



2019 – 2020 Annual Report

**McConnell Library
Radford University**

Steven P. Helm, Dean of the Library
March 27, 2020

To call the past year one of challenges is an understatement. And yet the librarians and staff at McConnell and Radford University Carilion Libraries rose to the occasion in every instance, and addressed each adversity with dedication and professionalism. Without dwelling on the many issues we faced, let me list a few them briefly; fiscal challenges, reduced travel funds, vacancies, hiring freezes, reduced personnel lines, serials cancelations, and quite a few bureaucratic frustrations.

Again, I want to thank all our librarians and staff for their commitment to excellent customer service, keeping our focus on students and their success, finding creative solutions and workarounds, maintaining collegiality, and unwavering professionalism. Likewise I commend everyone in McConnell Library and RUC Library for their many efforts in helping with the merger of Jefferson College of Health Science (JCHS) and Radford University!

Unlike previous years, this report will focus solely on my goals and activities related to them.

Interim Provost Colley and I agreed to the following three goals for the year;

- Managing the merger of Jefferson College of Health Sciences Library and Radford University's McConnell Library.
- Promote Open Educational Resources both state-wide through VIVA, and at Radford University.
- Pursue professional development opportunities to enhance the operation of the library, and to seek best practices.

Managing the merger of Jefferson College of Health Sciences Library with Radford University McConnell Library.

I was involved in many merger discussions beginning with the President's Leadership Council meeting where the intent to merge with Jefferson College of Health Sciences was announced. The public announcement came soon after.

A Merger Steering Committee and subcommittees were created including; Academic Programs and Accreditation, Communications, Finance, Human Resources, Information

Technology, and Student Services. The committee and subcommittee membership was by appointment. Mona Thiss, Director of the JCHS Library was appointed to one of the committees for JCHS, however I didn't receive an appointment.

Once the Provost permitted conversations to begin with JCHS staff, Mona Thiss and I began regular discussions and meetings with both McConnell and JCHS Library staff. Initially we were asked to limit the discussion to our institutions collections. Immediately we learned about the the consortial agreement between Jefferson College of Health Science, the Virginia Tech School of Medicine (now VTC), and Carilion Clinic. Each of the consortial members contributed to the shared collection, they used Open Athens for authentication, and they used EOS Web, an integrated library system by SirsiDynix.



McConnell Collections and Technical Services staff began detailed discussions with JCHS Library staff evaluating the collections, the overlap, and materials not already owned/subscribed by Radford University. Thank you Kay Johnson, and the rest of CATS for your excellent work with Mona Thiss, Christina Manzo, and Chrystal Dent at JCHS on this phase of the merger.

We moved quickly to plan the migration of JCHS's collection into our WorldShare Management System (WMS) On Jan. 15, 2019 we held a Webex with OCLC, CATS, Mona, Crystal Dent to discuss the merger of the collections. We sought a quote from OCLC for the migration JCHS holdings. The quote came in at \$11,000 which wasn't budgeted. Fortunately, given the size of the JCHS collection, the CATs staff were able to manually add the JCHS collection to WMS, saving us time and money. Thank you all for your hard work on this project!

Mona Thiss and I also shared budget information in relation to the collections. JCHS provided most of the staffing for the consortium, while Carilion and VTC provided the majority of the collections funding.

Mona Thiss and I agreed to recommend that the consortium not continue post-merger, due to many complications of Radford being a public institution and JCHS being private. It would take legislation from the General Assembly, or a waiver from the Attorney General to allow the consortium to continue. I shared this opinion with Provost Colley, and both the Academic Programs and Accreditations, and the Student Services subcommittees. I also shared copies of the Memorandum of Understanding as well as the consortial agreements with Provost Colley.

After a few months it became clear the Steering Committee intended to continue the consortial agreement between RUC-VTC-Carilion and they had “given it to the lawyers” to work on. Unfortunately, a new agreement was not drafted, and the merger went into effect in July 2019. Thus the supervision of VTC and Carilion library staff, JCHS staffing support to VTC and Carilion, and collections support from VTC and Carilion all needed to be revised.

During AALT discussions and with Provost Colley I advocated for a for the creation of a daily shuttle service between RUC and the Radford campus, to allow for efficient and cost effective transport of paperwork and library and ILL materials. I am very pleased the shuttle was created soon after the July merger date, and was integrated into the daily campus mail operations.

As we moved through the merger planning, we were eventually permitted to broaden the discussion to the issues of staffing, spaces, and IT. Kudos to Beth Johnson, and Eric Ackermann for their leadership with Access Services, and Research Services and their collaborations with the JCHS staff. They worked through issues of training of JCHS staff on WMS, merging chat services, Libguides, FAQs, Library Instruction and many other issues. Well done! One unfortunate issue that we weren't permitted to address and is still needing to be addresses updating positions descriptions.

Another snag in the merger process was the vacant wage position at JCHS no longer existed post merger. It took many months of discussions and emails to get the position restored at RUC. We also said farewell to Mona Thiss who announced her plan to retire

at the end of Dec. 2019. After many discussions with Mona Thiss, RUC and McConnell staff we developed a restructuring plan of the RUC Library staffing. With Mona Thiss's retirement, and the demise of the consortial agreement, we proposed to eliminate Mona Thiss's Associate Dean position. Then using the existing personnel funding, we proposed appointing a Head Librarian for the RUC Library. We also proposed that the vacant part time wage position be made into a full time classified position This plan was submitted to Provost Colley, and finalized by Provost Scartelli with the approval by the Budget Office. After numerous discussions, I named Jamie Price the Head Librarian at RUC Library. We hope to soon advertise for the new classified position.

In March 2019 I developed a Merger Topology for Authentication still assuming a new VT-JCHS-Carilion Consortial agreement was in the works. I presented it merger WebEx to DOIT, and Carilion IT, and Mona Thiss. I also shared this presentation with Administrative Council, the McConnell staff, and JCHS staff. With the end of the consortial agreement, we bought RUC users into the McConnell authentication with EZProxy. Patrons migrated easily into WMS via regular patron loads.

I attended the April 22, 2019 Jefferson College of Health Sciences Spirit Day along with the President's Leadership Council and met many JCHS students, faculty, and some of the JCHS Library staff, including Magrat and Pratchett! Of course, they posed with everyone including the two school mascots.

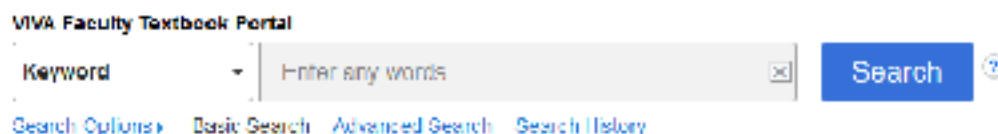


Promote Open Educational Resources both state-wide and at Radford University

I was fortunate to have served as the VIVA Steering Committee Chair from July 1, 2017 until June 30, 2018, and have continued as a member of the Steering Committee to the present. I am pleased to report that during my tenure as Steering Committee Chair, VIVA made a huge advances promoting Open Educational Resources (OER).

We successfully requested a new initiative to support ongoing Open and Affordable Course Content across the Commonwealth from the General Assembly. This initiative resulted in a \$600,000 annual base budget increase including;

- ◆ Expansion of the Open Textbook Network program: \$120,000 each year
- ◆ Curriculum-driven acquisitions program: \$120,000 each year
- ◆ Course redesign grant program: \$120,000 each year
- ◆ Central Staffing and Travel: \$240,000 each year



We created a Faculty Textbook Portal in collaboration with EBSCO. This repository allows faculty to easily find OER materials across many OER repositories, along with DRM free Ebsco ebooks, and ebooks that VIVA will purchase for faculty by request. The portal includes thousands of OER ebook titles, 85,000 DRM-free Ebsco ebooks, and 110,000+ DRM-light unlimited user ebooks.

We created a new VIVA committee appropriately called the Open and Affordable Course Content Committee (OACCC). I appointed Steve Litherland, Associate Vice President Libraries at Tidewater Community College the Chair of the committee. He was the ideal

founding chair since Tidewater Community College was already a national acclaimed leader in OER with their Z-Degree program and Steve was well versed in OER issues, policies, and practices.

The OACCC was given their charge: “The Open and Affordable Course Content Committee (OACCC) recommends to the Steering Committee policies and/or operations related to the adoption and development of open and affordable course content and promotes the adoption of open and affordable content to VIVA member libraries.”

VIVA Central began recruiting and hiring the two positions funded by the General Assembly to support VIVA’s OER initiatives. I am happy to report that the Open and Sustainable Learning Coordinator position was filled by Dr. Stephanie Westcott, and the Assessment & E-Resources Program Analyst position was filled by Sophie Rondeau. Both have proved very capable and hit the ground running.

The Course redesign grants began in 2018 and three rounds of grant awards have been issued since. Three Radford projects were awarded in the first grant review process.

I nominated Dr. Matt DeCarlo as our campus OER leader, previously held by Jackie DeLong, and also nominated him to receive Open Textbook Network (OTN) training coordinated by VIVA. Dr. DeCarlo and I met regularly over the year, and I shared all VIVA OACC and Steering Committee information immediately.

During the legislative process I was in communication with Lisa Ghidotti, Radford University’s Executive Director of Government Relations to advise her on VIVA’s position on the language of HB454. As to the language in Delegate Filler-Horn’s bill HB 454, librarians and SPARC (Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition) endorsed the original language of the bill, and objected to the added phrase “and low-cost commercially published materials.” This was added by publishers for their own financial interests, and doesn’t reflect the best interests of our students. In the end, the General Assembly added the “low cost” phrase. The bill called for each institution’s Board of Visitors to adopt open and low cost guidelines. They later required universities to identify free and low cost material in their registration system/course catalog.

2018 and 2019 updates to § 23.1-1308 of the Virginia

42 E. The governing board of each public institution of higher education shall implement guidelines for
43 the adoption and use of low-cost and no-cost open educational resources in courses offered at such
44 institution. Such guidelines may include provisions for low-cost commercially published materials.
45 F. *The registrar or another appropriate employee of each public institution of higher education shall*
46 *identify conspicuously in the online course catalogue or registration system, as soon as practicable after*
47 *the necessary information becomes available, each course for which the instructor exclusively uses*
48 *no-cost course materials or low-cost course materials.*

I worked with Interim Provost Kenna Colley on the formation of the ad hoc Radford University Open Educational Resources Committee to develop a draft of the OER guidelines for Radford University required by the General Assembly. I suggested Dr. Matt DeCarlo be appointed chair since he was already actively writing an OER Social Work Research Methodology textbook. The committee based their guidelines on the examples offered by SCHEV (State Council of Higher Education). The guidelines drafted by the OER Committee were submitted to the Provost for presentation to the Board of Visitors. To date, the guidelines haven't been voted on since the BOV has delegated textbook issues to the President. Likewise, the second bill on OER (see above image) was addressed by the OER committee and submitted to the Provost. I have been advocating the Provost(s) for implementation of these recommendations.

I repeatedly requested that Dr. Matt DeCarlo and I be added to the agenda of Academic Leadership Team (AALT) to present the VIVA OER initiatives as well as the OER Committee work to AALT. Regrettably the request was delayed for nearly a year.

In Jan. 2020 Dr. Matt DeCarlo and I gave our OER presentations to AALT, and shared the Powerpoint files with all the deans to use with their leadership teams (chairs). We gave an encore presentation at the request of Dean Rogers to the Artis College leadership team. I want to express my highest commendations to Dr. DeCarlo, and the OER Committee for all their excellent work! Special thanks to CITL staff, and Alyssa Archer and Elizabeth McCormick for their work on the OER Committee. There is now a sizable cohort of faculty actively engaged in OER creation, use, reuse, mentoring, and advocacy. Many thanks to all of you!

Initial VIVA assessment of our statewide initiatives indicated OTN textbook reviews (\$200 stipend for faculty reviewers) lead to OER adoptions saving VA students over \$3 Million (as of Aug 19). The



Faculty OER Textbook Portal (new in 2019- already saved students \$120,000), The VIVA Course Redesign grants is saving VA students over 1.7M each year. VIVA also contracts with ISKME for a Virginia OER microsite called Open Virginia to be a repository for all OER created by Virginia faculty, especially those awarded Course Redesign Grants. The greatest impact of OER adoption is that the cumulative savings to students continues to grow each semester, and for years to come! This savings often allows students the affordability to continue in college, and to graduation, with far less debt due. This is measurable student success worth being proud of!

Professional Development

Per discussions with Provost Colley, I sought profession development opportunities that would contribute to a work environment environment that would benefit the operations of the library including seeking out best practices in the professional literature.

To this end, in addition to reading professional listservs, and articles in professions journals, I also read

◆ ***Workplace Culture in Academic Libraries; The Early 21st Century,***

Edited by Blessinger and Hrycaj. Chandos Publishing 2013, and

◆ ***The Coaching Habit: Say Less Act More & And Change the Way You Lead Forever*** by Michael Stanier. Box of Crayons Press. 2016. Unfortunately, due to scheduling conflicts I was unable to attend the live webinars related to this book.