

**VCU Arts Library Committee**  
**Wednesday, November 18, 2009**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room, James Branch Cabell Library**

**Minutes**

**Attendance**

Charles Brownell, Susie Ganch, Sonali Gulati, Roy McKelvey (chair), Janet Rodgers, Barbara Tisserat, Roberto Ventura, Stephen Vitiello, Sara Wilson-McKay

Staff: Pat Flanagan, Yuki Hibben, Kristina Keogh, Pam Fraga (recording secretary)

Guest: Kevin Farley

Mr. McKelvey reported that Mr. Ulmschneider was out of the office on business and that Pat Flanagan would be serving in his stead for this meeting. Ms. Flanagan thanked Dr. Brownell for the wonderful Architectural History Symposium, which he conducted last week and the reception for which was held in the Cabell Room of the James Branch Cabell Library. Several other Committee members commented on what an excellent program it had been.

**Business**

**Review and approval of agenda**

The agenda was approved as presented.

**Review and approval of minutes from September 2009**

The minutes were approved as presented.

**Library space planning: consultant visits and other actions - handout**

Ms. Flanagan reminded the Committee that an addition to the Cabell Library is high on the University's list of potential capital outlays. Because of this, it is important to know how much space and what kind of space would be needed, especially since a new addition will probably have to last for at least 30 years. Therefore, the VCU Libraries, working with VCU Facilities Planning, has retained the services of BCWH, a consulting firm familiar with VCU, and Lucker & Tappe, experts in library planning, to carry out a comprehensive study of library space at VCU, taking into account enrollment, academic programs as they exist now, projected growth in academic programs, and projected growth in collections. These two teams have been meeting last week and this week with deans, the Provost, faculty members, staff and students to gather as much input as possible in developing the full scope of spatial needs, use needs, general size and configuration of the new addition. They have also been given the names of peer academic institutions and academic institutions which have recently added library

space; the team will gather comparative and benchmark data from these institutions. Ms. Flanagan asked the Committee members to please send their thoughts about this initiative to John Ulmschneider directly. Mr. McKelvey pointed out that he will be at the VLAC meeting on Friday, which the consultant team will visit as part of its work, and that he will convey his thoughts about School of the Arts needs at that time. Ms. Flanagan agreed that this was particularly important as VCU Libraries is trying to highlight the contributions of the School of the Arts, particularly with regard to the ongoing display of student/faculty art work.

In discussion, Ms. Flanagan said that it's not clear exactly where the footprint for the addition will be but the projected location is over the parking pit behind Cabell. Furthermore, the addition of new space is complicated by the fact that there are two campuses and two libraries. In addition, it's difficult to project the exact space needs for the collection: print publication is undergoing radical change, and publication activity overall will change as new disciplines develop and contribute new materials (some books, some not) to the collections.

The final report by the consultants will be sent to both VCU Libraries and VCU Facilities. A representative from Facilities is accompanying the consulting teams on all the interviews on both campuses.

## **Reports and Discussion**

### **New collection acquisitions for VCU Arts – 2 handouts**

Ms. Hibben began her report by referring to the handouts. The first one identifies a potential collection of new purchases for this fiscal year. This list is speculative and is based on current and projected graduate and PhD programs. While every attempt has been made to be specific with titles that will meet the needs of the academic programs on the list, it's impossible to be completely exact because many fields and programs will generate new titles in the future. The focus of the list is to show that collection efforts support academic programs quite directly, and in particular, many purchases are for existing and projected new graduate and PhD programs.

The second handout lists titles and items which have been or are being purchased right now. Items with an asterisk are currently available online and in full text. In discussion it was noted that this list indicates which disciplines are covered. When new items become available, these are announced on the main VCU Libraries website and an email is sent to the relevant department.

Ms. Hibben explained that there have been several purchases related to humanities that have bearing on VCUArts programs:

- \$25,000 for media replacement, particularly VHS tapes
- \$300,000 for new journals in the Humanities
- \$100,000 on databases

- \$25,000 on books

### **Spring exhibit planning**

Ms. Flanagan told the Committee that Mr. Ulmschneider is very enthusiastic about continued support for exhibiting artwork in the two library buildings. On his way to Charleston, SC, for a meeting, he stopped at the University of North Carolina in Wilmington. The director of the library there is very involved in regional art programs, and he has built a comprehensive display of student, faculty, and community artwork in the library building on that campus. Mr. Ulmschneider described the art as “ubiquitous” in the building, and said it makes for a welcoming and comfortable environment.

Ms. Hibben reminded the Committee that the current exhibit in Cabell is about to be taken down and she has asked for volunteers to step forward as curators to begin the design and implementation of the exhibit for the spring semester. So far, no one has come forward. In discussion, it was asked if the Anderson Gallery, which already does this sort of thing, could expand its work with Cabell or could be of assistance in the exhibit done in the library. It was noted that Anderson has an existing collection and a professional curator and so doesn't have the logistical problems that VCU Libraries is dealing with, one of which is that fact that librarians do not have a direct connection with the students needed to facilitate the exhibit. The idea of a department taking the lead on a given exhibit or semester was discussed and it was felt that while this is a good idea, it should ultimately be the students who take the lead. Several departments have student organizations and it was thought that these might be good groups to take the initiative, contacting students with a call for exhibits and recruiting their advisors to help oversee the effort. This would give the students curatorial experience and possibly be for course credit. The following were points of discussion:

- The Friends of the Library have authorized \$500 per exhibit for support for materials, etc. As VCU Libraries lacks specific items needed for exhibition, such as display cases and appropriate tables, this is a very useful gift.
- The spring exhibit could be much smaller, perhaps just the 2 video monitors and works exhibited along the elevator wall on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor.
- Important not to lose the momentum generated by the first exhibit.
- Strong sense that the students should curate the exhibit in some capacity.
- Students could end up designing work specifically for the exhibition in Cabell.
- Having a prize, either monetary or recognition, for exhibiting in this manner might be incentive for student participation.

In discussion about what has been learned by this first exhibit, the following points were highlighted:

- Some specific naming should be in place, perhaps on the staircase wall, that identifies the exhibit.
- Publicity for this exhibit is weak and there was no opening event to highlight the effort.
- How to use the columns was not clearly defined
- No sound of any kind is allowed
- People were not available for set up as this was done in late August before the semester began.
- Need a faculty person to stay on top of the exhibit until it's fully installed, including maintaining solid contacts with the students involved.
- Limited by insurance constraints and so can't use student owned equipment, such as TV's or recording devises.

After this discussion, Dr. Gulati said she would supply materials/content for the 2 monitors for the spring semester and perhaps curate the fall exhibit. The monitors can stay in their current location for her use in the spring.

At the next meeting of this Committee in January, this subject will again be on the agenda as part of the planning for the fall exhibit.

#### **Demo: Jazz Music Library**

Dr. Farley began the demonstration by noting that the provider of this collection is Alexander Street Press (located in Alexandria, Virginia), and that it is a extremely useful and extensive database. There are thousands of albums and soundtracks available to the user. He showed how to access the Jazz Music Library database from the main VCU Libraries website. The items in this database are fully licensed and so the listener can enjoy the full soundtrack. The listener can create their own play list so a professor could use this for course work as well as personal use. He then demonstrated how to browse the collection using a variety of search words and parameters, including by instrument and time frame.

The recording quality is on 2 levels and not quite CD quality. Some recordings also have liner notes available. It was noted that the Classical Music Library is as extensive as the Jazz. Dr. Farley was not sure if one could download to an iPod but he will check into that and get back to the Committee on that issue.

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 pm. The next meeting will be January 20, 2010.