

**Virginia Commonwealth University
VCU Libraries Advisory Committee**

**Main Conference Room, Tompkins-McCaw Library
October 19, 2012**

Minutes

Attending

Meredith Baines, Corey Davis, Jose Dula, Tehra James, Kathy Kreutzer, Victoria Menzies, Whitney Newcomb, Peter Nguyen, Faye Prichard (chair), Robert Sexton

Absent with notice

Les Harrison, Lea Marshall, Niyati Patel, Lisa Phipps, Jeanne Schlesinger, Carolyn White

Guest: Sabine Pierre-Louis for Niyati Patel

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

Guest staff: Mike Rawls (VCU Libraries), Sue Robinson (VCU Libraries)

Business

Review of agenda and minutes

The agenda was approved as presented. Dr. Hughes, incorrectly marked as absent, has rotated off the Committee. With that revision, the minutes were approved.

Discussion: How to deal with smokers outside of Cabell Library?

Mr. Clark reported that smoking outside Cabell Library continues to be a problem affecting staff and patrons. Smoke wafts into the building through the main doors and the book-drop. With permission from the University, signs noting “No Smoking within 50 feet of the entrance” were posted in 2011. Security has attempted some “soft enforcement” but cannot do much more. Culture is slow to change and the problem persists, particularly in the evening hours. Mr. Clark asked for suggestions on how to deal with the issue. The Committee had these thoughts:

- Refer smokers to the nearby shelter outside of Hibbs.
- Post health alert messages that might dissuade smokers.
- Strengthen signage; current information is not very visible.
- Use social media to reinforce the message.
- In new signage, note hazards of second-hand smoke and the potential damage to books and archival materials.
- Don't be too intrusive with the language. The very successful use of specific language outside Harris Hall is a good example of what can work.
- Measure air quality in and near Cabell to underscore the serious nature of the problem.

Mr. Ulmschneider thanked the Committee for their input and said these ideas will be taken under advisement in further work on this issue.

Reports and Discussion

ClimateQUAL institutional climate survey results for VCU Libraries.

Mr. Rawls reported that VCU Libraries showed high rankings in the survey designed to measure institutional climate in library settings. The scores showed that the VCU Libraries has a positive climate for diversity and superior rankings to many other similar university libraries, with above average rankings on 21 out of 26 areas measures. The VCU Libraries had a 97 percent response rate and an 87 percent completion rate for the survey, so the findings can be considered valid.

Some areas of concern included lower scores for “distributive justice” and “organizational justice”, which include staff satisfaction with compensation, and the fact that women rated the institution lower on many points than do men. Mr. Ulmschneider pointed out that some of the organizational justice and distributive justice scores might arise from the lack of raises in 5 years. It’s very difficult to express reward for work well done without the option to increase salaries accordingly, although there are some other options that the VCU Libraries is beginning to implement. Additional analysis is being done and open sessions for discussion will be scheduled. The survey will be conducted every three years to assess the state of the libraries, to find areas for improvement, and to update and calibrate the diversity plan.

Upcoming phase-out of catalog

Mr. Duke briefed the committee about rollout of the new enterprise-wide library management software, Alma, from Ex Libris Inc. As one of the early adopters (the 3rd institution to go into production with this software, and the largest research library), VCU Libraries is on the vanguard of library technology development internationally in implementing cloud-based library systems. One key advantage of being an early adopter is that the VCU Libraries staff has played an oversized role in developing and enhancing the software. The software should bring greater efficiencies to many operations in the library system, including cataloging, acquisition of materials, funds management, lending of materials, and many other areas. A companion to the Alma system is the new search technology, Primo, which has been running successfully for months. It is a single-search box on the home pages of the libraries. The old electronic catalog is scheduled to retire Oct. 24 and will be replaced by the single search box technology.

In discussion, Committee members noted that not all of the EBSCO content was covered by the Primo single search technology. Staff will modify the help text that describes what is searched by the Primo to clarify what’s covered, although it was noted that some (though not all) of the EBSCO content can be found through Primo in other data repositories provided by the VCU Libraries. One Committee member noted that the new search technology was not as “mobile aware” as it should be in presenting results. Mr. Duke responded that modifications to improve mobile presentations of results were a high priority.

Update on new library

Noting that the building design is a work in progress, Mr. Clark shared sketches of the current concepts for interiors of the new library at Monroe Park. Some discussion followed about off-site storage of materials, a critical component of maximizing library space for on-site researchers. Some Committee members underscored the real helpfulness and utility of stacks browsing, and noted digital records don’t allow for this type of research and information discovery. Both Mr. Ulmschneider and Mr. Duke reassured the members that the new search technology does offer some form of browsing, and also noted that not all the books will be relocated to off-site storage. However, they acknowledged that libraries

could not fully replace the experience of browsing with digital substitutes, and that this remained an area for further work by libraries nationally.

It was noted that the fall 2012 improvements to Cabell's Fourth Floor - adding power outlets and installing new furniture - may be the last major improvements until construction begins in 2014.

Fall 2012 event announcements

Ms. Knott reported on the well-attended talk by patient safety expert John J. Nance on Oct. 18, which drew an audience of about 250. He spoke as part of the 10th anniversary of the Community Health Education Center (CHEC). Mr. Ulmschneider noted that author and VCU alumnus Tom Robbins, whose papers are housed in Special Collections and Archives, will be honored at a reception Oct. 19. The VCU Cabell First Novelist Award book talk will be Nov. 8.

Second floor renovations at Tompkins-McCaw Library

Ms. Knott gave attendees a tour of the new second-floor classroom and demonstrated the state-of-the-art capacities for teaching and collaboration the new space offers.

Meeting adjourned for the tour at 2:45 p.m.