

Standard 601 Comments
Without approbation

1. Increasingly, I've been thinking that if this standard had language about the necessity to keep pace with inflation, law schools might be more inclined to build in annual library budget increases for collection maintenance. Perhaps some language like, "These resources shall be supplied on a consistent basis and shall include annual or periodic increases to keep pace with inflationary increases in the costs of library resources."

This interpretation MUST be changed to acknowledge the necessity and feasibility of consortial arrangements whereby materials are accessible but not necessarily housed on the premises of every law library. Language about document delivery, ILL, and electronic access should be included.

2. I've always thought that 601b was somewhat vague, but I don't know how I would change the language to improve upon the current wording.
3. This could be strengthened by changing the period from "consistent" to "yearly". I would also recommend a requirement that if reported resources are significantly changed after being initially budgeted, that should be reported as well as a violation of the standards. Perhaps this is actually an interpretation?
4. The interpretation should make clear that arrangements with other nearby law libraries can be one factor in the mix of satisfying section (a). I'm thinking here of cooperative arrangements by which several law schools in a city agree to divide responsibility for top level research collections in different subject areas. I assume the existing language is aimed at for-profit schools that might try to avoid developing a library at all, but it shouldn't be used to restrict cooperation among legitimate libraries.
5. I think the Committee should consider a change similar to the following:
Standard 601 can not be satisfied solely by arranging for the students and faculty to have access to other law libraries within the region. However, formal cooperative agreements may be considered when considering whether students and faculty have efficient, effective access to the resources necessary to support the law school's teaching, research, and service programs.

6. Language seems well worded. I was actually surprised.

Doesn't really address the library. So suggest changing to: Law school...technology by supporting the library's efforts to provide an appropriate mix of both print and electronic formats.

7. Keep the language of section (a); how can there be any doubt?

Res ipsa loquitur. Can there be any doubt but that 601(b) should be kept?
Isn't this one of the self evident truths? Or have I been in the business too long?

Interpretation 601-1 should be kept as is. When talking about materials that are essential to fulfilling a library's and law school's primary function, those materials cannot be items not found in the library or accessible to electronically.

As a temporary stop gap during major renovation or new construction is one thing but not as a permanent solution.

8. I have an idea to help deal with the general language of the library standards in general. Perhaps we need to have written case studies of hypos that clearly meet these standards, hypos of case studies that clearly do not meet these standards and ambiguous situations that require more digging. This would help give schools a way to evaluate themselves in terms of expectations and also help inspectors keep consistency. Of course this would be a challenging process to create the hypos and they would need to be consistently updated if they are to give guidance.

I would propose hypos for the specific subsections as being the most helpful.

Hypo Meeting the standards: The Disney Law School Library professional staff regularly attends faculty meetings and attends a variety of students and faculty events of the School particularly the educational ones such as special lectures, symposiums, works in progress presentations, etc. The law library director is a tenure or tenure tracked member of the faculty. The professional staff serve on the faculty library, curriculum, alumni, and technologies committees. The law library director is part of the core management team of the school meeting with the dean's top administrators at a fortnightly meeting. The law library director is a full member of the dean's annual administrators retreat which last two days each year at an off site location.

Any significant change or initiative affecting the educational activities of the school are discussed with or in the presence of the law library director or one of the professional staff and their views are welcome.

Hypo Not Meeting the standards: The Universal Law School Library professional staff do not regularly attend faculty meetings. They rarely attend any student or faculty events of the School except for the SBA auction and SBA Annual Dance. The law library director like many of the assistants deans is a contract employee not a member of the tenure track faculty. Only the law library director serves on any faculty committee and that is only the library committee. The law library director is not a member of the core management team of the school. The director only meets with that group when it is know that something about the library is going to come up. At the annual dean's retreat for the administrative staff the law library director is invited to give an hour presentation on the law library but does not get to attend the whole retreat.

Most of the time the significant changes and initiatives affecting the educational activities of the school only become know to the law library director and the professional staff after the fact through hap hazard means.

Hypo Ambiguous: The World Law School Library professional staff regularly attends faculty meetings. They attend a few faculty and student educational programs. The law library director is a tenured member of the law faculty and serves on several faculty committees. The rest of the professional staff does not. The dean does not really have a core management staff that meets regularly. He does meet with the law library director when either of them ask for a meeting. The dean does not have an administrative retreat each year.

Usually the library director and the professional staff find about significant changes and initiatives affecting the educational activities of the school in a timely manner.

Although the language is very general it gives flexibility to schools and the ABA in dealing with specific circumstances. Schools that have high aspirations will need to provide better funding for information services. Schools that just want to supply lawyers for the local bar in a work day practice need not be as well funded. Obviously the local school needs to have resources for a local collection not weighed toward interdisciplinary studies and international law.

You could have a lot of fun with hypos for this area!

Although proscriptive standards would help those schools suffering from lack of resources they tend to create strait jackets which discourage innovation. Such standards also do not take into account the highly variable situations of different law schools and the kinds of library services they need to succeed. We are better served by not detailing lots of specifics each law library must have to meet the standards.

9. I notice the interpretations often are vague but this interpretation of 601 does not discuss any interpretation of (c). How does Standard 601 meld with the requirements of a law library's collection being balanced between print and 'contemporary technology'? How, and who, will evaluate whether the technology is appropriate under ABA standards?
10. I would add something about the resources for technology—that they should be budgeted annually or supplied on a consistent basis.

Perhaps something tacked on to this interpretation that indicates that the standard also is not satisfied just by arranging for remote access to information.

11. I feel this is such a given that it is somewhat insulting to have it as a "standard".

Interpretation 601-1 should be changed to allow for schools to pool their resources and create joint libraries.

12. Include stronger language that reflects the number of options that law library's have in supplying information. I would also like to see some specifics about what is not acceptable e.g. relying solely on CALR.

Weakening of these standard in any way invites Law Schools and Universities to weaken library support. We need to educate some Deans about what law libraries do for their schools. We also need to enlist faculty and knowledgeable Deans to support us in these efforts.

13. I would like for the language to remain the same in 601 and 601-1. It does not say "print"material, so it is still relevant. I think 601(b) is more important than ever.