Virginia Commonwealth University
VCU Libraries Advisory Committee

Main Conference Room, Tompkins-McCaw Library
January 23, 2015

Minutes

Attending
Meredith Baines, David Burton, Corey Davis (chair), Jose Dula, Les Harrison, Susan Johnson, Whitney Newcomb, Neha Sakhawalkar, AJ Shriar, Jeremy Stultz, Kenneth Warren

Absent with notice
Peter Nguyen, Faye Prichard, Mike Ryan, Carolyn White, Hu Yang

Absent
Vincent Ryan

Guests:
Robert Tombes, College of Humanities and Sciences
Jimmy Ghaphery, VCU Libraries

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

Business

Review and approval of agenda
The agenda was approved as presented.

Review and approval of minutes from November 2014
The minutes were approved as presented.

VLAC meeting schedule for spring 2015
Mr. Ulmschneider reminded the Committee that at the previous meeting it was decided to change the meeting schedule to two meetings per semester. After some discussion regarding the merits of March vs. April, it was decided by unanimous vote to hold the next meeting on the already scheduled date of March 20th. Because of construction at Cabell Library, the meeting will take place at TML.

Populating the VCU Scholars Compass repository – handout
Dr. Davis reported that when he checked holdings in Scholars Compass, there were only a few from Allied Health and no one seemed know how they got there. He and his colleagues found it unsettling to discover works there that were not known to be published, and because of the very few publications from Allied Health in Scholars Compass, it looked like Allied Health faculty were not publishing much. He also expressed concern about what other types of materials were being incorporated into Scholars Compass, and how useful/valuable or detrimental it might be to publish in Open Access forums.

After being introduced by Mr. Ulmschneider, Mr. Ghaphery referenced the handout, a synopsis of activity in Scholars Compass since its inception late last year. He highlighted four main points:

- Scholars Compass is a suite of services, not just a publishing tool. It is designed to host articles, presentations, vetted student work, and peer reviewed journals, and is meant to be a comprehensive university repository
- Scholars Compass has only been adding content for about 4 months
- Users are encouraged to be open to new publishing and research options
- Staff are working to enhance the partnership with the faculty

Mr. Ghaphery responded to Dr. Davis's concerns by explaining that Libraries' staff had identified publications by Allied Health faculty that appeared in open access journals, and had sent emails to the authors asking if they wanted to exclude ("opt out") their materials from Scholars Compass. Most did not respond and so their works were included as "previously published" works.

There was a great deal of discussion about the availability of previously published works through traditional venues, noting that most often if a work is published in a traditional manner, only the "author's manuscript" can reproduced in an open access venue, although this varies based on the agreement a faculty member signs for publication of a work. Mr. Ghaphery noted that when his staff solicited university faculty for author's manuscripts, the response was very modest, an indication of some of the challenges faced in populating the repository. He also explained that one of the advantages to Scholars Compass is that it does not have a "pay wall" for research access and works remain available in the Scholars Compass repository indefinitely.

In discussion, committee members raised concerns about the types of works included in Scholars Compass; were these works of a quality with which one would want one's own work associated? For example, it might be a matter of concern if Scholars Compass contained student works alongside peer review works, presenting them as equivalent. There also was concern that faculty were, in essence, being forced to publish in open access and therefore could not publish in traditional journals. Mr. Ghaphery and Mr. Ulmschneider pointed out that student works are vetted by faculty and by VCU Libraries before being included. This is particularly true of works other than theses and dissertations, which are traditionally retained in perpetuity by the university. Holding these works in the repository, even with public access to Scholars Compass, does not change ownership of the intellectual property rights that invest in the work.

Several Committee members expressed appreciation for this update and thought that having this information more widely disseminated would help reassure faculty as to the value and advantage of Scholars Compass. Mr. Ghaphery said his department would be very glad to come to faculty meetings or departmental meetings to help educate others about this feature. It was noted that in the recent Ithaka Faculty Study, most faculty who responded said they wish to have an institutional repository, so there is likely a strong market for Scholars Compass at VCU.

Reports and Discussion

Staffing changes within the VCU Libraries: update
It was decided to table this discussion in favor of the time needed for both the previous and the next topic.

In-depth review of results from the 2014 Ithaka Local Faculty Survey; focus on exploring the implications of the different needs of STEMH and non-STEMH faculty – handout
Mr. Ulmschneider reported that an in-depth review of the recent Ithaka Survey identified discrepancies in responses between STEMH and non-STEMH significant enough to raise concern. He said that understanding these differences would help in future staffing and collection decisions, e.g., what areas would need and welcome support and what areas function well as they are currently supported.

The first side of the handout focused on the questions of engaged support needed from the libraries and whether or not libraries should have an active role in data management. On both of these points, the non-STEMH were much more affirmative while the STEMH were more hesitant about the ideas. In discussion, several points were made, including:

- HIPAA concerns cause STEMH depts to be more reluctant to reach out or be involved in data management outside the host department; the concern is that the wider the pool of those who have access to the data, the more likely identities can be discovered.
- Maintenance of the independence of the lab investigators is critical.
- In humanities, works often reference other works; in STEMH work, the material is usually unique.
- Collaborative nature of humanities work makes involving the Libraries much more reasonable; STEMH work is collaborative usually only with regard to funding.
- In STEMH work, the data set has to be available for verification of results; this is as critical as the results themselves.

On the second side, the questions centered around the perceived level student performance by the two kinds of faculty. Both seemed to reflect a low opinion of the students' academic and research expertise.

Non-STEMH faculty seemed to place a slightly higher value on library teaching and information literacy than did STEMH faculty. However, in discussion it became apparent that several schools in the STEMH population, especially Nursing, highly value the teaching and information literacy offered by the Libraries and felt that introducing their students to the range of resources available through the Libraries early in their course work paid off immensely going forward. Others in the room voiced appreciation for this perspective, noting that they simply had not taken advantage of these services and could see how useful it would be for their students as well. Interestingly, semantics may be partly to blame: what is "evidence based practice" to one is "information literacy" to the other.

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 pm.

The next meeting will be March 20, 2015, at 2:00 in the TML conference room.