

AALL 2000-2005 Strategic Plan: "Leadership for the 21st Century New Realities, Changing Roles"

At the Annual Meeting in July 2000 in Philadelphia, the AALL Executive Board approved a new strategic plan for the years 2000- 2005.

Mission

The American Association of Law Libraries supports and serves its members, promotes and enhances the value of law libraries, fosters law librarianship, and provides leadership and advocacy in the field of legal information and information policy.

Vision

The American Association of Law Libraries is a thriving professional association whose members and libraries-whether physical or virtual legal information services-are recognized as critical to the success of their organizations and as central to society. AALL members possess the knowledge and skills to maintain effectiveness in a constantly changing legal environment. Since the ready availability of legal information is a necessary requirement for a just and democratic society, AALL and its members advocate and work toward fair and equitable access to authentic current and historic legal information, and educate and train library users to be knowledgeable and skilled legal information consumers.

Preamble

The Strategic Plan is a tool to provide structure and focus to all Association activities. It is the framework for Association Committees, SISs, and Chapters for developing activities and programs. The Plan includes the Mission statement of the Association and a Vision statement articulating the state of the Association in five years. The Plan's Strategic Directions are priority statements, major paths to guide the Association during 2000-2005. Outcomes are specific phenomena that the Plan seeks to create to move the Association in the strategic direction and make a real difference in the professional lives of law librarians, consumers of legal information, and AALL members. Initiatives are specific activities or steps to be undertaken by AALL and its membership to bring about the outcomes. The Strategic Plan is the tool for choosing among competing priorities for Association resources-such as member and staff time and fiscal resources. All activities must be evaluated against the Strategic Plan to assure that they help move the Association toward the Vision.

This strategic plan does not attempt to list or chronicle all the important, ongoing work of AALL and its many entities. For example, AALL will continue to publish the Law Library Journal, AALL Spectrum, and hold Annual Meetings and professional development workshops. The Executive Board assumes that these and many other ongoing efforts will continue in the future and serve as a foundation for increased efforts in those areas described in the new Strategic Plan.

This Plan supersedes previous Plans. It was developed from the input generated by extensive outreach efforts. During 1999, the Board reached out to members individually as well as through Committees, SISs, and Chapters-conducting surveys, offering formal programs, and through informal discussions. During two planning retreats, the Executive Board reviewed responses to the outreach program and extensive Environmental Scans prepared by Association staff and Board members.

Environmental Scan

There are rapid, significant changes in the components of a law library: the resources and the services. On the resource side, mergers, buyouts, and changes in the focus of individual publishers have created a new resource environment where traditional practices and relationships are no longer valid. Two mega-publishers, a few new alternative publishers, and many heavily marketed new electronic sources have replaced the finite number of reliable products and known philosophies of traditional publishers. Leased information, price increases, loss of knowledgeable customer support personnel, and titles, and formats that come and go with bewildering speed have created a resource-consuming, indefensible environment that adds to the workload and impacts the credibility of law librarians. Extant federal regulations and a revised industry focus yield incomprehensible pricing practices, major cost increases, a diminution in quality, and the threat of a permanent loss of valuable legal resources.

Intellectual property and copyright issues increase in complexity and importance with the increasing prominence of electronic resources and the globalization of information and organizations. The nature of electronic resources creates new concerns for authentication and preservation of information. The volume of electronic resources that expand print resources add a new set of elements to acquisitions, collection development, and reference. Subject diversity has become part of law school curricula, legal practice, and court case processing. Subject disciplines other than law and languages other than English increase demands on resources. The Internet wave has fostered the inaccurate perception that all required information is-or can be-on a desktop and that a physical facility is no longer the heart of the organization, that the network has supplanted the physical facility.

On the services side of the library, changes in the profession are occurring at the same time that library patrons and their expectations are changing. There is a continuing refocusing of library schools and tensions between the traditional and the new. Distance education and online courses are growing. Changing curricula, closing schools, and alternative jobs for graduates reduce the number of new law librarians. Librarian salaries are not competitive or equitable with those for comparable professions requiring similar education, experience, and responsibility. Fewer qualified personnel are available for job openings. Legal education is changing, and more law schools are offering courses outside the traditional legal curricula. The number of programs and courses dealing with legal information offered by associations and institutions other than law schools and legal associations are increasing.

Law librarians are providing services outside the traditional physical library location. As more attorneys and students rely on online research, librarians are providing one-on-one assistance in offices and online. The number of library users from the general community is increasing and there is a need for added basic legal research instruction for the public. Virtual reference, knowledgeable self-represented litigants, and increased alternative dispute resolution resources impact law libraries.

Law librarians are contributing to organizations and to the communities they serve in new ways-as knowledge managers, information coordinators, and as essential participants in the organization's administrative structure. Different competencies and skills are required for law librarianship each year. The basic knowledge for library work changes frequently. Librarians need to be skilled teachers and evaluators of materials, and knowledgeable about technological developments, marketing, and other business subjects. At the same time a "do more with less" philosophy affects resource allocation and decision making in all law library environments. Funding continues to be problematic. A steady erosion of space and unrealistic perceptions about libraries and legal information exacerbates tensions between the library and other departments. Continuing problems of librarian salaries and image magnify the challenge of adapting to the new legal environment.

More law firms and companies are global. Multi-disciplinary law firms and practices are increasing. Globalization of the law increases the scope of materials required and the research requirements for law librarians. Revised revenue structures in firms and governments affect the resources available for libraries. An increase in the number of lawyers and a diminution of respect for the law and legal institutions create a new challenge for law librarians to work with colleagues to improve respect for the rule of law. Diverse cultural enclaves and backgrounds in our communities create a demand for new knowledge and people skills as well as a broader scope of materials and resources.

All aspects of the law libraries continue to evince a sea change and there is no indication that the pace will be modified. The profession faces one of the most challenging eras ever.

Strategic Direction #1

Law Librarianship Is a Thriving Profession Whose Members Are Valued as Critical to Their Institutions and to the Legal System.

- Outcome A: Law librarians determine the evolution of virtual and physical law libraries.

INITIATIVES

AALL will:

1. Set standards and guidelines for the organization and delivery of information and services in an evolving print and electronic environment.
 2. Develop standards for virtual law libraries.
 3. Create and promote models for high quality law libraries in the courts, law firms, law schools, and other organizations.
 4. Establish standards that become the preeminent requirements for academic law libraries and are incorporated in the ABA standards for law libraries.
- Outcome B: Law librarians are recognized by their employers as central to their institutions and to decision-making at the highest levels.

INITIATIVES

AALL will:

1. Actively communicate the value of law librarians to employers and potential employers.
 2. Track and report trends affecting courts, law firms, law schools, and other institutions in which law librarians work and provide information to help members anticipate and respond to change in their institutions.
 3. Train librarians in skills and strategies to influence decision-making within their institutions.
 4. Create opportunities for law librarians to provide leadership at conferences and influential meetings of other law and information-related groups and organizations.
- Outcome C: Law Librarians receive equitable compensation and status relative to their skills, knowledge, and contributions.

INITIATIVES

AALL will:

1. Regularly compile detailed compensation analyses comparing law librarians' salaries, education, and contributions to those of comparable professionals in different types of organizations, firms, schools, and courts.
 2. Document and publicize the financial benefits of law librarians to their institutions.
- Outcome D: Law librarians are recognized as the essential legal information experts.

INITIATIVES

AALL will:

1. Establish standards of excellence for legal information Web sites that are used by consumers and librarians for law-related research.
 2. Partner with Chapters and others associations to offer continuing legal research education to national, state, and local bar associations, and to other law and library associations.
 3. Create a preeminent law-related Web page on AALLNET that links users to other sites that meet an AALL standard of quality.
 4. Support members by supplying information on new developments in legal research that they can use in communicating with library patrons.
- Outcome E: Law Librarianship and AALL membership reflect the diversity of society and there are an ample number of qualified librarians entering the profession each year.

INITIATIVES

AALL will:

1. Actively promote the profession of law librarianship and membership in AALL to law and library schools and undergraduate career centers.
2. Found and build a \$250,000 endowment for minority scholarships.
3. Create marketing tools for Chapters and individual members to recruit others to the profession and to AALL.

Strategic Direction #2

Law Librarians Possess the Knowledge and Skills to Thrive in a Constantly Changing Legal Environment.

- Outcome A: Educators and employers use AALL's Core Competencies that reflect the changing nature of law librarianship and guide professional development activities.

INITIATIVES

AALL will:

1. Develop basic and advanced core competencies for law librarians.
 2. Actively promote the core competencies to educators and employers.
- Outcome B: Include a curriculum on law librarianship in Library and Information Science degree programs.

INITIATIVES

AALL will:

1. Provide a model curriculum for an exemplary program in law librarianship.

2. Participate in accrediting schools of library and information science so that library education meets the needs of our members and our institutions.
 3. Partner with schools of library and information science to increase the availability of distance education programs in law librarianship.
 4. Publicize and promote law librarianship in schools of library and information science.
- Outcome C: High quality professional development programs are available to law librarians and others through innovative means and in a variety of formats and locations.

INITIATIVES

AALL will:

1. Solidify the programmatic objectives and achieve financial viability for the AALL Professional Development Program.
 2. Partner with other educational and professional organizations to expand the scope of program offerings.
- Outcome D: Law librarians are the trainers of choice for legal information research.

INITIATIVES

AALL will:

1. Actively promote law librarians to the legal community as the premier legal research trainers.
2. Offer educational programs to develop a cadre of skilled adult educators among law librarians.
3. Partner with Chapters to facilitate legal research training programs for the public.

Strategic Direction #3

AALL and Law Librarians Are Recognized Leaders in Shaping Information Policy that Ensures Fair and Equitable Access to National and State Legal and Government Information.

- Outcome A: Authentic, current, and historic government information is widely available at little or no cost.

INITIATIVES

AALL will:

1. Establish a coalition of major library and law-related associations and other non-profit groups to promote permanent public access to government information from the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of federal and state government.
 2. Prepare and publicize compelling statements of AALL's positions on information policy issues.
 3. Work with public agencies to ensure the authenticity of electronic legal and government records.
- Outcome B: Integrated finding tools and a system of standards for electronic publications provide permanent access to legal and government information.

INITIATIVES

AALL will:

1. Work with government entities to develop timely and comprehensive finding tools and a system of standards for electronic publications.
 2. Initiate a campaign to incorporate into state and federal legislation principles of public access to information that require government agencies to develop and maintain comprehensive finding tools for all electronic government publications.
 3. Extend principles of public access and create finding tools to information from the legislative and judicial branches.
- Outcome C: Copyright law and licensing practices preserve the rights of users, including fair use in all formats.

INITIATIVES

AALL will:

1. Provide leadership in the development of federal and state licensing legislation that preserves the rights of users.
 2. Work with legislators and others to ensure that database protection legislation preserves user rights.
 3. Work with the Copyright Office to preserve user rights in respect to digital information.
 4. Cooperate with other organizations to influence the development of international treaties, agreements, laws and conventions concerning intellectual property.
- Outcome D: All levels of government accept the AALL Universal Citation Guide as the standard method of citation for legal information.

INITIATIVES

AALL will:

1. Promote the Universal Citation Guide to organizations representing the federal and state judiciary.
 2. Seek endorsements of the Guide by key organizations.
 3. Promote usage of the Guide by publishers.
- Outcome E: AALL members actively participate in the advocacy process at all levels of government.

INITIATIVES

AALL will:

1. Develop a government relations action group in each state to monitor legislation and provide leadership on state information policy issues.
2. Communicate with members on important federal and state information policy issues.
3. Provide training to members on government advocacy skills.

Strategic Direction #4

A Diverse Legal Publishing Industry Offers a Broad Range of Legal Publications in a Competitive Environment.

- Outcome A: High quality, authoritative legal publications in all formats are available at fair prices.

INITIATIVES

AALL will:

1. Produce and widely disseminate a report analyzing evolving pricing patterns and comparing trends in legal publishing to trends in other publishing sectors.
 2. Provide consumers with tools for informed decision-making, such as an annual price guide with needed budgetary information.
 3. Engage legal publishing executives in discussions that will educate both vendors and librarians about our common concerns and represent the best interests of our members.
 4. Work with other groups, consumers and members to provide leadership and ensure a vibrant and competitive legal publishing environment.
- Outcome B: Legal publishers follow fair business practices.

INITIATIVES

AALL will:

1. Develop a model code of fair business practices for legal publishers that is an accepted standard in the industry.

2. Build a power base among consumers of legal information to encourage worthwhile and beneficial practices and to highlight those that are harmful to end users.
 3. Recognize publishers and publishing practices that conform to AALL's model code.
- Outcome C: Historical legal materials are preserved and accessible.

INITIATIVES

AALL will:

1. Develop a national plan for the preservation of legal materials in all formats.
2. Publicize current preservation activities.
3. Support efforts by libraries and publishers to build consortia for the preservation of historical electronic and print materials.