VALE Steering Committee

Minutes of the October 12, 1999 Meeting

Present: Chervenie, Ciliberti, John Cohn, Judy Cohn, Gaboury, Gaunt, Getaz, Long, Martin, Rigby, Simpson, Sweeney

1. Gaunt opened the meeting welcoming Marilyn Martin, Dean of Libraries at Rowan University who was elected to represent the state college/universities this year as Barbara Simpson's representation shifts from state college/universities to Council of NJ College and University Library Directors.

2. Gaunt brought forth the issue of whether the Steering Committee would approve the practice of sending substitutes to Steering Committee meetings when the elected members cannot attend. After discussion, it was agreed that members of the Steering Committee may send substitutes as their representatives to a maximum of two meetings each year. The substitutes will not have voting privileges. If elected members of the Steering Committee are unable to attend more than two meetings per year, they should discuss with their continuing status with the Chairperson. The group also agreed that representation from the computing division of Seton Hall University was important given the increased technical load being carried by that institution. Phil Long agreed to act in that capacity.

3. Ciliberti provided a general update on various database activities, announcing that remote access to the Softline and Gale databases has been implemented with virtually no problems. The Wilson databases will hopefully be implemented within the next few days. Off-campus access to these products via usernames and passwords will be provided by all three vendors although the implementation of this program will be delayed until the IP-based access (on campus) has been completely implemented.

4. Ciliberti distributed a financial report and explained that invoices for all database services had been mailed to the libraries and that William Paterson's Business Office was processing the vendor invoices. She anticipates an end-of-year balance of approximately $50,000.

5. The group discussed the general future movement away from locally loaded databases to more remote hosts and the possibility of using SiteSearch software and its database builder component for creating access to digitized local resources. Gaboury and Gaunt explained that the new 4.1 version of SiteSearch will greatly simplify digitization, indexing and access to local materials. It was suggested that we invite proposals for small pilot project to test the feasibility of this type of service.

6. Ciliberti reported that Assumption College for Sisters located in Mendham, NJ has inquired about joining VALE. After reviewing its accreditation status and degree programs, the group voted unanimously to extend membership to Assumption College for Sisters.

7. Phil Long inquired about the potential for other, non-New Jersey colleges and universities to join VALE and indicated that a university in the Dominican Republic had expressed serious

interest in joining VALE. After discussion, it was agreed that a small task group consisting of Long, Sweeney, Martin and Gaboury (chair) would explore the implications of opening membership to non-NJ institutions. Their draft report will be due at the November meeting.

8. Gaunt discussed that the new technical position being created by grant funds from the NJ State Library will be posted soon at Rutgers. She mentioned the possible difficulties in hiring into a grant-based position and encouraged all members of the group to help identify possible candidates. The position description will be posted on both the Council and corrado listservs.

9. Gaunt thanked the group for their quick approval of a request from two researchers for access to VALE files for a research project. The group discussed the importance of cost benefit information about VALE and looks forward to the outcome of the research. Gaunt will check with the NJ State Library to be sure that such an endeavor is permissible within the guidelines of the grant which helped fund VALE. The researchers will be invited to discuss their project at a Steering Committee meeting.

10. Getaz reported on her work to update the VALE flyer and presented a draft revision. Several suggestions were made and Joan noted that she will be working with OCLC who has agreed to help with the printing of the brochure.

11. Getaz also announced that her Public Relations sub-committee has agreed to assume a major role in the development and organization of a day-long VALE users meeting tentatively scheduled for January 7, 2000 at Rutgers. Several suggestions for programs were made: SiteSearch database builder demonstration; SiteSearch 4.1 search capabilities; new technologies for authentication of remote users; the VALE research project; and speakers from other consortia. It was suggested also that each VALE committee might want to host a program or meeting that day.

12. Simpson reported that vendor-supplied training sessions are being set up and that Softline training will be held on November 9 and 12 at two locations. Invitations will be sent to all subscribers but all VALE participants will be invited to attend via announcements on the listservs.

13. Rigby and Chervenie reported on their assessment efforts and distributed a draft form to be made available on a web site. Several changes were suggested for the survey which will be directed to librarians and directors. The group also agreed to explore cost benefit kinds of data from directors in a separate inquiry and that an end-user survey available on the VALE website will be developed later. The librarian/director survey will be announced on the various listservs and be concluded by mid-November.

14. Ciliberti reported that Joe Ptaszynski at Seton Hall has been developing a java-based website for VALE usage statistics which will include bar graphs of some of the use data and will be accessible only via username/password to the specific institution. Sweeney inquired if statistics on downloading could be made available and Phil Long will explore this option.

15. Gaunt reported on database documentation and interface design activities, noting that a group of librarian volunteers from around the state had met on October 8 to begin writing documentation about the four original databases for VALE librarian use. She explained that these efforts would provide instructions and explanations designed for librarian use and that the Training group could then modify them as appropriate for end-users. Since the migration to version 4.1 of SiteSearch may impact some of their work, the group was instructed to document the functionality which currently works and to list problem areas separately, since these be solved or changed with the new software. A target date of November 1 has been set for the completion of their work. Gaunt expressed her appreciation to the volunteers for taking on this important task.

16. Gaunt reported on various efforts to obtain stable funding, noting that NJLA's top legislative priority for FY00 is funding for the New Jersey Virtual Library which would provide for VALE activities. She noted that the State Library will be submitting its budget request including $6 million for the Virtual Library. Jack Livingstone has also been making contacts with key legislators about the importance of this funding and will continue to lobby for it. Critical "talking points" will be developed and distributed for the use of all VALE participants as they find opportunities to meet legislators. Gaunt also reported that the State Library has announced changes in funding programs through the regional library cooperatives that may lead to statewide database licenses, which would therefore include VALE.

17. The group discussed the need to move forward quickly in the identification of new databases for FY01 and Gaunt stated that it will be a primary item on the agenda of the next meeting. It was suggested and agreed to that announcement of the call for database suggestions should be posted on the listservs and that the Steering Committee members should use call their "communication buddies" to make sure that all VALE members are aware of this opportunity.

18. The next meeting of the group will be on November 15 at 2 pm.

Minutes prepared by Anne Ciliberti