Richmond Academic Library Consortium
Board Meeting
Minutes
February 20, 2015, 9:30am - noon
William Smith Morton Library, Union Presbyterian Seminary

Present:

Kevin Butterfield, University of Richmond
Joe Coalter, Union Presbyterian Seminary
Pam Foreman, Virginia Union University
Megan Hodge, Virginia Commonwealth University
Linda Luebke, John Tyler Community College
Sara Marrin, Virginia Union University
Michael Rawls, Virginia Commonwealth University
Sandy Treadway, Library of Virginia
John Ulmschneider, Virginia Commonwealth University
Ginger Young, Randolph-Macon College
Hong Wu, J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College

Agenda and minutes: The minutes were edited to correct the spelling of the name of one member. Agenda and minutes were then approved by acclamation. A quorum of RALC Board members was present.

Treasurer’s report

RALC treasurer Mike Rawls reported on the proposed 2015-16 budget. He has developed a preliminary budget that uses the 2014-15 courier service amount. The courier service contract still includes a gas surcharge, but given the price of gas in recent months, it may not be invoked or amount to a significant charge. The RALC scholarship fund normally is not budgeted, but it has been budgeted by Mike for the 2015-16 year. The report shows that RALC has a current account balance of $27,000 and will likely have a $20,000 end-year balance, if dues remain the same and expenses come in as projected.

Committee reports

• Technical Service committee: The committee met in October. Committee members have compiled a catalog of expertise that exists on the committee. The committee is scheduled to meet again in March, when it will take up the topic of training volunteers and part-time staff in technical services. The committee also will consider a new chair at that meeting.

• Public Services committee: The committee’s new chair, Megan Hodge, reviewed a couple of issues with the Board.

- Megan reported that the roster for the committee appears quite out of date. Does the Board know who is currently serving? Ginger noted that Megan can use the RALC
listserv to ask about current membership or ask for expression of interest in joining the public services committee.

- Megan is interested in doing a couple of programs for public services folks, and discussed some of the ideas for these.

- One Board member noted that he’d like to have institutions share how they orient students to their libraries and how they can assist students in research. Another Board member said that it’s difficult to even get students to participate in workshops that are offered. Other Board members reported that in many respects, students don’t do research anymore, since they have so much reserved reading and other requirements. Students simply aren’t learning enough about how to get new material to apply to an academic question or problem at hand.

- John asked each of the directors to ensure that we have representatives to the public services committee. The media coop committee has been merged into the public services committee, but we haven’t revisited the membership in follow-up to that. Each institution might wish to have a representative on the committee in light of the new scope of the committee.

- John suggested that the public services committee thoroughly reconsider the statistics formerly collected by the media coop committee. The RALC statistics can be very useful to members, but we don’t want to collect too many numbers or numbers for which we haven’t identified a good use.

- Hong noted that RALC committee reports and other information exists on a wiki that is attached to the RALC web page. Unfortunately, the service hosting this information, wikispot, will be phasing out its services shortly. This will eliminate the ability for committee chairs to update the RALC site themselves. One solution is to start using libguides for this purpose, with an account to each committee chairs. Another option is to migrate the current wiki content to the hosting services pbwiki, which is still available. Hong reported that she is investigating options for the libguides design for RALC. April 1 is the deadline.

- John said that regardless of the solution that Hong and her staff can devise, the entire RALC enterprise needs to consider that we’re not updating the RALC website as often as necessary. The reality of everyday work obligations means that RALC matters aren’t in the forefront of our minds for the most part, so we aren’t updating things as much as we need.

- Web User’s Group: The group has not met since fall. The Board briefly discussed the website in light of the previous discussion, and agreed that the user group might want to consider a new web design for RALC or otherwise assist Hong and her staff in upgrading the site.

Old business

- Bylaws revision: Changes to the bylaws will be considered in the April meeting.
• Review of courier service: We should review the new bid for the service at the April meeting.

• Searching RALC institutions: John explained that the RALC web page for OCLC Worldcat should be the default for this capability.

New business

• Future of RALC: John reflected on the current activity level of RALC and asked the Board members to consider its activity in comparison with similar consortia and cooperatives in the region, such as VICULA, MaLIA, the Virginia Tidewater Consortium libraries, and the like. Should RALC consider building partnerships with non-RALC groups and institutions, such as these other consortia, the VHS, or the VMFA? Perhaps RALC should have a committee focused on special collections and archives that includes RALC institutions and affiliations with non-RALC institutions. This might start as an ad-hoc group this year just to explore the concept.

The Board charged John to ask Wesley Chenault from VCU, Lynda Kachurek from U-Richmond, and a representative from the Library of Virginia to consider what such a special collections group might look like and what it might undertake. In addition, John asked the Board to think about a retreat to consider the future of RALC. John will send out a Doodle poll on a possible June retreat date.

• John will send out a Doodle poll to arrange for the April meeting.

• Scholarship exception: Currently, the RALC Scholarship for the Profession requires that an applicant be employed for 3 years before the scholarship is awarded. One member institution has an employee who is pursuing a degree but doesn’t meet the 3 year requirement. After discussion, the Board decided to grant the request for an exemption. The Board also decided that RALC should look at the VLA requirements for its scholarship, and consider whether to modify the RALC guidelines to allow exceptions or to make them consistent with VLA’s policy.

• Announcements and discussion regarding news from RALC institutions: Board members shared news from their institutions.

Meeting adjourned at 11:45am.

Minutes submitted 4-3-15 by John Ulmschneider