

Date: _____

Approved: _____

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
Minutes of the Resources and Visitor Experience Committee
Wednesday, 16 September 2015, 8:30 am
Theater Level Conference Room #1

There were present:

Tyler Bishop, Co-Chair
W. Birch Douglass, III, Co-Chair
Karen C. Abramson
Mary Anne Carlson
Margaret N. Gottwald
Terrell Luck Harrigan
Barbara Noble Howard
Judith A. Niemyer, MD
Dr. Claude G. Perkins
Michele Petersen
Charles H. Seilheimer, Jr.
Dr. Shantaram Talegaonkar
William A. Royall, Jr.

By Invitation:

Alexander Nyerges, Director
Allan Altholz
Dr. Lee Anne Chesterfield
Claudia E. Keenan
Alex McGrath
Megan Reilly
Jayne Shaw
Tom Zydell

Absent:

Anne L. Battle
Cynthia Kerr Fralin
Dr. Monroe E. Harris
H. Eugene Lockhart
Pamela C. Reynolds
Mary Gray Shockey

I. CALL TO ORDER

Tyler Bishop, Co-Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:34 am.

II. MINUTES

Motion: proposed by Mr. Seilheimer, and seconded by Ms. Abramson, to approve the minutes of the June 18, 2015 Joint Resources & Visitor Experience and Operations Committee Meeting as distributed. Motion carried.

III. INTRODUCTION – NEW COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Alex Nyerges, Director, thanked all committee members for their service and introduced new committee Co-Chairs Tyler Bishop and Birch Douglass. Mr. Nyerges commended the leadership abilities of both Co-Chairs, and indicated their expertise in two areas of critical importance to the Resources & Visitor Experience Division: government relations (Mr. Bishop) and fundraising (Mr. Douglass).

Mr. Douglass led a discussion of the mission of the Resources & Visitor Experience Committee, reporting that he, Mr. Bishop, and Ms. Keenan have drafted a mission statement and plan to share it with the committee for their comments. Mr. Douglass highlighted the 2020 Strategic Plan as a central focal point for the committee, summarizing its four goals:

1. Creating exceptional visitor experiences
2. Expanding the museum's education platform to reach all corners of the state
3. Elevating VMFA's reputation within the museum field
4. Building organizational capacity and aligning financial resources to achieve the Plan

Ms. Keenan added that three central themes underpin all four goals of the Plan: branding, interpretation, and technology- making technology a major, current institutional priority.

IV. ADVANCEMENT REPORT

Ms. Shaw reported that the Foundation has raised \$8.7 million in FY15, a 40% increase from the previous year, highlighting significant increases in both unrestricted and restricted giving over the previous Fiscal Year. Restricted giving increases were due largely in part to a sizable challenge grant from the Mary Morton Parsons Foundation in support of *ARTshare*, VMFA's initiative to infuse digital technology into all areas of the museum.

Ms. Shaw provided an update on fundraising progress for FY 2016. So far, the staff has raised 35% of the \$5.9 million fundraising goal. VMFA's Development Staff is currently working to raise funds for *ARTshare*, Change Capital, *Kehinde Wiley*, and *Johns/ Munch*, and is working secure two large grants from the Mellon Foundation and the Evans Foundation.

Ms. Shaw announced the creation of the 1936 Society, an emeritus society for former board members to foster continued engagement with VMFA. She also described the new 5% Gift Allocation Policy, which gives donors the option to contribute 5% of every restricted gift over \$25,000 to the unrestricted endowment beginning October 1, 2015. Mr. Royall commended the development of the 1936 Society, citing that board members (both current and former) are the museum's greatest ambassadors. Mr. Douglass commented that effective communication with donors will be the most important piece of introducing the 5% Gift Allocation Policy, since not all donors will be familiar with this strategy for raising project money while also growing unrestricted income.

A status report on Change Capital, the funds currently being raised from board members to jumpstart the Strategic Plan, was provided by Ms. Keenan. To date, \$2.2 million has been raised. Ms. Keenan shared the goal of reaching out to all board members for their support by the beginning of December, and of attaining 100% participation from the boards.

The group discussed the museum's proposal to the Mellon Foundation for the National Center for Advanced Study in Conservation in the context of the Strategic Plan, focusing on how this initiative would boost the museum's reputation, connect the museum with universities, and increase revenues. Mr. Nyerges and Ms. Keenan outlined how the museum is working across public and private partnerships to garner support for the Strategic Plan, as they seek Change Capital support from board members, request budget packages from the Commonwealth of Virginia, and set goals to increase internal revenues through enterprise and ticket sales.

V. MARKETING REPORT

Ms. Keenan updated committee members on the organizational changes to-date within the Marketing and Communications Department, and provided insight into how the department will continue to evolve.

Allan Altholz, Director of Marketing and Communications, provided a report on exhibition sales and survey results for *Japanese Tattoo*, and announced the exhibition's extension through November 29. Mr. Bishop and Ms. Howard inquired as to how VMFA planned to market the exhibition extension to continue attracting millennial visitors, and recommended that we share news of the extension to non-paid media at universities across the state. Dr. Perkins suggested that we explore a partnership with the Council of Independent Colleges of Virginia in order to further engage Virginia universities. He offered his support in this endeavor and requested follow-up with contact information. Mr. Altholz lastly reported on projections and marketing plans for *Rodin: Evolution of a Genius*, coming to the museum November 18.

Per Mr. Bishop's suggestion, Mr. Altholz will look into adding committee members to the daily email digest which captures news related to VMFA.

VI. GOVERNMENT RELATIONS REPORT

Ms. Keenan, in David Bradley's absence, updated the committee on the funding requests currently being made of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Six decision packages for initiatives related to the Strategic Plan (including the National Center for Advanced Study in Conservation) will be going before the Governor for his consideration at the end of this year. Parallel to Change Capital solicitations, Ms. Keenan, Mr. Bradley, and Mr. Bishop have been making calls and visits to key legislators and influence-makers to garner their support for the VMFA's requests, and have been met with much interest thus far. The museum expects to know by the spring what items will be funded by the state.

VII. VISITOR AND CUSTOMER SERVICE REPORT

Tom Zydell, Director of Membership and Visitor Services, announced a comprehensive plan for customer service training that will launch on October 1. The training curriculum, built in partnership with the

Community College Work Force Alliance, will serve to educate all VMFA staff on the fundamentals of customer service, beginning with front-line employees.

VMFA will also be partnering with VCU this fall as a test-site for its Center for Customer Experience. A study conducted by Mr. Zydel and his VCU partners will aim to map the visitor experience at VMFA by identifying and analyzing visitor “touch points” through survey data, with the ultimate goal of gaining insight as to how we can improve customer experience.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS/ ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Douglass requested that upon receiving the mission statement draft and list of responsibilities, each committee member respond with feedback, and note any areas of responsibility with which they could be most helpful.

Mr. Bishop and Mr. Douglass also proposed that the committee seek ways to remain active and communicative between Trustee meetings, and that there be greater opportunity for the committee members to shape future meeting agendas.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:56 am by Mr. Douglass.

Recorded by: Megan Reilly
Executive Assistant to the Deputy Director for Resources & Visitor Experience