Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

Minutes of the Technology Task Force Meeting

Tuesday, 22 March 2016, 9:30am

Founder’s Conference Room

There were present:

William A. Royall, Jr., President

Satya Rangarajan

Michael J. Schewel

By invitation:

Alex Nyerges, Director

Kelly B. Armstrong

Stephen D. Bonadies

Dr. Lee Anne Hurt Chesterfield

Claudia Keenan

Laura Keller

Hossein Sadid

Dr. Michael Taylor

Kimberly Wilson

Lilo Simmons Ukrop

I. CALL TO ORDER AND MINUTES APPROVAL

At 9:33am, Chair Satya Rangarajan called the meeting to order.

**Motion:** proposed by Mr. Royall and seconded by Mr. Schewel that the minutes of the December 9, 2016 meeting of the Technology Task Force be approved as distributed. Motion approved.

II. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION REPORT

First, Mr. Sadid reported on the current state of his division, which relies heavily on manual reporting. Due to these manual processes, the staff has less time for analysis. The finance department has consolidated the finance reports for the Foundation and museum, but manually. His division has also consolidated policies and procedures from throughout the museum and posted them on Sharepoint.

The group discussed improving the museum’s Sharepoint website. Mr. Bonadies explained that an upgrade to the site would cost $25,000, but the design would need to take staff needs into consideration. Mr. Nyerges said that the Employee Engagement Task Force has made suggestions for the layout and the content.

Mr. Sadid announced that the museum has migrated accounting reporting systems from CARS to Cardinal. With this change, the department can now generate monthly budget reports. There is a one-time $150,000 expense for integrating the financial reports, but the museum would need application support in the long term. Mr. Rangarajan suggested waiting to hire an application support person until there is base saturation and clear understanding of the specialization needed.

Mr. Rangarajan encouraged the museum to ensure that the system aligns with the data mining software for consistent reporting across divisions. The committee expressed support for Mr. Sadid to move forward with the project to integrate the financial reports.

III. ART AND EDUCATION REPORT

Dr. Taylor reported on a retreat for Curatorial and Education staff in which they discussed the museum’s interpretation philosophy as outlined in the 2020 Strategic Plan. In summary, every digital initiative undertaken by the Art & Education division is guided by an interpretation philosophy: the museum’s belief in the power of engaging authentic objects, exchanging knowledge, and stimulating creativity, and that belief drives its collection, education, program, and digital strategies. Using audience research and evaluation, goals and outcomes will be articulated for each project ahead of time to ensure success.

Next, he reported on past technology initiatives for children and families, including *Wild@art,* a mobile application for, *Beyond the Walls*, an exhibition featuring digital interactives, and *ArtCycle*, which featured a kinetic gallery tour. He discussed the following upcoming projects: the museum tour app, improved website content, the Fabergé app, touch screens in the Kehinde Wiley exhibition, the *Artist’s Palate* teaching gallery, the *Dig It!* teaching gallery, the ArtMobile, and a distance learning studio.

The group discussed the depth of content currently available through visitor services, curators, and docents, and how best to make that information available digitally.

IV. COLLECTIONS AND FACILIATIES MANAGEMENT REPORT

Mr. Bonadies reported on the infrastructure supporting the digitization of the collection. The museum has migrated to the new collections management system The Museum System (TMS). There are 34,000 records and digital images for 18,000 of those. The division is working to digitize the Fabergé archives including receipts and dealer correspondence. He explained that photographs and scans are loaded into the digital asset management system Piction. With this system, digital assets like high-resolution images of the artwork are available to the curators at their desktops, but it also makes it easy to push the information to the website or an app.

Next, he updated the committee on the Google Art Project. Google will visit in May to create gigapixel images of 50 artworks in the collection. There are currently 200 high resolution images from VMFA’s collection on their website. This fall, Google will send street view cameras through the galleries and grounds to provide digital tours of the museum. The project is funded by Google.

Lastly, Mr. Bonadies announced that the museum will sign a contact with ArtStor and begin contributing images to the website. In exchange, the museum will be able to negotiate for improved copyright privileges, especially for high resolution photographs. The photographs sent to ArtStor contain metadata with citation information to ensure that VMFA is properly cited for all images.

The group discussed current staffing from VITA.

V. RESOURCES & VISITOR EXPERIENCE REPORT

Ms. Keenan discussed opportunities to improve customer services at the ticket desk. Although the museum moved the ticketing servers on-site to increase the speed of ticket sales, she recommended upgrading the Outbound ticketing system. Mr. Bonadies remarked that some of the problem is the design of the VITA network system. By FY20, Ms. Keenan hopes to have membership cards and tickets accessible on mobile devices.

The group encouraged Ms. Keenan to look into alternatives to Outbound to ensure the museum has a ticketing system with the most up-to-date technology.

Ms. Keenan outlined other strategic plan priorities including automated visitor counters, touch screens for visitor surveys, and an upgrade to MailChimp.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS/ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:15am.

Recorded by: Laura Keller

Assistant to the Secretary of the Foundation