

# New Directions in Professional Development

Our newest committee is taking AALL down the right road.

AALL's Professional Development Committee and Director of Programs Martha Brown are taking Association educational programs to new heights, with a long-range plan to help members grow and learn into the next millennium. By the year 2000, the plan will have transformed AALL professional development efforts from today's Annual-Meeting-focused approach, to a year-round process of meeting member needs with a diverse range of programs—available at least once a month—in numerous locations and formats.

The Professional Development Committee (PDC) was created by AALL in July 1996, to expand the educational opportunities available to all Association members and others interested in law libraries and legal information. The PDC is the culmination of a number of special committees, task forces and Education Committees that have worked over the years toward developing an expanded and comprehensive continuing education program for the Association.

"Historically, AALL had an Education Committee and staff that necessarily focused their efforts on developing an Annual Meeting and associated workshops, plus two Institutes," says Kay Todd, 1996-97 Chair of the Professional Development Committee and Senior Legal Researcher at Paul Hastings Janofsky & Walker in Atlanta. "They could never step back and take a broader look at AALL's educational programming—never had time to say 'What can we change?' By making a two-committee structure, AALL still has a committee to create the Annual Meeting, but the task of developing a broader education program and examining bigger policy issues now rests with the PDC," she explains.

## Three-Year Start-Up

The AALL Executive Board has committed \$100,000 through 1999 to provide for the start-up of the professional development effort, which is expected to be self-supporting after the first three years. Part of AALL's support is a new professional-level staff position, Continuing Education Coordinator, reporting to AALL Director of Programs Martha Brown. The new staff member's expertise, and sole responsibility,

will be creating and supporting continuing education programs of all kinds for AALL members.

The Professional Development Committee's initial focus is on needs assessment—to identify what AALL members want and which programs are most appropriate. Building on the 1995 AALL Demographic Survey of member needs, which was supported by CCH Incorporated, the group will work closely with AALL Chapters, Special Interest Sections, and individual members to identify their interests through focus groups and additional surveys. Among its other important efforts will be sharing these assessments, and related educational priorities, with AALL's Annual Meeting Program Selection Committee, to ensure that the Annual Meeting program reflects what members want.

## Based on Member Needs

One of the important differences between the new PDC plan and previous AALL efforts is a strategic focus on member needs, rather than proposed program ideas. "We are responding to what we are learning from a variety of sources, and we are going to prepare programming to meet needs," Todd says. "Instead of asking for program proposals on any subject, we are going to outline the needs expressed by members and request proposals on those topics."

The PDC also will look at ways to leverage Association resources by developing programming and offering it repeatedly, and using the program content in a secondary way when possible. "We want to use a variety of delivery systems or media—making the most of the monetary and human resources used to develop the programs," Todd says.

## More Choices, Formats and Participants

The PDC expects future educational programs to extend well beyond AALL's current offerings. Part of its ongoing research will be to explore new technologies to deliver information, and new audiences that would benefit from it.

"What's exciting is that we're reaching out to a broader group," says 1997-98

AALL President Judy Meadows, State Law Librarian of Montana, who is Board Liaison to the PDC. "It's not just for the directors or professional law librarians with time and money to go to the Annual Meeting, but for the ones who don't have a large travel budget. We'll be able to bring them educational opportunities that didn't exist before—live programs, publications, satellite, regional live programs and hopefully, desktop programs."

"We're going to help people be better at their jobs—help them provide better service to their customers," says Meadows. "We're the only association that's going to give them this kind of diverse programming specifically for law librarians. We're bringing opportunities to people—not waiting for them to come to us at the Annual Meeting. We're going out to them."

*Continued on page 14*

## AALL Educational Policy

- To provide members and non-members with educational opportunities consistent with the AALL Mission Statement.
- To provide members with readily available, high quality and timely educational programs, publications, and services in a variety of formats, using all available and future technologies in order to enable members to remain current in the profession of law librarianship.
- To provide members with educational opportunities enabling them to meet core competencies for law librarianship.
- To provide non-members with comparable educational opportunities in our area of expertise.
- To engage in collaborative educational endeavors with for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, including AALL Chapters.

### Professional Development Committee Goals:

- opportunity for each AALL member to participate in at least one learning event per month;
  - the participation of 1000 currently inactive AALL members in educational opportunities;
  - development of programming that attracts 1,000 new members to AALL by the year 2000.
- At a minimum, the PDC wants to offer each year:**
- two distance education programs;
  - two extended programs prior to the Annual Meeting;
  - six regional programs of short duration; and
  - one program of extended length (2–3 days).

## AALL Professional Development Committee

### 1996–2000 Long-Range Plan Highlights

To meet its stated goals, the Professional Development Committee has an aggressive long-range plan covering activities over the next three years. The plan says the PDC will:

1. Establish guidelines and review mechanisms to promote programming that meets member needs, including
  - reviewing program priorities annually; and
  - establishing program priorities for private, academic and state/court/county law librarians.
2. Work collaboratively with all segments of AALL to meet the professional education needs of all members, such as
  - developing working relationships with all segments of AALL to insure quality educational offerings;
  - developing a Request for Proposal (RFP) process for new program ideas, tools and materials, as well as compensation guidelines for program developers and speakers; and,
  - developing an expanded educational publishing program, including a process for offering secondary educational products such as books, course handbooks and tapes.
3. Establish and maintain ongoing mechanisms for assessing member educational needs and the needs of other target audiences, including:
  - conducting focus groups at the AALL Annual Meeting and selected Chapter meetings;
  - surveying the membership through electronic technology or formal membership surveys; and,
  - conducting annual evaluations to ensure the needs of AALL's core groups are clearly met.
4. Recommend ways that AALL's Annual Meeting can best meet member needs by providing the Annual Meeting Program Selection Committee with information on:
  - member educational needs and topics of interest; and,
  - AALL educational policies and long-term objectives.
5. Communicate the continuing education goals and plans frequently to AALL members, through vehicles such as:
  - contributing substantive professional development articles to *AALL Spectrum*; and,
  - updating AALLNET regularly on PDC activities and publishing details in *AALL Spectrum* when appropriate.
6. Seek collaborative educational endeavors with:
  - Chapters, Special Interest Sections and other sub-groups of AALL;
  - other professional associations, including SLA, ALA and its divisions; and,
  - legal publishers and others.
7. Formulate, review and oversee standards of professional education for law librarianship, including:
  - working with library schools to promote continuing formal and informal education for law librarianship; and,
  - investigating credentialing and certification for library schools.

### Progress to Date

PDC's progress already can be seen this year with the following new educational activities:

- March 20 satellite teleconference on "The Future for Librarians"
- New Copyright Workshop offered to AALL Chapters
- AALL's first Continuing Education Coordinator hired
- New Guidelines drafted for Annual Meeting programming, to increase breadth, depth and variety of formats.

### What to Expect Soon

According to its long range plan, in the 1997–98 year the Professional Development Committee will:

- conduct focus groups/needs assessments at the Baltimore Annual Meeting;
- present a 1-day workshop on Legal Research for Non Law Librarians;
- conduct several Copyright workshops in cooperation with AALL Chapters;
- explore a 2–3 day program on Teaching the Internet;
- develop a Request For Proposal process;
- conduct another Satellite Conference;
- publish professional development articles in *AALL Spectrum*; and
- oversee the Anaheim Annual Meeting, which is the first under new guidelines.

### By 2000

- Develop a grant/stipend program for all PDC educational activities of more than two days duration
- Conduct one two-three-day program
- Present six one-day programs
- Introduce a two-week course on a core area of law librarianship
- Conduct two distance education programs
- Conduct two Institutes prior to the Annual Meeting
- Collaborate on educational activities with at least two library organizations and one law-related organization
- Revise the standards for Graduate Law Librarianship Education, and work with library schools on curriculum issues.

For more information on AALL educational programs, or to participate in activities of the Professional Development Committee, contact Martha Brown, Director of Programs (mbrown@aall.org).