

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts  
Minutes of the Resources and Visitor Experience Committee Meeting  
Thursday, 20 March 2014, 8:30 am  
Theater Level Conference Room #1

There were present:

Margaret Irby Clement, Co-Chair  
Thurston R. Moore, Co-Chair  
Dr. Lindley T. Smith  
Dr. Monroe E. Harris, Jr.  
Dr. Elizabeth Forsyth Harris  
Dr. Claude G. Perkins  
Margaret N. Gottwald  
Karen C. Abramson  
Cynthia Kerr Fralin  
Terrell Luck Harrigan  
H. Eugene Lockhart  
Thurston Moore  
Shantaram Talegaonkar  
William Birch Douglas III  
William A. Royall, Jr., Ex-officio

By Invitation:

Alex Nyerges, Director  
Dr. Lee Anne Chesterfield  
Robin Nicholson  
Claudia E. Keenan  
Anne L. Battle  
Pam Reynolds  
Austin Anderson  
Robert Tarren  
Jayne Shaw  
Darrian P. Mack  
Brigette Thomas

Absent:

Mary Ann Carlson  
Ivan P. Jecklin  
Charles H. Seilheimer

I. CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Margaret Irby Clement called the meeting to order at 8:36 am.

## II. NEW COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Co-Chair, Thurston Moore, welcomed the group, and Meg Clement, Co-Chair, proceeded to discuss the former two-committee structure and review the change to the new four-committee structure. Ms. Clement asserted this committee will today address Audience Development, Marketing and Communications, Visitor Services, and Advancement.

## III. NEW DIVISION HEAD

Museum director, Alex Nyerges introduced the new Executive Director of the VMFA Foundation and Deputy Director for Resources and Visitor Experience, Claudia Keenan. Most recently she was the Vice President for External Affairs at Eastern Virginia Medical School. Ms. Keenan thanked the committee for contributing to the creation of this division.

## IV. DIVISION OVERVIEW AND DEPARTMENT REPORTS

### a. Audience Development – Darrian Mack

Director of Audience Development, Darrian Mack explained that his department assesses the museum's current audience compared to the surrounding population and creates initiatives to reach underserved groups. In the coming fiscal year, he hopes to increase African American as well as Latino membership by 5%. Through programs like Jazz Café and VMFA family days, the museum can gauge interest within different demographics and reach non-members. He hopes to expand the museum's presence in the community through religious institutions and universities. He shared a video used in a membership drive at St. Paul's Church, a campaign reaching 28,000 and generating 30 new memberships.

### b. Visitor Services - Brigette Thomas,

Visitor Services Manager, Brigette Thomas described the department as the face of the institution. Her staff, including volunteers and council members, ensures that all visitors have a good experience and communicates feedback to the rest of the museum. She explained how the group prepares for fluctuating attendance and the improvements made after *Picasso*. The new sales software has improved efficiency, communication, and data collection. Lastly, she described an objective to improve employee and volunteer training.

### c. Marketing & Communication – Robert Tarren

Director of Marketing and Communications, Robert Tarren began his presentation with the work in progress for upcoming exhibitions *Posing Beauty* and *Forbidden City*. His department has been collaborating with their VMFA colleagues to generate content for regular events, update members regularly via emails, and promote museum programs. Mr. Tarren went on to talk about the five positioning themes Marketing and Communications use to shape their messaging: collections programs, the "it's your art" tagline, visitor experience, the visitor's positive perceptions, and lastly that membership is the best way to enjoy VMFA. He highlighted one advertising effort in which the museum spent \$18,031 on Facebook Exchange and online display ads resulting in \$170,000 in ticket revenue. Mr. Tarren closed by describing the department's goals, which include enhancing VMFA's reputation, driving increased visitation to the banner exhibitions, and transitioning the website from Ektron to WordPress content management.

### d. Advancement – Jayne Shaw

Interim Deputy Director for Advancement, Jayne Shaw reviewed her department's major activities which include fundraising, financial services, donor engagement, and Advancement marketing and communication. Examples of the last category included *myVMFA* as well as Advancement's email campaign. She cited the success of the customized membership program, now in its second full year. Ms. Shaw said the Division expects to fully meet its Fiscal Year 2014 revenue goal of \$4,908,000, explaining that the majority of these funds come from individuals. She noted that Forbidden City fundraising has been particularly successful, already surpassing its goal. She explained that the new datamart will allow the department to make much more accurate goals and projections this year. The Deputy Director reported that VMFA membership has exceeded 35,000, comprising the full range of membership levels from students at \$10 up to Commonwealth Society at \$25,000. The Advancement Division's donor engagement efforts also include the member travel program, the Focus and Spotlight programs, (the latter geared toward a smaller group of people at higher levels). She then reported on progress towards Exhibition fundraising goals, showing that *Hollywood Costume* exceeded its goal as has *Forbidden City*, with fundraising somewhat below projections for *Posing Beauty*.

#### V. OTHER BUSINESS/ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:24 pm by Meg Clement.

Recorded by: Austin Anderson  
Interim Administrative Assistant to the Director