Richmond Academic Library Consortium
Board Meeting
Minutes (draft)
Friday, January 19, 2018, 10:00 am – noon
Randolph-Macon College, McGraw-Page Library

Present:
Kevin Butterfield (University of Richmond)
Irene Handy, (Richard Bland College)
Elsie S. Weatherington (Virginia State University)
Christopher Richardson (Union Presbyterian Seminary)
Lisa Payne (John Tyler CC)
Nancy Falciani-White (Randolph-Macon College)
Hong Wu (J. Sargeant Reynolds CC)

Old business

Participants discussed and brainstormed the following questions:

- What is the "why" of RALC?
- If RALC didn't exist, why might we create it?
- Why does RALC matter to you, or how could it matter?
- Why does your school need, want RALC to exist?
- How does RALC impact our institutions and users, contribute to their success?
- How might we demonstrate RALC's value to our institutions and users?
- How might we connect RALC to what our institutions and users are doing?
- What could RALC do for our schools, leadership-wise?
- What are the top 5 meta-issues for your library?

Notes from the discussion:

1. VIVA has done a lot, in recent years, to facilitate collaborative borrowing. RALC needs to think more about other forms of collaboration. We need to capitalize on the uniqueness of RALC, our geographic proximity and the diverse nature of its members. We need to seek innovative strategies without duplicating the efforts of other consortia, such as VIVA.
2. We should continue, however, to give priority to RALC member libraries during ILL transactions.
3. We need to broaden the concept of resource sharing in the changing information landscape. Expertise sharing and professional development are increasingly important. RALC libraries benefit from networking and connecting with each other, but RALC could
facilitate networking beyond our libraries, to include administrators, faculty, students and staff.

4. RALC should continue to seek opportunities for cost-saving, cost sharing, and resource optimization. Examples include co-sponsoring professional development activities or eliminating duplicate services where collaborative work is possible. VCU’s Social Welfare History Project, for example, has incorporated digitized items from UPSem’s archives and those of other schools in a way that is beneficial for all involved.

5. The RALC Scholarship has been a great program. Many RALC members have benefited from it. We need to continue to make an effort to encourage and support staff to seek MLS degrees.

6. RALC members could do a better job of communicating with each other and cross promoting library and institutional events. We appreciate VCU’s efforts to invite RALC members to participate in their events and could do more to encourage that type of sharing. A better website could help facilitate this.

7. A part of our challenge is to help library personnel and our diverse service communities to be aware of what’s available through RALC libraries - our collections, services, spaces and expertise. It could help to have a regularly-updated and more detailed RALC brochure handy at library staff/service desks to facilitate patron referral. We could also share that brochure with faculty members and administrators to show the full range of what RALC libraries offer. The survey mentioned below, to compile up-to-date information on RALC collections, spaces and people (expertise) was proposed with this in mind.

8. We need to mobilize library staff to engage with and contribute to the success of RALC. Right now, RALC is mostly the business of the Board of Directors. A survey could be sent to all library staff to seek their input on what RALC should be and how they might contribute.

9. We’d like to continue to consider the RALC Re-conceptualizing Task Force’s proposal of an annual "RALC Day" (for networking and professional development) and its proposal to consolidate RALC committees around new organizational emphases. An initial RALC day, for example, could be devoted to staff engagement around the question of the future of RALC.

10. We might consider the option of inviting other Richmond-area libraries to join RALC - museum libraries, law libraries, special, public and school libraries. If so, RALC could come to stand for "Richmond Area Library Consortium" and endeavor to serve a wider patron base. The types of collaboration and resource sharing that we are considering now could be relevant to a wider range of local libraries. See survey proposal below.

11. The RALC web site could be more dynamic, collaborative and easy to update. The RALC Board will reconsider the proposal from RALC's webmaster and the Web User Group.
New business

1. Hong will re-share the web site proposals sent earlier this year - with the directors, via email. Whether for a reconfigured organization or just for the process of transitioning to a reconfigured organization, we felt like a better web site (along the lines of what was proposed) would be helpful, so we didn't want to wait for this process to be over before starting that work. This could be a web site to bridge the old and the new.

2. Elsie and Nancy will prepare a web-based form whereby each of us or our designees might list notable collections, spaces, and people (expertise) at our libraries - for an initial or updated compilation. One of the potential functions that we considered for a reconfigured organization was that of raising awareness (among librarians, other library staff, students, faculty members, administrators, other community members) of the collections, spaces, and people (expertise) available at area libraries.

3. Hong and Irene will prepare a brief survey to gather feedback from our librarians and other library staff members about the questions under discussion (i.e. the future of RALC). We felt like it would be helpful to consider their thoughts but didn't want to send all of the questions on our list. It will be a more concise set of questions.

4. Kevin and Lisa (Payne) will prepare a very brief survey to send to other local library directors (e.g. at museum libraries, law libraries, special, public and school libraries) to gather their thoughts on the possibility of a reconfigured organization that involves (in some way) a wider range of local libraries. Kevin shared a short list of questions at the meeting that sounded appropriate for this purpose.

5. Christopher will begin the process of planning for our spring meeting. We discussed choosing an earlier date than last year, perhaps early April instead of late April. Potential locations included Virginia Union University, Virginia State University, and the Midlothian campus of JTCC (which has ample parking).

Announcements

Meeting adjourned at 11:45am.

Next meeting will be scheduled in early April, 2018.

Minutes submitted by Hong Wu and Christopher Richardson