Richmond Academic Library Consortium

Board Meeting, Nov. 22, 2011

James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University

In Attendance:

Joe Coalter (Union Presbyterian Seminary), Helen McKann (John Tyler Community College), Sandra Treadway (Library of Virginia), John Ulmschneider (Virginia Commonwealth University), Elsie Weatherington (Virginia State University), Ginger Young (Randolph-Macon College), Nell Chenault (Virginia Commonwealth University), Laurie Preston (Randolph-Macon College).

Call to Order:

John Ulmschneider, President, called the meeting to order. He announced that he had been asked by OCLC to serve on an advisory group that is supporting the OCLC CEO search committee. He asked if an agenda item could be added to solicit the group’s input. Everyone agreed to the revised agenda. A quorum of members was present.

John saluted Ginger Young for her three years of outstanding leadership as RALC President. He cited a long list of achievements during her term, including the revision of the Bylaws, the development of the reciprocal staff visit initiative, the second audit of RALC finances, awarding of scholarships and much more. On behalf of all RALC members, he thanked Ginger for her dedicated service.

Treasurer’s Report:

Paul Porterfield was unable to attend but had sent an abbreviated budget. RALC finances are on a solid footing. All RALC dues have been collected for this year with one exception, and that payment is expected soon.

Approval of minutes from April 12, 2011 meeting:

The Board approved the minutes as submitted. It was agreed to distribute and approve the minutes using email in the future. This more timely method will facilitate dissemination of information such as the election of new committee chairs.

Committee Reports:

Technical Services Committee:

Sara Marrin (Virginia Union University), Chair, could not be present but she submitted a report which John shared with the group. The fall meeting at Union Presbyterian Seminary focused on patron-driven acquisitions. A spring meeting is planned at Virginia Union University. The date will be announced.
Public Services Committee:

Laurie Preston (Randolph-Macon College), Chair, reported that there was no summer meeting. Plans are underway to present a program in January in cooperation with the Media Co-Op Committee.

Media Cooperative Committee:

Nell Chenault (Virginia Commonwealth University), Chair, reviewed continuing education opportunities related to media which included a meeting of the ALA Video Round Table in May at the University of Richmond. She announced the formation of a new statewide interest group centered on media issues. The Virginia Association of Academic Media Professionals or VAAMPS held summer and fall meetings and plans to hold its second annual meeting in spring 2012.

Nell’s term as chair is expiring soon and a new chair is needed to take over.

Nell distributed an update to the RALC annual statistics report. She noted increases in both total shuttle deliveries (20%) and book loans (21%), although media loans dropped by 5%.

The last statistic sparked a discussion about the future format of choice for media. John noted that VCU is currently reevaluating media and looking increasingly at streaming as the first option. Ginger raised the topic of how to handle media created in-house.

Old Business:

Web User Group:

Erin White (Virginia Commonwealth University) submitted a report summarizing the group’s activities. WUG has met three times since its inception in February 2011. The next meeting is tentatively planned for January at Randolph-Macon and new members are encouraged to attend. Details will be forthcoming.

RALC Retreat:

The group agreed to substitute a retreat for the April meeting when the budget for the upcoming year is approved. Several topics were suggested for the retreat agenda:

- Should RALC be expanded?
- Examination of the committee structure
- Off-site storage plan

Off-Site Storage:

The last proposed agenda item generated discussion. An earlier RALC initiative is on hold as several institutions have shorter horizons on solving overcrowding problems than a construction project would allow. Sandra Treadway pointed out that a cooperative construction project could save money at multiple institutions as space was freed up for more heavily used materials. This could strengthen the justification for the project.
The Board agreed to seek January and April dates for meetings with the retreat planned for the April slot.

**New Business:**

*Review of accomplishments and activities 2009-2011:*

John Ulmschneider expanded on his salute to Ginger Young’s leadership as President with an extensive list of achievements during her tenure. In addition to the actions and changes mentioned earlier, the list includes:

- Updated Inter-institutional Loan Agreement
- New RALC Web site
- Creation of RALC Web User Group
- New RALC pass
- First draft of cooperative off-site storage facility proposal
- Investigation of possibilities for collaborative disaster planning; workshop on disaster planning
- Strong, successful programming by Technical Services Committee and Public Services Committee
- Superb management and oversight of budget and dues requirements

*E-books and e-textbooks*

John Ulmschneider noted that a VIVA initiative to add e-books has resulted in a campaign to educate legislators and State officials about e-books and e-textbooks. Faculty are being encouraged to take the lead in promoting the use of e-books in the curriculum.

Elsie Weatherington described Virginia State’s entry into the e-textbook field. Dr. Mirta Martin, the Dean of the Business School at VSU, had become concerned about the prohibitive cost of textbooks. She first sought to raise funds to buy the hard copies of textbooks but it quickly became apparent that this philanthropic effort was going to be difficult to sustain. Faculty members identified Flat World Knowledge as an e-textbook publisher that allows professors to customize their textbooks and either offer them solely to their students or share them on the Flat World website. Costs currently are $24.95 to download the textbook or $20 to print a hard copy. (The latter price represents a $10 savings for VSU over the price quoted on the website.) Evaluation of the effectiveness and usability of the program is ongoing.

A wide-ranging discussion followed. Ginger Young noted that some Randolph-Macon students had expressed dissatisfaction with e-books, although Nell Chenault cited recent surveys and studies that indicated students were willing to use e-books. John Ulmschneider emphasized the importance of getting librarians out of the middle of the discussion about e-textbooks and shifting the leadership role to faculty who are directly involved in the situation. VIVA has suggested a statewide conference of faculty about the feasibility of moving to e-textbooks.
Search for OCLC CEO:

John Ulmschneider noted that OCLC has transitioned into a global company over the past decade, with more than half of its business now coming from outside the United States. There was discussion about the implications of this shift. It was observed that OCLC has been enriched by the addition of holdings from Asia and the Middle East. On the other hand, the move away from regional stateside networks has changed the nature of the organization, and some questioned if the level of service could be maintained with OCLC’s present staff.

Announcements:

Ginger Young announced that construction of the addition to the Randolph-Macon library, to be called the Werner Pavilion, will begin soon and extend through the academic year.

Helen McKann shared that renovation of the Chester campus library of John Tyler is on schedule, with completion set for late summer 2012.

John Ulmschneider made three announcements:

- VCU has approved a Strategic Plan that commits to improving the library’s ARL rank. This is tied to budget criteria.
- Shaka Smart, VCU’s basketball coach, is featured on the library’s latest READ publicity.
- The Monroe Park campus library has moved into the #1 position on the University’s capital projects list. Now all that’s needed is the money!

Elsie Weatherington reported that strategic planning is underway at Virginia State University and library staff are involved. The possibility of renovation of the existing library is being considered. Currently a multipurpose center and a new dorm are under construction.

Joe Coalter shared that ATS and SACS will be on the Union Presbyterian campus in March. The Seminary continues its move to patron-driven acquisitions.

Sandra Treadway noted that at the Library of Virginia there is an emphasis on encouraging leadership throughout the organization. The hiring freeze continues. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45.