
Presbyterian and Reformed

Virginia Dearborn, Princeton Theological Seminary, Secretary

MEMBERS PRESENT

- Virginia Dearborn, Princeton Theological Seminary
- Ed Hughes, Memphis Theological Seminary
- Steve Jamieson, Covenant Theological Seminary
- Denise Pakala, retired, Covenant Theological Seminary
- Jim Pakala, retired, Covenant Theological Seminary
- Christopher Richardson, Union Presbyterian Seminary, Convener
- David Schmearsal, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary
- John Shaffett, Shorter University
- Andrew Stout, Covenant Theological Seminary
- Andy Thomas, Covenant Theological Seminary

ABSENTEE MEMBERS

- Margaret Alkema, Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary
- Sharon Taylor, Shadyside Presbyterian Church
- Bart Voskuil, Mid-America Reformed Seminary

AGENDA

As the convener of our group, Chris welcomed everyone and kicked off our sharing time together centered on takeaways from Atla Annual Conference 2021 (which was again virtual), unexpected and/or top challenges of reopening the library and/or institutional news. Virginia agreed to take minutes as she and Margaret Alkema share the role and Margaret was unable to attend the meeting this year.

ROUND ROBIN REPORTS

Union Presbyterian Seminary

Chris particularly appreciated Elizabeth Young Miller's presentation Framing and Painting the Library: Mapping Existing Instruction, Services, and Practices to Established Standards and Can You Find Yourself in the Stacks? Building Diverse Collections in Religion and Theology presented by Suzanne Estelle-Holmer, Amy Limpitlaw, and Michelle Spomer. Some of the challenges the library has faced in reopening is rebuilding the student worker population, training/retraining and so on, as well as managing the volume of donated materials being offered after such a long time of deferral. Dr. Paula Skreslet retired as Reference and Archives Librarian. Dr. Robin McCall has joined the team as Reference Librarian, and Ryan Douthat has taken on the duties of Director of Archives & Special Collections. Union Presbyterian Seminary (UPSem) is holding summer classes online but will hold fall classes face to face with a vaccination requirement.

Covenant Theological Seminary

Andrew Stout found the presentations and conversations about DEIA (diversity, equity, inclusion, and access) in this year's conference resonant with the grappling with history and practices we are beginning to do in the Presbyterian and Reformed traditions. Also, Andrew was interested to see what different schools/libraries are doing with their LMSs (Canvas, etc.). Covenant has also found it challenging to manage the large number of incoming donations.

Andy Thomas joined the team as Collection Development Librarian since we last met. Bo Adams' presentation was a helpful introduction to Atla as well as the challenges librarians in the organization are facing with respect to collection development (rising costs, increasing prevalence of e-content).

Jim and Denise, now both retired, continue to be involved with Covenant and in Atla. The seminary's outgoing president will be honored later this week; the incoming president is an alumnus. They're happy to have Becky Givens in technical services and Andy in collection development.

Steve, who has become the Library Director since our last meeting, remarked on the practice of controlled digital lending which continues to evolve but has not yet developed to the point of any turnkey solutions.

From Jim (submitted following our meeting):

Our consortium, as Steve Jamieson mentioned, is MOBIUS, which, like Atla, is now no longer an acronym but had stood for Missouri Bibliographic Information User System when we began over 20 years ago. Since then, some public libraries have joined, including the Arkansas system centered in Little Rock and Tulsa Public with its branches, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Texas joined (institutions join rather than just their libraries). There are also a few members in Iowa and Kansas. MOBIUS also has a mutual borrowing relationship with Prospector in Colorado (plus the University of Wyoming). States are connected by various courier services that interact.

Specifically, regarding e-books not being shared, MOBIUS has about 261,713 EBSCO e-books with unlimited simultaneous users that all faculty, staff, and students of the academic members can access.

We check MOBIUS holdings before purchasing a book, and if we can afford one expensive title but not another of two we'd like, we'll get the one not in MOBIUS versus one that is. But that works only with print books, as e-books cannot be shared.

Princeton Theological Seminary

Virginia was glad for the opportunity to attend the virtual conference and looks forward to reviewing her notes and watching sessions she missed on demand. The library was called upon to reopen for Princeton Seminary students, faculty, and staff on June 14, although the campus does not plan to reopen until the fall. Since security declined to conduct ID card checks on those entering the building, library staff have had to fill this role. One consequence of this has been the re-suspension of interlibrary loan services. Thankfully, they now have a Head of Special Collections and Archives (Brian Shetler) and an additional full-time cataloger (Nicholas Friesner) since we last met. The search for a Head of Public Services is ongoing. Princeton Seminary is undertaking antiracism formation work through the

curriculum and efforts involving employees, trustees, and alumni as well.

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Stitt Library

David mentioned challenges related to reopening as renovation work continues and no student workers are available yet. Ninety percent of the collection was moved off-site during renovation and the remaining 10% has been in a nearby racquetball court. They have been using the LMS to create staff training modules.

Memphis Theological Seminary

Ed, whose background is in university and public libraries, finds Atla valuable for approaching theological librarianship. The biggest challenges in reopening the library have been staffing and budget. There are now only two library staff, including Ed, so they had to go to closed stacks and have tried to place the higher use materials on the main floor to aid retrieval. The library also cancelled the print journals and shifted to accepting on demand article requests.

Shorter University

John especially appreciated the pre-conference workshops at Atla Annual this year, particularly Strategic Planning: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly by Siong Ng, Kelly Campbell, and Matthew Ostercamp. There has been some turnover in staff as some have retired and others have come on board. Much of the collections budget has gone to database purchases, leaving less for print. However, the incoming new provost may provide some hope for a change going forward.

Shadyside Presbyterian Church

Shadyside Presbyterian Church closed its building for most of the year, so Sharon could not spend much time in the church library and archives. It was supposed to be her year to weed and reorganize. Instead, she did as much as she could from home. Right now, she has over 50 new books on her dining room table ready for cataloging and processing. The church building is now partially open and folks are asking, "What's new in the library?". Sharon also fielded some interesting reference questions about the church's history and it has spurred her on to think about writing, including a history of the church during the COVID-19 crisis.



2020-21 GROUP: [pictured, left to right] Chris Richardson, John Shaffett, Jim Pakala, Denise Pakala, David Schmersal, Andy Thomas, Andrew Stout, Virginia Dearborn, Ed Hughes