American Association of Law Libraries
Career Development Task Force

Report to the AALL Executive Board

March 17, 2004

Career Development Task Force
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INTRODUCTION

> A core component of AALL's mission is to support the career development[1] and continuing education needs of its members. In recent years, AALL advanced this mission through its professional development program. As members' needs become more complex and demands for their time become more acute, the Association recognizes that it must focus its efforts in new ways to enhance its continuing education activities and offer targeted, effective methods of delivery. (AALL Career Development Task Force Charge (2002). See Appendix B for the copy of the Charge which can also be found at **http://www.aallnet.org/committee/career_com.asp**)

In October 2003, the Gary Siegel Organization (GSO) delivered to AALL the *Career Development and Needs Assessment Survey* (*GSO Report*), its report on the career development needs of AALL members.[2] GSO based its report on the data gathered from AALL members through the *Career Development Needs Assessment Survey* (*Survey*) that was administered during the spring and summer of 2003 and the career development focus groups held during the 2003 Annual Meeting.   The *GSO Report* contains analytical tables of responses to questions on the *Survey*, transcriptions of the focus group sessions, a brief analysis of the data from the *Survey* and information gathered in the focus groups, and a list of recommendations based on that data and information.

The Career Development Task Force (CDTF)[3] has as its charge to "develop and recommend a new continuing education program." (*CDTF Charge*) It is important to note the CDTF's deliberations and report were to focus only on career development opportunities outside the annual meeting, taking as a given that the annual meeting and

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[1] In keeping with its name, the CDTF has chosen to use the term career development in this report to describe educational activities that are also commonly referred to as professional development or continuing education. Career development is defined broadly as any learning opportunity that enhances AALL members' ability to perform their current duties or to learn new skills or new knowledge that will prepare the member for future job-related duties in the field of law librarianship.

[2] For a complete discussion of the background that led to the report by the Gary Siegel Organization see Appendix C.

[3] For a list of CDTF members, titles, and affiliations see Appendix A.

its associated workshops would continue to play a pivotal role in AALL's overall career development program.

To fulfill its charge, the CDTF reviewed and discussed the *GSO Report* and also independently analyzed the data presented in the tables and the discussions from the focus groups. The CDTF also reviewed AALL's statement on its policy on career development. According to this statement, it is AALL policy:

- o To provide members and non-members with educational opportunities consistent with the AALL Mission Statement.
- o 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.
- o To provide members with educational opportunities enabling them to meet core competencies for law librarianship.
- o To provide non-members with comparable educational opportunities in our area of expertise.
- o To engage in collaborative educational endeavors with for profit and not-for profit organizations, including AALL Chapters.

The CDTF believes this policy still accurately reflects the AALL's continuing commitment to meet the career development needs of its members.

Based on all of this information, the CDTF has developed a list of ten suggestions it believes will provide the basis for a sound career development program that will meet many of the needs of AALL's members in cohesive, timely, effective and cost-efficient manner. These suggestions, however, are not meant to provide complete, detailed instructions on how such a program should be set up and carried out. The details of the program will depend upon the results of the Executive Board's discussion of the suggestions and should include further input by representatives of the Special Interest Sections and Chapters.

THE *GSO REPORT*

The *GSO Report* provides tables of data gathered from the *Survey*, transcripts of the focus groups sessions, analysis of the data, and six recommendations from GSO concerning AALL's career development program. In general, the data is very useful, but the CDTF feels the analysis and recommendations are fairly superficial and of somewhat limited help in developing a coherent educational program.

GSO is confident the response to the *Survey* is adequate to be representative of the membership as a whole. (*GSO Report*, p. 2) Some members, however, are concerned that while a response rate of 27% might lead to informative results, it is not very large and this should be kept in mind when evaluating the data. Balancing this is the fact that, overall, there were relatively few differences among segments of the AALL membership as to the responses. This suggests a surprisingly uniform vision of what a successful career development program might include.

GSO RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the information gathered through the *Survey* and the focus groups, the *GSO Report* makes six recommendations concerning the AALL career development program. The CDTF feels GSO's recommendations are supported by the data from the *Survey* and focus groups and are understandable and clear as presented. Some members of the CDTF have expressed disappointment because they feel the recommendations are very general in nature and reflect the same concerns CDTF members had heard voiced by other professions. Feelings are mixed within the CDTF as to whether the recommendations provide much help in developing a career development program: some members feel the recommendations are too general to provide much guidance, while others think the recommendations, viewed as a whole, provide enough specific information to be of use. Because of this divergence of opinion, it is fair to say that during its deliberations, the CDTF has viewed these recommendations as the backdrop for its deliberations rather than directive as to the nature of the program.

Following are the six GSO recommendations with some general comments by the CDTF.

GSO Recommendation 1. Conduct research …[to ascertain why only 60% of those responding have participated in a career development workshop or seminar in the past two years and how the 40% who have not attended such a workshop/seminar stay current] and develop a strategy to meet the needs of this segment of the AALL.
(*GSO Report*, p. 8, p 18, and Table 1 (p. 88))

Many of the CDTF members initially were somewhat disconcerted that the first recommendation of the *GSO Report* (based on an association-wide, in-depth survey) was to conduct further research. On the whole, the CDTF feels the information given by respondents in the *Survey* provides sufficient information to develop a program that will better meet the needs of those who had not been able to attend workshops in the two years previous to the *Survey*. The data and the discussion in the focus groups provide a relatively clear indication of members' preferences and concerns. The CDTF also believes an effort to overcome the attendance barriers mentioned by all segments of the response group may result in overcoming the attendance barriers of this particular segment of the membership

GSO Recommendation 2. Develop and promote workshops/seminars in these content areas: Current topics affecting the profession; Reference/research skills; Technology skills; Administration and management; Subject expertise; Teaching and instruction; Business topics; and Retirement planning.
(*GSO Report*, p. 9, p. 31-35, and Tables 7-9 (p. 137-162))

The CDTF believes this to be a sound recommendation. The preferred content areas evidenced in the *Survey* responses are diverse enough to offer educational opportunities of interest to a broad spectrum of our members.

GSO Recommendation 3. Develop and promote regional or local workshops to overcome the major barriers (cost, location, time away from work) to attending career development training.
(*GSO Report*, p. 10, and Table 35 (p. 268))

GSO Recommendation 4. Increase the amount of regional programming to lower travel costs and make it easier for those who cannot attend the AALL annual meeting to access career development activities.
(*GSO Report*, p. 10, p. 41, and Tables 20-21 (p. 230-233)
        The CDTF believes GSO's Recommendation 3 and Recommendation 4 are supported by the data gathered in the *Survey* and the focus groups. This finding was somewhat surprising considering that AALL's recent attempts at regional or local workshops have not been successful. The CDTF feels the failure may lie not in the concept of local/regional, face-to-face instruction, but in the execution of these programs. The programs must be structured in such a way as to overcome the barriers of time, location, and cost. Developing a methodology for cost effective regional educational offerings is a high priority for the CDTF.

Recommendation 5. Develop more advanced course material.
(*GSO Report*, p. 11, p. 55, and Tables 36-37 (p. 269-272))
        The CDTF believes this to be a sound recommendation. While over half of those respondents who had attended a workshop felt the level of training was at the right level, about 25% felt the training was too basic. Those attending the focus groups echoed the need for more advanced training.

GSO Recommendation 6a.   Develop a strategy to increase member satisfaction.
(*GSO Report*, p. 12, p. 58-61, and Tables 40-43 (p. 292-312)
        The CDTF feels this recommendation is self-evident. The purpose of the needs assessment process was to collect data to ensure AALL's continuing education efforts would be structured in a manner that would improve member satisfaction. At the same time, the CDTF notes the *Survey* does **not** indicate AALL members are unsatisfied with current organizational efforts. The responses to Question 41 indicate to the contrary. A clearly majority (67%) is very satisfied. (*GSO Report,* Table 41-A1, p. 308) Only 7% are clearly unsatisfied. (*GSO Report*, Table 41-A1, p. 308)

GSO Recommendation 6b.   Conduct a needs assessment and member satisfaction study in 12-18 months to gauge success in increasing the satisfaction level and improving the perception of AALL's courses relative to competitors. (*GSO Report*, p. 12)
        The CDTF believes it is necessary to build an evaluation mechanism into the career development program undertaken by AALL as a result of the *Survey* and the work of the CDTF. The 12-18 month time frame recommended by GSO should be measured from the implementation of a new program, not from the date of the original survey.

Missing Recommendations. CDTF members believe there are three findings that did not result in GSO recommendations that are of the same level of significance as those

findings that did result in recommendations. The three are:
1. When asked as to the format of career development opportunities, respondents showed a strong preference for face-to-face, hands on, half to one-day workshops. (*GSO Report*, p. 36-38)
2. Respondents indicated they felt chapters and special interest sections should play a role in career development opportunities undertaken by AALL. (*GSO Report*, p. 39)
3. There was no recognition of the significant interest, particularly among younger, less-experienced respondents, in developing web-based career development opportunities (*GSO Report*, Table 12, p. 164)

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE *SURVEY*

In order to more fully understand GSO's recommendations and to evaluate the suggestions made by the CDTF later in this report, the following key findings from the *Survey* will provide valuable background information.

Member participation in career development activities

The *GSO Report* provides a great deal of information about respondent participation in AALL career development activities over the past two years (2001-2002). The following are some of the most significant findings.

Key Finding 1. Sixty percent (60%) of the respondents have taken a career development workshop[4] during the past two years. (*GSO Report,* p. 18)
This finding is consistent across type of library, library setting, and library size. It is somewhat startling that 40% of respondents have **not** attended a career development workshop during this period. Those who had not attended a workshop were asked to indicate the reason(s) why they had not attended. The reasons given most often were: too far (30.3%), too busy (26%), and lack of funding (26.2%). (*GSO Report,* p. 56; Tables 38 and 38A-38G, p. 273-280)

Key Finding 2. Seventy five percent (75%) of the respondents attended as many or more workshops in 2002 as in 2001. (*GSO Report,* p. 28)
The S*urvey* shows respondents are increasingly taking advantage of professional development opportunities. It is interesting to note the younger respondents, those in the profession for fewer than six years, are much more likely to have increased their number of workshops in 2002 than their more experienced peers. (*GSO Report,* Table 5, p. 123)

Key Finding 3. AALL provides about 50% of the career development workshops attended by the respondents. (*GSO Report,* p. 21)
While a slight majority of the workshops taken by the respondents were given by

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[4] The term "workshop" is used to refer to career development offerings in both workshop and seminar format.

AALL, respondents did turn to other providers for a number of the workshops they attended. Other significant providers were: in-house training, commercial vendors, bar associations, state/local library associations, and OCLC. (*GSO Report,* p. 26, and Tables 4, 4A-4L and 4-Other, p. 96-122)

Key Finding 4. Forty-four percent (44%) of respondents did not attend either the 2001 or 2002 annual meeting; only 25% attended both meetings. (*GSO Report,* p. 41)

Respondents from academic libraries were more likely to have attended both meetings, as were librarians from large metropolitan areas. (*GSO Report,* Table 20, p. 230) Younger respondents were less likely to have attended than older respondents. (*GSO Report,* Table 20, p. 230) This finding is in contrast with the fact that, in general, younger respondents are more likely to seek career development opportunities than older respondents. Respondents who had to pay their own way were less likely to have attended than those who received institutional support. (*GSO Report,* Table 20, p. 230)

Key Finding 5. The main barriers to attending workshops are cost, irrelevant topics and time away from work. (*GSO Report,* p. 29)

Cost is the most significant barrier and is of particular concern to those who have worked in a library for fewer than six years and, not surprisingly, to those who must pay all or part of the cost of the workshops. (*GSO Report,* Table 6-A and 6-A1, p. 125-6) Time away from work is of greatest significance to those who have been in the profession for 26 years or more and those whose major responsibility is in administration. It is of greater concern to those in firm and county/court libraries than those in academic libraries. (*GSO Report,* Table 6-B and 6-B1, p. 127-8) Catalogers and those whose responsibility is mainly administrative find lack of relevance to be more of a barrier than do those in reference or those who perform several functions within a library. (*GSO Report,* Tables 6-C and 6-C1, p. 129-30) It is interesting to note more respondents found as a barrier that topics were too basic than did those who found topics were too advanced. (*GSO Report,* Tables 36-37, p. 269-70) Focus group members confirmed cost, location and time away from work were the major barriers.

What Members Want

The greater portion of the *Survey* was devoted to determining members' views as to the content of career development workshops and seminars. Questions were asked to solicit preferences as to substantive content, learning style, and type of workshop, pricing, and location of workshops.

Key Finding 6. There is significant agreement on what respondents think are the top priorities for training for themselves and their staffs. (*GSO Report,* p. 31)

GSO presented members with eleven educational topics, asking them to them to indicate the extent to which they needed training in that area (*GSO Report,* Table 7, p. 137) and the extent to which their staffs needed training in the same area. (*GSO Report,* Table 9, p. 150) Among respondents in general, four of the six top responses for each question were the same: current topics pertaining to the profession, technology skills, reference/research skills, and subject expertise. The remaining two

priorities for the respondents themselves were administrative/management skills and teaching/ instruction skills. The remaining two priorities for their staffs were public services skills and technical services skills. There are differences as to priorities when one looks at various segments of the membership. GSO has provided a variety of tables that reveal more precise information for the different segments. (*GSO Report,* Tables 7-9, p. 137-161)

       Respondents were also given the opportunity to list other priority needs not covered by the eleven enumerated educational topics. Thirty percent of the respondents indicated one or more educational needs, but there was no significant agreement on any one topic. The topic listed most often was "improve budget". Focus group members indicated they would like to see workshops in business, retirement planning, management, technical services, cataloging and technology. (*GSO Report,* p. 35) It is interesting to note focus group members see little difference between the needs of those in academic libraries and those in law firms.

Key Finding 7. A majority of respondents do not consult the *AALL Competencies of Law Librarianship* when identifying areas for professional growth. (*GSO Report,* Table 10, p. 163)

       Overall, only 31.3% of the respondents consult the *AALL Competencies of Law Librarianship* to identify areas for professional growth. Fifty-one percent (51%) do not consult the *Competencies*, while 17.7% are not aware of their existence. When given the opportunity to indicate why they do not use them, 25% of those responding to the question indicated the *Competencies* were not relevant. (*GSO Report,* Table 11, p. 164)

Key Finding 8. Among respondents there still remains a very strong preference for face-to-face, hands-on education. (*GSO Report,* p. 36)

       When asked to rate their preferred learning styles, respondents continued to rank face-to-face, hands-on instruction very highly. On a scale of 1-10 (ten being the highest), live presentation had a median score of 10 and a mean of 8.8.[5] (*GSO Report,* Table 12-A, p. 165) Over eighty-eight percent (88%) of the respondents gave a score of 7-10 for live

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[5] GSO used a scale of 1-10 on various questions to rate whether respondents found certain scenarios satisfactory or useful. Respondents used a 1-to-10 scale to express their degree of satisfaction with one being an extremely negative response (i.e. not at all satisfied, not at all useful) and ten being an extremely positive response. "Our experience with these scales suggests that scores of 7-10 are high satisfaction, 4-6 moderate satisfaction, and 1-3 low satisfaction." (*GSO Report*, p. 58) (There is a conflicting analysis given to the score levels in the *GSO Report*. Early in the report, GSO indicates that "as a guide in interpreting results, our experience with these scales suggests that mean scores above 9 are an 'extremely satisfied' or 'extremely useful' rating; scores in the 8s are 'very satisfied' or 'very useful'; scores in the 6s or 7s are 'moderately satisfied' or 'moderately useful,' and scores in the 5s or below indicate relatively little satisfaction or perceived utility." (*GSO Report*, p. 4) The chair of the Task Force called Gary Siegel, the principal in GSO, Inc., for clarification. He indicated the analysis on p. 58, which corresponds to the breakdowns in the tables, is the correct analysis.)

       "[The mean] is computed by adding all the answers reported by respondents then dividing that total by the number of respondents who answered…. The median is the middle number in a distribution. If we rank-order all the responses to a question from highest to lowest, the middle number in the distribution is the median…. The median is sometimes a more reliable measure than the mean. This is because extremely high or extremely low scores affect the computation of the mean and may render it less representative." (*GSO Report*, p. 3)

presentations. (*GSO Report,* Table 12-A1, p. 166) These scores did not vary significantly across the segments of the membership. When ranking hands-on experiences, the results were very similar. Here there was a median score of 9, and a mean score of 8.2, with over eighty-one percent giving a score of 7-10. (*GSO Report,* Table 12-H and 12-H1, p. 179-180)

The focus groups clearly preferred face-to-face career development opportunities. Among the advantages cited for this format are the opportunities for interaction, the ability to focus with no interruptions, the synergy coming from group participation, and the ability to network with those who have similar interests. (*GSO Report*, p. 337 and 359)

Key Finding 9. Respondents continue to value print as a format for continuing education opportunities. (*GSO Report,* p. 36)

Respondents listed print materials as a preferred learning style nearly as often as live presentations and hands-on experiences. Across segments of the membership, this format received a median score of eight, with a mean of score of 7.5. (*GSO Report,* Table 12-B, p. 167)

Key Finding 10. Respondents find web-based instruction to be somewhat useful, but find other computer-based formats of little use. (*GSO Report,* Table 12, p. 164)

The web-based tutorial was the only online format found useful by S*urvey* respondents, with a mean score of 5.8 and a median score of 6. (*GSO Report,* Table 12, p. 164) However, 44.5% of the respondents gave this type of instruction a ranking of 7-10, which indicates a fairly high degree of usefulness. (*GSO Report,* Table 12-C1, p. 170) The respondents did not find on-line discussions of value (with a median and mean score of 4) or CD-ROM (with a median score of 2 and a mean score of 2.9) to be useful. (*GSO Report,* Table 12, p. 164) It is interesting to note those who have worked in libraries for 5 or fewer years found web-based instruction slightly more useful with a mean score of 6.4 and a median score of 7. (*GSO Report,* Table 12-C, p. 169) The percentage, 51.3%, of those respondents finding web-based instruction to have a fairly high degree of usefulness was also higher. (*GSO Report,* Table 12-C1, p. 170)   Their responses did vary significantly from all respondents as to online discussions and CD-ROMS. (*GSO Report,* Tables 12-D, p. 171-2 and 12-F, p. 175-6)

Key Finding 11. Respondents prefer one-day or half-day workshops. (*GSO Report,* p. 38)

Respondents across all segments of the membership find one-day or half-day workshops to be the most useful. One-day workshops were scored 7-10 by almost 80% of the respondents; half-day workshops were scored 7-10 by 73.1% of the respondents. (*GSO Report,* Table 13-B1, p. 189 and Table 13-C1, p. 191) Respondents found three formats to be of little use: Breakfast meeting workshops, dinner meeting workshops, and multi-day rotating institutes. (*GSO Report,* Table 13, p. 185)

Key Finding 12. Respondents believe the median price of $100 they paid for one-day workshops in 2002 is reasonable. (*GSO Report,* p. 45)

When respondents were asked to indicate a reasonable price for a one-day workshop, the mean response was $124, the median response was $100, and the mode was $100.[6] (*GSO Report,* Table 25, p. 248) This correlates highly with the average amount respondents paid last year for this type of workshop where the mean was $112, the median was $85, and the mode was $100. (*GSO Report,* Table 29, p. 255) It is interesting to note respondents whose main responsibility was administration were more accepting of slightly higher prices. Over 25% (25.6%) of these respondents found prices of more than $200 to be reasonable, while only 19% of respondents in general found these costs in that range to be reasonable. (*GSO Report,* Table 25-B, p. 250)

Key Finding 13. Respondents show a preference for AALL sponsorship of regional or local career development workshops rather than national workshops. (*GSO Report,* p. 54 and Table 35, p. 268)

While 42.7% of the respondents expressed no preference as to national or regional/local workshops, 40.8% preferred regional/ local career development workshops with only 16.5% preferring national workshops. (*GSO Report*, Table 35, p. 268*)* Focus group members were very much in favor of more local and regional training. (*GSO Report,* p. 40) When asked who should offer regional training, 62% of the respondents thought it appropriate for AALL to do so, 89.7% thought it appropriate for regional/local chapters and 59.2% thought it appropriate for special interest sections. (*GSO Report,* Table 19, p. 225)

AALL's role in career development for its members

Career development is a core component of AALL"s mission. The *Survey* briefly addressed this issue.

Key Finding 14. Respondents believe AALL, its special interest sections and its chapters should share responsibility for offering career development opportunities to AALL members. (*GSO Report,* p. 39)

Almost 80% of the respondents believe AALL and its chapters should share responsibility for offering career development opportunities for AALL members. (*GSO Report,* Table 14, p. 220) Over 66% of the respondents also believe chapters need assistance from AALL headquarters in order to provide adequate continuing education opportunities. (*GSO Report,* Table 15, p. 222)   Financial assistance and speaker/publicity/logistical assistance were mentioned most often as appropriate types of assistance. (*GSO Report,* Table 16, p. 223) Almost 60% of respondents felt the special interest sections also have a role in offering continuing education opportunities outside the annual meeting. (*GSO Report,* Table 17, p. 224) The roles mentioned most frequently were offering specialized training and providing topics, speakers, and surveys of members. (*GSO Report,* Table 18, p. 225)

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[6] Mode is the most frequently given answer.

Level of satisfaction with AALL's career development offerings

Key Finding 15. Respondents are satisfied with most AALL methods of delivery of career development opportunities. (*GSO Report,* p. 58-61)

Median scores of 7 or higher indicate respondents are highly satisfied with AALL's annual meeting workshops (median of 8, mean of 7.5), print publications (median of 7; mean of 6.2), and regional workshops outside the annual meeting (median of 7, mean of 6.7). (*GSO Report,* Table 40, p. 292) Respondents are moderately satisfied with other offerings such as the listserv discussions (median of 6, mean of 5.6), video conferences (median of 5, mean of 4.6), and online training (median of 5, mean of 4.7). (*GSO Report,* Table 40, p. 292)

Overall, respondents were very satisfied with AALL's career development workshops, giving them a median score of 7. (*GSO Report,* Table 41A, p. 307) Those who indicated less than a high degree of satisfaction (scores of 1-6) were asked to list the reasons for their lower satisfaction. The most frequent reasons given were: nothing useful to implement (25.4%), the workshops were too basic (17.5%), and different speakers (8.8%). (*GSO Report,* Table 42, p. 311)

Respondents were also given a chance to offer suggestions for improving AALL workshops and seminars. The suggestions offered most often were: expert speakers (12.8%), offer regional/local opportunities (10.9%), and more specific topics (8.6%). (*GSO Report,* Table 43, p. 312)

Key Finding 16. Respondents are somewhat more satisfied with workshops offered by vendors other than AALL. (*GSO Report,* p. 58)

Respondents were somewhat more satisfied with the workshops given by other vendors, giving them a median score of 8. (*GSO Report,* p. 58) However, when asked to compare specific attributes about AALL workshops in general with those of other vendors, respondents ranked AALL workshops the same or better in all categories. Those categories in which more than 20% of the respondents found the AALL workshops to be better were: quality; range of topics covered; usefulness of material presented; quality of instructors; and networking opportunities. (*GSO Report,* Table 39, p. 281) Those categories in which more than 20% of the respondents found AALL to be worse were: range of topics covered; location; cost; and value received for the fees charged. (*GSO Report,* Table 39, p. 281)

Key Finding 17. Respondents believe a portion of their AALL dues should be allocated to support continuing education opportunities. (*GSO Report,* p. 48)

Nearly 2/3rd (63.5%) of all respondents believe a portion of their AALL dues should be used to support continuing education opportunities. (*GSO Report,* Table 26, p. 252) Only 10.1% disagree. (*GSO Report,* Table 26, p. 252) This finding is consistent across all segments of the membership.

CDTF SUGGESTIONS FOR A NEW AALL
CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

One of the key components of AALL's mission is to provide a robust program of educational opportunities for its members, not only at the Annual Meeting but throughout the year. The program should be responsive to members' needs in terms of subject matter, format, cost and location, flexible enough to provide timely career development opportunities, and within the fiscal means of the Association.

After reviewing the *GSO Report*, doing its own analysis of the data gathered through the *Survey* and the focus groups, and conducting its own deliberations, the CDTF makes the following ten suggestions it believes will provide a sound basis for a successful AALL career development program.

Suggestion 1. Meet its members' career development needs through a multi-layered, flexible educational program that utilizes different media and formats.

It is clear from *Survey* responses that the respondents found a variety of educational experiences to be useful in meeting their career development needs. While respondents still considered regional/local, face-to-face, hands-on instruction to be the most useful format, they also found print and several web-based formats to be useful methods of delivering educational opportunities. (Key Findings 8, 9, 10)

The CDTF recommends AALL develop a multi-layered educational program that makes use of a variety of formats depending on target audience, topic, depth of coverage, and need for timeliness. The three main components of the layers would be: (1) regional workshops; (2) web-based instruction; and (3) print materials. In some instances, one educational offering might produce educational products in multiple formats.

Whatever program structure is developed, it must be flexible enough to react relatively quickly to member needs and be able to accommodate educational opportunities that arise serendipitously. (For example, those in charge of educational programming must be able to quickly accept a proposal to partner with another organization or vendor for an already planned activity, or to replicate a successful program given by another organization.)

Based on the information garnered from the *Survey,* the topics (regardless of format) of most interest to the respondents themselves and to those respondents who select career development opportunities for others are**:** current topics pertaining to the profession, technology skills, reference/research skills, and subject expertise. The remaining two priorities for the respondents themselves were administrative/management skills and teaching/ instruction skills. The remaining two priorities of supervisors for their staffs were public services skills and technical services skills. (Key Finding 6) The CDTF recommends these topics as the focus of most career development opportunities.

AALL should pay particular attention to developing career development opportunities with more advanced content. *Survey* respondents and members of the focus groups indicated a need for more advanced training. (Key Finding 5) The demographic information from the *Survey* showing that 71.1% of the respondents have been librarians for more than 10 years and 59.9% have been law librarians for over 10 years supports the need for advanced training. (*GSO Report*, Tables 50-51, p. 320-323)

Suggestion 2. Include a small number of cost-effective regional workshops in AALL's educational offerings.

As already mentioned several times in this report, respondents to the *Survey* and members of the focus groups indicated they still find face-to-face, hands-on workshops to be the most useful format for career development opportunities. The most often expressed reason for this preference is the opportunity for interaction with others interested in the same topic. Another reason given is that the workshop format minimizes distractions from day-to-day responsibilities, which can be intrusive when education is taking place in the office setting.

Historically, the regional workshop format has played a significant role in AALL's educational program. At one time, multi-day rotating institutes on specific subject areas were offered in various regions of the country following a four-year cycle. From 1997-2002, the Professional Development Committee sponsored or co-sponsored twenty-seven regional workshops of varying lengths. While those who attended the workshops were generally satisfied with the experience, the workshops were costly. (Much of the cost was from indirect costs incurred by Headquarters. These costs were passed on to attendees, thus raising the price of the workshop.) The cost often discouraged potential attendees and led to significant resistance from chapters as to any partnering opportunities. Eventually, the Executive Board felt the workshops as then structured had become too costly to continue. The regional workshops were discontinued in 2002, pending the results of a needs survey and the report of this Task Force.

In addition to the barrier of cost, the *Survey* indicates the traditional workshop format also presented some other barriers for respondents. Respondents indicated the time away from work needed to attend a workshop and inconvenient locations were often barriers to attending AALL workshops. (Key Finding 5)

Because the CDTF strongly believes AALL must include regional workshops as part of its career development program, but realizing past models have presented significant barriers in relation to cost, time spent, and location, the CDTF will address this suggestion in some detail.

Topics. In order for workshops to be successful, it is important the topic for workshops be carefully chosen and well-presented by experts on the topic. The workshops chosen must appeal not only to the members themselves, but also to the managers who select and support career development opportunities for members. As indicated above, respondents to the *Survey* have selected a fairly wide range of topics they would like to see addressed. (Key Finding 6) Remarkably, there is agreement on the importance of most of these topics between the respondents who would be attending and those to whom respondents report. These topics should receive priority when topics for workshops are chosen.

While respondents to the *Survey* indicated the *AALL Competencies of Law Librarianship* did not influence their selection of career development opportunities, many of their choices as to useful topics are directly related to one or more of the competencies. The *Competencies* should also be considered when topics are chosen.

Workshops need to be well-presented by experts on the topic. Respondents, while indicating a relatively high degree of satisfaction with AALL's educational opportunities, have also indicated they are somewhat more satisfied with the workshops offered by

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other vendors and organizations. (Key Finding 16) It is possible the higher satisfaction is due primarily to better location of workshops, quality of instructors, and value received for the fees charged. However, it might be helpful for a future committee to spend some time querying AALL members about the qualities they have found of value in workshops given by vendors and other organizations.

Carefully chosen topics, well-presented by expert speakers, help address all three barriers to workshop attendance. Members will be willing to pay slightly more, can more easily justify time away from work, and will accept a less-convenient location, if they believe the value received is high enough.

Respondents and members of the focus groups also showed an interest in improving and expanding the speakers used in workshops. (Key Finding 15) In the past, as a cost-containment measure, most speakers at workshops have been AALL members who were willing to speak at no cost. Since the CDTF contains other cost-saving and cost-sharing measures, those who plan future workshops should be encouraged to find the best speakers possible (within reason) and the funding for the workshop should be arranged accordingly.

Timeliness.   Respondents place a great deal of importance on the timeliness of educational opportunities. In a rapidly changing workplace, the need for timeliness will continue to grow. One problem with past workshop models has been the length of time needed to plan and implement a workshop. Administrative and committee procedures surrounding workshops have been burdensome and required long lead times, sometimes as long as two years. At the same time, as discussed in many of the focus groups, there is a tension between the need for advance notice in order to plan for career development in their institutional and personal budgets and the desire not to be forced to commit to a workshop at a time too far in the future to know if one can commit to the time. (Three months was often mentioned as optimum.) An additional factor, if one is to encourage chapter involvement, is that chapters plan their calendars at least a year in advance. When developing the procedures for AALL workshops every effort must be made to balance all of these conflicting needs.

Length of workshops. Respondents to the *Survey* indicated a preference for shorter workshops, covering a single topic, rather than multi-day, multi-topic workshops. (Key Finding 11) Restricting the length of the workshops addresses two of the barriers to attending workshops: cost and time away from work. The downside is there may be some topics that cannot be addressed in such a short period of time. It may be appropriate from time to time to consider longer workshops with narrowly tailored audiences.

Cost of workshops.   *Survey* responses indicated respondents are very concerned about the cost of career development opportunities. (Key Finding 5) Belt-tightening budgets in all sectors, especially for state, county and local governments, are causing severe cuts in funds available for career development. Many members who in the past have never given a second thought to attending any career development opportunity they thought of value must now carefully evaluate and select career development activities for themselves and their staffs. Respondents to the *Survey* feel a fee of $100 for a one-day

workshop is reasonable. (Key Finding 12) This figure, which seems unrealistically low for a workshop given by a non-profit organization, may be influenced by the relatively low cost of some vendor-sponsored education.[7] Nevertheless, however unrealistic this figure is, it does reflect a reality that must be taken into account when planning workshops.

Sponsorship. In the past, AALL workshops, with some notable exceptions, were developed and coordinated centrally by the AALL staff working with a program committee and/or education staff. The CDTF believes an educational program that stresses involvement of the special interest sections and, in particular, the chapters would produce more useful programming in a more cost effective manner.

In very general terms, special interest sections would play a central role in developing new regional programs, recommending joint programs with other organizations, or recommending existing vendor programs. This is not a new idea: the special interest sections have always been one of the sources of regional workshop proposals. They should continue to play an important role. (This does not mean all proposals for workshops would be required to come through a special interest section. Any member or group would be encouraged to make proposals.)

What does differ in this model is that workshops developed at the national level would then be made available for chapter sponsorship. Chapters would be given the opportunity to sponsor these programs on a regional basis and assume responsibility for local arrangements for the workshop.

AALL, through Headquarters staff and/or a career development committee, would coordinate the offerings, provide the necessary seed money, handle registration, and market the program.

Under this model, all three entities would be "credited" as sponsors of the workshop, strengthening the spirit of cooperation within AALL. The model would help assure programming for which there was a known interest among particular segments of the membership and in particular locations. The CDTF realizes this cooperative approach needs to be carefully thought out so it does not become cumbersome and unable to react quickly to proposals. There will also need to be a mechanism to assure broadness of coverage, both in terms of topics and locations.

As mentioned above, workshops have been costly for participants and costly for AALL. Much of that cost can be attributed to the indirect costs charged by AALL to cover its administrative costs. Under the new model, indirect costs would not be charged to the workshops. Some of those costs, such as the cost of doing local arrangements, would be shifted to the chapters. Those remaining would be absorbed by AALL under its budget for career development. Respondents to the *Survey* felt strongly AALL allot some of its budget to career development and these expenses should be part of the AALL budget. (Key Finding 17) It is also possible that in order to offer more ambitious workshops while keeping costs down for individual members, chapters and special interest sections could occasionally be asked to share direct costs.

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[7] It is interesting to note that in a similar study done by OCLC respondents found $285 to be perceived as a reasonable amount to pay for an "instructor-led" training and education course. It is unclear what the length of the course under discussion was. *OCLC Library Training and Education Market Needs Assessment Study, January 14, 2003,* p. 94.

Sources for programming . In addition to relying upon suggestions for workshops, there are several other methods AALL could use to provide workshop opportunities.

One idea favored by the CDTF is to hold a train-the-trainer workshop at the Annual Meeting. A topic would be chosen that would appeal to both those attending the annual meeting and those who could not. The workshop would be geared to both meeting the needs of those attending and, in the process, training them so they could then offer the workshop at the local or regional level. The materials prepared for the workshop would be suitable for use at the regional meeting. This type of training is becoming increasingly popular with other library groups such as the American Library Association and the Library of Congress.

There are other short workshops offered in conjunction with the Annual Meeting that would be attractive to members who cannot attend the Annual Meeting which could be duplicated at the regional level. This could be worked out in any of several ways. A mechanism could be set up to have those who are proposing Annual Meeting workshops indicate whether the speakers would be amenable to offering the workshop at the regional level. In addition, workshops that are not selected for the Annual Meeting, but thought to be of value, could be forwarded for consideration as regional workshops. There might be a provision for reviewing the Annual Meeting workshops after the meeting and selecting a particularly well-received workshop to pursue for a regional program.

Outside vendors are another source of programming expertise. There are many vendors with well-developed programs that would be of interest to AALL members. The scenario might work something like this. AALL, perhaps in concert with a special interest section, would contract with a vendor to provide a workshop at three locations over the next eighteen months. AALL would then advise chapters that this program is available for their use during the given time period at a given cost. (If costs are high, there could be a provision for AALL, the special interest section, and the individual member to share the cost.)   Chapters (or a group of chapters) could choose to offer the program at a time mutually agreeable between the chapter and the vendor.

There are many advantages to this approach. Vendors might agree to charge lower rates because of the multiple offerings. Chapters would control whether the program would be offered and the timing. The special interest section is seen as doing something for its members who cannot attend the Annual Meeting. AALL is seen as providing the chapters with assistance in local programming. Members are given the opportunity to gain insight from those with special subject expertise. There are potential pitfalls to keep in mind. Outside vendors will need to be carefully evaluated before they are chosen. There must be a relatively high level of certainty that a number of chapters would be willing to offer the program. If the program is costly, there may be a need to share costs between AALL, the special interest section, and the chapters in order to keep member costs in the acceptable range.

Another source of programming is other professional organizations such as the American Library Association, the Special Library Association, OCLC, or a local bar association. AALL has offered very successful programs with these organizations in the past. This type of cooperation is valuable from many standpoints. It increases the possible audience, which might allow for a more expensive program to be offered. It also increases the mix of presenters, which members see as a valuable asset to a program.

Finally, AALL would benefit from more actively encouraged wide-spread marketing of workshops organized on a local level. Many chapters and groups of chapters offer exceptional workshops that might attract members from outside their traditional base. Getting information about these programs to all AALL members in a timely, organized manner, using such facilities as a master calendar and e-mail dissemination, would provide a real service to AALL members.

Suggestion 3. Increase and enhance AALL's web-based educational opportunities.
AALL must increase and enhance its web-based educational opportunities if it is to meet the future needs of the members. Web-based instruction is the training technology of the future; it overcomes the barriers of cost, time and location. It will only grow in popularity among AALL members as the profession recruits new members who are very comfortable with this format for instruction.

It is clear AALL's current web-based offerings were not regarded as particularly useful by those taking the *Survey*. (Key Finding 10) The CDTF feels this may be because early efforts in online instruction have not been very professional and the quality of these offerings needs to be improved. Also, some of the efforts, such as the moderated online list discussions, have had a very narrow focus and thus were "useful" to only a small number of members.

The CDTF believes it is important to continue the moderated online list discussions. Although any one discussion might not be useful to a great many members in the aggregate, they reach a significant portion of the membership. For those interested in the timely discussion of issues of immediate concern, they can provide very useful education through group discussion. In addition, these discussions cost very little to set up and administer.

Now is the time to begin to experiment with other forms of web-based instruction. In particular, it would be appropriate to develop some online tutorials. Those who develop the tutorials would be paid for their work. They would also serve as online instructors during the tutorial. In order to recover the cost, members would pay a modest fee for the program. The tutorial would also be marketed outside AALL; non-members would pay a higher fee to participate. It is also possible to arrange with other library groups to make their tutorials available to AALL members. This has proved successful in the past and is well worth continuing.

The CDTF is currently working with West to offer video or audio coverage of a selection of programs from the Annual Meeting on the West Legal/Ed center. The usefulness of this endeavor should be evaluated at the end of the current three-year agreement. It may prove to be an excellent vehicle to bring Annual Meeting programming to members (and others) at a reasonable cost.

Another possibility to consider is using the webcast format to hold online "workshops". Here, there is real-time interaction among those attending the workshop during an assigned time period. After the live webcast, the webcast could be archived and thus available to those who could not participate in the live webcast.[8]

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[8] For an excellent example of the use of webcasts see the Infopeople (California) web site at http://www.infopeople.org/training/

Suggestion 4. Continue to support AALL current educational opportunities offered in print that members have identified as valuable.

AALL's current publications, *Law Library Journal* and the *Spectrum*, are valued by the respondents, as is the *AALL Publication Series*. (Key Finding 9) There is no doubt these publications need to continue.

These publications did not fall under the responsibility of the former Professional Development Committee or the CDTF. However, the PDC did begin, and the CDTF did continue, the "Desktop Learning Series" which has published articles dealing with career development in each issue of the *Spectrum*. These articles have been very well-received by the members and the CDTF recommends they continue.

Suggestion 5. Earmark a portion of membership dues to support a multi-faceted educational program.

Respondents were very much in favor of allocating a portion of their dues to career development opportunities. (It must be noted, however, that the *Survey* did not ask if respondents were willing to support a dues increase to cover career development programming.) AALL currently does support two very important sources for career development: the *Law Library Journal* and the *Spectrum*. This support should continue. In addition, the CDTF recommends that AALL budget some additional funding from dues to support regional workshops (as discussed above).

Suggestion 6. In early 2004/05, convene a meeting of AALL chapter and SIS officers who have responsibility for chapter or SIS educational programs to determine their support of cooperative career development programs.

The model for regional workshops suggested by the CDTF places great value on cooperation between AALL, its special interest sections, and its chapters. As such, it is important the special interest sections and the chapters are in favor of the model and have a chance for significant input into its final design. In order to involve these two groups, the CDTF recommends AALL convene (at its expense) a meeting, in early 2004/05, of AALL chapter and special interest section officers who have responsibility for their respective educational programs to determine their support of cooperative career development programs.

Suggestion 7. In order to insure a vital educational program, provide AALL headquarters staffing to carry out the programming.

The CDTF believes if AALL is to offer a high-quality career development program for its members, it must provide headquarters staff to run the program on a day-to-day basis, performing such tasks as handling logistics and coordinating regional offerings and other resources. In order to assure the program is member-driven, a standing committee, with members serving multi-year terms in order to provide continuity, would be responsible for developing policy, selecting topics, and general oversight of the career development program.

While volunteer committees, such as the CDTF and its predecessor, the PDC, have done an outstanding job in the past, the time commitment is growing so large that it is very difficult for volunteers to do the work necessary. Also, a coherent program needs continuity, which presents a significant obstacle in a committee structure such as

AALL's. A third consideration is that educational programming is becoming so complex it would be more efficient and effective for the work to be done by an educational programming career professional.[9]

The CDTF believes it, or its successor, could develop the workshop model, run it on a modest scale for a year or two, and continue to offer the programs it has in the past. (It probably wouldn't have much time to work on developing web-based opportunities, beyond the current moderated list discussions.) Once the workshop model has proved its viability, responsibility should then be turned over to staff (under the direction of an oversight committee). The staff, with oversight by a committee, would then be able to continue the workshop program and begin serious development of web-based career development opportunities.

Suggestion 8. Charge the CDTF (or its successor) with developing a detailed career development policy and program during 2004/05.

If the Executive Board favors the approach suggested by the CDTF in this report and there is support for approach by the special interest sections and the chapters, the work of crafting the details of the program could begin immediately. There is considerable information in the tables of the *GSO Report* that could be used in developing the program. In addition, the *Preliminary Report and Recommendations to the AALL Executive Board on the Future of the Professional Development Program* (October 9, 2002), prepared by the Professional Development Committee, contains many helpful suggestions for such a program.

In addition to those the program elements mentioned above, there are several other activities begun by the Professional Development Committee and continued by the CDTF that would either be continued under the auspices of the newly established career development committee or made the responsibility of another committee. These activities have proved valuable to the membership in the past and the CDTF feels their value will continue. They include the "professional development" page on AALL web site.   The CDTF recommends this page include, at a minimum, current AALL career development opportunities, archives of past activities, a master calendar, and links to other career development opportunities that may interest members. The CDTF has coordinated two activities for chapters: the Chapter Professional Development Award and the Professional Development Roundtable (held at the Annual Meeting). Both of these activities are important to the chapters, the CDTF recommends they continue. In past years, Lexis asked the Professional Development Committee to assist with its TRIALL and TRICALL workshops, which are offered in alternate years in conjunction with the Annual Meeting. These workshops have been very popular and should continue, but they probably can do so without AALL's direct participation.

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[9] For a more complete discussion about the possible role of AALL staff in the career development program see the ***Preliminary Report and Recommendations to the AALL Executive Board on the Future of the Professional Development Program*** **(October 9, 2002) prepared by the Professional Development Committee and** *Final Report: Evaluation of AALL Professional Development Program***, *June 2001***, (http://www.aallnet.org/prodev/prodev_evaluation.rtf) prepared by Sara Cameron May, an Educational Project Consultant.**

Suggestion 9. Offer, through Career Development Task Force (or its successor), at least two regional workshops during 2004/05 and 2005/06.

If there is wide spread acceptance of the CDTF's suggested model for workshops, the CDTF recommends that at least two regional workshops be planned for 2004/05-2005/06. These workshops could serve as trial runs, providing very helpful information when developing a complete program.

Suggestion 10.   Eighteen months after the implementation of the new career development program, formally evaluate the program's success.

The CDTF agrees with GSO's recommendation that the career development program adopted by AALL should be subject to a formal evaluation process. (*GSO Report*, p. 12) It recommends the evaluation take place approximately 18 months after the program is adopted.

Respectfully submitted,

AALL Career Development Task Force

Appendix A
Members of the Career Development Task Force

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Career Development (Task Force)

- [Charge and Size](#)
- [Roster](#)
- Website

Charge and Size

A core component of AALL's mission is to support the career development and continuing education needs of its members. In recent years, AALL advanced this mission through its professional development program. As member needs become more complex and demands for their time become more acute, the Association recognizes that it must focus its efforts in new ways to enhance its continuing education activities and offer targeted, effective methods of delivery.

In 2002 the Executive Board authorized a needs assessment survey to determine more precise and up-to-date information in regard to the continuing education needs of members. The needs assessment and focus group sessions will be conducted with the assistance of a professional consultant. The outcome of this information gathering and professional consultation will be used to establish a new career development program specifically tailored to meet the needs of Association members.

The Career Development Task Force will:

- Participate in the organization and development of focus group sessions
- Evaluate the data from the needs assessment and focus groups and present a final report to the Executive Board
- Develop and recommend a new continuing education program.
- Promote the new continuing education program.
- Continue professional development activities such as the "Desktop Learning Series", listserv discussions and other non-funded career development programs on an interim basis.
- Seek collaborative educational endeavors as defined by the policies adopted by the AALL Executive Board.

The Task Force shall submit an interim report to the Executive Board for its meeting in Fall 2003 and a final report to the Executive Board at the Spring 2004 meeting.

Size: The task force shall consist of a chair and eight members. The members will be appointed by the President and serve until July 2004. A non-voting Executive Board liaison will be appointed. The staff liaison shall be the Executive Director.

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Appendix C

Background to the Career Development Task Force Report

In November 2001, the Professional Development Committee (PDC), predecessor to the Career Development Task Force (CDTF), was charged by the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) Executive Board, to "design new professional education program alternatives which are financially sound." (AALL Professional Development Committee. Preliminary Report and Recommendations to the AALL Executive Board on the Future of the Professional development Program (2002), p. 8) In October, 2002, the PDC submitted a preliminary report and recommendations for future professional programming for consideration at the Board's November 2002 meeting. While several of the PDC's recommendations were adopted, the Board tabled other recommendations until a comprehensive continuing education needs assessment of AALL members could be completed.

In 2002, AALL contracted with the Gary Siegel Organization (GSO) to conduct a comprehensive career development needs assessment of its members.   The purposes of the needs assessment were to determine the members' career development needs, determine their preference for format and content, assess their satisfaction with AALL's current professional development programs, and compare AALL's programs to those of other professional development vendors. The assessment would include a survey of all members and a series of small focus groups to be conducted at the 2003 Annual Meeting. BNA, Inc. generously agreed to fund the development, distribution, evaluation and analysis of the survey.

The PDC drafted an initial set of questions for the needs assessment. The draft questions were then submitted to AALL Executive Director Susan Fox, AALL President Carol Nicholson, and GSO for comment and refinement. The PDC members reviewed the consultant's initial drafts and the worked with the Executive Director, the President, and GSO to finalize the survey.

The Professional Development Committee concluded its work at the 2003 Annual Meeting and was replaced by the Career Development Task Force. The CDTF is charged with evaluating the data from the needs assessment and focus groups and to develop and recommend a new AALL career development program.

The *Career Development Needs Assessment Survey (Survey)* was initially sent to all AALL members via the Internet on May 5, 2003. On June 2, 2003, it was mailed to members who had not responded to the Internet survey. In late June, a follow-up copy was mailed to those who had not responded. Reminder post-cards were sent to non-respondents in July 2003. Members were given the opportunity to return the *Survey* by mail or at the 2003 Annual Meeting site. The cut off date for returning the *Survey* was August 29, 2003.

From an eligible response base of 5,169 members, GSO received 1,387 completed surveys, a response rate of 27%. Of those returned, 567 were completed on the web and 820 were returned from the mail survey. GSO is confident the response pattern of those responding is representative of the AALL membership at large. (GSO's *Career Development and Needs Assessment, September 2003* (*GSO Report*), p. 2)

In addition to the questionnaire, GSO also conducted four member focus groups at the 2003 Annual Meeting. The purpose of these focus groups was to solicit a more detailed perspective of career development needs and preferences from a small group of AALL members.

The script for the focus groups was developed by GSO in consultation with the ALL President, its Executive Director, and the chair of the Career Development Task Force.   In May 2003, messages were sent to all AALL members from the President and the Executive Director inviting them to participate in the focus groups. The invitation was repeated several times over a period of several weeks. Thirty-eight (38) members volunteered to participate. Since it had been predetermined to limit each focus group to six-ten participants, it was possible to assign each of those who volunteered to a group. Of those who agreed to participate, 31 actually attended the focus groups. Of those who responded, 26 were from academic libraries, seven were from private law firms, four were from state or county libraries, and one was from a non-profit legal interest group. One of the focus groups was composed entirely of members from academic libraries. One group contained members from the academic libraries and from state and county law libraries. The other two groups contained members from academic, interest group, and private libraries.

The *GSO Report* was delivered AALL headquarters in late September 2003. On Nov. 5, 2003, the CDTF completed its *Interim Report* which was delivered to the Executive Board for discussion at the November 2003 Board meeting. The *Interim Report* contained a short list of initial reactions to the *Survey* by CDTF members (without discussion). The list was meant to give some focus to the CDTF's further in-depth deliberations on the information and recommendations found in the *GSO Report.*

The CDTF then worked from November 2003 through mid-March2004 to complete its report to the Executive Board, using the data from the *Survey* and the *GSO Report* to inform its deliberations. Its *Report to the AALL Executive Board* was completed on March 17, 2004.