



VIVA VRC: THE FIRST TWO YEARS OF LANSING COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S VINYL RECORD CLUB

A history by Dr. Steve Robinson and Sarah Eubanks

CONTENTS

VRC Pre-History	1
VRC Becomes an RSO.....	3
Nerd Stuff.....	3
High Fidelity Award Established	4
VRC As Part of the LCC Community	4



PHOTO: LCC's Vinyl Record Club meets in the first meeting space at A&S on November 5, 2022

VRC PRE-HISTORY

Dr. Steve Robinson

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I often joke that we started the VRC as an excuse for me to hang out with students. That's not really a joke. Toward the end of the "lockdown" phase of the pandemic at LCC, I really missed contact with students. My team looked for all kinds of ways to get me more time with students, and this idea really did come up in that context. On September 10, 2021, I wrote an e-mail to Layne Ingram asking about the vintage turntables we owned at LCC and pitched the idea of starting a student club.

Pam Blundy found us a room in A&S and we did some low-key promotion. The first "exploratory" meeting was held on November 17, 2021. Three staff

members and the student editor of *The Lookout*, Jacob Zokvic, attended.



11/17/2021

PHOTO: Exploratory Meeting of the Vinyl Record Club on November 17, 2021. Dr. Steve Robinson, LCC President; Chuck Page, LCC Librarian; Will Emerson, HHS Apprenticeships and External Partnerships Director; and Jacob Zokvic, Student Editor of *The Lookout*.

VRC BECOMES AN RSO

Dr. Steve Robinson

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The first official meeting of the club as a Registered Student Organization was on February 24, 2022. Sarah Eubanks was the club's first student president. She wrote an amazing statement that, in my view, has come to define this club:

It was evident to me after The Vinyl Record Club's successful first meeting that this club has a special potential to create those kinds of connections--the ones that bolster a person and reminds them that the thrill of discovery is better as a group activity. I would love to play a leadership role in growing this club and spreading the joy of music. I strongly believe each of us are responsible to help create the kind of the world we want to live in, and the world I want to live in includes music and community!



PHOTO: VRC members pick out stickers with which to decorate the Crash Cart. A drop-in member looks through our offering of free albums

When she completed her program of study here at LCC in August of 2022, Sarah stepped down as the first president of VRC. Tyler Reck was

elected the second president at the September 22, 2022 meeting. Amy Rochowiak is the current president, elected September 21, 2023.

NERD STUFF

Dr. Steve Robinson

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PHOTO: The VRC attempt "Double Weezer" by syncing the same song from two albums simultaneously

In the early days of VRC, we used my personal equipment, which I left in the unused classroom of A&S. We had two separate systems: an Audio-Technical LP5 paired with a Yamaha amp, and a Technics SL-D20 and a Technics amp. Each system was hooked to some badly deteriorated JBL studio monitors (I have since restored these).

About the time Pam Blundy moved us from A&S to the new space in Gannon, I

unpacked the contents of the current "Crash Cart." This thing has been absolutely perfect for the club. The pair of Pioneer PLX-1000 turntables are very high-quality DJ/broadcast decks. They have heavy bases and great controls and would be considered top-of-the-line for a hip hop/DJ setup, as well as a radio station. They had been purchased new by LCC prior to the pandemic and were just sitting in storage, along with the pair of Ortofon Red cartridges. Pam Blundy ordered the cart, which fit the decks perfectly. Gary Mejia in Media Services found us the Audio-Technica DJ mixer and Crown 55-watt power amp. I bolted the entire thing together and added the pine desktop (with the help of Brad Latuzek in Facilities, who helped me cut and finish the wood). I painted it with a durable black stain, and the students have covered it with stickers. As a finishing touch, I created dedicated speaker leads on the back of the cart and custom made 20' speaker cables with banana plugs. The Sony DD-2900 speakers are very light and small. They were literally plucked out of the garbage when the previous president moved out of the Herrmann House (they are very inexpensive speakers that were originally paired with an entry-level sound system). This rig works perfectly for club meetings, where the listening level is low to afford for conversation. For events where the club is playing music, we use a portable PA that is more than loud enough to play the music outdoors.

HIGH FIDELITY AWARD ESTABLISHED

Sarah Eubanks

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Of the many irresistible targets of criticism, two perennial favorites are the state of modern music and the perceived indolence of youth. Anyone who has settled into this worldview would have a lot to reconsider after attending a VRC meeting!

Being involved in the VRC frequently reminds me that our best days are not behind us. Despite being a curious and voracious lifelong music fan, I am routinely introduced to artists—even entire genres!—at VRC meetings. Yet more inspiring are our student members. So much so, in fact, that I felt compelled to create an award to recognize their achievements. The High Fidelity award is an annual honor recognizing a VRC Student Officer for their outstanding dedication and promotion of the club.



PHOTO: Simon Medina's High Fidelity Award, 2023

Our club secretary, Simon Medina, was the first High Fidelity Award recipient. My primary justification for nominating Simon was his commitment. He comes to every meeting and event without fail. Whenever we have records spinning—which is basically always—he can be found logging every single track played. After he goes home, he makes a spreadsheet that he uses to create a Spotify playlist. He combines those Spotify playlists into mega-playlists that chronicle the entire semester. He somehow finds the time to do all of this while taking classes and working. It's important to him that every person's turn at the cart is remembered. He takes his role—which he self-defined—very seriously.

Simon was honored at LCC's 53rd Annual Student Recognition Celebration. It was the first time the VRC appeared at a college-wide event. Simon was given a custom-made award designed to double as an album jacket holder. His peers, family, and college community got to celebrate his achievements with him.

Simon is just one example of this level of dedication. The VRC currently has 63 registered student members. The VRC elected new student officers at our September 21st meeting, marking the club's continuation as a registered student organization. I feel so lucky to see firsthand what the students achieve here and excited for what they achieve beyond.

This award will not be the last time our student members will be recognized. It

is only the beginning, and the best is yet to come.

VRC AS PART OF THE LCC COMMUNITY

Sarah Eubanks

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PHOTO: VRC members Simon Medina and Tyler Reck represent the club at the Fall 2023 RSO Fundraising event on October 31, 2023, with the VRC's beloved Crash Cart

The VRC is frequently invited to attend and play music at events on campus, including RSO and resource fairs, RSO fundraising events, and the StarScapes showcase.

We love spreading the love of music played in an analogue format and bringing attention to RSOs at LCC. Promoting LCC as a place where everyone can find a place to belong is the central tentpole of our club. What better way is there to do that than to literally plug in and amplify a variety of music, picked out by our students?

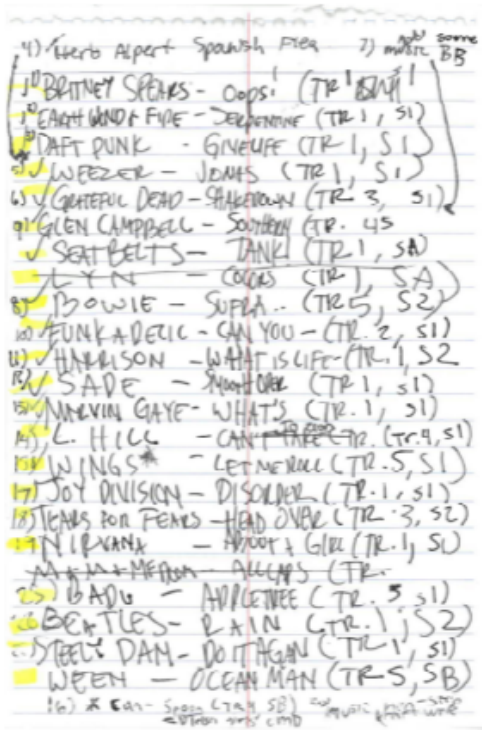


PHOTO: Playlist of the VRC's set at LCC's RSO and Resource Fair on August 22, 2023

Incidentally, this practice has contributed to our club's visual identity too. In gratitude for our participation at the LCC Resource and LCC Fair on August 22, 2023, Student Life offered to purchase a banner for the VRC. As a result, a mascot was born! I made the design and Iris Morici digitally inked it. LCC Marketing refined and approved the design, which can now be seen printed on the tablecloth at any on-campus event the VRC participates at.



PHOTO: The original VRC mascot design by Sarah Eubanks, inked by Iris Morici



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Features Vinyl Record Club

Vinyl Record Club continues to spin



Members of the LCC Vinyl Record Club hold some of their favorite albums during a recent meeting. Courtesy photo

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PHOTO: The VRC as featured in *The Lookout*, April 7, 2023.