



**VCU Libraries Advisory Committee, April 28, 2017
Boardroom #311
James Branch Cabell Library
2:00–3:00 p.m.**

Minutes

Attending

Lorraine Anderson, Matt Bogenschutz, Lelia Brinegar, Jose Dula (chair), Les Harrison, Nastassja Lewinski, Cheng Ly, Tom Nelson, Faye Prichard, Valerie Robnolt, Pam Taylor, Kenneth Warren

Absent with notice

Meredith Baines, Natalie Baker, Corey Davis, Fin Hatfield

Absent

MaryBeth DeMarco, Jeremy Stultz

Staff: Kathy Bradshaw, Dennis Clark, John Duke, Teresa Knott, John Ulmschneider, LaJuan Neal (recording secretary)

Review and approval of agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

Review and approval of minutes from January 2017

The minutes from the January meeting were approved as presented.

Association of Research Libraries site visit itinerary – handout

Mr. Ulmschneider reminded the Committee that VCU Libraries and the university are working with ARL in consideration for membership into the association. Mr. Ulmschneider informed the Committee that efforts have progressed to the final stages, which include a site visit scheduled for June 14-16, 2017. Following the visit, the ARL membership committee will make a recommendation regarding membership for VCU. Membership will ultimately be determined by a vote from the full ARL membership body, comprised of all member institutions.

Mr. Ulmschneider has been working on a draft itinerary for the site visit, which will include a meeting with the President of the university, a meeting with the Provost, and tours of both libraries. Plans are being made to arrange a one-hour long session to meet with members of VCU faculty on Thursday, June 15 (to be added to the itinerary). Mr. Ulmschneider is currently gathering faculty volunteers to participate and welcomed VLAC members to volunteer if interested. The intent is for VCU to tell ARL about the work in which VCU Libraries engages and how the VCU Libraries is received by the university community. Briefing materials will be provided to all of those involved. Dr. Robnolt informed she would check her schedule to determine if she can attend the faculty session. Dr. Anderson confirmed she will plan to attend the faculty session if the time does not conflict with her summer class.

HEETF and STF investment proposals for 2017-2018 – handout

On Mr. Ghaphery's behalf, Mr. Duke provided a summary of the HEETF and STF technology proposal for the upcoming 2017-2018 fiscal year. The proposal reflected a total of \$438,448 being requested by the Libraries. Mr. Duke informed the Committee that a formal proposal has not yet been solicited or submitted; however, they are on schedule to have the proposal finished this Spring.

Items are grouped into three investment categories: Collaboration and Learning Spaces; Digital Culture: Viewing, Transforming, Publishing; and Computer Tools. Mr. Duke explained that the largest portion of the money will be contributed toward the latter category, which will help fund the acquisition and replacement of public and staff computers, student loaner laptops and equipment in Innovative Media.

Mr. Ulmschneider invited the Committee to endorse the proposal if they so choose. A committee vote was initiated and the proposal was unanimously supported by the Committee.

Library hours 2017-2018 – handouts

Ms. Knott provided an overview of operating hours for Tompkins-McCaw Library for the upcoming academic year, which she said will continue to follow the same hours it has normally operated under for the past few years. Afterward, Mr. Clark provided an overview of operating hours for Cabell Library for the upcoming academic year. He explained that the change to opening the library an hour earlier on the weekends (9 a.m. instead of 10 a.m.), which began this year, proved successful. VCUL plans to carry this forward into the upcoming academic year. Additionally, a change to Cabell Library's winter and summer weekend hours will have the library roughly open between the hours of 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. As someone who teaches during intercession, Prichard noted how much she appreciated these changes.

In response to requests for longer hours, administrators are looking into the possibility of expanding hours to meet the needs of the VCU community. An analysis of operating costs and library traffic patterns are being taken into consideration. For comparison, Mr. Clark provided a list of other university library systems across the state and nation and showed how VCU Libraries ranks in terms of operating hours and gate count. He informed the Committee that many libraries with near 24-hour access (such as UVA) are designed in such a way that allows small sections of the library (rather than the entire building) to remain open for extended hours. Cabell Library's building is not designed in such a way to allow this. Mr. Clark also estimated that it would cost about an additional \$65,000/yr to operate and staff the library on a 24/7 basis. All in all, Mr. Clark noted that the most-voiced complaint revolves around students' inability to find available study spaces—a complaint that cannot be fixed with extended hours.

Interfaith meditation room in Cabell Library: overview and discussion – handout

VCU Libraries has been working to design and build an interfaith meditation room in Cabell Library to meet students requests for meditative and prayer spaces on campus. Mr. Ulmschneider recognized the sensitivities of the project and highlighted the challenges of designing the space to be used by many faith denominations while favoring no particular faith tradition. He also discussed the difficulties associated with preventing the space from being misused, or being taken over by any one faith. To ensure these issues do not arise, it will be imperative to establish a culture of respect and good stewardship that communicates the acceptable use of the space that can be understood and accepted by all, instead of relying on policies enforcement. Other libraries with similar spaces have been successful in creating a manageable space. An outside advisory board may be needed to provide oversight of the space.

A space on the third floor in Cabell Library adjacent to the public restrooms has been identified as the most feasible space. Mr. Ulmschneider displayed a conceptual design of the interfaith mediation and prayer space. The plans showed a mockup of a 44' x 22' space divided down the middle to create a *silent meditation space* and an *expressive meditation space*, furnished with plants, bookcases, comfortable

cushions, soft lighting and access to water for ablutions and foot-washing. VCU Libraries does not intend to use state funds to complete his project. Instead, private funds will finance the design and construction. Mr. Ulmschneider expressed his hope that the space will become an exemplary model for meditation spaces nationally.

Discussion about the project ensued and Mr. Ulmschneider answered questions from members of the Committee. It was stated that VCU Libraries is looking to raise \$100,000 for the project, which may be more than is actually needed. Mr. Ulmschneider planned to look into how the success of the space might be accurately measured. Ms. Pritchard noted her pride in the VCU Libraries' commitment to inclusion, and admired the Libraries' drive to provide safe and comfortable spaces for all members for the VCU community. However, she expressed concerns about creating new amenities in an already space-challenged library. She urged the Libraries to examine if this is the most appropriate organization on campus to provide this resource. Both Dr. Dula and Dr. Harrison expressed concerns over how to define "appropriate uses" in terms of worshipping practices, and highlighted the potential for conflict and controversy that could emerge from the space.

Dr. Anderson supported the project, hoping that it will create more balance and wellness within the mind-body-soul trifacta. She felt that, at present, the VCU community places great emphasis on the mind and body, and having a space dedicated to rejuvenation of the soul is missing.

Dr. Lewinski questioned why there was division between the rooms. Though unintentional, she was concerned that the room's design would create the perception of segregation within the space.

Mr. Ulmschneider acknowledged the concerns for bad faith actors, the perception of two separate spaces and the reality of the Libraries' space shortage. He stressed that VCU Libraries would be committed to building a culture that would address these issues and minimize the likelihood of negative unintended consequences.

Dr. Harrison stated his belief that VCU Libraries would benefit from evaluating the successes and failures of other similar spaces (through analyses and interviews with other universities).

The Workshop one year later: How students and faculty use its unique resources

Due to a lack of remaining time, Mr. Johnson agreed to save his presentation for the next committee meeting in the Fall.

The committee joined in a round of applause for Dr. Dula's excellent leadership as the committee chair.

The meeting adjourned at 2:59 p.m.