

**Virginia Commonwealth University  
VCU Libraries Advisory Committee  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room, James Branch Cabell Library  
November 14, 2014**

**Minutes**

**Attending**

Meredith Baines, David Burton, Jose Dula (substitute), Whitney Newcomb, Peter Nguyen, Faye Prichard (acting chair), Mike Ryan, Neha Sakhawalkar, AJ Shriar, Kenneth Warren, Carolyn White, Hu Yang

**Absent with notice**

Corey Davis, Les Harrison, Susan Johnson, Vincent Ryan, Jeremy Stultz

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

Guest: Eric Johnson, VCU Libraries

**Business**

**Review and approval of agenda**

It was agreed to add an update on the progress of the building construction prior to the demo at the end of the agenda. With this provision, the agenda was approved.

**Review and approval of minutes from October 2014**

The minutes were approved as presented.

Mr. Ulmschneider thanked Ms. Prichard for agreeing to act as chair for this meeting during the absences of Dr. Davis.

**Schedule for spring 2015**

Mr. Ulmschneider reminded members that the VLAC discussed a possible change in the meeting schedule for spring 2015 at the previous meeting. The VLAC members agreed to revisit the topic at today's meeting after time to think about a change and to consult with colleagues. Mr. Ulmschneider reviewed a new approach to VLAC meetings: focus the work of the committee on more policy and strategic challenges with less operational focus, and reduce the number of meetings from 7 per academic year to 2 per semester. The members made these points in discussion:

- The idea of 2 meetings was acceptable, even preferable, but the chair of the committee needs to retain the option to call an ad hoc meeting if necessary.
- Perhaps demos could be created online so the demo portion of the meeting, a much-appreciated feature, would still be available. There was some concern about burdening the staff with the production of these but Mr. Ulmschneider told the committee that the Libraries was moving toward doing this anyway.
- If needed, materials could be sent to the committee via email between meetings.

The idea of moving to 2 meetings per semester was given a unanimous vote, as well as the concept of refocusing the overall work of the committee. Mr. Ulmschneider said he and Dr. Davis would work on scheduling the new meeting dates and locations; construction at Cabell might affect the locations available there.

## **Reports and Discussion**

### **Investment plan for VCU Libraries: update – online demonstration**

Mr. Ulmschneider shared two spreadsheets with the committee, illustrating first the current financial assets of VCU Libraries and second, the investment plan for those assets going in 2014-15 and 2015-16. 2014-15 will focus primarily on outfitting new spaces as well as new personnel and security. He noted that the spreadsheet showed a funding shortfall in accomplishing all that's needed, so some adjustments and careful decision-making must guide the final expenditures. The second spreadsheet (2015-16) shows a full year's needs for operations and personnel and again, adjustments will have to be made to stay on budget. The primary source of funding for these plans is the new student library fee (\$25/semester/student).

In discussing the new personnel to be hired, Mr. Ulmschneider told the committee briefly described the position of art curator for the VCU Libraries. He said that the School of the Arts and VLAC would both be involved in recruiting this person and that the goal was a purposeful focus on including art throughout both libraries through the agency of a full-time curator. The curator will develop displays using only materials from students, faculty, and alumni of VCU, without commissioned works, and the displays will be regularly rotated and refreshed.

Ms. Hammer told the committee the with regard to the selection of furniture for both the old and new spaces, every effort is made to purchase good, lasting quality pieces but that the furniture gets so much use that it simply can't last as long as everyone would like it to. Many older pieces, which appear to be much sturdier than today's construction, are cost preclusive in today's purchasing.

### **Article level metrics and altmetrics: how to educate faculty – handouts**

Mr. Ulmschneider referred the committee to the handouts that outline some of the issues involved in assessing the value of a published work. The handouts describe how an article can be assessed for its visibility and impact, and provide a primer on article level metrics accompanied by an article that summarizes some of the criticisms leveled against the use of article level metrics.

Mr. Ulmschneider underscored that it is important to break the link between the reputation of a journal and value of an article that appears in a journal. For example, it is not necessarily true that an article in a prestigious journal has greater impact or value than an article in an less esteemed journal. He noted that it might be possible for VCU Libraries to purchase article level metric software to assist faculty in assessing the total impact of their scholarly output.

Copies of the handouts will be available on the VLAC webpage.

### **Update on building progress**

Ms. Hammer reported that the renovation of the Special Collections suite is almost done. Because of this, SCA will be closed from 12/8/14 through the end of the winter break to allow for moving and relocation of staff and materials.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> thru 4<sup>th</sup> floors in the older building will get new restrooms in addition to the existing ones and that construction of these restrooms has been moved up to begin during the winter break. This means that the 4<sup>th</sup> floor conference room will be closed and removed, the staff in Room 230 will be relocated and the John Mapp Graduate Study Room will become a temporary reading room for Special Collections. Additionally, the 1<sup>st</sup> floor restrooms will be closed and reconstructed from early through spring break. Access to the Cabell Room will periodically be unavailable but the room will not be closed permanently during the construction process.

**Demo: Innovative Media** –online demonstration

Mr. Johnson, Head of Innovative Media, gave a brief overview of the resources available in the Innovative Media department, as well as the plans for the relocation and expansion of the department into the new building. He pointed out the libraries are often at the forefront of the use of new technology and the department is available to all students in all works of study and research to enable them to create new ways of demonstrating and displaying their research and projects and assignments. Innovative Media resources are available to all students and faculty, and the staff is ready and eager to assist the VCU community in using the equipment available.

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 pm.