During the academic year, the faculty Library Committee performed its oversight role in several contexts:

1. Reviewing Budget Strategies

   In November 2010, Jim Rettig, University Librarian, presented first to the chair of the committee, and then to the committee as a whole, several plans for the FY2011 Library Materials Budget. These plans identified needed revisions to the Media Resource Center Budget. They advocated the licensing of ArtStor’s electronic Shared Shelf digital resource and a new, more functional Interlibrary Loan software system called ILLiad. They also proposed major and minor renovations to the Boatwright building needed to improve service for the university community (outlined separately below). Finally, they outlined the university library’s commitment to servicing the community with 4% increases in the library materials budget lines devoted to books, serials and electronic resources.

   Two issues of concern arose during these discussions. First, inflation in the library materials sector continues to outpace the national inflation rate, with books increasing by 5% a year, electronic resources by 6% and serials by 7%. Thus while quite favorable at a first glance, a 4% annual budget increase does not allow the university library to keep pace with market pressures.

   Second, most of the university library’s efforts to cut costs to offset its budget shortfall (through cancelling select journal subscriptions, converting others to exclusively online subscriptions, and by attempting to negotiate online licenses through the VIVA consortium) amount to a series of one-time savings. This means that the library is running out of cost-saving opportunities that are likely to yield significant internal funds for stop-gap use elsewhere.

   The faculty Library Committee is concerned over the long-term implications of library budgets that fall short of the real inflation rate for the library materials sector of the national economy. Shortfalls in this area force the library to delay or cancel the purchase of needed resources and materials, threatening the ability of the library to fully support key university priorities and the Richmond Promise’s commitment to “paths of traditional disciplinary excellence and paths of distinctive educational exploration” and “support for interdisciplinary teaching and scholarship.”

   A final budget for FY2012 has not yet been disseminated at the time of the writing of this report.

2. Library Renovation

   In the long term, major renovations to the library deserve priority in the university master plan in order to profoundly rethink the use of the Boatwright building’s floor space and reorganize the flow of campus life quite literally through it by means of the creation of a walk-through foyer or grand hallway connecting the Stern Quad (the Weinstein, Ryland and Jepson buildings) with the lake.

   In the interim, for FY2012, university librarian Rettig proposed a series of minor
internal renovations to realize several projects that promise considerable benefit and require only marginal financial outlays. Underused library storage areas were identified for conversion into more useful student study and meeting space. Office space in staff areas was mapped for repartitioning in order to make the most of limited floor space. Outdated and frankly unpleasant bathrooms (the source of frequent student complaints) were also slated for needed renovations.

It appears, however, that Facilities has decided to delay the rehabilitation of these bathrooms until the summer of 2012, suggesting that the other minor projects noted above risk being sidetracked until the summer of 2013—developments that are likely to disappoint library patrons during the near and mid-term.

At present, the library is a key hub of student intellectual activity on campus, both on an individual level and within the context of group study. There is a direct correlation between further expansion of library study space and continued undergraduate intellectual growth. The university library lacks funds of its own to invest in even the least expensive of these facilities’ projects and relies on the UR administration for financing in order to continue to serve its core mission to the campus community.

3. User Surveys

Lucretia McCulley, chair of the library’s Assessment Committee, reported to the Library Committee on results of several surveys the library has conducted over the past few years. The results of the surveys mounted on the library’s web site reveal a high degree of campus satisfaction with the library’s services. They also indicate broad-based student demand for more group study rooms, more public computers, and more quiet study areas. These results confirm the findings of other survey instruments used during the past few years and further quantify the degree to which the university library (and particularly the Boatwright building) functions as a central hub of student intellectual life on campus.

4. Outside Consultant

In October Dr. Joan Lippincott, associate executive director of the Coalition on Networked Information and a nationally recognized expert on the ways in which students interact with their libraries and evolving information technologies, visited campus to meet with library staff, students, faculty, and senior administrators to listen to the university community’s ideas about our library and aspirations for it in the future. Lippincott reported to Kathy Monday, vice-president for Information Services, that “Boatwright is currently a prime venue where students study and find a range of library, technology, and media services. The library can play an even more important role in the university, serving as a center for integrative learning, a meeting place for all of the university’s academic programs, and a strong link to the local community.” From the input she received she developed a vision for Boatwright as a catalyst to integrative learning: “In keeping with the Richmond Promise, the renovated and expanded Boatwright Library would offer its students ‘a learning environment unlike any other in

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1 Additional information on the library’s assessment program, plans, reports, etc. can be viewed at the library’s assessment website: [http://library.richmond.edu/about/library-assessment.html](http://library.richmond.edu/about/library-assessment.html)
higher education,’ offering students an extraordinary combination of traditional learning with opportunities to bring knowledge into the digital age. It would offer faculty new kinds of support and resources for scholarship, creating an exciting and stimulating intellectual environment.” Lippincott’s full report will soon be made public through Kathy Monday’s office.

5. Leadership Transition

The faculty Library Committee is saddened by the resignation of university librarian Retting to take a new position in the DC area at the United States Naval Academy. It considers the timely appointment of a new university librarian with experience managing holdings and resources of UR’s scale to be imperative. The committee will assist in any way it can in the appointment of the next university librarian.

6. Miscellaneous

As in the past two years, David Brandenberger convened the James W. Jackson Award committee at the request of Retting and recruited social scientist Jeffrey Hass (sociology) and Russian literature specialist Joseph Troncale (Modern Literatures and Cultures) to join himself and committee veteran Olivia Reinauer in order to judge the year’s submissions. Under the terms of the Jackson Award competition, faculty members nominate outstanding student research papers to be considered by the committee for an annual prize and recognition. More specifically, this award calls attention to a paper (or papers in the case of a tie) that “demonstrate[s] a depth and breadth of effective use of research materials in the social sciences and clear evidence of a thoughtful command of these resources.” In 2010-2011, the Jackson Award committee voted unanimously to award the prize to Marianne Williams (International Studies) for her paper “Moderates within the Confessing Church: Caught between Two Kingdoms,” a seminar paper written under Assistant Professor Stephen Long (Political Science) in his IS 400 course “Societies at War.”

Respectfully submitted,
David Brandenberger, Chair

Library Committee membership, 2010-2011:

David Brandenberger—A&S (3rd of 3 yrs., expiring 2011), chair
Bill Ross—A&S (3rd of 3 yrs., expiring 2011)
Kathy Zoghby—A&S (2nd of 3 yrs., expiring 2012)
Aurora Hermida-Ruiz—A&S (1st of 3 yrs, expiring 2013)
Thomas Arnold—Business (1st of 3 years, expiring 2013)
Katrina Minoza—Westhampton College Student Representative
Maurice Jones—Richmond College Student Representative
Tim Coggins—Law Library Director, ex officio
James Retting—University Librarian, ex officio