

MOBIUS Task Force on Financial Planning

Progress Report, November 14, 2008

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Charge to the Financial Planning Task Force

The MOBIUS Task Force on Financial Planning has been working on determining the “level of service and products to be included in the basic costs and services and products for additional costs” as it has been charged to do.

The Task Force met on October 17 to discuss these issues as they apply to the Innovative software maintenance bills and training. If the newly formed Financial Subcommittee requests it, the Task Force will meet again in the spring to help set up guidelines for determining charges for services provided beyond core service requests.

Recommendations from the Task Force on Financial Planning to the MOBIUS Executive Committee

1. The Task Force on Financial Planning recommends that, at the next revision of the assessment model, the borrowing statistics (intra-cluster and INNReach) be combined for a total of 40% (to be offset by the negative 20% credit for lending). This would ensure that all borrowing and lending activities are treated equally and fairly. This would, of course, be subject to Executive Committee and Council approval.
2. **The Task Force on Financial Planning recommends that MOBIUS ask Innovative for complete itemized lists of the maintenance charges attributable to each cluster or institution.** This will permit the MCO Office to fairly, accurately, and easily charge back for maintenance of those specialized services still being used by individual clusters or libraries. After many days of historical research by the MCO staff and several hours of discussion by the Task Force, it was decided that the current records are neither reliable enough nor current enough to use as a foundation for billing. Furthermore, the total amount of the non-standard maintenance was 2% of the total bill. To expend such a large amount of MCO staff time to regain such a small amount of money does not seem cost effective. The Task Force believes this is an important facet of assessment, particularly as the clusters grow more diverse, but it should not be applied with incomplete information. Once an itemized bill is

available, these charges can be separated out by the MCO Office with the advice of the Financial Subcommittee.

3. **The Task Force recommends that the core training services provided by MCO be confined to those listed in the MOBIUS Training Catalog and as scheduled by the MOBIUS Training Office.** All other requests for additional training may have a fee attached, as determined by the MCO Office, with the advice of the Financial Subcommittee. Additional training services might include (1) tailoring training to a specific institution, to specialized non-Innovative software, or some other type of unique situation, (2) offering training at a designated location or institution which would not ordinarily host MOBIUS training, or (3) providing the same training to the same individual more than two times.
4. The final part of the extra-services determination concerns helpdesk services, primarily preparing load tables and loading records for individual institutions. The MCO staff has prepared a detailed list of such services requested in the past and those services which are performed routinely. The charges would fall primarily into several areas: (1) How much should be charged for creating and testing a custom load profile for an entirely new database or service? (Answer: Lots!) (2) How much should be charged for modifying a currently used load profile to fit a different database or service? (Answer: Not so much.) (3) How much should be charged for applying a currently used load profile for a newly subscribing institution? (Answer: Even less.) (4) How much should be charged for routinely loading records weekly with one of these load tables? Monthly? Annually? Once in a blue moon? (Answer: Not a large amount, but there should probably be some differentiation between frequent use of MCO staff for loading records, troubleshooting, etc. and only occasional use of these services.) Obviously, while the first of these services (custom load tables) should cost the most, this service must be also considered as a form of research and development, where some of the costs should be borne by potential subsequent users of the load table. That would increase the costs of the routine loads further down the list. MOBIUS should expect to be paying for some of the cost of providing the skill and expertise for developing load tables even for those libraries which have not ever used this service and are not yet aware that they might want it in the future.

The Task Force is not sure whether numerical guidelines would be beneficial in these cases. It is possible that the MCO staff and the Financial Subcommittee can work this out best over time. The Task Force will meet in the spring to assist in this process, if it might be helpful.