

Minutes University Library Committee

Date: March 15, 2005

Time: 3:00-4:00 p.m.

Location: Library Board Room

Chair: Bill Newton

Members Present: Douglas Berry, Joon Chung, Eileen Hitchingham, Warner Kohler, Edie Moussa, Ray Plaut, David Radcliffe, Wyatt Sasser

Guests: Heather Ball, Bruce Pencek

Agenda Items:

Library loan periods with a new system

There has been considerable discussion in the last several ULC meetings regarding the loan period for faculty and graduate students. When the present practice was introduced in 1997 it was understood that there would be a review after several years. The library is implementing a new library system, with basic features (public searching, circulation, cataloging) to be initiated in August 2005.

Background

At the January 15th meeting <http://www.lib.vt.edu/services/minutes/ulc15jan05.pdf> a delegation of visitors from various College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences departments attended the ULC session and requested that the loan period for faculty be extended to that in effect prior to 1997 (180 days, 3 renewals of like terms and then material is returned) before the current practice was initiated (90 days, one renewal of 90 days after which materials must be returned to Newman or a branch and can then be also checked out again). The visitors noted that library resources were necessary for their research, that their research often required extended interaction with texts rather than one-time reading, and that more extended borrowing periods were the practice at all of the other VT peer institutions they had surveyed (survey results noted in minutes of <http://www.lib.vt.edu/services/minutes/ulc15feb05.pdf>). The visitors suggested that keeping procedures more restrictive than those in place for other major research schools would be counterproductive to VT's goal to increase research across all disciplines of the university.

The ULC discussed the issue further at their February 15th meeting. The practices at other VT peers were considered. There was mixed response to possible options ranging from keeping it as it is, to making it a little longer, to making it considerably longer. The advantages suggested for keeping it as is were that more items would be on the shelves for other users to look at or checkout if they wished. Another advantage was that the shorter term borrowing periods could recognize aspects of human nature. If users were given a longer time there was a considerable likelihood that things would remain unused at home or in offices because it would be easier to renew than to bring the things back. The ULC's advisory role was noted by several members and E. Hitchingham said that she wished to confer with others in the library and the university community before outlining the procedures to be used when the new system came up in August 2005.

On February 16th the Faculty Council of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences unanimously adopted the following proposal:

Proposal for Improved Book Circulation Policies for Faculty:

In keeping with the university's efforts to enhance conditions for faculty research, and in light of loan periods and renewal policies for faculty at Virginia Tech's peer institutions, we request that the University Libraries

implement the following circulation policies for faculty:

Loan period for books: 180 days

Number of on-line/phone renewals: 5

At the meeting reflected in these Minutes, a member of the ULC introduced the following motion:

The present circulation policy for faculty requires that library books be renewed online or by phone within 90 days, and be brought to one of the libraries within the subsequent 90 days, at which time they can be immediately checked out, and the process begins again. (This assumes that the book has not been recalled.) The University Library Committee recommends that a new category be established for special users who have more than 25 library books for an extended period of time. Faculty who have more than 25 library books would be eligible for this special status. For them, a book could be renewed every 180 days. This renewal could be accomplished online or by phone until the end of six 180-day periods,[1080 days] at which time the books would need to be brought to one of the libraries, but could be immediately checked out again.

E. Hitchingham expressed concern that applying variable limits for borrowing (i.e., when a number of outstanding items was reached – more than 25 items -different rules would apply) would not be workable. She suggested an alternate mechanism that would recognize the desire of many of the committee to retain the current practice for most but still allow flexibility as appropriate for those with research needs for longer borrowing terms. She shared two documents, one showing circulation rates since the 1997 rule was implemented and a worksheet that placed current practices, peer practices, and recommendations from CLAHS on a continuum of length of borrowing. Her suggestion included:

- *Eliminating the over 25 items issue*
- *90 day borrowing periods with 1 online renewal of 90 days as the general application for faculty and graduate students.*
- *Faculty and graduate students with special needs could request a research exemption and the general characteristics of the requests would be monitored by the library. The exempted faculty and graduate students would have another classification, and their borrowing type would reflect 90 day borrowing periods, renewable online 7 times, for a total borrowing period of approximately 720 days.*

Of members eligible to vote present at the meeting the poll for support for the alternative was 1 For, 6 Against.

Of members eligible to vote present at the meeting, the poll for support for the original motion was 6 For (includes 1 absentee vote), and 2 Against the motion.

[Note: Since the meeting the library clarified with the vendor that varying rules for loan periods based on how many items the user had out was not possible.]