Alabama Association of College and Research Libraries

Annual Dinner/Business Meeting

April 3, 2019

Wash House Restaurant, Fairhope

Present: Tim Bailey, Paula Barnett-Ellis, DeDe Bradsher, Debbie Cobb, Tim Dodge, Vandy Pacelli Donelson, Dusty Folds, Jessica Hayes, Karlie Johnson, Eric Kidwell, Amy Prendergast, Todd Shipman, Felicia Smith, John Upchurch, Kim Westbrooks, Kathy Wheeler, Daniel Wilson, Ellen Wilson, and Kelly Wilson.

Called to Order: President Jessica Hayes called the meeting to order at 7:13 p.m.

New Officers: Ms. Hayes announced the recent election results with Dusty Folds coming in as President-Elect and Megan Bell as Treasurer. Kathy Wheeler is coming in as President and Jessica Hayes as Past-President. DeDe Bradsher is taking over as Editor of the *Newsletter* from Dusty Folds. Tim Dodge is continuing as Secretary and Anna Mary Williford is continuing as Member-at-Large/ACRL Chapter Liaison. Also continuing: Eric Kidwell as Legislative Liaison and Ellen Wilson as Webmaster.

Sue O. Medina Significant Contribution Award: Rickey Best (Auburn University at Montgomery) was unanimously voted the winner of this award. Unfortunately, he was unable to attend the Annual Dinner/Business meeting. Consequently, the Executive Board recently agreed to make arrangements for setting up a presentation of the award to Mr. Best in Montgomery at a later date.

Minutes of April 11, 2018 Annual Dinner/Business Meeting: Secretary Tim Dodge distributed copies of these minutes for attendees to review and approve. Webmaster Ellen Wilson made a motion to accept the minutes; Tim Bailey seconded; all voted in favor.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Debbie Cobb reported that the checking account had a current balance of $3940.10 and the PayPal account had a balance of $233.93 so the condition of AACRL finances are in "good shape." Membership continues at approximately 100. **Please see attached Treasurer's report for more detail.**

Presentation by Ron Leonard, Special Initiatives Coordinator, Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) on "Toward a Statewide Approach to *Open* our Educational Resources":

 Formerly serving as Director of the Network of Alabama Academic Libraries (NAAL), Mr. Leonard is now serving as coordinator of the newly-formed Special Initiatives operation of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE).
 The "headlines say it all": there is a crisis of student debt in the United States with effects on the national economy with recent graduates unable to make major purchases such as new cars or

houses and often living at the home of their parents. The situation is a consequence of several factors including the recession of 2008-2009 and state governments cutting back on funding for higher education with colleges and universities passing on these costs via increased tuition. Meanwhile, the price of textbooks has also risen dramatically. One partial solution is to turn to free open educational resources (OER) available on the Internet thanks to either liberal licensing terms or by being in the public domain.

Ron Leonard became interested in OER and made inquiries about nearby initiatives such as the Affordable Leasing Georgia done by GALILEO.   Funding for this initiative comes from a state lottery.   Thanks to state politics, an education lottery is not currently possible in Alabama, so alternative ways of setting up an OER initiative here will need to be found.   Unfortunately, the Alabama Legislature is not inclined to fund such an initiative.

However, recent developments at ACHE may help in finding a solution. Dr. James Purcell came in as Director in 2017; ACHE subsequently added OER to its strategic plan; and ACHE funded three free all-day workshops for those interested in learning about OER.   Mr. Leonard became so interested, he left his position with NAAL to joint ACHE as coordinator of Special Initiatives.

Meanwhile, Vicky Ohlson, Director of Special Projects at the Alabama Community College System, became interested in working with Ron Leonard on an OER initiative.   They collaborated on a $60,000 project to replace print resources (*i.e.,* textbooks) with OER resources. The project involved 18,000 students and required that all such resources be posted on the AVL (Alabama Virtual Library) web site. Interested faculty members at both two-year and four-year institutions participated with 21 out of 37 proposals being accepted. Grants ranged in size from $250 to $5000 per proposal. It is calculated that this project saved the students involved $2,000,000 they would have otherwise spent on textbooks.

In his new capacity, Mr. Leonard has been in contact with the AVL (Alabama Virtual Library) Executive Council which is supportive of the idea of the AVL becoming the OER repository for Alabama. He was surprised to learn of the high level of interest in OER by school media specialists as well.   The AVL is launching OER Commons, a "suite of services" in April. See the AVL web site at https://www.avl.lib.al.us/ .

What's next? 1) Establish an OER clearinghouse with information to mirror on web sites.
2) Continue to speak to groups with a potential interest in OER initiatives.
3) Look at grant opportunities, especially foundation and federal.
4)   Promote collaboration between "senior institutions" and community colleges in the development of OER.
If this collaboration is successful, there will be an estimated savings of $24 to $27 million to students who would otherwise have to purchase textbooks.

Lessons learned: 1) Involve all stakeholders.
2) Find OER champions on campus.
3) Ask for volunteers.
4)   Engage in networking to learn about our state's existing resources.
5) Get support of campus bookstores.
6) Investigate federal and foundation grants.
7) Explore more ways to provide "affordable leasing" for resources that are not free.
8) Find OER champions in state government.
9)   Use a blended approach: even if OER is not the complete solution to alleviating student debt, it is still possible to identify resources that can be purchased at a deep discount by students.

Ron Leonard then listed some additional OER repositories: MERLOT, MIT Open Courseware, OER Commons, Open Stax, Open Textbook Library (Minnesota), Orange Grove (Florida), and Affordable Learning (Georgia).

He suggested additional affordable options such as e-book textbooks available through EBSCO and Springer and noted NAAL's purchase of Springer e-books.

There was some question-and answer/commentary.

1) Kathy Wheeler reported on an OER workshop held at the University of South Alabama and that the library created a video concerning OER to distribute to teaching faculty. Also, they sent out a survey.

2) Jessica Hayes reported that OER workshops have been conducted at Auburn University at Montgomery with good faculty attendance noted.   Things are still in an early stage but the library is reaching out to faculty members about OER.   The Library is working with the Online Learning and Distance Education Department.   They are creating a LibGuide plus a web site for faculty members to consult.   Most of the work has concerned English Composition classes with some success; the Library will soon work with History classes.

3) Daniel Wilson said that the library of his employer, American Intercontinental University, is absorbing the costs textbooks, especially in connection to Business and Information Technology courses.   They are replacing textbooks with subscription videos.

4) Eric Kidwell said that at Huntingdon College students are assessed a flat fee for textbooks and that the College is trying to help families do better planning for college costs.   Best models seem to by a hybrid of textbooks and OER.   Ron Leonard agreed that a hybrid or blended approach is key. Mr. Kidwell expressed a concern that some faculty members might find such policies an infringement on academic freedom, so he noted it may be necessary to explain to skeptical faculty members that OER is not an infringement but rather an optimal way of handling the issue. Jessica Hayes noted it is important to consider which faculty members one wants to approach at this point.   Mr. Leonard suggested that OER allows for greater freedom for faculty members to "remix" and revise a syllabus more easily.   Kathy Wheeler noted some faculty members at USA had concerns about the quality of OER resources, so being able to supply good reviews is helpful.

Adjourned: The meeting/dinner was informally adjourned at approximately 8:55 p.m.

Submitted by:

Tim Dodge
Secretary

Treasurer's Report

For the last Treasurer's Report the checking account balance was $4,505.86 and the PayPal account was $189.03.

Since then I received eight AARL membership renewals from PayPal for a total of $172.34. For expenses, one check for $250.00 was written to Kathy Wheeler for reimbursement for the 2019 Annual AACRL Meeting's restaurant reservation at the Wash House. One check for $1,757.96 was written to the Wash House for the Annual meeting/Dinner.

Twenty individuals registered for the 2019 AACRL Annual Meeting/Dinner. Seventeen payments in the amount of $572.56 were received through PayPal and three checks in the amount of $105.00 were received and deposited for a total of $677.56.

$700.00 was transferred from Paypal to the AACRL checking account. Check #1453 never cleared the bank. After review the President and President-Elect decided to void this check and place the amount of $637.20 back into the AACRL checking account.

The checking account balance as of April 3, 2019 is $3,940.10 and the PayPal account is $233.93.

We currently have approximately 100 members in good standing.

[Submitted by Debbie Cobb, Treasurer]