

**VCU Libraries Advisory Committee**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room, James Branch Cabell Library**  
**September 18, 2009 2:00 to 3:00 p.m.**

**Minutes**

**Attendance**

Gonzalo Aida, Mary Baechle, Jan Chlebowski, Brandon Dube, Rosemary Farmer, Linda Hughes, Kimberle Jacobs, Allen Lee, Roy McKelvey, Faye Prichard, Karen Rader, Gabriel Reich, Brenda Seago

Absent with notice: Leila Christenbury, Ann Wiesner

Absent: Corey Davis, Worth Longest

Staff: John Duke, Teresa Knott, John Ulmschneider, Pam Fraga (recording secretary)

**Business**

Ms. Seago opened the meeting per the request of John Ulmschneider, since she had been the presiding chair for the last meeting. She invited members to introduce themselves.

**Review and approval of agenda**

The agenda was approved as presented.

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

Ms. Prichard noted that she was present at the meeting in April but was marked as absent. With that revision, the minutes were approved.

**Election of chair for academic year 2009-10 (correction from published year of office)**

Mr. Ulmschneider thanked Ms. Seago for opening the meeting and welcomed all present back from the summer break. He then asked for either nominations from the floor or volunteers for the position of chair of this committee for this academic year. Mr. McKelvey, current chair of the Arts Library Committee, volunteered for the position and voted in by unanimous acclamation. He then assumed chairing the remainder of the meeting.

**Service changes in VCU Libraries**

Mr. Ulmschneider reported that there have been several changes in services brought on by the need to meet budget targets. He reported that across the University, the guiding vision for budget adjustments have been to maintain instructional programs, preserve class offerings, and provide the support necessary to ensure that students could stay on schedule in their academic programs. He noted that while there have been significant reductions in the personnel and operating budget of the VCU Libraries, the University has demonstrated its ongoing support for the library collections, consistently valued as the most important service provided by the VCU Libraries, by increasing the budget for library materials by nearly \$2 million since 2007. The University has also invested substantial funds in renovations and furnishings that provide more and improved work space for students.

To meet budget targets for the reduced personnel and operating budget, there have been changes in services and building hours in the VCU Libraries. However, regular building hours during the week for Cabell Library have not been affected: Cabell still opens at 7:30am and closes at 2am. Changes include:

- Reduced reference desk and the service desk hours
- Reduced MRS and Special Collections hours
- TML is now closed on Saturdays

- JBC has trimmed hours on Fridays and Saturdays to save the equivalent of one shift, 8 hours
- ILLiad has reduced the number of items that can be borrowed and instituted a fine for items not picked up when ordered
- Suspended 24/5 for fall semester and likely for spring semester
- Reduced off-campus services

Mr. Ulmschneider reported that the VCU Libraries has planned to meet budget targets by not filling vacancies and by reducing its student and temporary payroll. As of today's meeting, the VCU Libraries has 15 vacant positions (9 at JBC and 6 at TML) that it will not fill in the near-term future. Ms. Knott said that Tompkins-McCaw Library is currently searching for one part-time (80%) position to ease this shortfall and has split one FTE position into 2 hourly positions to allow more flexibility in scheduling.

Mr. Ulmschneider asked that the Committee members please let him know about inconveniences they experience or complaints they hear about. He pointed out that the only way VCU Libraries can know about the real impact of these changes is if these complaints are made known. He said that if and when it's possible to restore items to the operating budget, the priority will be hours at TML, 24/5 and hours at MRS.

## **Reports and Discussion**

### **Six-year budget plan: submission from VCU Libraries**

Mr. Ulmschneider reported that in the past, the University has requested that all units submit a budget plan showing what will be needed to meet their unit plans and ambitious over the next six years. This year the University has decided to target specific initiatives that advance the VCU2020 plan, and is asking selected units for budget requests for plans that support those initiatives. This means that not all units will be asked for a 6-year plan, and those requested to supply a plan will shape the plan according to the VCU2020 initiative that it will support.

The VCU Libraries has been asked to submit a 6-year plan for library collections to provide support for ongoing and new PhD and graduate programs that are a vital part of VCU2020. Mr. Ulmschneider said that the request for a 6-year collections plan demonstrates that the University is paying very close attention to the ongoing needs for stronger graduate programs and has a serious focus on supporting faculty in these programs. Mr. McKelvey agreed that he has observed Dr. Rao paying particular attention to the quality of the programs at VCU, not the quantity, and that the President appears to be very concerned that the adequate instruction and support be in place to advance these programs. Dr. Chlebowksi expressed concern that there be real support for VCU Libraries in instituting these programs and requiring that research materials be in place. However, he did feel that "a rising tide lifts all boats" and that this overall intention to improve the resources for the graduate programs will in fact bode well for all the students as the resources acquired for the graduate programs will be available to undergraduates, as well.

Mr. Duke explained the budgeting process briefly. He said that there are two principles guiding the process. The first is to support existing programs, which includes provision for unavoidable cost increases in journal subscriptions. The second is to achieve a research depth in collections equivalent to the median level of peer institutions. The calculations for these new collections include unavoidable cost increases expected in new journal subscriptions and bundled packages of purchases. Duplication has already been eliminated and every attempt is made to maintain a balance between fixed costs and one-time purchases including databases and books specific to certain programs.

Mr. Ulmschneider said that VCU Libraries relies heavily on input from VLAC and its other advisory committees regarding what resources are needed and how the lack of them is affecting the instructional programs.

**Two millionth volume celebration – handout (press release)**

Mr. Ulmschneider passed out copies of the press release related to the upcoming celebration of the two millionth volume in the VCU Libraries collection. The celebration will on October 2<sup>nd</sup> at JBC at 2:00 p.m., simulcast to TML. The volume selected to honor the 199,999,999<sup>th</sup> item will be the Edward Peeples Collection of digitized photographs and documents, which focuses on the decision in Prince Edward County to close its schools rather than integrate between 1959 and 1964. The 2,000,000<sup>th</sup> is the Marvel Comics “Amazing Spiderman #583”, in which Spiderman meets President Obama. The 2,000,001<sup>st</sup> volume is the Rittenhouse R2 Digital Library, a collection of digital books focusing on medical and health care issues and the life sciences. Mr. Ulmschneider said that these items all celebrate, in one way or another, the culture and academic focus both of VCU and the VCU Libraries, and he noted that none are actually “books”! He also said that he had asked for suggestions from various people and committees for volumes or items that they felt would uniquely represent their department. These items will be highlighted in the two millionth celebration, as well.

In discussion, it was asked if VCU Libraries specifically captures and can offer a list of publications by VCU faculty. It was reported that this is not currently possible. While some universities have a centralized reporting system from which one can then call up a list of authors, VCU does not. Quite to the contrary, departments operate very autonomously in this regard and it's virtually impossible to have a complete list of known authors at any one time. Most departments have a legacy of manual production of lists and so this information is simply not available electronically. There is a movement university-wide to move toward this and the School of Medicine already has a centralized reporting mechanism in the works which should be operational by the spring.

Concern was expressed about the possibility of going to all electronic book collections, that something unique and intrinsic to walking in the stacks would be lost. Mr. Ulmschneider agreed that hard bound books offer a serendipity of discovery that electronic books can't. However, he pointed out the immense savings to students when electronic texts are selected by professors, and noted that advances are being made in the presentation of electronic material to make it more user-friendly. It was also pointed out that the current generation of users expects to find what it needs electronically, and finds actually going to the library buildings a bit archaic and not a little intimidating. Finally, he reported that when a faculty member finds that an electronic book is inappropriate for a particular application, the VCU Libraries will acquire that book in print form (if available).

**Tour of facilities enhancements and art exhibit; plans for new student space; timeline for new library addition on the Monroe Park Campus; timeline for library study for both campuses.**

Mr. Ulmschneider explained that while there is often a demonstration at this point in the agenda of some new feature offered by VCU Libraries, today there will be a physical tour of some areas within Cabell Library to show the Committee some of the new areas offered to students. Before the tour, he addressed some other points of this agenda item:

- A study is under way to ascertain the library space needs of students and faculty on both campuses. The first meeting with the consultants will be 10/12 and 10/13/09. He told the Committee that the consultants likely be contacting members of VLAC for their input in this effort. The consultant group is BCWH and Tappe, who have experience in research universities.
- The timeline for the new addition to the library on the Monroe Park Campus, which Mr. Ulmschneider prefers to call “library and academic commons”, is moving forward. Mr. Ulmschneider noted that the visitor counts for the VCU Libraries exceeded two million in academic year 2008-09 (just like the two millionth book!). The new addition will be attached to Cabell (over the parking pit) but will, in fact, be a separate building with a separate name.

- 500 Academic Center – Mr. Ulmschneider reported that VCU completed its purchase of the old Ukrop's building on Harrison and Grace Streets back in the spring. Half of it will be renovated into much needed new classrooms and the back half will be storage for approximately 210,000 volumes from Cabell Library. Once all the shifting around has been done, the space will ultimately free up 18,000 square feet of space for student study use. The shifting of library materials to use the new space will start in December/January. The parking lot will be converted to University paid parking.

Mr. Ulmschneider reminded the Committee that every Thursday in September the Capital Ale House is donating 25% of food purchases to VCU Libraries and he encouraged them to partake of this offer.

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 to commence the tour of Cabell.