VCU Libraries Advisory Committee, September 22, 2017
Main Conference Room
Tompkins-McCaw Library
2:00–3:00 p.m.

Minutes

Attendance
Lorraine Anderson, Meredith Baines, Matt Bogenschutz, Lelia Brinegar, Corey Davis, MaryBeth DeMarco, Nicole Ekanem, Hassen Hafiz, Tom Nelson, Amy Pakyz, Faye Prichard, Valerie Robnolt, Richard Huff for Nancy Stutts, Jayaraman Vijayakumar, Kenneth Warren

Absent with notice
Frank Gulla, Les Harrison, Cheng Ly

Absent
Sarah Mizar

Staff: Dennis Clark, John Duke, Jimmy Ghaphery, Teresa Knott, John Ulmschneider, Pam Fraga (recording secretary)

Business

Welcome and introductions
Mr. Ulmschneider welcomed the members to this year's VLAC committee and thanked them for their service and support. Committee members introduced themselves.

Review and approval of agenda
With the addition of the option to tour newly renovated areas of Tompkins-McCaw Library following the meeting, hosted by Teresa Knott, the agenda was approved.

Election of chair for 2017-2019
Mr. Ulmschneider announced that Dr. Meredith Baines had agreed to serve as chair for the next term (2 years). She was approved by a unanimous vote of affirmation. She then chaired the rest of the meeting.

Review and approval of minutes from April 2017
The minutes were approved as presented.

Status of initiative for membership in Association of Research Libraries - handouts
Mr. Ulmschneider summarized evaluation process used by ARL and briefly described their site visit this past June. The handouts explained the timeline for the full process. He announced that based on the submission of data and site visit, the ARL membership committee and the ARL Board had recommended Virginia Commonwealth University for membership. The recommendation next goes to a vote of the full membership at ARL's October 2017 meeting.

The second handout showed the ranking within ARL of current members, and VCU's ranking should the membership approve the recommendation of the Board. While VCU has a ranking similar to some of its Quest peers, it is not what we hope it to be going forward. In discussing the merits of ARL membership, Mr. Ulmschneider explained that membership gives VCU and VCU Libraries the ability to participate in and contribute to national policy development and research related to the evolution of research libraries. For VCU, membership is a clear statement about the kind of institution VCU has become: a flagship-

stature research institution in its state. Membership also fulfills one of the original Quest for Distinction strategic plan goals.

Reports and Discussion

VCU Libraries budget in the new university budget model – handouts
Mr. Ulmschneider explained that the new budget model for VCU is currently in the last stages of development, and that its proposed methodology will be implemented parallel to the current model for academic year 2017-18 to evaluate possible impacts on the university. The new model will become the operational budget plan for academic year 2018-19.

While responsibility centered management (RCM) models are widely deployed in academe, adopting it for each institution requires much fine-tuning. For instance, right now it appears that the RCM model at VCU does not easily take into account non-resident students. Like all RCM models in higher education, it assumes revenue and non-revenue generating units. In general, the schools and the College are revenue-generating units; most other units, including the VCU Libraries, are non-revenue generating units. The university is working to assure that all non-revenue units will be held harmless for the first couple of years of the new model, but it is not completely understood yet what that means in practical application.

A major challenge for the VCU Libraries going into the new model is an insufficient number of librarians for the community it serves, as illustrated by a handout distributed by Mr. Ulmschneider. In discussion on this topic, the following points were raised:

- Although the enrollment at VCU has held steady in recent years, the use of Cabell Library has been growing dramatically, so that overall, the number of visits per student has increased. There has been no growth in space or librarians to handle that increase.
- VCU Libraries faculty meet with other faculty across campus, mostly in the other faculty classrooms/offices.
- VCU Libraries does not track computer use by visitors. It does assess the use of computers by observation and by regular surveys.
- The undergraduate student representative praised the quality of consultations with staff and librarians at VCU, and said he learns a new skill set every time he interacts with VCU Libraries staff.
- Should not discount FaceBook use on library computers, as this may well be academically related and not just social media.

Development of new health sciences library on the MCV Campus
Ms. Knott told the Committee that the university has held several open forums to inform the research master plan and the strategic plan about physical facilities requirements for the MCV campus. She explained that the emerging outlines of these plans appear to have profound implications for Tompkins-McCaw Library for the Health Sciences. She reported that the research master plan is investigating the potential for two new buildings called “research hubs”, one on each campus, and in that scenario, TML would add research hub responsibilities as part of a move to a new library where McGuire Hall currently sits. In a separate initiative, VCU Health is investigating how to create two inpatient towers near the D deck, possibly on the same land currently occupied by TML. The timeline for that construction may require a temporary relocation for TML before the university’s plans for a permanent relocation can be implemented.

The relocation of TML in either plan requires that the university store much of its existing collections in a separate facility. Consequently, the ongoing effort to develop and build a new off-site storage facility for library materials at VCU has been accelerated.

While very inconvenient in the short run, there are 3 advantages to any of these scenarios:

- VCU will have better library space on the MCV Campus – much of TML is over 40 years old, and the original building is almost 85 years old.
- VCU Libraries will have a clear path forward and know where TML will be located both in the short term and the long term
- Students have often made it clear that they need a better facility than the current TML building, something comparable to the new space at JBC on the Monroe Park Campus.

The committee discussed what it considered essential requirements for a new health science library. Some of the points made were:

- Use of the health science library collections is primarily online; students and faculty come to the physical library for its space assets, not its collection. Faculty come to the building infrequently.
- Students are more collaborative in their use and use different resources and library offerings, such as The Workshop in Cabell Library – students have asked for space, equipment, and assistance like The Workshop for the MCV Campus.
- Library spaces should accommodate all disciplines, arts to sciences.
- Library spaces should have abundant light – a significant drawback of TML is that windows exist only on one side, so much of the building has no daylight.
- Much of the TML collection could go into off-site storage, which might improve its security.
- Space sharing in a new library building with other departments with similar missions make sense.
- Few new health science libraries being built, especially health sciences libraries at research universities. A new building on the MCV Campus presents a unique opportunity to explore what a contemporary health sciences library at a major research university could look like and how it could advance the success of students and faculty.
- TML has the 5th largest medical library print collection nationally.
- Having the collection available for retrieval in off-site storage is not the same thing as having the actual items on the shelves in terms of immediate access.

Accelerating off-site initiative: VLAC perspectives – handout

Mr. Ulmschneider noted that the previous conversation leads directly to this topic: an off-site storage at some point is inevitable if the university wishes to relocate its health sciences library. Current storage locations are very nearly full, with a combined 560,000 items in 500 Academic Center and the basement of Cabell Library. Retrieval from these facilities to satisfy user requests totaled about 3,300 in 2016-17, a very small fraction of the total items stored. The university has several motivations to create a new off-site storage facility.

- Relocating the health sciences library will require storing its collection, and current spaces cannot accommodate that need
- If the university wishes to build on the current location of 500 Academic Center, it will need to relocate the printed materials there
- The only possible interim solution to overcrowding in Cabell Library is to relocate print materials from there to an off-site storage facility, and convert the freed-up space in Cabell to student use.

Mr. Ulmschneider informed the Committee that VCU Libraries has joined with the Library of Virginia in a partnership to create a new off-site storage facility. The Library of Virginia has a growing need for additional storage space for both library materials and state records, so it makes sense to develop this initiative jointly to take advantage of economies of scale. The partnership has contracted with a consulting

group to planning for a new off-site storage facility. The new space will be located in the region, but could be anywhere between 5 and 45 miles of VCU, close enough to allow retrieval times of less than 24 hours, but far enough away to achieve the lowest possible real estate and construction costs. In the ensuing discussion, the following points were raised:

- What collections are available in digital form affects what can most easily and quickly be moved.
- The collections of the VCU Libraries will pass 3 million volumes this academic year, mostly through the addition of digital monographs.
- VCU Libraries is a research library – it keeps things in perpetuity for future generations of scholars. Print publication remains critical for arts and humanities, but far less so in many science, medicine, business, and other disciplines. Many older print collections in these disciplines can be stored off-site with negligible impact on scholarly work.
- Most undergraduates do not use physical materials, including books, as much as they do digital. The VLAC SGA representative pointed out that he has done the bulk of his work online with very few visits to library to retrieve hard copies.
- One VLAC member said the he had allowed a week for an item to be retrieved and it came the next day to his office.
- It is imperative that VCU Libraries respond to the specific needs of different disciplines for print and digital resources – one size does not fit all.
- Some prefer to peruse the stacks and find things "serendipitously" – this is not as easy to do online and some users believe that much good scholarship potential will be lost if this experience is no longer available.
- It can be difficult to determine what should be left on the shelves and what to put into storage, and this will need to be across the library collections at both libraries. Frequency of use will one of the determining factors, but the nature of a little-used work may compel its staying on the shelf.
- Having student study space is wonderful, but some members felt that these buildings are libraries, after all, and space for collections should remain a priority.

Mr. Ulmschneider thanked the Committee for the insightful and vigorous conversation and feedback. These perspectives will definitely be considered in the upcoming months of evaluation and change for both libraries.

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 PM