



PR Statement Declares Value of Law Librarians

by Robert H. Hu

After two years of collaboration, the Public Relations Committee of the American Association of Law Libraries has developed a statement that promotes the value and expertise that law librarians bring to their institutions.

In 2001, then AALL President Barbara Bintliff charged the Public Relations Committee to create an official statement that explains how law librarians' advanced skills and knowledge benefit their current and potential employers. This statement would fulfill Strategic Direction 1, Outcome B1 of AALL's Strategic Plan: "AALL will actively communicate the value of law librarians to employers and potential employers." The PR Committee's draft underwent several revisions based on input from the AALL Executive Board until the board approved the final draft of the statement in April. On the next page is the Public Relations Committee Statement in its entirety. (The document is also posted on the AALL Web site, AALLNET, at http://www.aallnet.org/committee/pr_statement.asp)

Spread the Word

The statement was conceived as a tool to promote the value of law librarians to both current and potential employers of law librarians. Thus the following organizations should receive the statement because they represent current and potential employers of law librarians:

- American Corporate Counsel Association
- Association of American Law Schools
- Association of Legal Writing Directors
- Association of Legal Administrators
- Deans of American library schools
- American Bar Association
- Library associations, including the American Library Association, Special Libraries Association and the Medical Library Association
- Law library associations in foreign countries, such as the Canadian Association of Law Libraries and the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians

How You Can Help

In order to achieve the goal of the statement, AALL members must mobilize to distribute the statement as widely as possible.

There are many means for members to promote the new statement. For example, if your chapter or Special Interest Section publishes a newsletter that is mailed to lawyers, judges and legal administrators — people in positions to hire law librarians — the statement should be printed in that publication. If you belong to a state or local bar association, query to publish the statement in a bar journal or newsletter — or, even better, write an article about the statement with examples of law librarian success stories.

Brainstorm with your colleagues about ways to spread the word on the value and benefits of law librarians. The statement will become an effective marketing tool only if it reaches the intended audience: employers and potential employers of law librarians.

Robert H. Hu (robert.hu@ttu.edu) is head of public services at the Texas Tech University School of Law Library in Lubbock, Texas.

Statement on the Value Added to Organizations by Law Librarians

Drafted by the Committee on Public Relations
Adopted by the AALL Executive Board, April 2003

Summary Statement

Law librarians are information managers, resource evaluators, access facilitators, expert researchers, teachers and trainers. Law librarians possess the knowledge and skills to realize the full value of information in a changing work environment. Law librarians can bring value to organizations by reducing research time and information costs, thus saving money and resources.

Value Added by Law Librarians

As information evaluators, law librarians add value to your organization as they

- Identify, select and acquire the best information sources cost-effectively.
- Offer professional advice on how effectively to obtain and use information and technology.
- Stay abreast of cutting-edge information resources and technology, and share the knowledge with others.

- Eliminate repetition in research and development by spreading information across the organization.

As information managers, law librarians add value to your organization as they

- Make information resources accessible and user-friendly for users of both print and electronic media.
- Organize internal records and data for easy access and preservation.
- Sort through data and disseminate timely and relevant information to researchers.

- Gather and structure information for speakers, presenters and others in the public eye.

As expert researchers, law librarians add value to your organization as they

- Conduct research and retrieve information quickly and cost-effectively.

- Gather scientific and marketing data for development of new products and services.

- Collect, maintain and deliver information to achieve a competitive edge.

- Guide researchers with search strategies and information sources, saving time and reducing frustration.

- Investigate, recommend and manage new technologies to enhance productivity.

As teachers and trainers, law librarians add value to your organization as they

- Teach others how to choose and use information resources and technology for maximal benefits.

- Teach and train others to conduct online and print research effectively.

- Train and develop efficient researchers, saving time and money.