

VCU Libraries Advisory Committee
4th Floor Conference Room, James Branch Cabell Library
November 16, 2012

Minutes

Attending

Kathy Kreutzer, Victoria Menzies, Niyati Patel, Faye Prichard (chair), Jeanne Schlesinger, Robert Sexton, Carolyn White

Absent with notice

Meredith Baines, Corey Davis, Tehra James, Whitney Newcomb

Absent

Jose Dula, Les Harrison, Lea Marshall, Peter Nguyen, Lisa Phipps

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

Guest: Kristina Keogh, VCU Libraries

Business

Review and approval of agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

Review and approval of minutes from October 2012

The minutes were approved as presented.

New library building: current status and next steps – online PowerPoint

Mr. Clark presented a brief PowerPoint showing the current floorplans as envisioned to support the various programmatic needs. He stressed that these are not the final floorplans but an update on the ones shared with the Committee at the previous meeting. As the presentation went along, there were several points of discussion:

- Consideration is being given to the need for more student work space and the basement may yet be converted to that purpose and the current book storage may be moved off-site.
- Concern was expressed about below-grade vulnerability, especially following on the heels of the known damage done by Hurricane Sandy to other libraries in the storm's path, specifically to their basement storage areas.
- Staff need to know if there are any difficulties in retrieving materials from off-site storage – this may be a training issue for the Libraries.
- Faculty want to be notified about materials being moved to off-site storage. Mr. Duke reminded the Committee that they had reviewed and approved the off-site storage policy, which is published on the VCU Libraries' web page.

- The timeline showed that the kick-off for construction is targeted for March 2014 with completion in August of 2015. The timeline depends on public bond funding, which will be decided by the General Assembly in the upcoming session in January and February 2013.

Reports and Discussion

Changeover to new enterprise-wide library management system

Mr. Duke reported that the new management system, Alma, went live on October 24th, and thus far has gone pretty much as expected. There have been a few rocky places but the implementation team is working very closely with the Alma team and is very pleased with the responsiveness of the Alma staff; they have implemented fixes as needed very quickly. He did ask that if anyone has trouble with the search tool or the catalog features, to please let VCU Libraries' staff know right away. He also said that as the 3rd university to implement Alma, there is a lot of press that goes with this and VCU is trying to take advantage of this to both promote the University and to enhance its status as a potential ARL institution.

Web redesign initiative

Mr. Duke reported that VCU Libraries has launched an effort to do a complete redesign of the Libraries web page. He said that there's always some "tweaking" going on behind the scenes but every couple of years it's beneficial to just redo the whole thing. There are 3 goals to be incorporated into this latest effort:

- Increased mobility awareness
- Increased interactivity and use of social media
- Reduced heft and size for the whole site

Mr. Duke said that some of the redesign plans will be brought to the Committee for their feedback. In discussion it was strongly urged that the main VCU webpage return to practice of having the Library web page much more prominently positioned, especially since this is a research university. While Mr. Duke agreed that this would be most advantageous for users, he pointed out that the main University controls what it places where on its web page and the Libraries have very little say in the matter.

Brief summary of the status of renovations at TML and JBC

Ms. Knott informed the Committee that the last of the furniture has been delivered and the staff is very pleased with the resulting look and functionality. Currently the front steps are scheduled to be renovated in December – but they were scheduled for March so there are no promises that this will be done before next semester. Part of the problem is that all the materials have to be on site before they can begin the renovation and not all the materials have been available.

The exterior of TML is undergoing a cleaning of the bricks and repainting of the window frames and sashes, as well.

Mr. Clark reported that the renovations on the 4th floor of Cabell are nearing completion. The new furniture is in place and the new wall closing off the elevator area from the general seating and stacks

(creating a quiet space beyond the wall) is being constructed right now. Additionally, more power outlets have been activated for student use.

Friends of the Libraries events

- Visit by author Tom Robbins and VIP reception
- VCU Cabell First Novelist Award
- VCU Friends of the Library Book Sale

Mr. Clark reviewed these items, all of which have already taken place, briefly and told the Committee that there will be a new slate of events offered at the next meeting.

Demo: On-line chat consultation service – online demonstration

Mr. Clark began the report by saying that this service was initially offered several weeks ago and has become a very popular service.

Ms. Keogh told the Committee that the new service is being promoted actively with posters and notices on the web page. She then showed how to access the Chat feature through several different portals and demonstrated a live chat with a staff person. She pointed out that whatever a patron would ask for by phone or email or in person, they can ask for via Chat. This is especially handy in that students or other users don't have to leave their workstations or rooms or desks to get help with research or trouble shooting or any library related issues they might be encountering. It is hoped that this Chat feature will be expanded to texting soon. This new feature garners about 20 to 25 questions a day and is always answered live; there are no "canned" responses.

Mr. Duke quickly told the Committee that there will an event on January 9th at which the president of ExLibris (developer of Alma) will be on campus to talk about the future of technology in research and the implications for cloud computing. This will be an open to the public event and the Committee is very welcome to attend. There will be more about this event published soon.

Ms. Prichard thanked the Committee for their attendance on the Friday before Thanksgiving and wished everyone a happy holiday. She noted that the next meeting will be January 18th at TML.

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 pm.