

VCU Libraries Advisory Committee Minutes

Thursday, January 22, 2025, 2:00-3:00 pm

Zoom

[Slides](#)

Virginia Commonwealth University
VCU Libraries

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Attending

Jean Bailey, Keith Baker, Jason Burkett, Becky Carmel, Nicole Corley, Stephen Day, Allison Gregory, Frank Gulla, Anika Hines, Karen Kopryanski, Kimberly Matthews, Valerie Robnolt (Chair), Ihsan Topaloglu, Anusha Vaddi, Isaac Yeboah, Ryan Jackson, Christy Tyndall

Absent

Daniel Morales, Sarah Steele, Dayanjan (Shanaka) Wijesinghe

VCU Libraries Staff

Laura Gariepy, Jimmy Ghaphery, Irene Herold, Hannah King (recording secretary), Teresa L. Knott, Tammy Sugarman

Absent: Kathy Bradshaw

Business

Review and Approval of Agenda (Valerie Robnolt)

The meeting opened at 2:00 pm. The meeting agenda was approved as presented.

Review and approval of minutes from November 20, 2025 (Valerie Robnolt)

The minutes from September were reviewed and approved as presented.

Reports & Discussion

Welcome

Valerie Robnolt (Chair) welcomed the committee members and thanked those in attendance.

AI update: Education, Research Support, and Outreach

Laura Gariepy presented on Artificial Intelligence and the libraries' role in supporting teaching, research, and outreach. The libraries contribute through classroom instruction, one-on-one consultations, programming and workshops, faculty development, and university-wide AI teaching and learning initiatives. These efforts are led by librarians who specialize in specific disciplines/work with specific units, as well as those that focus on media literacy and research data management across VCU.

Librarian Roles Regarding AI

While the libraries have not adopted an official “stance” on AI, we do offer a [guide about AI](#) in the research and information context. All librarians are expected to understand how AI impacts their assigned areas and to participate in and lead conversations on this topic with the students and faculty. Librarians have a wide range of personal and professional perspectives about AI, which is valuable among a group of information professionals who are well-suited to grapple with this issue.

Poll of VCU Librarians

A poll of VCU research/outreach librarians showed increased engagement with AI-related topics across their work. Over half of respondents indicated that they cover AI at least sometimes in their teaching, with some noting that they address it “more and more”. It is anticipated that this engagement will continue to scale up although coverage is contingent on specific learning outcomes and individual faculty preferences.

When providing research support, the poll showed different patterns between student and faculty interactions. A little less than 40% of respondents cover AI-related topics when providing research support for students, while more than half do so with faculty. This suggests that faculty members may be more likely to engage librarians in discussions about AI in research.

What is being covered in sessions?

A large portion of librarian engagement with AI falls under AI literacy, information literacy, and media literacy. Librarians are teaching students how to use AI responsibly in research and information seeking, addressing concerns about hallucinations, and reinforcing the principles of academic and research integrity. There is a wide range of expectations across disciplines and faculty members. Librarians emphasize that AI usage is highly situational and depends on the research being done

Librarians emphasize evaluative methods such as lateral reading and the [SIFT method](#). Many are using AI as an engagement tool in the classroom by drawing on student experiences as a jumping-off point for discussion. They are also teaching about how to use AI to develop research terms for research in addition to using specific AI tools and library resources with AI integrations.

The increasing importance of information experts has become evident as many librarians lean into the difficult questions being asked about navigating today's complex information environment. This represents a valuable opportunity to leverage their expertise, no matter how unknown the transition may be.

Current Programming and Initiatives

The libraries and broader VCU community have a variety of programming and initiatives surrounding AI. We have a librarian who serves on the [Faculty Advisory Committee for GenAI in Teaching & Learning](#). Librarians provide faculty professional development sessions around AI, including a recent one about how GenAI impacts students and research and information seeking. We are available to provide these sessions for your schools and units. In addition, the [Hack My Assignment](#) events are faculty only sessions in which a librarian can talk through reworking research assignments to ensure they work well in the AI era. The libraries also offer an [AI in Research series](#) that follows faculty speakers sharing how AI is used

in the research process and how it is studied. We are able to do repeats of these sessions or tailor them to different schools and units.

VIVA Research Tools

VIVA (Virginia's Academic Library Consortium) has provided all members with trials of two AI research tools. Consensus is an AI-powered academic search engine that ranks the top twenty papers for a search. Scite is an AI-powered research tool for discovering and evaluating scholarly articles. The trial dates are Wednesday, November 12, 2025 - Thursday, February 12, 2026. [Feedback](#) on these resources is greatly appreciated.

2025 Course Materials Survey: VCU results

Associate Dean Jimmy Ghaphery presented on the published VCU results from the [2025 Virginia Course Material Survey](#). This is a follow-up from a 2021 survey. The results show that [students at VCU feel the burden of course materials cost](#) more compared to other students across the state which reflects the results from the 2021 survey. To address this challenge, the libraries have prioritized the Open and Affordable Course Content Initiative, which supports our instructors as they work to transition to low-cost or no-cost materials for their courses. This initiative has impacted over 135,000 students with a documented \$12.7 million in textbook cost avoidance for students. For more information please reach out to our Open Educational Resources Librarian, Abbey Childs, at childsam@vcu.edu.

Project Updates

Dean Herold presented on multiple interrelated projects coming up. Currently, we are waiting for approval from the Board of Directors of the Health System to approve funding for these initiatives. The current site of the Health Sciences Library (HSL) is planned to become a new patient tower, though we are not aware of an established timeline nor do we know where the temporary location for this library will be.

Additional projects include Cabell HVAC upgrades and addressing roof leakage. We aim to coordinate the roof work with the Special Collections and Archives (SCA) expansion to minimize disruption. Offsite storage is being built at the State Records Center and it will be used to house the bulk of HSL's circulating collections along with other materials that need to be relocated for the SCA expansion. Given the scope and complexity of these projects, completion is unlikely until 2028.

VLAC Meeting Schedule

Upcoming meetings scheduled for 2-3 pm via Zoom:

- OPTIONAL In-person Social: February 26, 2026 from 5-6 pm; Cabell 311
- April 23, 2026

Upcoming Events

- [VCU Visiting Writers Series](#), Edgar Kunz & Devon Walker-Figueroa, January 29, 2026, 7:00 pm, JBC 303
- **BHM Lecture**, [Reading a Dress: Fashioning Black Women's Histories](#), Elizabeth Way, February 5, 2026, 7:00 pm, JBC 303
- **Data Visualization Wall Ribbon Cutting**, February 9, 2026, 3:00 pm, JBC Workshop
 - Part of "[Love Data Week](#)" programming for students and faculty
- [Chris Burnside Book Launch](#), February 24, 2026, 5:00 pm
- **SCA Voices of Change**, February 26, 2026, 4:00 pm
- **Creative Inquiries**, Zach Blas, March 25, 2026
- **Artistic Mansions**, Charles Brownell, April 11, 2026
- **A Night in Mr. Cabell's Richmond**, (ticketed Friends of the Library scholarship fundraising event) April 16, 2026, 6:30 pm

Discussion/Questions

Q: Are you able to define "AI slop"?

A: AI slop refers to the low-quality content that AI systems create, including distorted or unrealistic images or video and inaccurate information. There is a cyclical nature to this problem where errors propagate and multiply through successive generations of AI content.

Q: Why is there not a collective VCU Libraries stance on AI?

A: AI is accelerating at such speed, we are still in the early days and have found value in leaving space for a range of personal and professional convictions, from early adopters to those who are cautious. While there are some challenges to not having a stance it would stifle important thinking to impose one lens or view on this topic from a group of information professionals at this time.

Q: When will the Cabell HVAC, roof, and SCA renovations happen?

A: There are temporary timelines, but they are still in the draft stages. We are waiting on a quote from a moving company regarding shifting materials, with pricing expected to come in February. For the HVAC issue, Facilities is in the phase of defining the scope of the problem. We will try to minimize disruption as much as possible. For those on MCV campus, if everything goes well in February, the transition to a temporary location will likely occur in late fall 2026.

VCU Libraries Merch

Purchases of VCU Libraries merchandise support the Friends scholarship fund.

collegethread.com/collections/virginia-commonwealth-university-libraries

Information Links

[VLAC Charge](#) | [Generative AI](#) | [VCU Policy on GenAI](#)