

Plan for 24/7 Reference Cooperative Implementation  
UC Digital Reference Common Interest Group  
December 2008

Submitted to UC Libraries' Heads of Public Service

1) Timeline

December 2008 - January 16, 2009

- Webinar for CIG with QuestionPoint (QP) on using report modules
- Formal review by QP of UC policy pages
- Revision of UC policy pages
- Modification of library webpages to include links to traditional QP interface when the UC is not staffing
- Modification of Ask A UC Librarian viewport

January 20, 2009    Begin offering access to 24/7 services to UC patrons

March 2009

- March 2-6    Analyze use by UC patrons (volume, patterns, etc)
- March 9-13    CIG plans staffing and schedule, negotiates staffing with OCLC, and reports staffing plan to HOPS
- March 2-20    Webinars with QP for UC service providers
- March 30    Begin answering questions from non-UC patrons  
New staffing plan is implemented

July 31, 2009    Interim report to HOPS

January 2010    Interim report to HOPS, including recommendation re: continued participation in 24/7

Spring 2010    HOPS / ULs decide re: continued participation in 24/7

June 2010    Final report to HOPS  
End of 24/7 Pilot

2) Training

As noted in the timeline, CIG members will participate in an OCLC webinar regarding use of reports, to enable us to gather and analyze data for assessment and planning, and to better understand the administrator's role. CIG will schedule webinars with OCLC staff to train our staff in the specific procedures and best practices of the 24/7 reference cooperative. In order to make sure all can attend, we will schedule two webinars. In addition, each CIG member is responsible for seeing that staff on her or his respective campus are familiar with changes to procedures after implementation. CIG intends to use QuestionPoint documentation whenever possible to train our staff. We have already distributed the QuestionPoint "Best Practices" and "24/7 Policies" documentation to all our service providers.

Two specific changes from current practices must be clearly communicated to our staff: 1) we will cease applying descriptors to answered questions, and 2) we will begin to use of Follow up by Patron's Library consistently and effectively. Each campus must monitor their referred questions regularly [every working day] and respond in a timely manner.

### 3) Updating or creating webpages, policy pages, scripts, etc.

Our policy pages will be reviewed for quality by OCLC staff, and updated by CIG. We plan to schedule regular review and revision on a quarterly basis. We will review and revise our scripts at the same time, creating any new scripts needed. The QuestionPoint viewport will need revisions: changing the name of the service to Ask A Librarian, removing the schedule information, and explaining the 24/7 academic reference cooperative. In addition, campuses that have only the Qwidget in place currently must include a link to the traditional QuestionPoint interface in order for their patrons to have access to the 24/7 service when the UC is not staffing.

### 4) Promotion

An effective promotional program should be in place as soon as possible to ensure that as many patrons as possible use the service. The service will be re-branded as Ask A Librarian starting in January, since service providers will no longer be exclusively UC librarian. By January 20, the viewport and library webpages must be updated. Online notification to campus stakeholders should also be sent out before January 20.

Questionpoint has customizable promotional materials on their website [http://questionpoint.org/support/promote/promote\\_qp.html](http://questionpoint.org/support/promote/promote_qp.html), including a sample press release, posters, table tents and bookmarks. Several campuses will be preparing promotional materials. These campuses will share their materials and ideas for publicity, although each campus will be responsible for producing their own printed materials and webpages.

### 5) Service models & staffing

Our agreement with QuestionPoint requires that we answer an amount of questions equal to 75% of the number of reference questions asked by our patrons, and that we cover 40 hours per week. Our answers need not all be to our patrons' questions, but we will get a 40 second head start on questions from our patrons. We intend to continue double staffing during the hours UC covers. Campuses are open to the idea of sharing coverage, i.e., partnering staff from one campus with staff from another, in order to achieve double staffing for campuses having trouble finding enough staff. Some campuses have experimented with triple-staffing, but we have no plan at this time to require this from all campuses. The exact schedule will be determined in mid-March 2009, following six weeks of analysis of UC usage (see the timeline).

### 7) Assessment

We plan to collect both quantitative and qualitative information on the pilot, and to provide HOPS with two interim reports (July 2009 and January 2010), and a final report (June 2010). Quantitative information will include usage statistics (peak use periods and slow periods, cumulative use). Our qualitative analysis will involve reviewing a sample of questions from our patrons answered by other librarians, a sample of questions that our staff answer for patrons from outside UC, and a summary of our patrons' responses to the QP survey. We will also collect anecdotal information from our QP staff regarding their impressions of the pilot.