

VCU Libraries Advisory Committee Minutes

Thursday, April 23, 2026, 2:00-3:00 pm

Zoom

[Slides](#)

Attending

Jean Bailey, Keith Baker, Jason Burkett, Stephen Day, Allison Gregory, Anika Hines, Valerie Robnolt (Chair), Sarah Steele, Ihsan Topaloglu, Anusha Vaddi, Isaac Yeboah, Christy Tyndall

Absent

Becky Carmel, Nicole Corley, Frank Gulla, Ryan Jackson, Karen Kopryanski, Kimberly Matthews, Daniel Morales, Dayanjan (Shanaka) Wijesinghe

VCU Libraries Staff

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

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.

Welcome

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

VLAC Chair Selection for 2026 - 2028

Christy Tyndall, Student Wellbeing Program Coordinator and Associate Professor at the Honors College was elected to be the new VLAC Chair for 2026-2028 with a unanimous vote from attendees.

[StudyWell](#) Update

Megan Hodge, Head of Student Success at VCU Libraries presented on StudyWell. She gave a comprehensive overview of the program's origins, its foundational philosophy, current programming themes, and growth statistics. Additionally, Kelsey Sidwell was hired as the new Undergraduate Student Engagement Coordinator, filling a long term vacancy for a key member of the StudyWell team.

What is StudyWell?

StudyWell was born in the Fall of 2021 to address the traumatic experiences and wellness gaps students faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. The program uses a holistic approach to wellbeing with a mix of one-off and recurring events. The programming targets many aspects of wellness, such as financial wellness, mental health, and simple relaxation and joy.

Why have wellness programming in the Library?

Students come to the library to focus on their studies, but that is not able to happen if they are hungry, stressed, or feel like they do not belong in college. It also relates to Quest 2028, where student success is one of four themes. By hosting these events, the libraries enhance a culture of care that supports student engagement and retention.

The Events

StudyWell events are offered at both libraries and are categorized by several themes, with “belonging” being the largest at 35%. Other common event themes are relaxation/play (23%) and financial wellness (21%). Specific health-focused event programming includes “Alcohol 101”, “Breaking Taboos for Healthy Relationships”, and “Cannabis 101”. The program also uses whiteboard prompts in the Cabell Library lobby to encourage fun, low-barrier student engagement with many of the tabling events.

Partnerships

The success of StudyWell relies heavily on its partnerships across the university and local community. Key collaborators include the Peer Health Educators from RecWell, YouFirst, Financial Success, and the Campus learning center. Without our partners, we would not be able to have as much of an impact as we have been able to have.

Statistics

StudyWell has seen significant growth since its inception. The number of annual events has increased by 92% to a total of 432 events held in the 2025 fiscal year. Student attendance has also increased from 2,764 attendees in 2022 to 10,807 in 2025. On average, each event draws in about 25 students, which shows a 108% increase in average attendance since the program began.

[VCU Libraries Technology Plans](#)

Associate Dean Jimmy Ghaphery provided an overview of the Student Technology Fee and the Higher Education Equipment Trust Fund (HEETF), detailing how the libraries intend to utilize these resources for the upcoming fiscal year. The Student Technology Fee is a charge to students that supports, maintains, and upgrades campus technology resources. The libraries will use these funds to primarily support studios and makerspaces, web systems, and general student computing. The Higher Education Equipment Trust Fund provides supplemental funding for purchasing or upgrading equipment at public universities. The libraries will use these funds to acquire laptops for librarians, upgrade the digitization lab, perform an AV refresh in the library conference rooms, and purchase a laser cutter. The plan was approved by the advisory committee.

Interrelated Projects

The associate deans provided a snapshot of the updates from the interrelated projects happening around the libraries.

Off-Site Storage

Library employees are working to prepare library collections (books and bound journals) to move to offsite storage once the new addition to the Library of Virginia's State Records Center (SRC) is complete (anticipated to be January 2027). VCU will be a tenant in the facility. We anticipate next day retrieval of materials M-F during regular business hours.

Special Collections & Archives Expansion

Cabell Library is undergoing an expansion of the Special Collections and Archives space, repurposing a portion of the library's fourth floor. This project will add approximately 16,000 square feet to the current Special Collections & Archives space. The new space will integrate materials relocated from the Health Sciences Library following remediation for possible mold.

The book arts lab will be a focal point of the expansion. It will feature glass windows that face the general student study areas to create a more active and engaging atmosphere for the students. The windows will be made of a special glass that will inhibit noise transmission. The existing exhibit space is being renovated to provide more contemporary exhibit opportunities.

Health Sciences Library Relocation

The Health Sciences Library (HSL) is preparing for relocation to Hunton Hall at the intersections of Broad and 12th Streets. While this move is considered "temporary" as planning for a new permanent facility continues, it is expected that HSL will operate out of Hunton Hall for 3-5 years. To ensure a smooth transition, the goal is to have the new space ready at the conclusion of the fall 2026 semester to move staff and student spaces. The plan is to reopen the HSL at Hunton in January 2027.

Hunton Hall will be going through some renovations to adapt the historic building for contemporary library use, keeping student needs in mind. The slides contain preliminary drawings of how space might be allocated after the renovations. The first floor will receive light renovations and will house an expanded makerspace, an information desk, a small collection of monographs, and user space. Existing offices on the second floor will be modified to accommodate library personnel. The third floor has balcony space open to the second floor, group study rooms, and additional office space. The focus is on creating a functional environment that supports the students, faculty and staff on the health sciences campus.

While Hunton Hall serves as the interim home for HSL, there is a plan for a new, permanent Health Sciences Library building at some time in the future. During this period, the library team is committed to maintaining the high service standards and ensuring that this temporary location is able to provide the necessary resources and quiet study environments that contribute to our students' success.

Cabell Roof and HVAC Repair

Cabell Library is slated for a major roof replacement to address the ongoing issues with leaks that affect a portion of the building. While the exact construction timeline is still being finalized, the work is tentatively expected to take place between Fall 2026 and early Spring 2027.

In addition to the work on the roof, Cabell will undergo HVAC repairs to resolve persisting issues such as unwanted condensation and component failures. These repairs are expected to be physically and audibly disruptive and the libraries are committed to being attentive to the needs of students, staff, and faculty who are in the building while the work is being performed. It is expected that the repairs will begin in late fall 2026.

Dean Search Updates

VLAC members have been invited to attend presentations from candidates for the Dean of the Libraries position in the coming weeks. These sessions will be conducted over Zoom and will include a Q&A portion at the end of the presentation.

The presentations have been scheduled for the following dates and times:

- Tuesday, April 28, 2026, 11:30 am - 1:00 pm
- Thursday, April 30, 2026, 11:15 am - 12:45 pm
- Monday, May 4, 2026, 11:15 am - 12:45 pm
- Monday, May 11, 2026, 11:15 am - 12:45 pm

Question & Answers

Q: Are you able to identify the number of recurrent attendees at StudyWell events?

A: We do not track individual attendees as most of these events are meant to be short, drop-in events. This data would be beneficial, but there are currently no plans to gather this information.

Q: Is the increase in attendance at StudyWell events reflective of more students being in the libraries or are these events attracting students to the libraries?

A: Most of these events take place in the lobby, which leads to higher attendance. Tracking gait traffic shows that there has been an increase in foot traffic since the pandemic, but it is not up to the rate of increases with the StudyWell events.

Q: What is the reason for laptop docking stations in the libraries?

A: One of the major reasons students have given for liking the docking stations is that it allows them to have a larger screen to work on assignments. Some students have also used them with their laptops to have a second screen for their work. A secondary benefit that has emerged from the docking station is that students have been able to charge their laptops before classes.

Q: Will you be hiring someone to retrieve materials for the off-site storage at the State Records Center?

A: The Library of Virginia operates the State Records Center and will hire someone to retrieve and deliver VCU materials.

Q: *Will there be study rooms at Hunton Hall?*

A: There are study rooms, but they are not all ideal, as some are walls with no ceiling. We are looking to see if changes can be made so that they are better suited for our students.

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](#)

Note: VLAC typically meets four times over an academic year, typically in September, November, January, and April. The request for representatives is sent to the deans in August.