

Our Vision

As the national professional organization for all law librarians and those who support the field of law librarianship, the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) serves as the voice of permanent public access to legal information and the leaders of the profession. AALL's envisioned future is to be an essential part of the professional life of every member. In the future:

Members will be recognized as valued leaders in the legal community. AALL will provide leadership training and opportunities to position our members to become essential to the mission of their organizations.

Members will have the skills needed to meet the ever changing needs of our environment. AALL will provide the educational opportunities to position our members to navigate those changes.

Members will work to protect continuous and permanent access to legal information, which is at the heart of law librarianship. AALL will provide the national voice, the reputation, and the stature to be a strong advocate for law librarians and their constituencies.

As an activist library organization, our agenda for the future is ambitious, encompassing a broad scope of activities. AALL, through our initiatives in leadership, education, and advocacy, will empower our members to meet the professional challenges that lie ahead.

Framework for Strategic Directions

Introduction:

The profession of law librarianship is changing. As access to information grows, the organizations served by law libraries evolve and technology changes the delivery of information. These changes provide both challenges and opportunities for librarians. While the number of issues that need to be addressed seems endless, a strategic framework needs to focus on what is most important over the next three to five years. This plan addresses these issues through leadership, advocacy, and education. It introduces the three concepts and attaches them to the ideas presented in the opening.

Leadership:

Law librarians see a need to reinvent themselves in response to their changing environment, the proliferation of information, and the rapid changes in technology. This provides an opportunity to position the librarian and the library to a more central place in the parent organization. Stronger leadership skills are needed to make that happen. Developing these skills can be accomplished through the enhancement of existing AALL leadership training, the creation of new leadership training opportunities, and the development of resources (e.g., toolkits).

The average age of law librarians is approximately 50 years old. New librarians must be attracted to the profession through education and recruitment programs developed in cooperation with both library and law schools. Law librarians also need opportunities to learn from each other through mentorship and partnering programs. Within AALL, leadership training and opportunities are needed to prepare the next generation of law librarians to continue the goals and ideals of the Association.

Perceptions and stereotypes continue to hamper the profession. While librarians often depend on the written word to change those perceptions, actions are stronger. Participation by AALL members in organizations outside of the library community and in joint projects with other library associations (e.g., advocacy work) educates non-librarians to the value and expertise of law librarians.

Education:

Libraries, the information librarians manage, and the technologies they use continue to change at a rapid pace. Education programs are needed to ensure that librarians are able to stay ahead of those changes. While AALL has been successful in delivering education through its Annual Meeting, additional education opportunities are needed, and AALL cannot do it alone.

As the Association develops its new education component, AALL needs to closely examine content, delivery of the programs (format), and partnerships with other

organizations. The manner in which education programs are delivered will not remain a constant but will change as needs and technology evolve.

To train the next generation of law librarians, more law librarian-focused and legal bibliography classes must be incorporated into library school curriculums.

To attract new librarians to the profession and to ensure that all librarians receive the continuing education they need, an increased number of grants and scholarships must be available.

Advocacy:

Political and commercial policies affect law libraries and librarians in almost every facet of operation. While some law libraries deal with thorny questions in the realms of technology, copyright, and intellectual freedom, others are concerned with costs of materials, funding, and the continuation of their very existence. The issues law librarians face are no longer limited to local and national topics; they have moved into the international arena. When information policy inhibiting access to and use of information is adopted at the international level, it is often too late for AALL or its members to take effective action.

AALL must increase its role, in all political arenas, as the unified voice of law librarians in order to help influence and shape policies that will promote continued access to and use of information. This will require more resources and a commitment from AALL members.

American Association of Law Libraries 2005-2010 Strategic Directions

Over the past two years AALL worked to develop strategies for the future that will strengthen our core purpose and values. Our plan for 2005 to 2010 reflects the result of this work. This approach will give us the direction and flexibility needed to grow as an organization, while placing primary focus on our members.

Core Purpose of AALL

AALL strengthens the profession of law librarianship and supports the individual efforts of our members.

Core Values of AALL

AALL values:

- Lifelong learning and intellectual growth
- The role of the law librarian in a democratic society
- Equitable and permanent access to legal information
- Continuous improvement in the quality of justice
- Community

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL I: LEADERSHIP

Law librarians will be recognized and valued as the foremost leaders and experts in legal information, research, and technology.

OBJECTIVES

- Provide tools to increase members' abilities to position themselves as essential to the mission of their organizations
- Provide leadership training opportunities
- Expand mentoring programs and opportunities
- Increase AALL participation in organizations within the legal and library communities

GOAL II: EDUCATION

Law librarians will have the education and training they need to meet and leverage the challenges of the changing information environment.

OBJECTIVES

- Expand the scope of educational offerings to meet the ever-changing needs of members
- Develop partnerships to increase the range of educational offerings
- Use a wide range of delivery means and opportunities to provide education beyond the Annual Meeting
- Increase the number of library school programs for law librarianship and increase awareness of law librarianship as a profession
- Increase the number and amount of grants and scholarships

GOAL III: ADVOCACY

Law librarians will influence the outcome of legal information, technology policy, and librarianship issues of concern to AALL members.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase resources available for advocacy efforts
- Continue to expand international role
- Improve grassroots participation in advocacy efforts

AALL Board Strategic Planning Process

November 2003

The AALL Executive Board, executive director, and senior staff met in retreat to consider: 1) What it Means to be on a Strategic Board: When, Why and How to Keep Your Focus Strategic; 2) The Life Cycle of Not-for-Profit Organizations: Implications for AALL and for Board's Governance Style; 3) Board Members as Change Agents: What it Means for Board Behavior, Skills Sets, and Comfort Level; 4) An Exploration of Strategic Planning: Designing an Appropriate and Fluid Planning Process for AALL; and, 5) The Mega Issue of AALL's Educational Needs Assessment: What is the Future of AALL's Education Program? Where should it focus and how should it be structured and still be affordable? The session was facilitated by Cate Bower, CAE, principal partner of Tecker Consultants, LLC. At the meeting each AALL Executive Board member was given a copy of Glenn H. Tecker, Jean S. Frankel, and Paul D. Meyer's, *The Will to Govern Well: Knowledge, Trust & Nimbleness* (American Society of Association Executives 2002) to read prior to the April 2004 meeting.

April 2004

The AALL Executive Board, executive director, and senior staff met in a planning day to consider 1) ways to continue to transition board focus to a more strategic approach and 2) to plan the process of strategic thinking that would be used to update the existing strategic plan. The session was facilitated by Cate Bower, CAE, principal partner of Tecker Consultants, LLC.

May-November 2004

The AALL Executive Board identified a number of documents that would provide a general environmental scan of the profession of librarianship, the legal community as a whole, information management, and publishing trends. Links or citations to these documents were posted in the AALL Executive Board section of AALLNet for all of the board to read (see Bibliography).

AALL members' thoughts were solicited in a variety of venues. At the AALL Meeting in Boston, there was an open forum soliciting members' views following the second business meeting. Subsequent to the Annual Meeting, there were online discussion groups developed for each of the major type special interest sections (academic; private; and state, court, and county); there was a set of questions posted on AALLNet that every member was encouraged to answer; and there was a discussion forum ("At the Water Cooler") where members could share their thoughts informally.

The AALL Executive Board decided to broaden its perspective by soliciting input from a cross section of stakeholders of law libraries and law librarians. It did so by commissioning qualitative research across five key groups: 1) legal publishers; 2) the courts; 3) law schools; 4) law firms; and 5) related associations. Using a questionnaire prepared by Tecker Consultants with input from AALL leadership, Cate Bower, CAE, principal partner of Tecker Consultants, who facilitated the AALL Executive Board's planning process, conducted a total of 12 interviews between September and November of 2004 with representatives of these stakeholder groups. The interviews served to elicit the stakeholders' ideas about the challenges and potential roles for both law libraries and law librarians, as well as the part AALL might play in helping create those roles. Interviews included asking the specific questions outlined in the questionnaire along

with extemporaneous conversations as a result of issues that were raised. Those interviewed were chosen from a list of potential participants created by the AALL Executive Board.

November 2004

The AALL Executive Board, executive director, and senior staff met in retreat where the actual strategic thinking process was undertaken. Based on the comments received from members and stakeholders and the information gleaned from the background documents about the future of the profession and the world in which law librarians function, the board developed what it felt to be the core ideology and envisioned future of AALL. Board members identified some mega issues facing the Association and its members and worked to establish goals and conditions to address those issues. The session was facilitated by Cate Bower, CAE, principal partner of Tecker Consultants, LLC.

December 2004

Cate Bower, CAE, principal partner of Tecker Consultants, LLC, supplied the AALL Executive Board with a summary report of the conclusions it had reached at the November retreat as to the core values of AALL and the major goals and objectives it wished to address in the next few years. Board members were asked to respond as to whether they agreed or disagreed with those conclusions and to add further thoughts and comments.

January 2005

Taking the summary report and the comments received from the AALL Executive Board, a board committee and the AALL executive director met to prepare a draft set of Strategic Directions. To assist the subcommittee with a perspective representing the needs of the Association's next generation, an involved member from the appropriate age demographic was invited to provide input.

February to April 2005

The draft set of Strategic Directions was provided to the AALL Executive Board for review and discussed at the April Board meeting.

July 2005

The final draft will be ratified by the AALL Executive Board at its July meeting.

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