DATE SUBMITTED:	Wednesday, June 15, 2011
SUBMITTED BY:	Joyce Manna Janto, President
ON BEHALF OF ENTITY:	None
BOARD LIAISON:	None
REQUIRES:	ACTION ITEM
TOPIC:	Caucus Formation Policy
SUMMARY:	See attached.
MOTION FOR BOARD ACTION:	That the Executive Board approve the report and recommendations regarding Caucus formation, presented at the November 2007 Executive Board meeting.
FUNDS REQUIRED:	None

American Association of Law Libraries

MAXIMIZING THE POWER OF THE LAW LIBRARY COMMUNITY SINCE 1906

June 15, 2011

TO: Executive Board

FROM: Joyce Manna Janto, President

RE: Caucus Formation Policy

In the summer of 2007 a group of members had approached AALL to register a Vegan Caucus. After a discussion with AALL staff member, Pam Reisinger, the person submitting the caucus form agreed that by listing Vegan as a meal option on the Annual Meeting registration form, it would eliminate the need for Vegans (vegetarian was already listed) to organize to find optional dining locations where they could eat. They were satisfied with this solution. The caucus registration was withdrawn.

However, prior to the withdrawal of the application, there was discussion as to how this proposed Caucus would relate to the overall mission of AALL. There was also discussion regarding how these applications should be reviewed and approved.

Because of this concern, President Ann Fessenden requested SIS Council Chair Catherine Lemann and Executive Board Member Steve Anderson to develop some procedures and standards for the formation of AALL caucuses. The report was submitted at the fall 2007 Board Meeting and was vigorously discussed. The Board declined to adopt the policy.

We have once again been approached by members to form a caucus that may or may not be in AALL's best interests. I think we should re-visit the idea of having some formal procedures in place governing the formation of caucuses just as we have for the formation of SISs and Chapters. Therefore I have asked Kate to place the 2007 report back on the agenda for the summer 2011 meeting.

DATE SUBMITTED: Friday, September 28, 2007

SUBMITTED BY: Steve Anderson, SIS Council Liaison

ON BEHALF OF ENTITY: AALL Executive Board

BOARD LIAISON: None

REQUIRES: ACTION ITEM

TOPIC: AALL Caucus Formation Policy

SUMMARY: There currently is no official policy on the formation of AALL Caucuses. The accompanying memo advocates the adoption of a Caucus registration process in order to minimize liability and enhance the status of the Association among members of the legal and information communities. Additionally, the memo calls for a meeting of Caucus Chairs at the next Annual Meeting to determine the suitability of creating additional accountability requirements.

MOTION FOR BOARD ACTION: That the Board adopt the recommendations in the accompanying memo.

FUNDS REQUIRED: None

Follow Up Assignments & Responsibilities Checklist

The following are some of the options available to the Executive Board:
Table until the next Executive Board Meeting
Refer to or Inform the Chair of an AALL Chapter, Committee, Special Committee or Task Force
Add to Annual Business Meeting Agenda
Revise or add to the AALL Financial, Legislative or other Policies
Revise the approved budget
Issue a news release
Post on AALLNET
Publish in AALL Spectrum
Update the Board, Committee, Representative, Chapter or SIS Handbook
Transmit action to an external organization or individual
Revise an existing flyer or form

Memorandum

To: AALL Executive Board
Re: AALL Caucus Formation Policy
Date: September 21, 2007
From: Steve Anderson, Executive Board Member
        Catherine Lemann, SIS Council Chair

Background:

There currently is no official policy on the formation of AALL Caucuses. A survey of related language is included below, but no material rises to the level of existing policy. The only extant mechanism for the creation of a Caucus is the Caucus Electronic Registration Form on AALLNET (http://www.aallnet.org/chapter/caucuses_registration_form.asp). The Form appears to be a simple contact-tracking device for use by Headquarters staff. There are no requirements for the formation of a Caucus other than the provision of contact information.

A few months ago, an AALL member registered the AALL Vegetarians/Vegans Caucus through the above Form. Because there was no prohibition against the formation of such a Caucus under the current rules (or lack thereof), the Caucus has been registered.

Because the purpose of this new Caucus is different from other AALL Caucuses now in existence, the following questions were asked:

> 1) Does AALL need to formalize the Caucus formation process?

> 2) If so, should there be a policy that outlines what types of Caucuses are
>   "acceptable?"

The Executive Board has no formal liaison to Caucuses. However, as liaison to the SIS Council, President Ann Fessenden asked that I examine these issues and report to the Board.

Current Language:

In addition to the Registration Form, there is only one reference on AALLNET to the formation of a Caucus. Current language in the SIS Handbook (2007 edition) (http://www.aallnet.org/sis/handbook/2007-SIS-Handbook.pdf), pg. 6, states:

> *Members of informal groups have sometimes misinterpreted AALL policy on caucuses and other informal entities. There is no requirement that an informal group must ever petition for recognition as an SIS. Some informal groups have continued for years in their informal status. AALL encourages the formation of any informal groups that members might find useful. Informal groups are not*

> *entitled to AALL funding or the other benefits of SIS status, but neither are they subject to required formalities such as bylaws or annual reports.*

Identical language appears on this page in the SIS section of AALLNET (http://www.aallnet.org/sis/organization.asp). Evidently, there is no requirement that a Caucus be oriented for a particular purpose or cause.

The only mention of a Caucus in the Association Bylaws is a reference to a requirement for the formation of SIS's. That is, according to Section X.3., an entity must have operated for a period of three years as an "informal caucus" prior to its acceptance as an SIS.

Policy Analysis:

1) *Does AALL need to formalize the Caucus formation process?*

It is well-established tradition that Caucuses use the Association's resources to further their own goals. For example, Caucuses are offered the following privileges and capabilities:

- Web space on AALLNET
- The ability to identify with AALL in newsletters and web communications
- Discussion list resources
- Meeting space at Annual Meetings
- Activities tables at Annual Meetings
- Use of CPE funds

Although there is no accurate information about the number of AALL members who affiliate with Caucuses, there is anecdotal evidence that many AALL members take pleasure in Caucus activities. Active Caucuses cover a wide array of interests, from shared ethnic backgrounds to shared professional interests. Plainly stated, the membership and the Association derives benefit from the existence of Caucuses. Therefore, Caucuses enjoy a certain status and level of credibility.

Because of Caucus' use of AALL resources and amount on influence with the membership, it is possible—but hopefully improbable—that a Caucus might bring some type of disrepute or liability on the Association. For example, one might envision awkward speeches at Caucus business meetings or inappropriate website postings. These unfortunate circumstances likely would be minimized somewhat if the purpose for the formation of a Caucus closely mirrored the objectives of the Association itself.

One must be mindful, in this age of instant information and connectivity, of how others outside the Association perceive us as professionals. Our employers and colleagues in the legal and information professions would expect that we would have subgroups for members to discuss shared experiences and backgrounds. No one inquiring about our Association should have difficulty with a Caucus named the "Document Delivery Caucus" or the "Latino Caucus." On the other hand, one could

properly call into question the merits of a subgroup whose purpose was not closely aligned with the objectives of the Association.

Because of Caucuses' use of AALL resources, their status within the Association and the need for AALL to maintain its leadership role in the greater community, Caucuses should have more accountability than they have at the present time. Specifically, AALL should formalize the Caucus formation process. For sound management reasons, the Executive Board should be aware of the subgroups using Association equipment and be knowledgeable of their activities.

> *2) If so, should there be a policy that outlines what types of Caucuses are "acceptable?"*

One could argue—successfully—that Caucuses have enjoyed success in the constellation of AALL entities precisely because their more narrow objectives further the broader objectives of the Association. For example, by networking among colleagues who have the same ethnicity, age, work environment or similar professional interests, Caucus members are better able to share experiences that will assist them in becoming better law librarians. Members' expertise will be enhanced, strengthening the Association.

For this reason, there is some management rationale to continue to foster the motivations that lie behind the formation of the current assembly of Caucuses. The existing Caucuses appear to share one or more of the following traits:

1. Shared background of members (e.g., Black Caucus of the American Association of Law Libraries)
2. Shared work environments (e.g., Federal Law Librarians Caucus)
3. Shared professional interests (e.g., Document Delivery Caucus)
4. Those that arose from the work of an AALL Special Committee (e.g., the Publishing Initiatives Caucus)

These traits would likely be sufficient to attract a critical number of members who share the same characteristic. Once together, one would presume that their shared experiences would further their professional goals. Thus, their objectives would be well aligned with the mission of the Association and would serve to minimize any liability the group might incur.

Nevertheless, it is not sufficient to merely outline categories of Caucuses. One could envision several scenarios in which a common interest alone might not further the mission of the Association. For that reason, a single decision-making entity, should oversee Caucus formation. In AALL, the Executive Board would be the most appropriate entity. Using the four traits listed above, the Executive Board, at a duly called meeting, should approve applications for Caucus status. An "informal group" cannot use AALL resources unless it has Caucus status. Caucuses currently in existence need not apply for the status they currently have.

Recommendations:

1. That the AALLNET Caucus Registration Form incorporates the following language:

> Because Caucuses exist to benefit AALL members through the use of certain AALL resources, such as AALLNET, CPE funds, meeting space and other assets, the Executive Board must approve applications for Caucus status. "Informal groups" may not use AALL resources without Board approval. Caucus status likely will be granted to membership groups that share one or more of the following traits:
>
> 1. Shared background of members (e.g., Black Caucus of the American Association of Law Libraries)
> 2. Shared work environments (e.g., Federal Law Librarians Caucus)
> 3. Shared professional interests (e.g., Document Delivery Caucus)
> 4. Those that arose from the work of an AALL Special Committee (e.g., the Publishing Initiatives Caucus)
>
> The proposed Caucus must demonstrate how the group's objectives will further the objectives of the Association (e.g., by networking among colleagues who have the same ethnicity, age, work environment or similar professional interests, Caucus members will be better able to share experiences that will assist them in becoming better law librarians). While there is no set number of members that a group must have in order to be granted Caucus status, the Board may consider whether the proposed number of initial members would be sufficient to carry out the Caucus's objectives. The final decision regarding the application of Caucus status is at the discretion of the Board.
>
> To apply for Caucus status, complete the following form to send to the Board for its next scheduled meeting. A Board Member will notify you following the meeting.

2. That the SIS Handbook and this page in the SIS section of AALLNET (http://www.aallnet.org/sis/organization.asp) be modified at the next available opportunity by the SIS Council Chair to conform to the above-stated principles.

3. That the Board convene a meeting of Caucus Chairs at the next Annual Meeting to determine the suitability of creating additional accountability requirements for Caucuses. Discussion should consider the following:

1. The need for annual reporting mechanisms for Board oversight, such as short annual reports to be archived on AALLNET.
2. The creation of mission or purpose statements for existing Caucuses.
3. The desirability of creating a Board Liaison for Caucus Chairs.
4. The creation of additional training for Caucus Chairs at the Annual Meeting.
5. The clarification of existing roles, guidelines and responsibilities.