

VCU Arts Library Committee
Wednesday, September 16, 2009
4th Floor Conference Room, James Branch Cabell Library

Minutes

Attendance

Charles Brownell, Sonali Gulati, Khaled Hamid, Sterling Hundley, Roy McKelvey (chair), Janet Rodgers, Barbara Tisserat, Roberto Ventura, Stephen Vitiello, Sara Wilson-McKay

Staff: Yuki Hibben, John Ulmschneider, Pam Fraga (recording secretary)

Mr. McKelvey welcomed committee members back from the summer break and noted that the coming year looked to be a busy one for all. He reported that this year the committee will meet only twice per semester so he was glad to see so many in attendance.

Business

Review and approval of agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

Review and approval of minutes from April 2009

The minutes were approved as presented.

VCU Libraries service changes

Mr. Ulmschneider thanked Dr. Vitiello for acting as curator for the Cabell Library student art exhibit, currently on display on the 1st floor of Cabell Library. He reported that President Rao's wife and son had toured Cabell Library and enjoyed many items in the exhibit. Mr. McKelvey inquired whether the exhibit would be replaced with another one during the year and Ms. Hibben confirmed that was the plan. She hopes to enlist another curator for it. Dr. Vitiello's willingness to volunteer for the initial exhibit worked well. The exhibit requires expertise and connections beyond what VCU Libraries staff can provide. Dr. Rodgers suggested the Theatre Department might provide a good source of materials, such as costumes, costume sketches and staging sketches for an exhibit. Dr. Vitiello confirmed that the experience he had would be helpful to others who take this on. Dr. Hundley suggested involving an existing exhibit such as the ones at the Anderson Gallery, which already had assembled materials. Mr. Ulmschneider summed up the discussion by saying that the exhibit had brought vitality to the 1st floor and the topic could be added as a future agenda item to follow up on the strong interest of the group.

Mr. Ulmschneider then reported on the changes made to services at both TML and JBC as a result of the University's ongoing funding constraints. The focus of these changes has been to reduce costs where possible while maintaining core services to students, particularly access to library facilities. The University has continued to support collections and has strengthened library collection funding by nearly \$2 million, in part to support for new graduate and PhD programs. Mr. Ulmschneider said that most of the changes in services will be felt at service desks. Some changes include:

- Reduced hours of operation at both libraries – equaling about 1 shift, or 8 hours, at each.
- Suspension of 24/5 extended exam hours for this academic year
- Sharply reduced discretionary spending, such as travel, publicity and participation in some University-wide events
- Reduction of number of requests allowed through ILLiad – this reduction still exceeds the number of items requested by nearly 98% of patrons
- Imposition of a fine if items requested through ILLiad are not picked up by requesting party

Some of these measures will be cause inconvenience for library users, but they allow VCU Libraries to continue core services such as a 2am closing time for Cabell Library. Priorities for investment when funding is stronger are restored hours in Media Reserve Services; 24/5 at the end of the semester; and as many hours as possible at both libraries, especially Saturday hours at TML. Mr. Ulmschneider asked the Committee to please let him know if they hear of any complaints; it is critical that VCU Libraries be apprised of the effect these changes have on students and faculty.

Ms. Hibben reported that a number of purchases for library collections have been made with expanded collection funds provided over the past year. Of particular interest to VCUArts are:

- ProQuest theses and dissertations (entire collection now available online)
- Additions to the jazz music library
- Purchase of Philosopher's Index
- Purchase of JStor VI

Reports and Discussion

Six-year budget plan

Mr. Ulmschneider reported that in the past, the University has asked all departments to submit six-year budget plans. This year, the University has requested budget plans from selected departments, along with detailed costs and how the plans align with the VCU2020 plan. Mr. Ulmschneider asked the Committee if they had input to offer on specific graduate programs that might need research support in the next year, since VCU Libraries was asked provide

more specific information on how library collection funding would support graduate programs. The Committee indicated that its members weren't clear which of the several proposed graduate programs in VCUArts are likely to be implemented. Mr. Ulmschneider indicated faculty awareness of any current information would be welcome. The following information was offered:

- PhD in Design Environment in Interior Design Dept – no news available, though it's possible this program may be in the developmental stage with MCV.
- PhD in Art Education has not moved forward.
- PhD in Museum Studies is in place to begin next year

Mr. Ulmschneider said that requests for specific collection items to support programs are welcome. Items which cannot be purchased now will be added to a wish list to be bought as soon as possible. Ms. Hibben said that while journal requests were due by September 15th, she can still consider others if needed.

Mr. Ulmschneider has to submit the libraries six year plan by September 28th and encouraged everyone to forward any information that should be considered as soon as possible.

Two millionth volume celebration

Mr. Ulmschneider told the Committee that the celebration of the two millionth volume will be held on October 2nd at 2:00pm on the 1st floor of Cabell Library. The 199,999,999th volume will be *Edward Peeples' Collection of Digital Photography*, a remarkable collection of photographs taken by Dr. Peeples of schools and students in Prince Edward County in Virginia in the 1960s. The collection includes map data so that when viewing the photographs, the user can decide to view the location on Google maps.

The two millionth volume will be Marvel Comics' *Amazing Spiderman: #583*, which features President Barack Obama. Given that VCU has one of the largest collections of comic arts in North America, it seemed particularly fitting to recognize this volume, especially since it celebrates a critical moment in US history.

The two million and first volume is *R2 Digital Library*, which includes hundreds of full-length books related to the health sciences and the nursing profession. This work focuses on the direction VCU and VCU Libraries are taking in the future of collections.

Mr. Ulmschneider noted that none of the three selected for this important occasion are actually "books". He said that in the past this type of celebration would have been quite lavish. The planned event will be somewhat low key, which recognizes the less prominent role of print volumes and volume counts in contemporary scholarship. But the event's larger role is to highlight the diversity of academic work and scholarship at VCU, and celebrate VCU's involvement with

the community. He asked for suggestions from the Committee of other works that might exemplify their schools or fields of interest so that VCU Libraries can highlight them as part of the overall two millionth celebration.

Space at 500 Academic Center

Mr. Ulmschneider reminded the Committee that VCU purchased the former Ukrops on Grace and Harrison Streets in the spring, and is now renovating the building. Half of it will become much-needed classroom space. The other half, including the loading dock entrance, will become storage space for print collections from VCU Libraries. Shelving (some donated) will be installed beginning in December; it's expected to house about 200,000 volumes. VCU Libraries will relocate little-used material already stored in the basement of Cabell into the new facility, leaving the Cabell storage space available for lesser-used materials from the current Cabell open stacks. The goal is to open the entire 2nd floor of Cabell for student study space.

Dr. Rodgers suggested that there are approximately 150 students who need community service hours and that obtaining their help to move volumes to 500 Academic Center might be a good way to obtain labor for the libraries.

There was significant discussion about the use of the Kindle book reader. Mr. Ulmschneider reported that he has used a Kindle and readily sees a very useful place for such devices in academe. Right now they are most useful for light reading or research, but not in-depth study. One chief limitation is their licensing arrangements for content: the amount of licensed content is limited, the content is tied to the Kindle itself, and it remains under the control of the seller and the Kindle, not the user. He felt that the greatest potential for this device will be achieved when it is uncoupled from the licensed content and the user is free to purchase volumes from many different sources. He also reminded the Committee that VCU Libraries offers over 100,000 digital volumes and to consider these when making course reading selections. They give students far more flexibility of use and help them avoid the cost of textbooks.

Mr. Ulmschneider had to leave the meeting at this point due to a prior engagement. Ms. Hibben served as the VCU Libraries representative for the balance of the meeting.

First floor exhibit report: Yuki Hibben and Stephen Vitiello

Ms. Hibben began by saying that preparations for the spring exhibit need to start very soon, since arrangements are complex and it can be difficult to gather all parties together. Dr. Vitiello and Ms. Hibben reported that the first exhibit has been an excellent learning experience. The team had to deal with such matters as insurance, privacy, display issues, audio limitations, and artistic releases. There are 27 pieces on display representing 10 students from 5 departments.

60% of the exhibit consists of graduate works and 85% were produced just for this exhibit. Dr. Vitiello said he had to pursue students individually to garner their participation. However, the enthusiastic response from VCU Libraries and from Mr. Ulmschneider has been gratifying. The Friends of the Library Board, who suggested exhibits in the library, is very pleased with the results. Ms. Hibben said that the original idea had been to use the little area next to the elevators but it was decided to expand to the columns and adjacent wall areas and all concerned are glad it now involves the whole 1st floor. The response from the public has been overwhelmingly positive and VCU Libraries is looking into the possibility of expanding the next exhibit to other areas of Cabell and at TML.

Tour: Art Browser and second floor renovations
First floor exhibit – tour by Stephen Vitiello, Curator

The Committee adjourned at 6:15 p.m. to tour the areas. Ms. Hibben and Dr. Vitiello conducted the tours.

The next meeting will be November 18, 2009.