

## **Integrated Digital Image Resources (IDIR)**

Faculty Advisory Committee *Meeting Notes* (September 18, 2007)

(Bridget Henry, recorder, and Katherine Haskins)

October 24, 2007

Present: Meg Bellinger, Hannah Bennett, Robert Carlucci, Edward Cooke (co-chair), Katherine Haskins, David Joselit, Edward Kairiss, William Kelly, Christina Kraus, Karen Kupiec, Jack Meyers, Robert Nelson (co-chair), Alan Plattus, Pamela Patterson, Charles Powell

Absent: Richard Benson, John Faragher, Benjamin Foster, Ivan Marcus, Lillian Tseng

Meg Bellinger reviewed the mission of the Integrated Digital Image Resources project and how it is being achieved through collaboration among library, information technology staff and faculty to create a new, flexible model to support teaching, research, and learning with digital images. A specific goal is to find solutions to support digital teaching, and as such IDIR is a work in progress. Meg reiterated that the project has been underway for over a year and a half and during that time has secured a budget from the Provost of over \$1 million to sustain the work of digitizing approximately 50% of the Visual Resources Collection (VRC) slides and photographs, developing associated tools and services and technology infrastructure, and archiving the slide and photograph holdings as a legacy collection.

Among the other milestones of the IDIR project, based on faculty engagement and advice, have been

- Working with art history faculty, ITS, and the Library to create or re-draft key position descriptions and to secure funding to make these positions permanent
- Implementing training programs and encouraged skill sharing among Library and IT staff

Meg introduced two new advisory committee members, Pamela Patterson, Instructional Technology Group (ITG) and Robert Carlucci, the newly-appointed Manager of the VRC. Pamela Patterson replaces Mary Litch, who has moved on to other assignments, and Meg acknowledged ITG and Mary Litch's role in "getting us started" with service support for digital teaching.

A question was raised about the number of future VRC staff positions and whether it was two or three. Meg replied that there would be three positions, one of which already exists. The two new positions are Robert Carlucci's and one for technology support.

Following up on his introduction, Robert shared his thoughts and information about current and future directions of the VRC:

- The coming year will be one of transition, both in the move to a new location and in the development of the service model and in looking for opportunities to expand the digital image collections
- We are currently advertising for a technology support staff member who will have a knowledge base and a skill set that will keep him or her fairly far ahead and

- keep the rest of the VRC staff well informed, and will also offer advice to faculty about current tools and transitioning to new ones
- We anticipate a lot of outreach to individual faculty members especially on the matter of how to enhance their teaching with digital resources, including sitting in on classes to observe how digital resources are used, how we can help them to use the resources more effectively, and to be there to fix things if they go awry
  - We also anticipate more focus on students and their needs for access to digital image resources, and in doing so, to put a greater emphasis on visual literacy

Katherine Haskins presented a summary report of IDIR activity since the last FAC meeting in May (document attached). Among the highlights were:

- Addition of more than 68,000 digital images, of which ca. 34,000 came from the acquisition of the Saskia Archive (digitized slide images consisting of mostly European and American painting, sculpture and architecture, with some Asian content)
- Comprehensive review of the 35 mm slide collections with graduate student selectors working through faculty recommendations and based on a selection protocol worked out with faculty members, and also selecting additional materials based on their own areas of interest and training.
- To date (October, 2007) over 110,000 35 mm slides have been selected and prepared for digitization
- Graduate students and VRC staff also worked as proxies for faculty in selecting from the lantern slide and photograph collection.
- To date (October 2007), over 7,500 lantern slides and photographs have been selected and prepared for digitization.

Katherine also remarked on the fact that the art history model used for IDIR is a good one for future digital image resource development as art history is image intensive and its needs and concerns are extensible to broader visual culture resource support issues and practices. Among the findings from IDIR workflows and best practices are:

- Extending the VRC work force through the strategic employment of graduate students (who have the requisite subject knowledge and are often comfortable with technology) has proven a successful approach.
- Strategic partnerships and collaborations with content-, or subject-specific approaches, handled on a project basis, are another useful approach to building collections and creating new service models and tools. For instance, in the last two years, the VRC has benefited from special project funding from the Classics Department, the Hellenic Studies Program, and the Councils on East Asian and Middle East Studies.

Christina Kraus reported that there will be a Digital Resource Manager position in the Classics Department to support the digitization of their slide collection, which is available in digital form through the Yale Department of Classics Digital Library ("DL"), also cross-searchable with the VRC collections.

Comments included the fact that there should be a greater effort to capture graduate student work (their own digital photography) as one way of building a shared collection. As well, a model not addressed in the preceding report would be one to support faculty members with a large amount of material they wished to contribute, especially if they needed help in organizing or managing it. We also need to do more outreach to faculty outside of art history for shared collection building. Meg mentioned that Katherine has prepared a collection contribution policy guideline document that might assist in this process. The document is currently under review in the Library and the plan is to share it with the Faculty Advisory Committee for their comments.

An observation was made that the cumulative knowledge and relationships between the Library and ITS have improved especially in the area of collaborative problem-solving and that as a result it is easier for faculty to cope. More work needs to be done on communication and education, however.

Student and faculty needs beyond art history should also be paid more attention. The new VRC location in the new Arts library facility should help, but we need to create ways to draw more attention to students and to faculty across the campus, including

- Developing basic orientation programs for faculty and students
- Holding more Library staff briefings on the VRC and digital image resources
- Creating better ways to access the digital image collections from the Library website
- Coordinating with residential college staff to increase support for digital image use by undergraduates
- Develop more practical programs for graduate students as the next-generation teachers, including workshops (possibly credit-bearing)

A brief discussion ensued about funding sources for digital image collection and support service development. The issue was raised about whether or not Moore Funds could be used to assist faculty with contributing materials to a shared digital image collection, and a suggestion was made that the issue of broad-based “line item” budget support for digital image collection building be brought to the Teaching and Learning Committee.

Alan Plattus remarked on the current relationship of the School of Architecture to the VRC and how the latter has not fully met the evolving needs of the School’s students and faculty. Alan mentioned that they would like to make use of the VRC but they end up building their own collections. The School doesn’t possess the infrastructure to store the many thousands of digital photographs students take as part of their training, and that this material remains ephemeral as a result. We need to develop incentives for students to contribute their materials and to support this activity.

Alan also said that more digitization of existing VRC slides and photographs is not a solution to Architecture’s needs. A single photograph or limited views of a structure are insufficient for an architect’s needs. Instead, what is needed is a comprehensive, cumulative approach to imaging a building or a site, where you capture all the details of both the design and the construction, etc. Also, photography showing the physical

context of a structure is very important, and is vital for landscape architecture. He would like to see new ways of modeling images, especially those creating “virtual” visits and, as an example, referenced the “Rome Reborn” project (Berkeley and UCLA, now at the University of Virginia), with its 3-D and other conceptual modeling of the city of Rome.

The committee adjourned, and the next meeting will be held during the spring semester.