

VCU Libraries Advisory Committee
January 18, 2013, 2 – 3pm
Conference Room, Tompkins-McCaw Library
Minutes

Attendees:

Corey Davis, Tehra James (accompanied by student), Kathy Kreuzer, Lea Marshall, Victoria Menzies, Peter Nguyen, Niyati Patel, Lisa Phipps, Faye Prichard (chair), Robert Sexton, Carolyn White, and a representative from the College substituting for Les Harrison.

Absent:

Meredith Baines, Dennis Clark, Jeanne Hammer, Whitney Newcomb, Jeanne Schlesinger

Staff:

John Duke, Gregory Kimbrell (recording secretary), Teresa Knott, John Ulmschneider

Guests: Ronke Lawal, Lynne Turman

Business

Review and approval of agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

Review and approval of minutes from November 2012

The minutes were approved as presented.

New library building: current status and next steps—PowerPoint

Mr. Ulmschneider presented a set of PowerPoint slides containing artist renderings of the façade of the new library building, as well as the additions and changes to the existing structure of Cabell Library. He stressed that the renderings were not set in stone, that alterations still could, and likely would, be made. The renderings were intended simply to give one an idea of the size and aesthetics of the finished construction. Mr. Ulmschneider then walked the group through a series of floor plans showing the new building and renovations to Cabell Library.

During the presentation, several points were highlighted or discussed:

- The size and aesthetics of the building: The desire was to create a building that would be both impressive and welcoming and that would also blend in with and complement its surroundings, including the elegant period architecture of the Fan District and the neighboring Cathedral of the Sacred Heart and the more contemporary buildings of the VCU campus. The general consensus was that Cabell Library in its current form could only be improved upon.
- The quality of light in the building: Large windows and other special features would allow for increased natural light inside Cabell Library. It might even be possible to have certain windows open during good weather. Concern was expressed that light might have a negative impact on the use of computers, e-readers, and other equipment with screens, because of the glare. Mr. Ulmschneider said that this was being taken into account by the designers. They were considering a special type of glass preparation that would diffuse the rays of the sun.
- The necessity of increasing off-site storage: Concern was expressed also about the diminishing number of physical books in Cabell Library. By moving books off site, it

was argued, the ability of a researcher to browse materials by call number was impaired, which meant that researchers were less likely to make fortuitous discoveries. Mr. Ulmschneider said that the creation of additional study space, the expansion of Special Collections and Archives, and other needs unfortunately left no alternative, but he added that work was being done to develop digital tools that would help to help recover at least some (though not all) of the physical browsing experience. Mr. Duke said that the ability to browse books online by call number would be a possibility in the not-too-distant future and that more and more books in the collection were electronic, meaning that the experience of browsing books physically was becoming more and more a thing of the past. He said that librarians had the responsibility of designing and reimagining online resources so that researchers were able to make use of collections as easily and productively.

Participation by university faculty, staff, and students in upcoming search for scholarly communications librarian and research data librarian

Mr. Ulmschneider announced that VCU libraries was preparing for two major job searches for positions that would have an impact across the university: 1) a scholarly-communications librarian, who would answer questions about copyright and open-access publishing, and 2) a research-data librarian, who would prepare data-management plans and assist with data curation. The search committees might use participation from outside the libraries. Mr. Ulmschneider requested the input of the group on how best to involve VLAC and others. He suggested that, at the very least, all VLAC members, and members of other library advisory committees, be invited to the open sessions. Ms. Menzies also suggested that lunch interviews with a variety of people could be very useful, as these often revealed much about candidates' qualities.

Ms. Prichard added that from her work on past searches, it was very clear to her that her input had been taken very seriously, which she appreciated. Mr. Ulmschneider thanked her for her help and said that feedback from outside VCU Libraries was essential to making good hires.

The question of student input was raised, and Mr. Ulmschneider suggested that students be invited to attend the candidate presentation and that presentations be scheduled at times when students might be able to attend.

Reports and Discussion

LibQUAL+ survey, spring 2013

VCU Libraries was preparing to do its fifth LibQUAL survey, beginning on March 26, 2013. Dr. Lawal gave a presentation in which she showed a timeline for the survey and then explained the changes and improvements that were being made. She said that the survey would not be publicized to the whole community, but only to select groups. Responses would be drawn from 30% of the undergraduate population, 30% of the graduate, 100% of residents and fellows, and 100% of faculty, a pool of 13,565 people in total. The lite version of the survey would be used, to make it simpler for all involved. Results would be presented in June or July.

Some discussion followed about the nature of the survey and the ambiguity of the questions. Mr. Ulmschneider emphasized that the survey measured the gaps between an individual's responses. After past surveys, VCU Libraries had looked especially at areas where there were large gaps between a respondent's perceived levels of service and his or her estimation of minimum required levels of service.

Overview of new initiatives

VCU Libraries had begun working with a consultant to determine how to reach its Quest for Distinction goals. New initiatives included:

- The creation of the two positions discussed earlier in the meeting
- The creation of a position for a university archivist
- The creation of an advanced media studio and the recruitment of designated staff, including a head of innovative media
- The redesign of the liaison program to be more responsive to faculty and staff needs

Mr. Ulmschneider emphasized that as more research materials were put on the Internet by the libraries, the libraries saw a corresponding need for improvements in their human resources and technology.

Friends of the Library events (upcoming)

Mr. Ulmschneider briefly mentioned the Black History Month Lecture coming up at the beginning of February, inviting all to attend. He also mentioned this year's Brown-Lyons Lecture. Dr. Jack Spiro would be talking about Jewish responses to the question of the meaning of life. Lastly, he highlighted the "Moving Up to the Cloud" event, about emerging library cloud technologies that had taken place the previous week. More than one hundred librarians from around the region had attended, and hundreds of viewers had watched the event live on the Internet through a video stream.

Demo: Research protocol searches

Ms. Lynne Turman, Head of Collections for TML, gave a brief demonstration of research-protocol searches, highlighting some new all-electronic resources that were easy for students and other researchers to access.

The meeting adjourned at 3:09 p.m.