

## **Minutes University Library Committee**

**Date: November 15, 2007**

**Time: 4:00-5:00 p.m.**

**Location: Library Board Room**

**Chair:** Bill Newton

**Members Present:** Joe Loferski, Philip Young, Eileen Hitchingham, Irene Glennon, Michelle Moseley-Christian, Bill Newton, Ross Edmonds, Steven Craig, Noreen Klein (for Robert Brown), Fleur Gooden, Larry Freeman, Thomas Hogdahl

**Guests:** Tamara Kennelly, Gail McMillan

### **April 16<sup>th</sup> Prevail Archive (Tamara Kennelly and Gail McMillan)**

The Digital Library and Archives Department at Newman Library documents the history of the university to make sure that its roots in the past are not severed. A major part is deciding which materials regarding the university have permanent historical value. Another important role is making archival materials available for research and reflection by students, researchers, teachers, and the general public.

The University Libraries working with the Virginia Tech community and guided by consultants from the Library of Congress is establishing an archive for April 16, 2007. The archives will provide long-term access and preservation of relevant materials in analog and digital formats.

To begin planning this archive Kennelly consulted with colleagues at other universities who developed archives after tragic events at their institutions including Syracuse University (Lockerbie air disaster in 1988), Bluffton University (bus accident last spring that killed 5 members of the their baseball team), Oklahoma State university who lost team and staff members as well as media members in a plane crash, and Texas A & M (bonfire accident). The team from the Library of Congress came to campus when the tents were still up on the drill field and materials were hanging in Squires so they could get a sense of what we were dealing with.

Dean Hitchingham also called together people from different components of the university who were working with the aftermath of the tragedy in various ways. For example: the web site mounted by Dr. Luke and Dr. Jesiek; and, the digital initiatives of Ed Fox and others. Kennelly emphasized that these are not dueling archives. They are working in a complementary way to these efforts and planning for the long run to work with these groups so that there will be long-term preservation of the materials collected.

Since the summer, the library has been working in coordination with the University Unions and Student Activities to deal with the many condolences received by the university. An area has been set up in the CRC in what is informally called the Prevail archive. The university received an estimated over 87,000 items. This number includes many thousands of cranes (33,000 cranes were received in one lot) and thousands of cards and letters. This is in addition to the items distributed through the Student Union in the days after the shootings. Digital images are being taken of many items, and these initially will be available on the Internet ([http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/416\\_archive/](http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/416_archive/) through a timely but temporary arrangement with Rutgers University.

Kennelly stated that as she has worked with these materials for the past 4 or 5 months, she has found that in addition to being an outpouring of support for the university, the items received are a rich source of material about how we express grief and the effect this tragedy has had on people around the world. There are materials that would be of research interest not only to sociologists but also to students of popular culture.

We've already had an expression of interest from Dr. Paula Cushing, Department Chair & Curator of Invertebrate Zoology at the Denver Museum of nature & Science about borrowing some items from the archive for an exhibit case showing ways people memorialize the dead. At least one of the venues for the expanded "Perspectives on Death and Dying" exhibit will be on a university campus in Colorado. In addition to planning for the permanent collection, we also are planning to have a traveling collection that might visit different venues.

Kennelly also noted that the Perspective Gallery in Squires is planning an exhibit of the cranes received by the university. This exhibit will be put up in December.

Because of the amount of materials received and space limitations, not all items will become part of the permanent collection. Items selected for the permanent collection will be appropriately organized, preserved, housed in a climate controlled environment, and described in a finding aid that will be made available through the Special Collections web pages as well as through the Virginia Heritage project. Once the collection has been processed, the physical collection will be available through the Special Collections Reading Room on the first floor of Newman Library.

If anyone would like to discuss this archive further or have questions or comments about other materials in the University Archives or in Special Collections, please do not hesitate to contact Tamara Kennelly at 540-231-9214.

#### **Graduate Study Area (Hitchingham)**

The first phase of renovating room 416 on the fourth floor into a graduate study area is complete and will be viewed at the end of this meeting. We are currently working with the Graduate School to provide access to the facility through the Hokie passport system. The area now has study tables, some comfortable seating, and lockers. Due to limited funds these furnishings were borrowed from various floors of the library. Obtaining better furnishings could be pursued as a fundraising possibility.

#### **Other (Hitchingham)**

Replacing the HVAC system in the library is in the University's 6-year plan. This is a major renovation necessary to prevent future breakouts of mold. The problem is currently being contained and in the interim daily monitoring will continue.