Date: _____ Approved: _____

Technology Task Force Minutes
Theater Level Conference Room #1
Tuesday, September 10, 2013, 2:30 pm

There were present:
Satya Rangarajan, Chairman
Michael J. Schewel
William A. Royall, Jr., Ex-Officio

By Invitation:
Alex Nyerges, Director
Ms. Kelly B. Armstrong
Stephen D. Bonadies
Ms. Erin Brooks
Ms. Suzanne Broyles
Dr. Lee Anne Chesterfield
Cameron O'Brion
Ms. Jayne Shaw

I.   Call to Order – Satya Rangarajan, Chair

Chairman Satya Rangarajan called the meeting to order at 2:35 pm and welcomed the group.

II.   Minutes – Satya Rangarajan

Motion: proposed by Mr. Rangarajan and seconded by Mr. Royall that the minutes of the last meeting of the Technology Task Force held on the 27th of November 2012 be approved as distributed on the 27th of August 2013. Motion carried.

III.   IT Presentation for the Trustee Full Board Meeting on September 18

Stephen Bonadies brought the group up to date on the museum's technology projects including the WiFi installation, Datamart, the website transformation, the Digital Asset Management (DAM) System, the Collections Management System (CMS), and the mobile app Discovery. Mr. Bonadies said we have robust WiFi transmitters in place now. Datamart incorporates new reporting functionality that draws data from both Raiser's Edge which gives members and donor history and CounterPoint that handles tickets and gift shop transactions. With these two systems linked we can run reports to mine the data we collect. The result is a more effective way to engage with visitors who come through the door and we can better track new members and renewals.

The area of greatest change and our main focus is the website transformation which will be responsive and will automatically resize the content to the visitor's device due to our migration from Ektron to Wordpress. It will also allow for improved navigation, less clicks, and increased exposure of the collection. The anticipated completion date for this transformation is December 2013. The group discussed details of these improvements and made suggestions.

Erin Brooks, the Senior Account Director and Web Strategist for RTS Labs, is assisting us with this project and said we could offer to rent devices to our visitors but we must keep in mind how they are going to use this technology. Some will want to use their own devices. Satya Rangarajan pointed out that the advantage to the website browsing vs. the audio tour is that there is no waiting, visitors can hear it now (locally vs. remotely).

In discussing the website improvements, Stephen Bonadies explained that the VMFA curators have been asked to identify twenty objects from each of their collection areas with additional content to post on the site. Signs on the objects in the galleries will alert visitors that extra content is available on-line if they want a closer look. Options include making x-rays of objects available with their before and after conservation photos. Mr. Bonadies mentioned that we have a lot of hidden content in this museum, back stories that are interesting, that will intrigue our visitors. Satya Rangarajan noted that delivery of content is where people tend to fail. He favors adding layers of content such as thumbnail images, meta data, and short videos so the website does not lack depth. He also cautioned that the content cannot be stale the day it launches as we want the visitor to return to the site and see different new content. It must continue to interest the visitor. Mr. Rangarajan asked that the Task Force be able to view the design for the new website which is in process now. Alex Nyerges agreed saying this Task Force should meet again and weigh in on the new design.

IV.   Advancement IT Proposal

Jayne Shaw presented the Advancement IT Proposal entitled ARTshare: VMFA's Digital Initiative Draft Summary as of August 1, 2013. This document lists projects that will enable visitors to engage with VMFA's collection in new and dynamic ways. They will showcase the collection beyond what can be displayed on campus, open the archives to give visitors a deeper understanding of the works, enrich context for the objects, highlight connections within the collections, and empower meaningful wandering by creating pathways for visitors to explore the collection. She said our goal is long term sustainability and this would be a living project.

The summary explains that we have identified nearly $5 million in needs and an additional $2-3 million in educational programming and staffing needs not yet defined. Satya Rangarajan remarked that we still need the vision part of this technology proposal to determine the actual costs and this will be discussed at the next Technology Task Force meeting.

V.   Other Business / Adjournment

No other business was brought before the Task Force and the meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.

Suzanne Broyles
Secretary of the Museum