

From Subject Selectors to College and Interdisciplinary Teams

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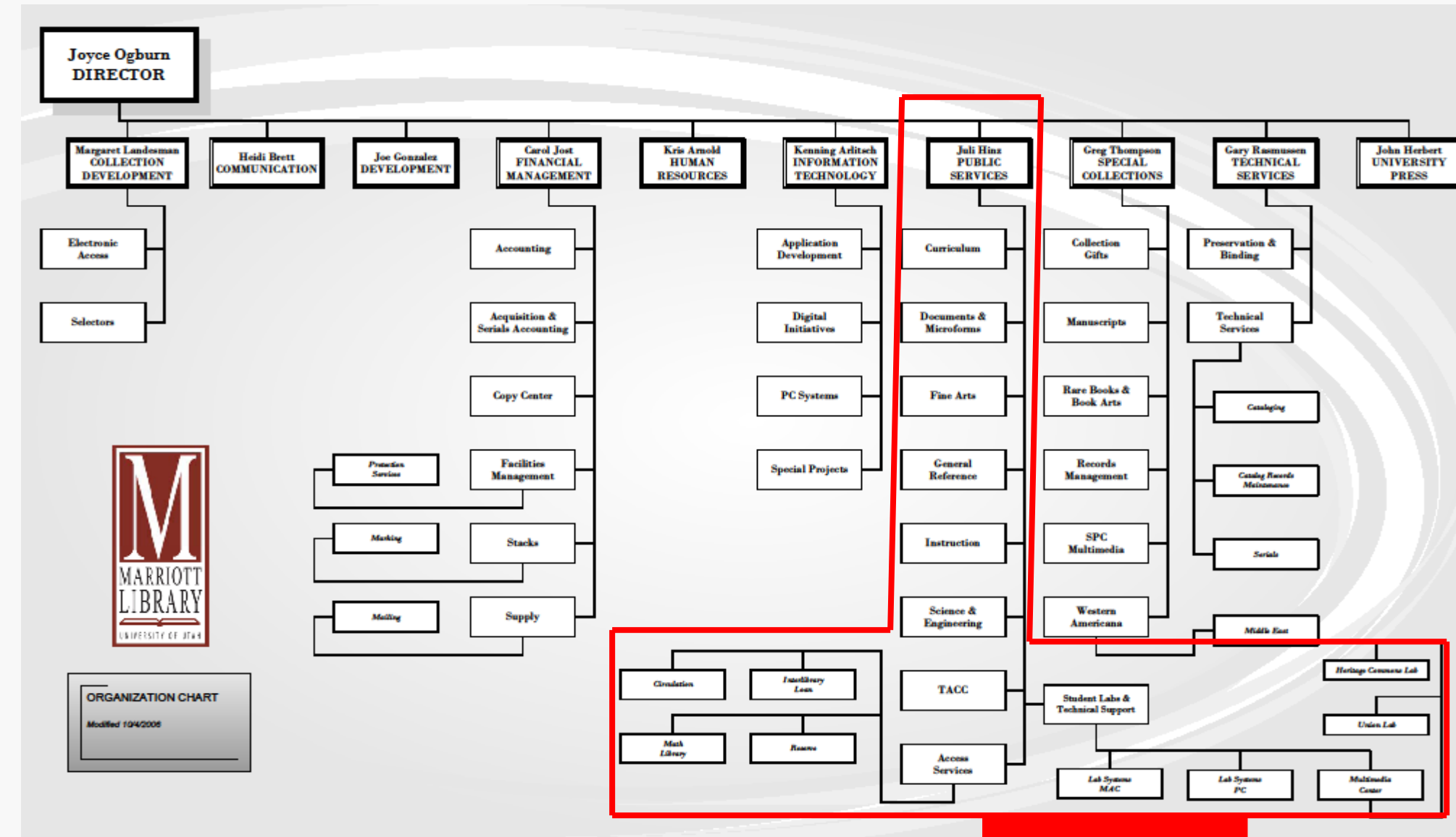


THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH
J. Willard Marriott Library

Abstract:

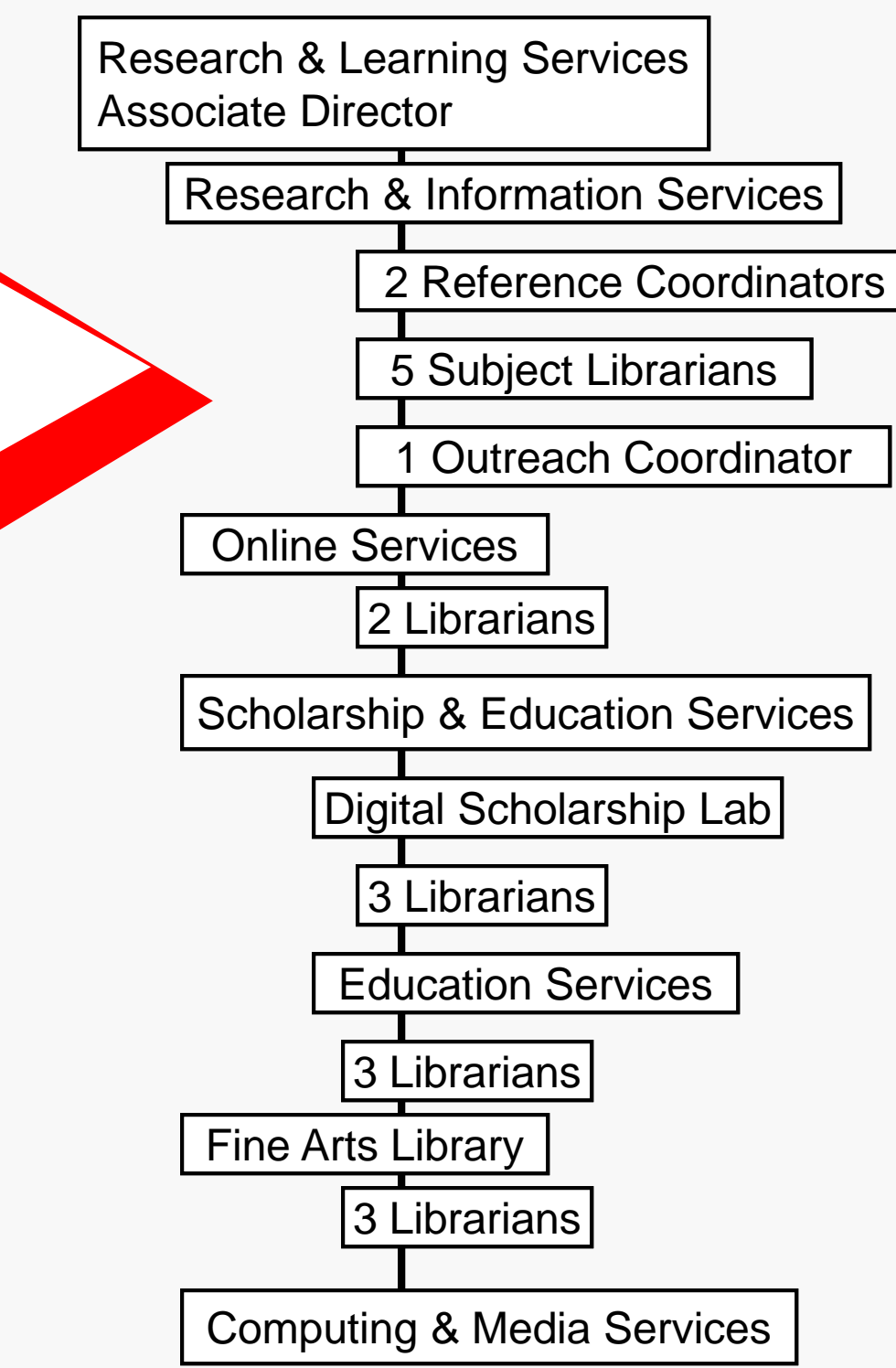
The renovation of the J. Willard Marriott Library, coupled with the changing responsibilities of public services librarians and the decreases in financial support, has forced librarians to evaluate their strategic alignment. The new Knowledge Commons has become the center for in-person reference and technical assistance. An Online Services unit addresses email and chat reference services along with research guides. The Digital Scholarship Lab focuses on data management, research projects involving the use of audio and video studios, usability testing, and new technologies as they become available. The traditional tasks of collection development and outreach to the subject departments became the responsibility of College and Interdisciplinary Teams or CITs. Public services librarians, therefore, had two organizational structures under which to work: task-focused and subject-oriented structures.

The earlier Science and Engineering Library had five staff. Forming the new Science, Health, Engineering, and Mining (SHEM) CIT increased the number of librarians addressing these subjects to eleven. The former head of the Science and Engineering Library has joined the Digital Scholarship Lab. SHEM's new team leader, new to the role of leader, is now leading the group that includes his/her present and previous supervisor. The budget for purchasing books is now cross-disciplinary; it is intended to sustain the entire CIT rather than one specific subject cluster. Research support, outreach, and course-integrated information literacy duties are routed to the entire team rather than to individual team members. How the team approached the challenges of reorganization and problem-solving will be the focus of this presentation.



1 The 2006 organization of public services personnel reflects the subject-based organization, while the 2009 organization reflects task-oriented organization.

2 CITs were established to address the traditional subject-oriented tasks of collection development, instruction and outreach as of July 2009.



Subject Areas of the College and Interdisciplinary Teams – CITs

Science, Health, Engineering, Mining – SHEM
Astronomy; Atmospheric Science; Bioengineering; Biology; Chemical Engineering; Chemistry; Civil Engineering; Environmental Engineering; Computer Science; Electrical Engineering; Communication Science & Disorders; Computer Engineering; Exercise & Sports Science; Geology; Geophysics; Health Promotion; Health Education; Material Science; Mathematics; Mechanical Engineering; Metallurgy; Mining Engineering; Nutrition; Parks; Recreation & Tourism; Physics

Social Sciences, Education, Business, & Social Work – SEBS
Accounting; Anthropology; K-12 Curricula; Economics; Education Psychology; Education; Culture & Society; Educational Leadership & Policy; Family & Consumer Studies; Finance; Geography; Management; Marketing; Operations & Information Systems; Political Science; Psychology; Social Work; Sociology; Special Education

Fine Arts, Architecture + Planning, & Humanities – FAAPH
Architecture; Art & Art History; City & Metropolitan Planning; Classics; Communication; Dance; English; Film & Media Studies; French; German; History; Languages & Literature; Linguistics; Music; Philosophy; Russian & Slavic Languages; Spanish; Theatre

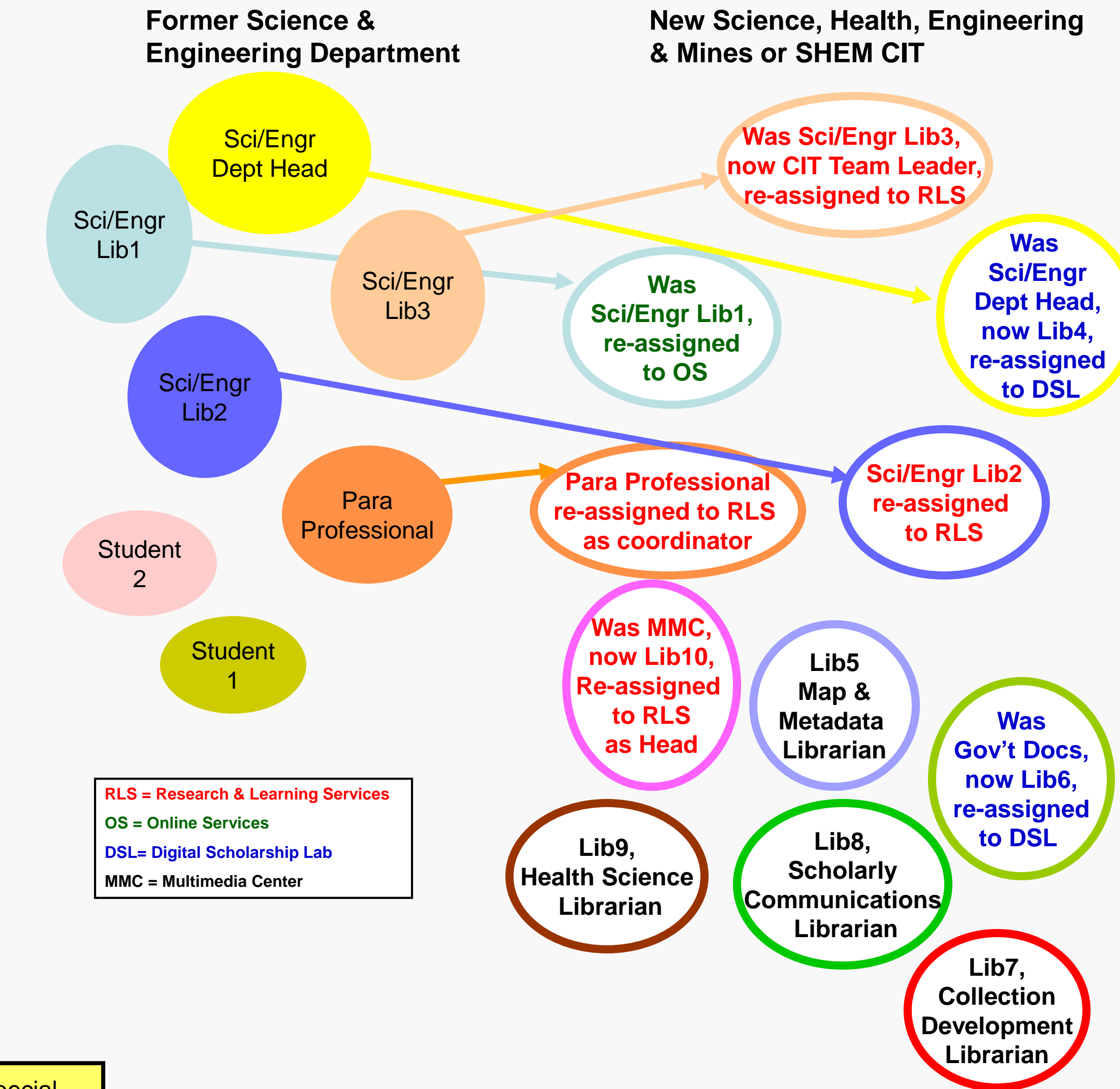
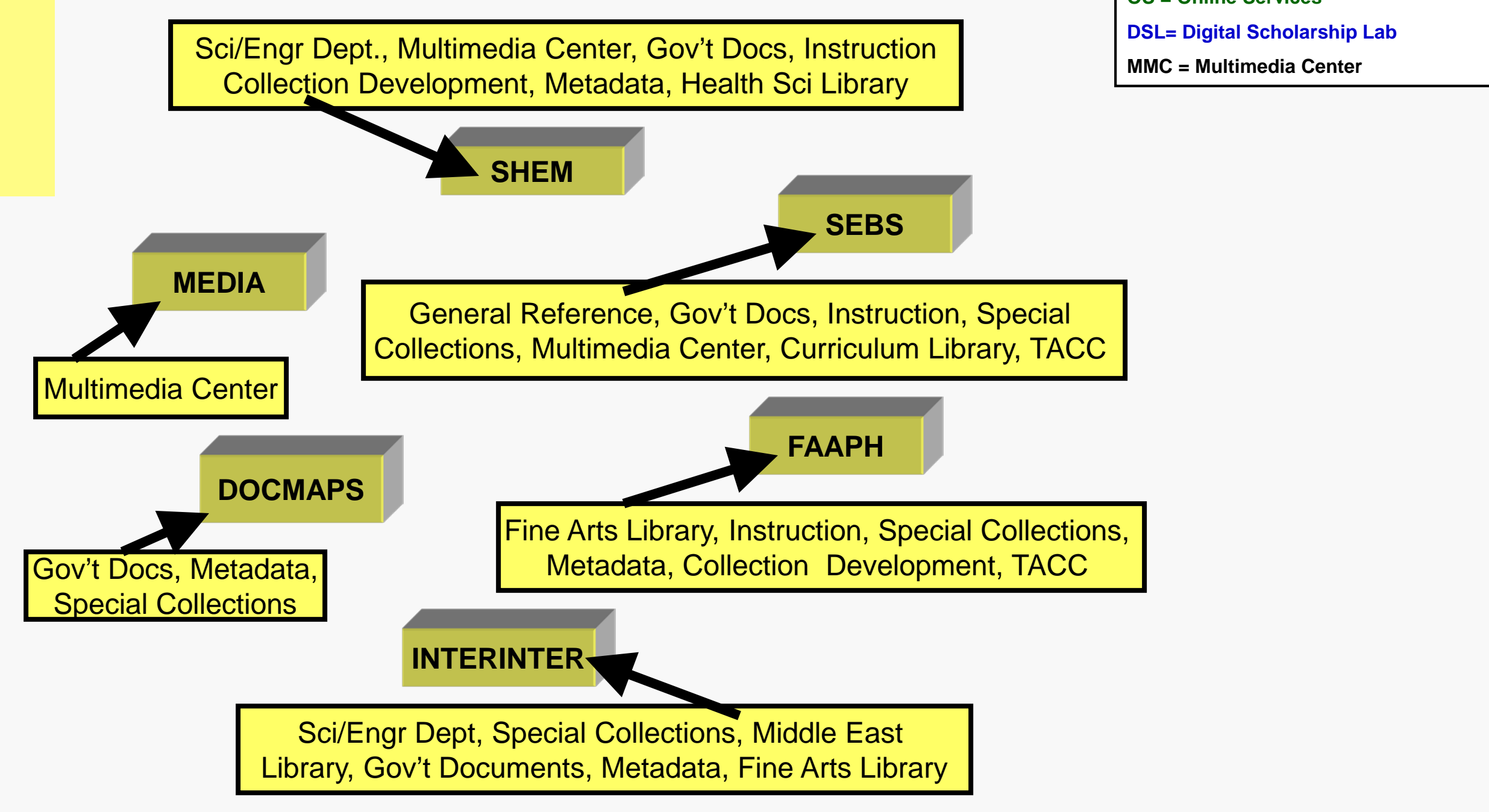
International and Interdisciplinary – INTERINTER
Asian Studies; Environmental Studies; Ethnic Studies; Gender Studies; Middle East Studies

Documents & Maps – DOCMAPS
Federal & U.N. Documents; Utah; U.S. & World Maps

Multimedia – MEDIA
All Subjects, but in non-print formats

3 Members of individual CITs work in different departments from throughout the library. CIT members do not have their offices located in the same area of the library. Communication is via meetings, email lists and telephone.

4 This study was conducted to examine the success of the team approach from the perspective of the SHEM CIT. The first obvious result was the increase in the number of personnel working together to address STM. The creation of CITs resulted in a team twice the size of the former Science and Engineering Dept. Adding six new personnel increased the number of subject areas covered from 19 to 26.



COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

5 As a result of policy changes and the reorganization of personnel, the Scholarly Resources Dept. reorganized the budget for purchasing library resources. In addition, for the 2009-2010 budget year funding was reduced as a result of economic cuts and some of the remaining funding was diverted to the Patron Driven Acquisition (PDA) program. Since "selectors" were being reorganized into CITs, it seemed logical to reorganize the distribution of funds by CITs. Information about (1) circulation statistics, (2) the average cost of titles by discipline, (3) the number of faculty, (4) the number of degrees granted, and (5) student credit hours were used to calculate the final budget per CIT.

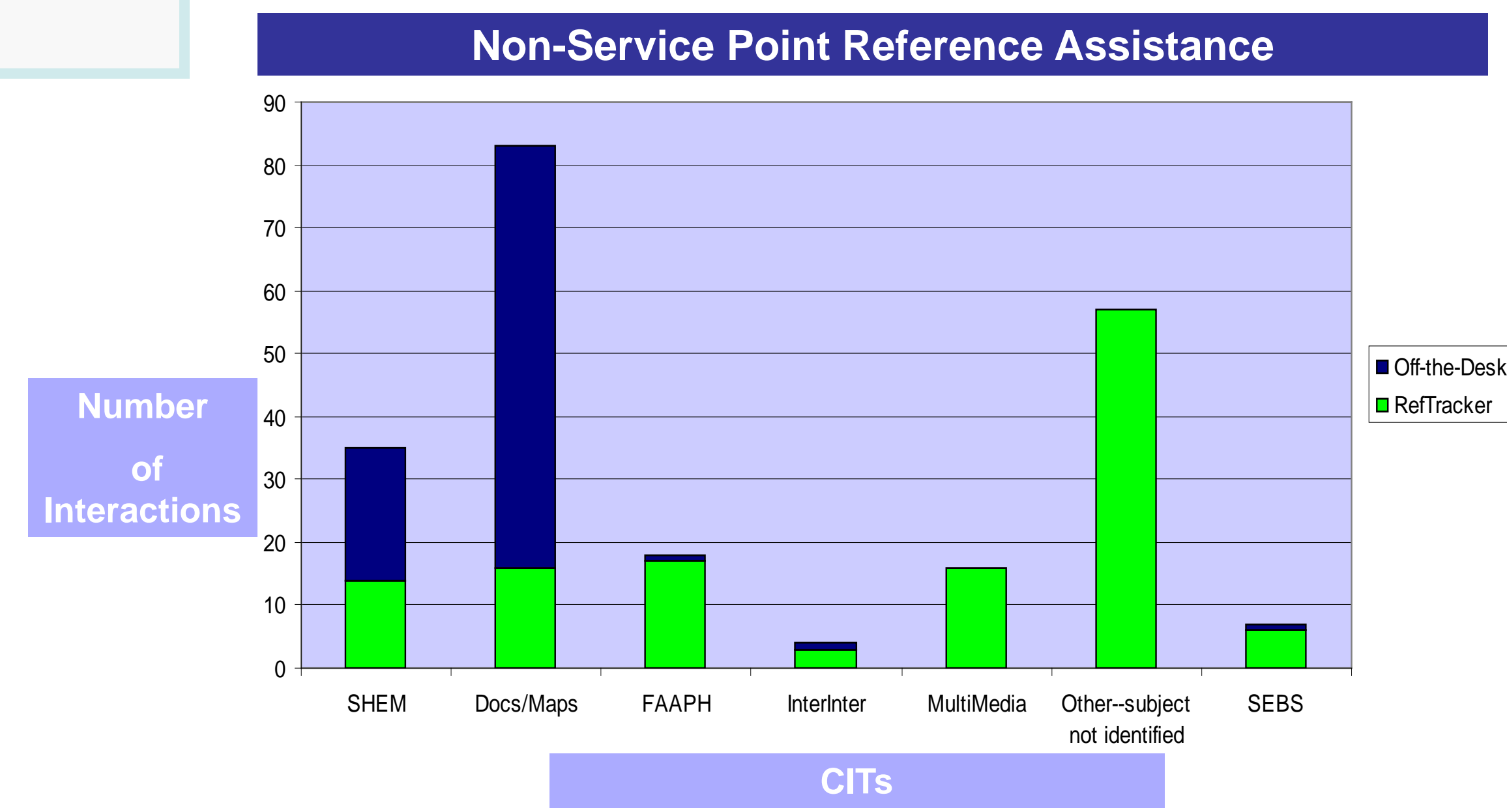
Purchases by Members of the SHEM CIT				
	Original 5 Sci/Engr Members		New 5 SHEM CIT Members**	
	# of Titles	Funds Spent**	# of Titles	Funds Spent**
	207	\$29,848.27	3	\$185.90
	155	\$3,324.94	150	\$8,125.58
	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00
	162	\$16,747.92	44	\$3,325.09
	91	\$11,504.77	30	\$2,719.46
TOTAL	615	\$61,425.90	227	\$14,356.03
COST PER TITLE		\$99.88		\$63.24

*The Scholarly Communications Librarian was not responsible for purchasing books for the SHEM CIT.
** Funds reflect what was purchased through Blackwell. \$26,472 was spent on large ticket items (ASTM Standards, Synthesis 2 Collection and RSC 2010 ebooks).

6 The chart shows that the original members of the Sci/Engr Dept. purchased 73% of the titles (81% of the funds) while the new members to the group purchased 27% of titles (19% of the funds). Further investigation revealed that some team members (mainly new to the group) only selected titles and the actual ordering was completed by two other members (original Sci/Engr Dept members) of the team. In addition, two team members relied on other team members to select titles for purchase so they could address other outstanding responsibilities. This indicates that SHEM is working as a team.

REFERENCE SERVICE ACTIVITIES

7 Altarama's RefTracker (R/T), implemented in the Library during January 2010, provides an online method of tracking interactions with patrons—(1) at service points, (2) away from service points, and (3) through R/T's online/email feature. Each CIT, department and service point (reference desks, circulation points, reserve desk) was provided with separate logons to record interactions.



To determine whether R/T was successfully integrated into the reference workflow of CIT members, data were extracted from R/T then sorted by CIT and by location (interactions away from service points and through the online/email feature). Data recorded at service points could not be sorted by CIT and not included. The data collected reflects activity from January through mid-May 2010.

8 The green bars depict the reference questions answered via email through the R/T system. The person answering the question selects the CIT or subject of the question for recording purposes. Four CITs—SHEM, DOCMAPS, FAAPH and MEDIA recorded similar numbers (15) of requests for assistance. Additional study is needed to determine the reason for the lower recordings. It may be that additional training and experience with the interface is required.

The blue bars reflect the requests for assistance away from service points. Librarians answer R/T requests while working in their offices, out in university departments, etc. Only two of the CITs seem to have incorporated recording non-service point reference interactions into their workflow. Prior to reorganization some of the members of SHEM and DOCMAPS had taken part in a project involving electronically recording reference desk transactions. This may explain why these two CITs were successful in integrating recording interactions into their workflow.

A big thanks to Amy Brunvand for providing RefTracker data.

Summary and Conclusions

During the first year the focus of the CITs was collection development and reference. Team outreach efforts included the development of research guides using LibGuides and a team-taught workshop for graduate students.

The team approach of the SHEM CIT was successful. The former five members of the Sci/Engr Dept were accustomed to operating as a team; the prevalent approach being when something needed to be done, each person could count on a colleague to step up to the plate. It was a cooperative and collegial group.

With the reorganization and despite the dispersal to other departments, the new members of SHEM were included in the previous team framework and philosophy. This previously established team-flavored model, with open communication and participation, encouraged the newer members to feel included in team activities. All team members were encouraged to take initiative, look for innovative solutions, and support each other.

Accomplishments:

- Mutual awareness and support of team members' activities
- Spending of SHEM materials budget judiciously and on time
- Development of Research/LibGuides
- Incorporation of RefTracker into the workflow to enable tracking of non-service point reference transactions
- Development and teaching of team-based information literacy workshops

Limitations:

- Finding a common day and time for everyone to meet
- Balancing new departmental responsibilities with CIT responsibilities

Future Plans:

- Increase further team-based outreach efforts
- Team-teach additional information literacy workshops
- Development of course-related LibGuides and How-to guides
- Further discussions on allocation of duties and responsibilities for outreach by team members