

**Virginia Commonwealth University  
VCU Libraries Advisory Committee**

**4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room, James Branch Cabell Library  
September 27, 2013**

**Minutes**

**Attending**

Meredith Baines, Lisa Brown, Matt Browning, Corey Davis, Jose Dula, Les Harrison, Kathy Kreutzer, Gerald Miller, Whitney Newcomb, Peter Nguyen, Lisa Phipps, Faye Prichard (chair), Jeanne Schlesinger, Carolyn Song, Carolyn White

**Absent with notice**

David Burton

**Absent**

Neha Sakhawalker

Staff: Dennis Clark, John Duke, John Ulmschneider, Pam Fraga (recording secretary)

Guest: Steve Barkley, VCU Libraries

Ms. Prichard welcomed everyone back from the summer break and extended a special welcome to the new members. Because there were several new representatives on the Committee, she asked members to introduce themselves and identify the department or school they represented.

**Business**

**Review and approval of agenda**

The agenda was approved as presented.

**Review and approval of minutes from April 2013**

The minutes were approved as presented.

**Election of Chair, 2013-2015 (two year term)**

Mr. Ulmschneider heartily thanked Ms. Prichard for her service and asked for a round of applause for her work chairing the VLAC Committee for the past two years. He reported that Dr. Corey Davis had agreed to chair the Committee for the next two years, barring volunteers or nominations from the floor. Seeing none, the Committee voted by unanimous acclamation to welcome Dr. Davis as the new chair. Dr. Davis then assumed leadership for the rest of the meeting.

**Library hours for academic year 2013-14 – handouts**

Mr. Ulmschneider reminded the Committee that they were given preliminary hours for both facilities in April. However, what is being offered now are the final proposed hours.

Mr. Barkley reviewed the handout showing the hours for Tompkins-McCaw Library. He noted that based on the experience with the extended hours pilot in spring 2013, it has been decided to keep the library open longer each day all year around, but not with the full extended hours of the pilot. He also noted that on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend, the building will be open on Sunday of that weekend.

Mr. Clark reviewed the hours for Cabell Library. He reported that 24-hour service continues this academic year. Recognizing that students often use holiday periods to complete assignments, Cabell Library this year will remain open during most holidays even if the University is closed or not in session.

### **Collections discards and calibration 2013-14 – handout**

Mr. Ulmschneider explained that the construction of the new building will reduce overall space for collections even as it expands space for students. While the VCU Libraries routinely discards duplications and damaged volumes, the construction project makes it necessary to become more aggressive in the reducing the size of the physical collection.

The handout explained what and why items have been identified for removal. Both Mr. Ulmschneider and Mr. Duke noted the rigorous criteria for identifying items, and the careful review of candidate items for removal. The VCU Libraries plans to remove about 100,000 items, along with increasing the storage in 500 Academic Centre to hold additional less-used materials. Removed items will be offered to other libraries, sold at the annual book sale, or recycled. Dr. Miller asked that items related to or from the Department of Defense or the military or Army Corp of Engineers be transferred to the School of Engineering.

Mr. Duke noted that with the current acquisition rate for print materials, the VCU Libraries will replace the 100,000 removed items in less than 5 years. That means the removal project is merely a temporary reprieve. The university and the libraries still need a more permanent solution for storing print materials that have intrinsic value but low use.

In discussion, the Committee agreed with the criteria being used to make selections for removal. Mr. Ulmschneider noted that online call number browsing was now available, responding to Committee members' previous request for functionality that could at least partially replace the browsing of physical items in the stacks as stack materials are moved out. He also said that off-site storage at 500 Academic Centre is not permanent; the university plans to build on that space eventually. The VCU Libraries is working with the Library of Virginia and others in the region to create a shared off-site storage facility that could house physical materials from several institutions at less cost than if each institution developed storage independently.

### **Reports and Discussion**

#### **Elsevier contract negotiations and future of Elsevier contract**

##### **Setting the stage for 2013-14: overview of budget and year to come – PowerPoint presentation**

The Committee chair agreed to Mr. Ulmschneider's request to combine the next two items on the agenda, since they were both going to be addressed in his presentation.

Mr. Ulmschneider reviewed the organizational changes to VCU Libraries over the past year, both changes in assignment and job title, as well as the addition of several new positions and functions. He then described the VCU Libraries' 2014-15 budget request submitted to the University Budget Advisory Committee (UBAC) in September. The budget has been developed to achieve the *Quest* goal of qualifying as an Association of Research Libraries (ARL) library, which involves both quantitative and qualitative measures. For the benefit of the new members of the Committee, he reviewed briefly the benchmark measures for ARL membership, as well as the benefits to the VCU community result from having an ARL-quality library system. He reviewed the actions VCU Libraries has taken thus far toward achieving ARL status.

Mr. Ulmschneider reported that the use of the VCU Libraries facilities and resources is an excellent indicator of the value of VCU's investment in its library system. Individual visits to Cabell Library alone exceeded 2 million in academic year 2012-13 – more than the Library of Congress. It's certainly the busiest library in the state of Virginia, but since it provides the least amount of space per student of any university library in Virginia, it looks and feels very crowded, even overcrowded, for much of the year. The use between 2:00 am and 7:00 am is in the hundreds every night, with over 10,000 visits alone during that time period in April 2013.

Mr. Ulmschneider described the budget and its distribution between personnel and collections. A healthy balance for the VCU Libraries would be about 50/50; right now it's 54% collections and 49% personnel. With the increase in both physical space and collection size and use, and demand for more instruction and faculty assistance, a stronger personnel complement will certainly be needed. Nonetheless, the new budget request allocates 75% of funds to collections and 25% to personnel, which addresses to some extent the imbalance in a way appropriate for VCU's environment.

Mr. Ulmschneider also reviewed negotiations with Elsevier for a renewal of the Virginia consortium contract for Elsevier journals after the current contract expires at the end of December 2013. The negotiations have resulted in a new, acceptably higher price and an accepted rate of yearly increases for the consortium as part of a new 3-year contract. In addition, the allocation of costs for each university participating in the deal has been changed by the consortium members to correct long-standing inequities in the distribution that resulted from the legacy baseline costs used over the past decade. As a consequence of both the new contract and the revised distribution of costs, VCU will see a significant increase in its costs for the Elsevier package. The costs for the first year of the contract will occur in the current fiscal year, and will require about half of the one-time unavoidable cost funds provided by the university for 2013-14. (The budget request for 2014-15 includes a request to make these funds part of the permanent budget.)

As part of the budget presentation, Mr. Ulmschneider described the proposal for a Student Library Fee that has been included with the 2014-15 budget proposal. At this point, the Student Library Fee proposal is merely a suggestion from the VCU Libraries to the university as one possible way in which to fund the library system. Funds from the fee will go exclusively to library services for students, operation of the new library building, and (during the first year only) start-up costs for the new library. The university will continue to fund collections, unavoidable cost increases, and faculty and research services.

Mr. Ulmschneider briefly reviewed the new exterior designs and floorplans and announced that the state has issued bonds for the new building, the final step in funding for construction.

**Friends of the Libraries events - promotional handouts**

- Richmond Independent Press: September 4
- The Struggle for Equality, Farmville, 1963: September 10
- Comic Arts Lecture by James Sturm: September 16
- Levis Poetry Prize Reading, Michael McGriff: September 25
- FOL Book Sale: October 21-25
- “Migrating Archives”, E. G. Crichton, GLBT Historical Society of San Francisco: October 21
- Grace Robbing, Goblins and Ghouls: Anatomical Education in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Jodi Koste: October 30

Mr. Ulmschneider encouraged the Committee to review the promotional handouts in the packet folder and to attend the various events.

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 pm.