

# TS-SIS ad-hoc Committee on Standing Committees— July 2017

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## Introduction

The standing committee structure of the Technical Services Special Interest Section (TS-SIS), consisting of the core functional committees of Acquisitions, Cataloging and Classification, Preservation, and Serials, largely has been unchanged since 1995. The only change occurred in 2015, when the TS-SIS membership approved the combination of the Professional Development and Education Committees and their reconstitution as a standing committee in an attempt to underscore the importance of education and to improve communication between the standing committees and the Professional Development Committee.

In January 2017, the Executive Board of the Technical Services Special Interest Section (TS-SIS) appointed a chair to an ad-hoc Committee on Standing Committees (CSC): **to conduct an internal review of the current TS-SIS committee structure and the professional roles performed by its members and to recommend a standing committee structure for TS-SIS to the TS-SIS Executive Board.**

The TS-SIS chair further instructed the CSC chair to recommend **what areas of collaboration should be further explored between TS-SIS and other professional groups.** Besides potential collaboration, the CSC was instructed **to explore whether the present configuration of current standing committees encompass the full breadth of work and responsibilities of our members** (such as people doing archives, digital projects, electronic resource management, metadata work beyond MARC, etc.).

In February 2017, the CSC chair recruited members to form an ad-hoc committee, based on nominations from the TS-SIS chair and vice chair, and sought representation of different constituencies in terms of years of experience, types of library, committee participation, and job descriptions. Ultimately, the CSC was comprised of seven very dedicated members with a variety of work responsibilities and levels of experience in TS-SIS. There was at least one person from each of the current standing committees, but all were from academic libraries. The Committee was: Dan Blackaby, Sharon Bradley, Celia Gavett, Suzanne Graham (chair), Gypsy Moody, Karen Selden, and Elisabeth Umpleby.

## Methodology

The CSC began by reviewing similarly-charged groups within other professional library organizations, including American Library Association (ALA) divisions, Special Libraries Association (SLA), AALL Special Interest Sections, and AALL Caucuses. The CSC sought out different organizational models in order to observe how other member-driven organizations have adapted and stayed relevant. This work also informed its response to one of the directives from the Board: **what areas of collaboration should be further explored between TS-SIS and other professional groups?**

Through February and March 2017, the CSC members conducted interviews with current committee chairs and read current committee charges to understand the kind of work done by the various committees and the level of commitment and participation shown by their members. These interactions helped in planning a general survey by ensuring that we sought responses to questions raised by the committee chairs in addition to the questions posed by the Board.

For historical context, the CSC reviewed ten years of annual reports submitted by each of the standing committees.

CSC members also read the May 2015 [\*TS-SIS Task Force to Investigate Role of Roundtables\*](#) and made specific note of its recommendations for further study and comments on committees.

During April 2017, the CSC crafted a short survey with several open-ended questions to elicit responses to one of the fundamental challenges prompted by the TS-SIS Board: **do the current standing committees encompass the full breadth of work and responsibilities of our members?** It also addressed the partner and follow-up questions: **if not, what areas require additional support? and how effective and worthwhile do TS-SIS members perceive the current structure to be?**

From April 28-May 8, 2017, the CSC opened a survey, requesting current and past members of TS-SIS to contribute their recollections, ideas, and opinions. During the eleven days that the survey was open, the CSC Chair posted invitations and reminders to participate to TS-SIS members via the general TS-SIS MyCommunities list and to non-members via the Facebook group TSLAWCHATS. The CSC chair also encouraged the current standing committee chairs to post reminders on their committees' MyCommunities lists.

The survey included requests for demographic information in order to establish that respondents reflected the composition of the section at large. The CSC compared demographics provided by the survey respondents to demographic information provided by AALL Membership Services for overall validity of the sample. The group also reviewed the committee memberships of the respondents to make sure that the survey participants reasonably represented the various standing committees and other constituencies of TS-SIS.

Eighty-one people responded to the initial survey. All were current members of TS-SIS. The level of experience and membership in either TS-SIS or AALL was very consistent between the survey respondents and the overall TS-SIS membership, with the only notable exception being among those who have been members between six and ten years (Figure 1).

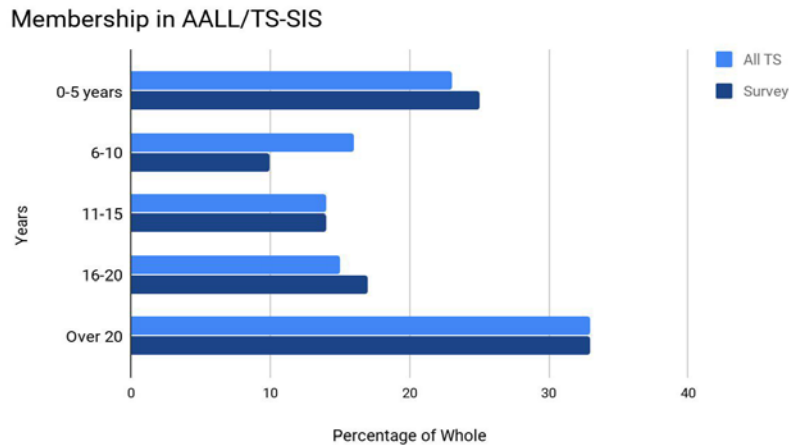


Figure 1

As can be seen in Figure 2 (Employed in Library Type), court and private law librarians were underrepresented in the initial survey responses. In an attempt to overcome this underrepresentation and gain feedback from these groups, the committee reached out to members of Private Law Librarians & Information Professionals Special Interest Section (PLLIP) via a posting by the PLLIP Secretary to its MyCommunities list. This post invited members to complete the same, re-opened survey during an additional week, June 6-13.

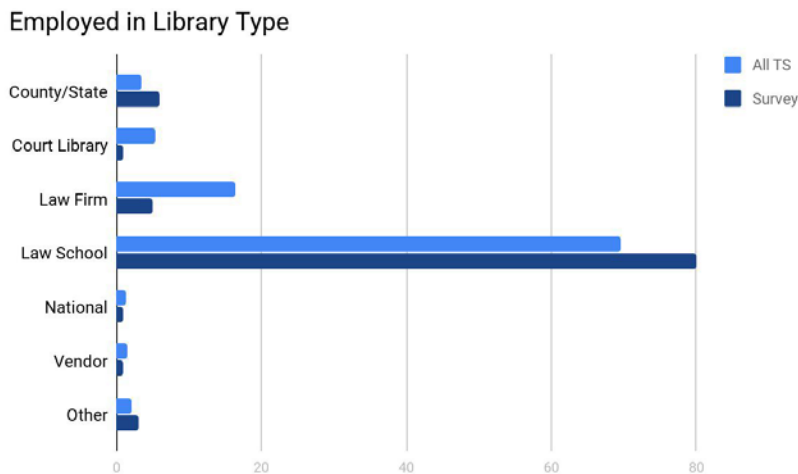


Figure 2

The response was very strong: 38 PLLIP members responded to the survey, even though none were current TS-SIS committee members. Since this overwhelming response would skew the responses toward law firms, the CSC decided against merging the two survey result sets. Instead, it viewed each survey individually, while noting areas of divergence and areas of general accord between the two survey groups.

The participation by members of current standing committees was mixed in the initial survey. With

total participation among members of the Acquisitions Committee at 100% and among members of the other committees ranging between 33-57% (Figure 3). The follow-up survey targeting PLLIP members did not include any currently serving committee members.

Percentage of Participants by Roster of Committee	
Acquisitions	13/13 (100% of committee roster)
Cataloging & Classification	24/42 (57% of committee roster)
Preservation	2/4 (50% of committee roster)
Professional Development	7/15 (47% of committee roster)
Serials	7/21 (33% of committee roster)
Not serving on a standing committee	36

Figure 3

The rate of committee participation among respondents was high compared to the overall rate among the TS-SIS membership at large. As of March 2017, the standing committees had 87 collective members. However, several people serve on multiple committees, so the actual number of individuals is likely much lower. Thus, of the 537 general members of TS-SIS, at least 84% do not participate on committees. In the survey, only 40% indicated they were not currently members of a standing committee (Figure 4).

Percentage of Overall Initial Survey Participants by Committee

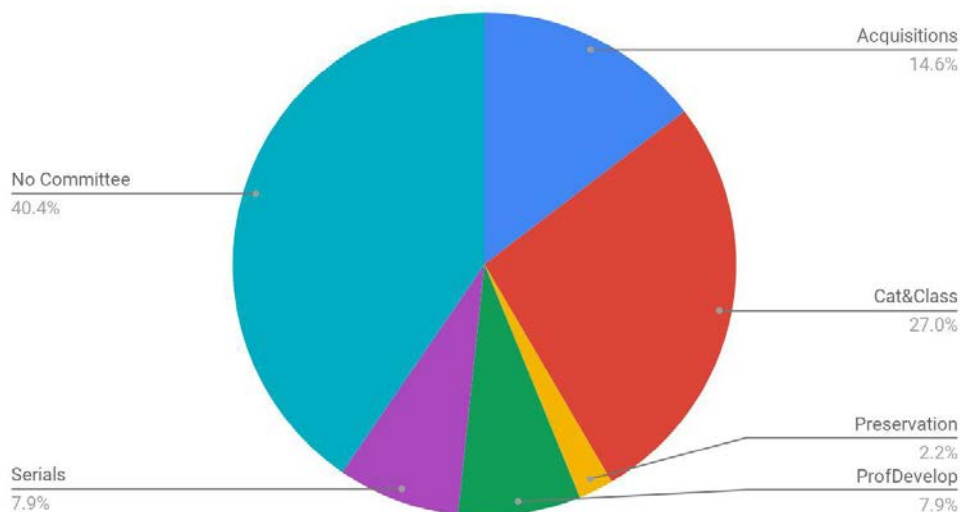


Figure 4

After establishing that the combined sample was reasonably representative and able to yield informative results, the CSC sought common threads and practical guidance in the extensive

comments to build its recommendations. The survey intentionally provided space for extended comments from the respondents. The CSC did not view any individual surveys but rather looked at only the aggregated responses. When reviewing the comments, the CSC compiled them both by questions and also by broad themes expressed in them regardless of which question they originally addressed.

## Findings

### Committee Structure Models

- **ALA ALCTS-** During the research of the other organizations, the CSC noted many professional similarities between the members of ALA ALCTS and AALL TS-SIS, even though TS-SIS members are a specialized subset of technical services librarians (those employed at law libraries).
  - **Committees-** ALCTS has five committees (Acquisitions, Cataloging & Metadata Management, Collection Management, Continuing Resources, and Preservation and Reformatting). These groups closely match the TS-SIS structure with the addition of “Collection Management” and the renaming of “Serials” as “Continuing Resources.” ALCTS [defines](#) a committee as:
 

"A committee is a group with long-term objectives so closely interwoven with the total program and development of policy of the association that it should have a continuing life. The need for the committee should be permanent and continuous."

In contrast, ALCTS also has [division-level committees](#), which handle areas like advocacy, budgeting, educational programming, leadership development, membership, and publications. These committees "direct crucial areas" of the "business" of ALCTS, whether programmatic, publishing, or operational.
  - **Interest Groups-** Since 2003, ALCTS has offered “interest groups” for its members to engage in programming for ALA conferences (both annual and midwinter), to participate in year-round remote access professional development webinars and eForums, and to engage in projects. Procedures for establishing an interest group are simple and ensure that any group of ten or more individuals with a common interest within the scope of ALCTS who are willing to sign a petition can create an interest group.
- **ALA ACRL-** Although this group is more analogous to the Academic Law Library SIS (ALL-SIS), the CSC acknowledged that TS-SIS has a strong majority of librarians at academic institutions, and there might be some value to reviewing the overall structure of the group.
  - **Committees-** ACRL has 20 committees, primarily administrative in nature to address overarching goals and pursuits of the whole membership (e.g., diversity, government relations, membership, professional development, etc.)
  - **Discussion Groups and Interest Groups-** ACRL Discussion Groups and Interest Groups address hot topics and needs for exchanging ideas and

- problem-solving.
  - **TS Interest Group** of ACRL (with 572 members in August 2015) is roughly the size of TS-SIS. ACRL defines its “interest groups” as “short-term groups gather[ed] together to discuss issues and provide members with the always-important information networks for exchanging ideas and problem solving.”
- **SLA**- SLA is divided into Chapters (by geography), Divisions (by field of work), and Caucuses (by professional interests)
  - **SLA Legal Division** has administrative committees for membership, professional development, grants, and awards. The Division has four roundtables for librarians with specialties in tax, government libraries, emerging technologies, and international issues.
  - **Solo Librarians Division** has only one committee: Communications. Each member of the division is encouraged to participate on the division’s one and only discussion list.
- **AALL SISs**- AALL has 14 special interest sections. All but two of these SISs represent staff engaged in a specific type of work within a law library (such as Computing Services) or a specific type of law library (e.g., Private Law Librarians & Information Professionals).
  - Committees- in other SISs, committees tend to be more administrative and overarching (e.g., Blog, Education, Nominations, Membership, Website, etc.).
- **AALL Chapters**- AALL has 30 chapters, each focused on geographical location of its members.
  - Committees- as in the SIS, the chapters tend to use their committees to accomplish overarching roles (e.g., Archives, Bylaws, Community service, Membership, Newsletter, Grants, etc.)
- **AALL Caucuses**- AALL has 15 Caucuses. Members of AALL may create caucuses to bring together colleagues with shared personal backgrounds, work environments or professional interests.
  - Committees- as with SISs and Chapters, the Caucus committees focus on the overarching work of the Caucus (Bylaws, Communications, Education, Membership, Nomination, etc.)

## Potential Collaborations with Related Groups

- **ALA ALCTS**: ALA ALCTS and TS-SIS have very similar constituencies.
  - ALCTS sponsors a liaison with AALL. The position is currently held by one of the co-chairs of the Professional Development Committee. This position supports good communication and possibilities of further collaboration and cooperation between TS-SIS and ALCTS in programming and education.
  - It's possible that we have many members who are currently also members of ALCTS.



- PLLIP-SIS: Two main areas of possible coordination exist between TS and PLLIP SISs.
  - PLLIP offers a committee for librarians and information professionals who work in organizations with fewer than 200 attorneys. Responses from the PLLIP community survey indicate that this is an area of need for closer outreach and collaboration between TS and PLLIP.
  - PLLIP-SIS has a [Technical Services Group](#) already with 60 members. This group has as their objective “the improvement of standards of bibliographic control in law firm libraries, and the development of related technology within the working environment of law firms.”
  - In addition, the Corporate Law Librarians' Group also listed "*Managers, in vendor contract negotiations, in budget preparation and monitoring, and in supervision of library personnel*" among the five key professional responsibilities in its [Value of the Corporate Law Librarian](#). This work is a natural tie-in with our Acquisitions and Serials Committees.
  
- ALL-SIS: TS-SIS and ALL-SIS could seek collaboration in the areas of collection development
  - The charge for the [ALL-SIS Collection Development Committee](#) includes work to "Develop and maintain collection development information for the ALL-SIS website. Continue to identify and evaluate commonly used tools for selections. Identify and evaluate tools for collection evaluation. Explore how e-resources are impacting collection development. Explore relationship between collection development and ILL."
  - Given that 70% of the TS membership is employed at academic law libraries, it is likely that many are also members of ALL-SIS.
  
- Legal History and Rare Books SIS (LHRS): The [LHRS](#) continues to offer a rare book cataloging roundtable session during Annual Meeting. Historically, chairs of this roundtable have been members of TS, and it has been promoted in TS in the past.
  
- Legal Information Services to the Public SIS (LISP): [LISP](#) has a tradition of working collaboratively with other SISs to produce educational programs, and TS is no exception. The Preservation Committee and LISP have collaborated to offer joint programming during Annual Meeting.
  
- Digitization & Educational Technology SIS (DET): Formerly, the Micrographics and Audiovisual SIS, DET focuses on three core areas, including "Preservation of materials through digitization." Although more-narrowly focused on educational technology and audiovisual materials, DET has potential areas of shared interest with the Serials and Acquisitions Committees in their issue page for [Electronic Licensing](#)
  
- OBS-SIS: TS maintains strong ties with OBS. Many members are part of both sections, and the sections already coordinate on the joint Funding Research Opportunities Grant committee and co-publish a highly-regarded publication, [Technical Services Law Librarian](#). OBS and TS Education Committees often collaborate to propose and deliver AALL Annual Meeting programs that are of interest to members of both sections.

- CS-SIS: The historical overlap between systems and technical services has been with discovery layers and ILS systems. However, in the last few years, much of the CS focus and programming has veered more toward front of the house public services use of technology or website UX, rather than the background systems. Potential remains for more outreach and partnership as BibFrame becomes more of a reality and in the general area of linked open data.
- Law Repositories Caucus- The [Law Repositories Caucus](#) and TS share some spheres of interest, but the overlap is only partial. TS interest in electronic resources extends beyond institutional repositories into the management of various databases, including matters of licensing, remote access, and statistical reporting. However, the IR Caucus is a resource for members seeking a community of users of those specific products.

## Interviews

Interviews with TS-SIS standing committee chairs were generally positive and optimistic, but the chairs expressed varying levels of perceived effectiveness in accomplishing the goals of the committees.

- Three chairs specifically commented on the vagueness or inaccuracy of their charge and a general lack of sustained participation by members.
- Some committees are in flux and need to have their charges updated.
- The Serials Committee is trying to engage more in electronic serials. It has plans to work with the Acquisitions Committee to compile templates from members on how they acquire, format and interpret e-resource usage statistics.
- The Preservation Committee chair recommended that the focus on preservation be expanded to embrace the broader issues of care and maintenance of all formats or that TS disband the committee altogether. In its place, TS-SIS could partner with other groups already engaged in collection care.
- The Cataloging & Classification Committee chair noted that some main strengths of this committee are that it serves as a general professional gathering place, and allows members to address and exert influence over outside organizations to effect change.
- The Cataloging & Classification Committee also strongly supports the important work of the AALL representatives to the ALA Committee on Cataloging: Description & Access, Subject Analysis Committee, and MARC Advisory Committee. The Committee and its working groups generate proposals and questions for the liaisons to take to the larger cataloging committees and they provide a beneficial proving ground for proposals under consideration. This interaction is seen as a great professional benefit to all parties.

- Two chairs mentioned the value of in-person committee roundtable discussions at the Annual Meeting, even though these have not always regularly taken place in recent years.
- Two chairs mentioned the value (either present or in the desired future) of holding online meetings/forums or webinar presentations/trainings during the year outside the Annual Meeting.
- One chair explicitly mentioned that there seems to be a great deal of overlap between a committee's scope of work and other TS-SIS standing committees and other SISs; another mentioned that certain topics (such as e-resources) slip through the cracks due to lack of a natural home for them in the current TS-SIS structure.

## Standing Committee Charges & Annual Reports, 2007-2016

Committee charges are very broadly-written and contain imprecise verbs that provide the chairs with considerable latitude and flexibility in prioritizing committee activities. While liberating, this vagueness can lead to a lack of clarity of what a TS-SIS standing committee does and how it differs from other committees or how well it performs its duties.

Based on the CSC's reviews of the past 10 years' annual reports submitted by TS-SIS standing committee chairs, meaningful member activity and progress on projects fluctuated year by year. This momentum shift could be due, in part, to external factors beyond the control of the committees, such as the economic downturn of 2008, urgent implementation of new standards such as RDA, or other factors that limit individuals' time and professional resources available to devote to committee work.

Because SIS chairs and members rotate, it may be the case that the current committee structure works best when there is one or more "visionaries" who have the ability to communicate the value and importance of committee projects to members. They also must have either strong institutional support to spend time on professional development tasks during working hours or strong personal commitment and interest to do committee work during non-working hours.

The chairs alone cannot guarantee the effectiveness of the committee. The individual members share responsibility through their participation and volunteerism. Engagement from both chair and dedicated members is critical to the success of the committee.

- Acquisition Committee [Charge](#) The Acquisitions Standing Committee **serves as the research and discussion group** on areas of acquisitions, including collection development; acquisitions policies; encumbrance systems; accounting and record keeping; internal acquisitions procedures; approval plans related to collection development and acquisitions policies; duplicate order control; and other topics within the scope of the preceding list. The committee currently has 13 members.

According to the charge, the Acquisitions Committee is to **support research and discussions**. Over the past five years, the Acquisitions Committee made efforts to reach members and provide valuable

tools and group interactions beyond Annual Meeting in alignment with that part of the charge. The Committee began holding quarterly roundtable discussions in 2015-2016. In 2014-15, the Acquisitions Committee posted monthly tips on relevant topics to the electronic list. In 2013-2014, the committee created a list of ways to access state statutes. No reports were issued from this committee 2011-2013, and the years between 2007 and 2011, the committee's work appears to be limited to a roundtable at Annual Meeting and a joint project with ALL-SIS to collect examples of collection development policies. In 2007, the committee organized a full-day workshop just prior to Annual Meeting that was completely filled and well received.

- **Cataloging & Classification Committee [Charge](#):** The Cataloging and Classification Standing Committee's responsibility is to **address issues** concerning descriptive and subject cataloging and the classification of book and non-book materials. The Committee currently has 42 members.

Over the past decade, the committee "addresses issues" through three consistently-active and beneficial working groups covering: descriptive cataloging, subject and classification, and vendor records. The Committee also has sponsored roundtables for new catalogers, rare book catalogers, and managers, but these have undergone periods of inactivity and have been linked to Annual Meeting. Participation in a working group or roundtable is not limited to members of Cataloging & Classification Committee. The Committee does not appear to have any overarching projects addressed as a full committee or to have engaged in activities outside of Annual Meeting since the introduction of RDA in 2008/2009.

- **Preservation Committee [Charge](#):** The Preservation Standing Committee is charged with **focusing on measures to preserve** legal information, in all formats, that is at risk due to deterioration, neglect or disaster and with **addressing issues related to the preservation of and access to digital content**. The Committee also serves as a **resource on preservation** for the American Association of Law Libraries. The committee currently has 4 members.

Over the past decade, the Preservation Committee has declined in overall membership, but it has remained active. Since 2010, the committee has coordinated and awarded the Worst Book Contest. The committee compiled and published a list of archivists in law libraries in 2015. It produces a regular column for *TSL*, maintains a blog, [Stay Well-Preserved](#) (2011- ), publishes a monthly "Preservation tip of the month" (April 2013- ), and has produced programming for the Annual Meeting, although the committee has not met at the Annual Meeting for two years.

- **Professional Development Committee [Purpose Statement](#):** The purpose of the Professional Development Committee is to **plan and implement continuing education** activities in any format that promote technical services-related professional development **both during and beyond the AALL annual meeting**. The Continuing Professional Development Standing Committee is **responsible for overseeing, coordinating, and maintaining the charges of several professional development Working Groups**. The committee currently has 15 members.

The Professional Development Committee was reconstituted as a standing committee in 2015. Its charge included the that of the former Education Committee, expanding its mission to providing year-round continuing education opportunities, including programming at Annual Meetings. Through the current co-chair, this committee has strong ties to ALA ALCTS, as the ALCTS Liaison to AALL. Activities of the committee and its working groups have resulted in additional electronic forums and webinars and has explored continuing education delivery options, but has had "frustrations" and "growing pains" in meeting expectations.

- **Serials Committee [Charge](#):** The Serials Standing Committee **provides a forum** for addressing **issues unique to serial publications** including, but not limited to, check-in systems; subscription agencies; binding; claiming; and record keeping. This committee also encourages the exchange of duplicate materials among law libraries by issuing periodic lists of exchange materials available from member libraries. The committee currently has 21 members.

The Serials Committee is in flux as it has moved away from major projects of years past. The formerly active and lucrative Exchange of Duplicates Project (mentioned in the charge) was discontinued in December 2014. The Project COUNTER Task Force has not reported at the Annual Meeting since 2012. The Committee has held combined roundtable discussions at Annual Meeting with the Acquisitions Committee. The 2015-2016 committee explores "what should be done under this committee," but no new initiatives were undertaken this year and the committee did not meet virtually.

## Report of Task Force to Investigate Role of Roundtables

The task force reported that 75% of respondents to its survey value the TS-SIS roundtables (marking either "very valuable" or "valuable"). The task force found that roundtables "created positive learning environments" and had such beneficial outcomes as producing "ideas for solving similar problems, best practices, future programs, and additional projects and initiatives [as well as facilitating] networking and forming of new connections."

The task force advised that the roundtables needed clearer expectations and that their meetings should all have defined agendas. Once clarified, the roundtables and their meetings should be better promoted within and beyond TS-SIS.

The [2015 report](#) concluded with the recommendation that TS-SIS should call a task force to investigate the role of committees to explore "where further distinctions could be made between roundtables and committees and the potential ... leveraging power of formal standing committees to enhance roundtable activities and vice versa."

## Initial Survey

### *General Awareness of Standing Committees*

Based on the results of the survey, the general membership of the TS-SIS is aware that the section has committees and most people have positive impressions of the work that these groups perform.

### ***Current Level of Participation on Standing Committees***

The 74 respondents to the initial survey, who were aware the TS has standing committees, were evenly split between those currently serving on a committee and those who are not (37 and 36 respectively with one person not responding).

The most common reasons for not participating in a committee this year given by the 36 respondents who are not currently serving were:

- Time constraints (67%)
- Five assumed that standing committees would entail work assignments
- Five respondents were not attending Annual Meeting
- Five people felt that members needed to be appointed, and two indicated they didn't know how to join
- Four respondents felt that committee assignments were reserved for “experienced members”
- Two respondents indicated that they felt "unwelcomed" at committee meetings, and one indicated feeling "uncomfortable" at meetings
- Two respondents indicated "no interest." Another indicated "not sure [it is] worth my time"

The work of the committees, as reported by current committee members, is done through a balance of face-to-face discussions at Annual Meeting and email exchanges throughout the year (78% and 87% respectively). Only 13% of committee members reported that their committees offered teleconference meetings, which roughly matches the number of responses by the Acquisitions Committee members.

### ***General Impressions of Committee Activities***

In the survey, questions #16, #19, and #20 sought open-ended responses about what types of committee activities and professional conversations that respondents would consider valuable, and any other feedback or comments participants wanted to share. The CSC reviewed all responses and grouped them into topical categories. Some common threads emerged:

- Respondents highly value opportunities to network, share practical professional information, and advocate as a group. Active discussions with the collective expertise of the group are a vital component for many members, as is the identification of current changes and developing trends.
- Respondents report high satisfaction with the working groups throughout the year, and the progress that comes out of those project-specific sub-committees and roundtables. Those conversations are critical to the members' feeling of belonging, and provide a way for them to be engaged.
- Respondents view in-person or teleconference conversations as important supplements to email correspondence throughout the year. They provide a learning experience for participants, and a place to bring up shared issues of interest to the law community.



- Many respondents feel there is not enough communication and interaction outside of the annual meeting. Web forums, webinars, online discussions are not used enough, and members are left feeling disconnected.
- Electronic resources management is an important aspect of members' work, but there is not yet a natural home for this topic in the TS-SIS structure.
- Professional development, mentorships, and management are highly desired across demographics (new/experience; solo/specialist respondents). TS-SIS needs more opportunities for newer members and to involve more people.
- Respondents voiced some dissatisfaction with AALL as a whole: limited number of SIS meeting slots at the annual meeting; reduced/eliminated funding for representatives; perception that TS-related programming at annual meeting is meager; difficult/unknown process on how to get involved with committees.
- Respondents reported having broader, multi-faceted job descriptions and less time to devote to committee work than in the past.
- The current committee structure encourages information silos and "team affiliations." Respondents want to build a more open environment of information-sharing and more frequent reporting. Updating committee descriptions to be more inviting and inclusive would help.
- General awareness of how technical services work is changing. How can the committees keep up with those changes? Are we forward thinking enough?

## PLLIP Survey

Thirty-eight members of a different AALL Section voluntarily participated in this survey. The CSC interpreted this robust response to be indicative of more than professional collegiality. Even though none of the PLLIP participants were current members of any committees under review, they showed interest and gave thoughtful responses of how we might better serve them. More outreach and collaborations between TS and this group could help inform this population of the professional support available from TS and recruit new active members.

- Respondents are not involved in TS-SIS Committees, not because of a lack of interest (4%) or a feeling it wouldn't be "worth [their] time" (8%), but because they lack time (32%).
- 8% assumed that committee membership involved work.
- 12% of respondents believe that committee membership is limited to experience members.
- 8% indicated that TS-SIS has "no applicable committee" for their kind of work.
- Based on recurring comments, the PLLIP respondents:
  - serve as solo librarians at their organizations (do everything for the library)
  - engage in extensive vendor relations
  - seek conversations about management of electronic resources
  - see considerable overlap and express confusion between the roles of TS, OBS and CS

## Items for Consideration

### Rewrite the Committee Charges

The CSC members found varying perceptions and expectations among members of the role of the standing committees and the time commitment that committee membership requires. From the interviews, annual reports, and survey responses, it appears that members have the perception that our committees have three distinct missions:

- Promote professional exchanges and networking (offer an open discussion forum)
- Accomplish projects (conduct research and compile white papers, best practices, directories, bibliographies)
- Promote year-round continuing education opportunities

### *Clarify Expectations*

One possible approach is to clarify that the standing committees only have primary responsibility to perform the first bulleted item: promote exchanges. Our committees currently operate more like divisions of ALA, in that their primary role is to bring people together. Membership in a standing committee comes with the benefit of inclusion into a more focused community discussion board. The more open and expansive the membership is, the more comprehensive the discussion can be.

The all-volunteer subgroups under the committees perform any work, and the professional development committee is charged with education (in close collaborations with the committees).

The use of verbs like "addresses", "focuses" and "serves" in the charges fails to give the committees adequate direction. Instead of attempting to describe how the committees will do their work, the charges could describe outcomes with assertive "will" or "shall" statements. This type of clarification and use of action verbs provides the chairs, the executive board, and the general members with a better understanding of the benefits of committee membership and a better measure of how well the committee is meeting expectations. For example:

The Acquisitions Standing Committee serves as the research and discussion group on areas of acquisitions.

*compared to*

The Acquisitions Standing Committee will provide a member-only discussion list to explore areas of interest to members, will conduct research projects by calling ad-hoc and working groups as needed, and will facilitate roundtables on areas of interest to committee members.

### ***Commit to Roundtables and Working Groups***

While the committee membership requires no work, each of these forums or committees would be



umbrella groups that would have responsibility for coordinating working groups and sponsoring roundtable discussions of professional interest. Each standing committee should be charged specifically with charging ad-hoc or working groups to conduct projects and investigations and calling meetings of roundtables on a regular basis.

AALL is a huge, national organization and is highly structured. Membership and conference attendance is expensive and potentially out-of-reach for librarians without employer support. TS-SIS should focus on providing opportunities that naturally lend themselves to the types of casual, collegial information-sharing that current law librarians are interested in.

### ***Empower the Chairs***

The role of standing committee chair is a big responsibility. These chairs should be given as much support and direction as possible. The TS-SIS Executive Board should clarify what a successful year in a TS-SIS standing committee looks like. "What are we doing and why is it important?" should be an answerable tandem question each year. The TS-SIS Chair should work with incoming and outgoing chairs to assess task lists of activities and expected outcomes.

### **Allow Members to Join at Any Time**

TS-SIS members cannot always anticipate what job roles and project responsibilities they will have throughout the year. Limiting interested people from joining committees to a set time during the year inhibits the ability of our committees to be a resource at the point of need. Just as TS-SIS welcomes new section members at any time, the committees should welcome new members year round. Joining the conversation on a committee MyCommunity board should be as easy and immediate as possible.

### **Sunset, Suspend or Merge Committees**

If TS-SIS wishes to recruit and retain members in organizations with smaller library staff, then more support to address the needs of solo (or at least less-specialized) librarians is needed. These professionals must be jacks-of-all-trades, and the current lines between acquisitions, continuing resources, cataloging, and preservation might not correspond neatly to their workday responsibilities. TS-SIS could reduce its standing committees to two broadly inclusive functional area committees: Description and Resources Management.

- Committee/Forum on Description would encompass the same specialties as the current Cataloging & Classification Committee, but it would more clearly embrace non-MARC formats and metadata creation beyond the traditional ILS.
- Committee/Forum on Resources Management would encompass the specialties of Acquisitions, Serials, and Preservation. The use of "resource" would semantically link the scope to electronic as well as physical resources.
- The current Professional Development Committee would be an administrative committee.

## **Clarify Distinction between Administrative and Standing Committees**

In contrast to how the CSC proposes defining the standing committees, the TS-SIS administrative committees should have work-oriented, finite charges that require active participation by their members. For example, the Nominating Committee must present a slate of candidates, and the Awards Committee must solicit nominations and select award recipients from that pool.

These committees are defined by the “work” they are charged to perform. Under this structure, the Professional Development Committee is an administrative committee and should be relabeled as such.

To further clarify the differing expectations placed on members of standing and administrative committees, the CSC suggests that TS-SIS consider renaming the standing committees as “Forums.” The term “forum” more intuitively expresses the role of a gathering place for similarly-situated professionals to discuss matters of interest.

## **Encourage Interest Groups**

The roles and job descriptions of TS-SIS members have continued to evolve during the past two decades. In order to respond quickly to hot topics and emerging areas of interest, TS-SIS should adopt the models of the Caucuses within AALL and Interest Groups within ALA Divisions. Both of these models grow and develop according to actions initiated by members, not by the leadership.

Given that some of the newest areas of work can require some of the most networking and community discussion and that these are the same areas that are likely performed by a minority of members, we need a way to set an expectation that smaller more targeted groups are welcome to address emerging needs of TS-SIS members. Rather than having a board anticipate needs, individual members should feel empowered to create and nurture the groups they need within TS-SIS.

Following the ALA model, TS-SIS Interest Groups could be formed by submitting a petition with a proposed purpose for the group and ten signatories to the executive board at any time during the year. Once established these groups would submit a renewal form to the executive board every three years to stay active. In return, they would be given MyCommunities lists for their communications and would be encouraged to develop program proposals for both the AMPC submission process and birds-of-a-feather discussions.

## **Promote and Engage in Continued Outreach**

While most of our active members are aware of the committees and have a general appreciation for their work, it is clear from the PLLIP survey, that some constituent populations are not. Even among those that responded to the initial survey, there were misunderstandings about the inclusiveness and roles of the committees.

Once the Board and the general membership affirms what the committees are, the Board should encourage a broad and on-going campaign to promote its committees to groups within and beyond TS-SIS through joint programming and professional communication on shared issues. To invite conversation and raise visibility, TS librarians could wear “Ask Me Anything about TS” buttons (or more

specific ones like, Ask Me Anything about Acquisitions) at the professional meetings they attend.

Outreach and continued collaborations between TS-SIS and related groups with ALA and AALL is critical. These ties expand the opportunities for education and networking among the current members and also expand opportunities for recruiting new members who have professional needs and interest in technical services. PLLIP and ALL are the largest sections within AALL. TS-SIS has done a good job selling its value to academic librarians, and it should take more concrete steps to promote its value to private law firm information professions.

The committees, roundtables, and working groups must communicate about their activities more on the general MyCommunities TS-SIS list. Relying on members to read annual reports is not the most effective way to promote a group or activity. A better general edification and recruitment strategy is the regular posting of short outlines of upcoming meetings and quick project updates to the general list. If TS-SIS opens the window to join a committee, this kind of on-going update can lead to new members at time of need. It also will make every member better informed about all TS-SIS activities and a better ambassador of our services.

### **Create a Section Buddy Program**

Formal mentoring programs have been attempted with varying success at the section and organization level in AALL. A pilot program could focus on matching new section members with an experienced one for one year to specifically focus on helping the new member become acclimated to TS-SIS and for the experienced member to listen to the expectations and emerging needs of the new member.

# Appendix

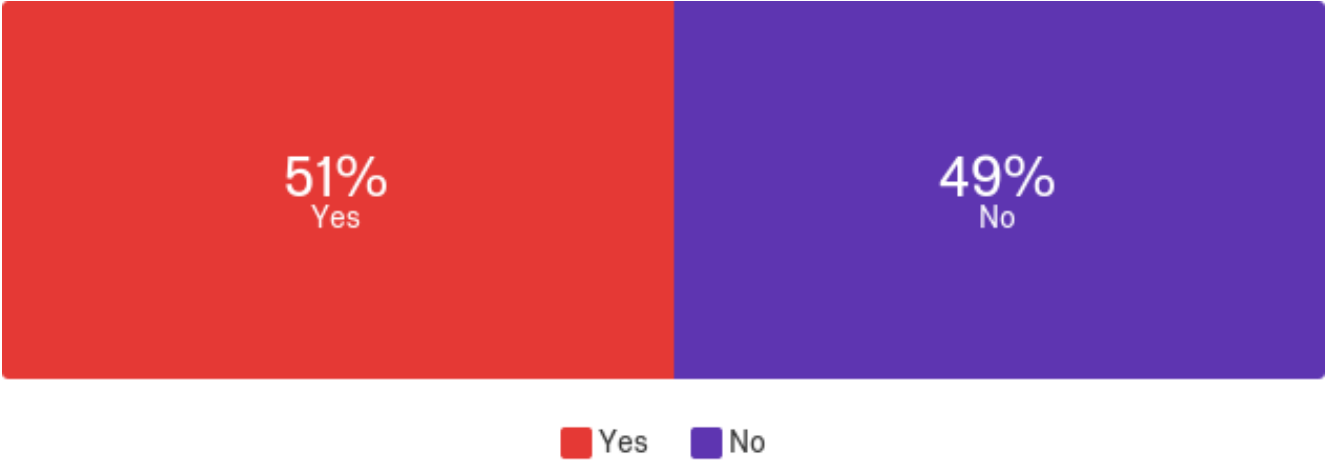
## Initial Survey Responses

Prior to taking this survey, were you aware that TS-SIS had Standing Committees?



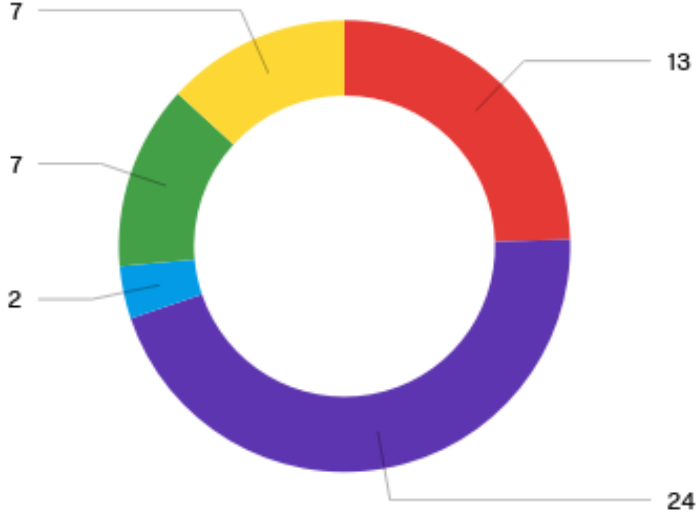
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	91.36%	74
2	No	8.64%	7
	Total	100%	81

**Are you currently a member of a TS-SIS Standing Committee?**



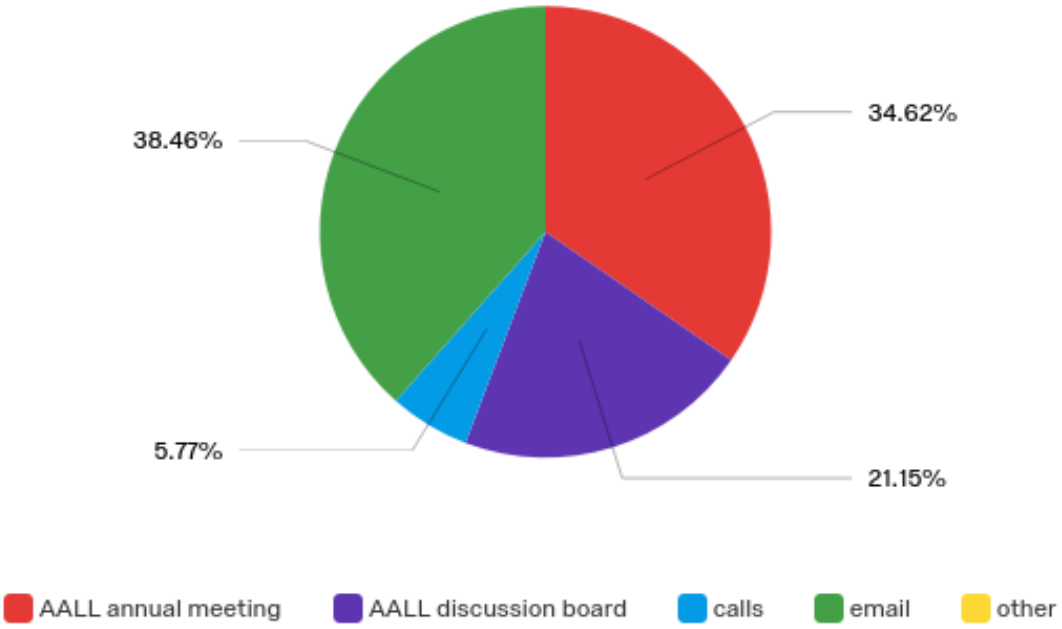
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	50.68%	37
2	No	49.32%	36
	Total	100%	73

# Which ones?



#	Answer	%	Count
5	Serials	18.92%	7
4	Professional Development	18.92%	7
3	Preservation	5.41%	2
2	Cataloging & Classification	64.86%	24
1	Acquisitions	35.14%	13
	Total	100%	37

How do you interact with your committee(s)? Please check all that apply.

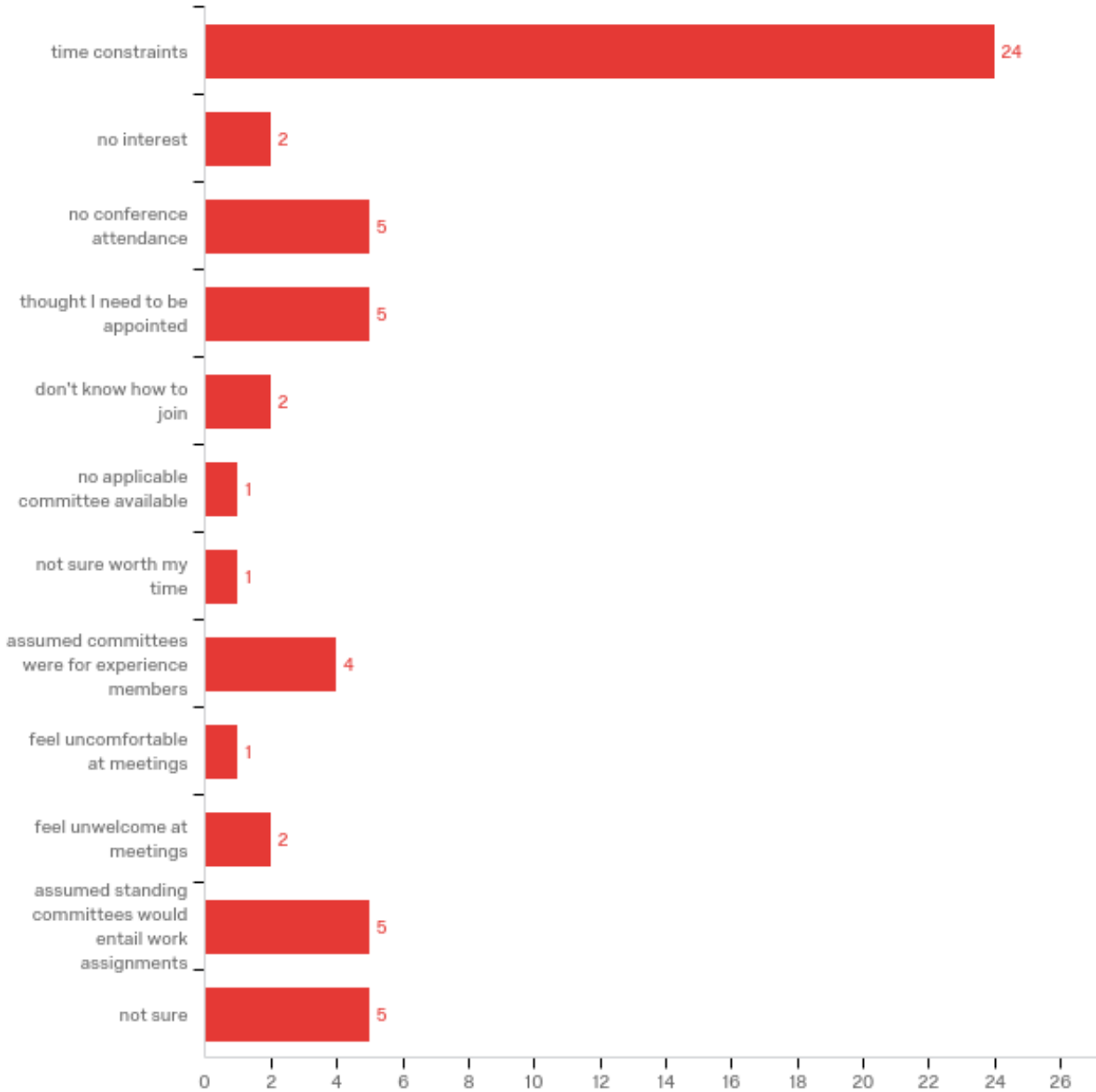


#	Answer	%	Count
1	AALL annual meeting	78.26%	18
2	AALL discussion board	47.83%	11
3	calls	13.04%	3
4	email	86.96%	20
6	other	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	23

Please elaborate:

No responses

**Which factors kept you from joining a TS-SIS Standing Committee this year? Please check all that apply.**



#	Answer	%	Count
1	time constraints	66.67%	24
2	no interest	5.56%	2
3	no conference attendance	13.89%	5
4	thought I need to be appointed	13.89%	5



5	don't know how to join	5.56%	2
6	no applicable committee available	2.78%	1
7	not sure worth my time	2.78%	1
8	assumed committees were for experience members	11.11%	4
9	feel uncomfortable at meetings	2.78%	1
10	feel unwelcome at meetings	5.56%	2
11	assumed standing committees would entail work assignments	13.89%	5
12	not sure	13.89%	5
	Total	100%	36

**Which activities of the TS-SIS Standing Committees are important or of interest to you and/or your library? What do you think would improve the TS-SIS Standing Committee experience?**

43 comments redacted for privacy

**If you could create a committee in TS-SIS what would it do? What kind of professional conversations would you like to participate in?**

35 comments redacted for privacy

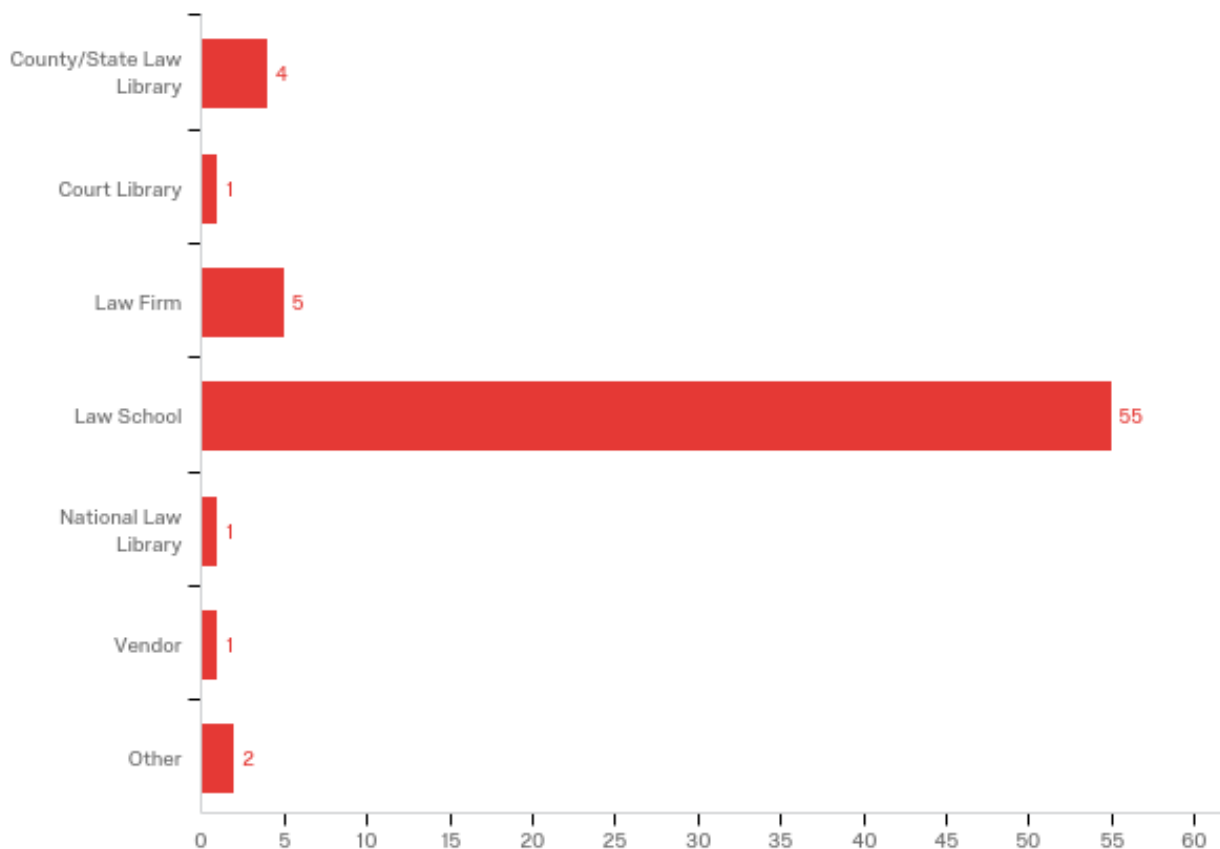
**Is there anything else you would like the committee to consider?**

24 comments redacted for privacy

**If you have comments that you would like to share directly with the committee, please enter your contact information below.**

7 comments redacted for privacy

## In what type of library do you work?



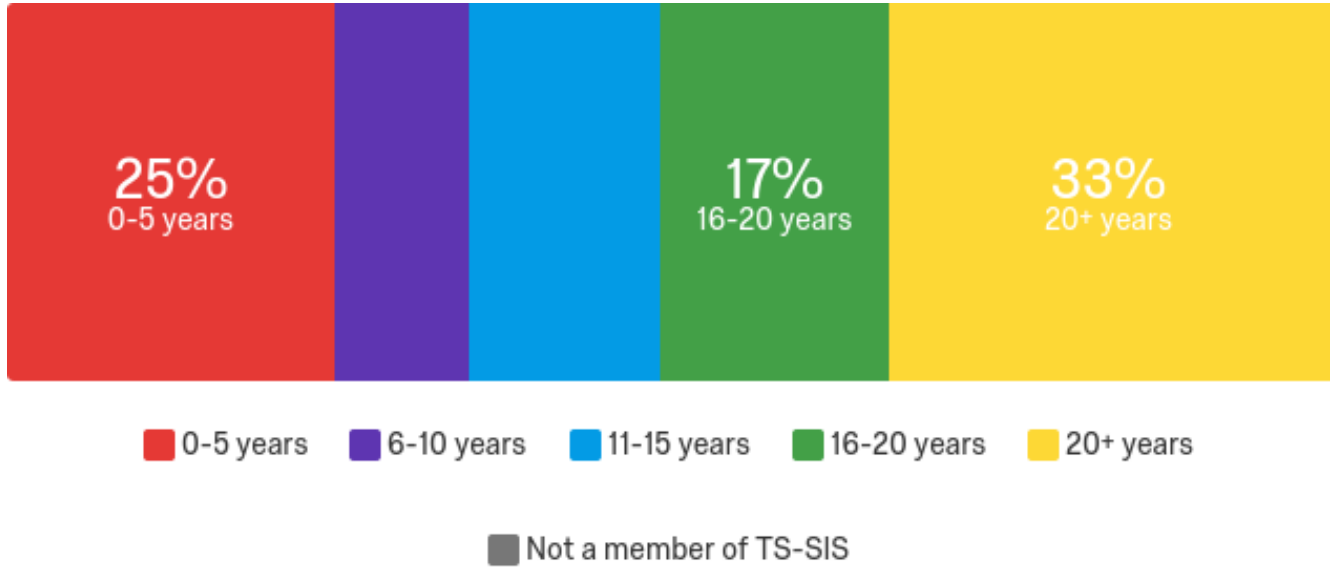
#	Answer	%	Count
2	County/State Law Library	5.80%	4
3	Court Library	1.45%	1
4	Law Firm	7.25%	5
1	Law School	79.71%	55
5	National Law Library	1.45%	1
6	Vendor	1.45%	1
7	Other	2.90%	2
	Total	100%	69

## Please elaborate

library consortium

Semi-retired, part time consulting

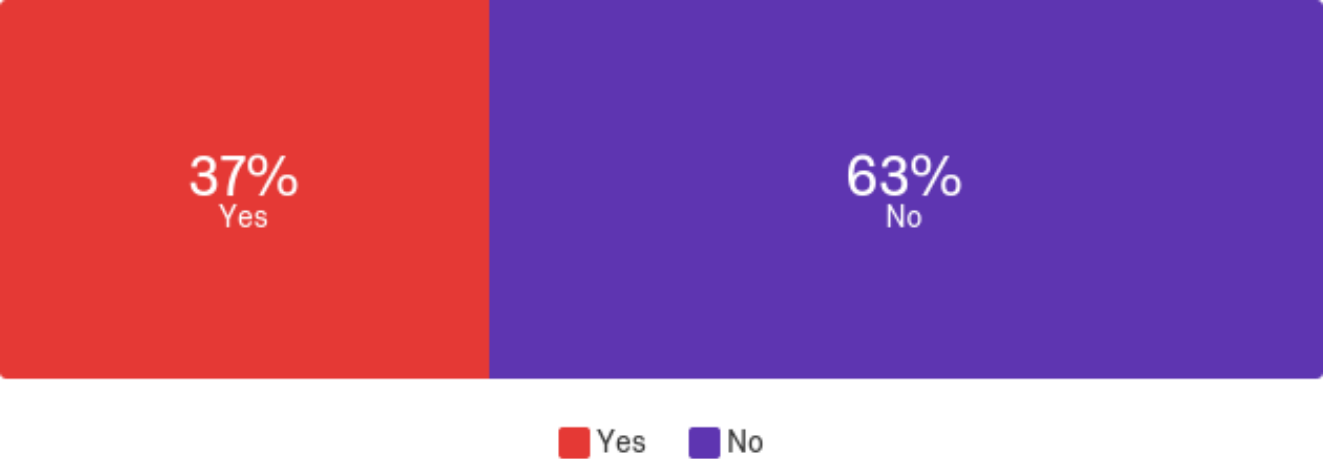
## How long have you been a member of TS-SIS?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	0-5 years	24.64%	17
2	6-10 years	10.14%	7
3	11-15 years	14.49%	10
4	16-20 years	17.39%	12
5	20+ years	33.33%	23
6	Not a member of TS-SIS	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	69

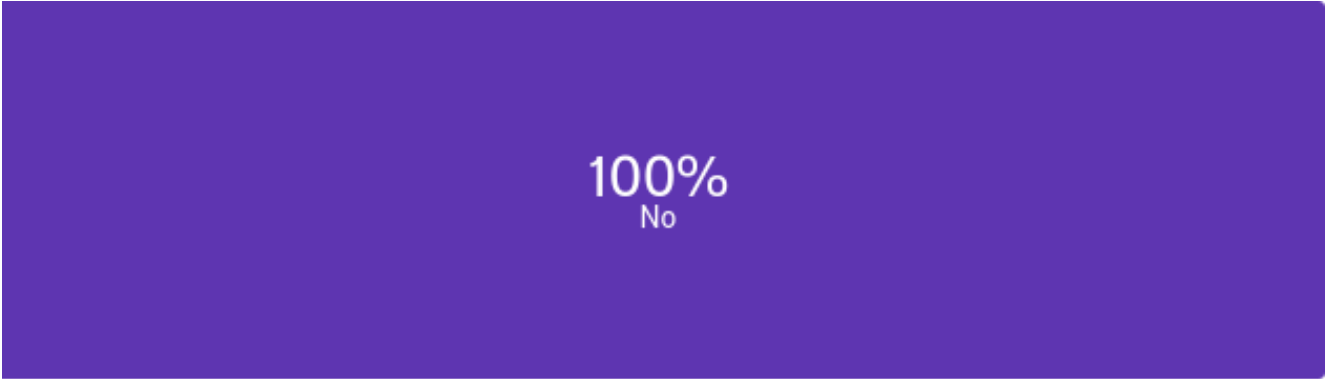
# PLLIP Survey Responses

Prior to taking this survey, were you aware that TS-SIS had Standing Committees?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	36.84%	14
2	No	63.16%	24
	Total	100%	38

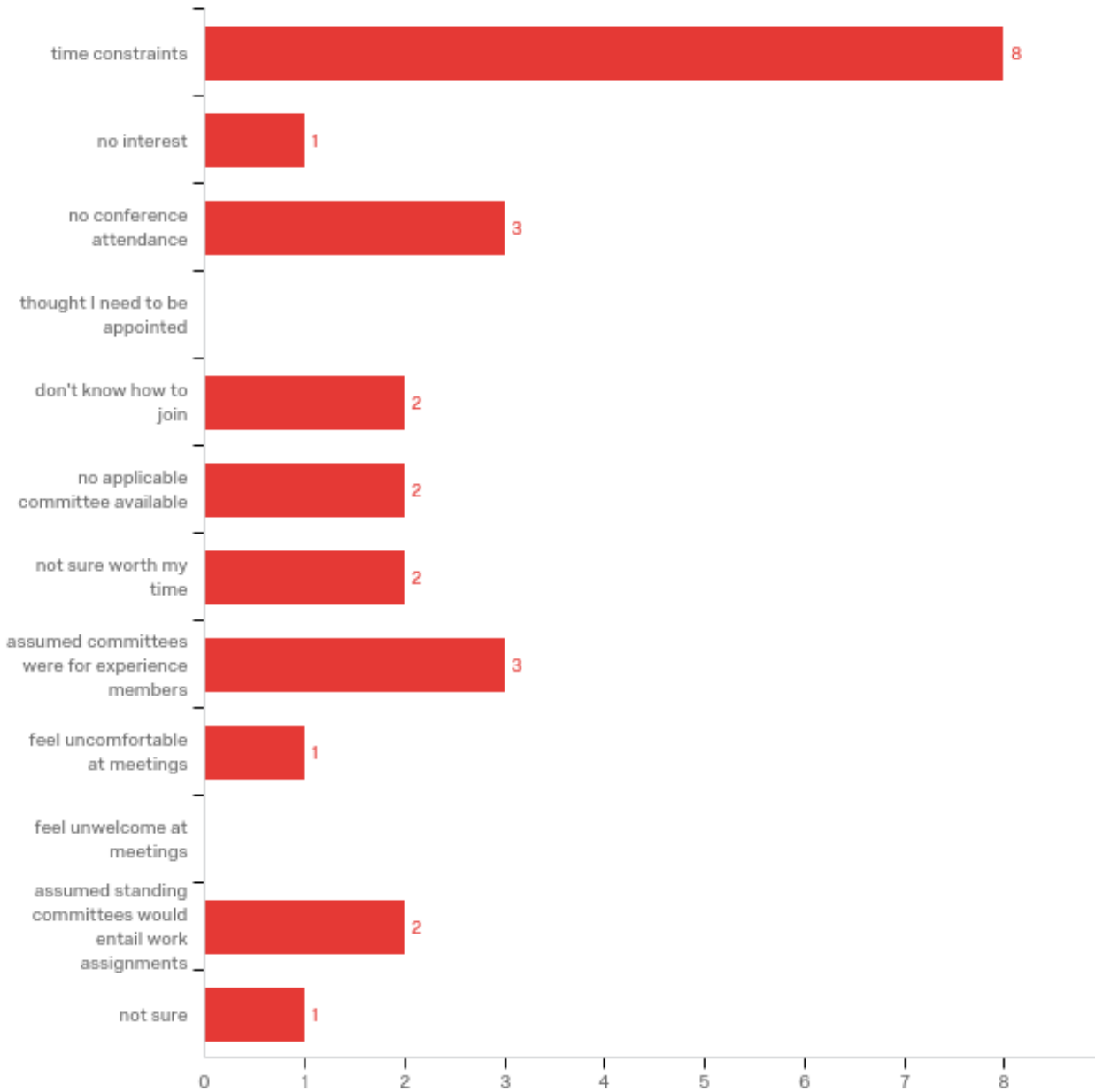
Are you currently a member of a TS-SIS Standing Committee?



■ Yes ■ No

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	0.00%	0
2	No	100.00%	14
	Total	100%	14

**Which factors kept you from joining a TS-SIS Standing Committee this year? Please check all that apply.**



#	Answer	%	Count
1	time constraints	32.00%	8
2	no interest	4.00%	1
3	no conference attendance	12.00%	3
4	thought I need to be appointed	0.00%	0

5	don't know how to join	8.00%	2
6	no applicable committee available	8.00%	2
7	not sure worth my time	8.00%	2
8	assumed committees were for experience members	12.00%	3
9	feel uncomfortable at meetings	4.00%	1
10	feel unwelcome at meetings	0.00%	0
11	assumed standing committees would entail work assignments	8.00%	2
12	not sure	4.00%	1
	Total	100%	25

**Which activities of the TS-SIS Standing Committees are important or of interest to you and/or your library? What do you think would improve the TS-SIS Standing Committee experience?**

6 comments redacted for privacy

**If you could create a committee in TS-SIS what would it do? What kind of professional conversations would you like to participate in?**

11 comments redacted for privacy

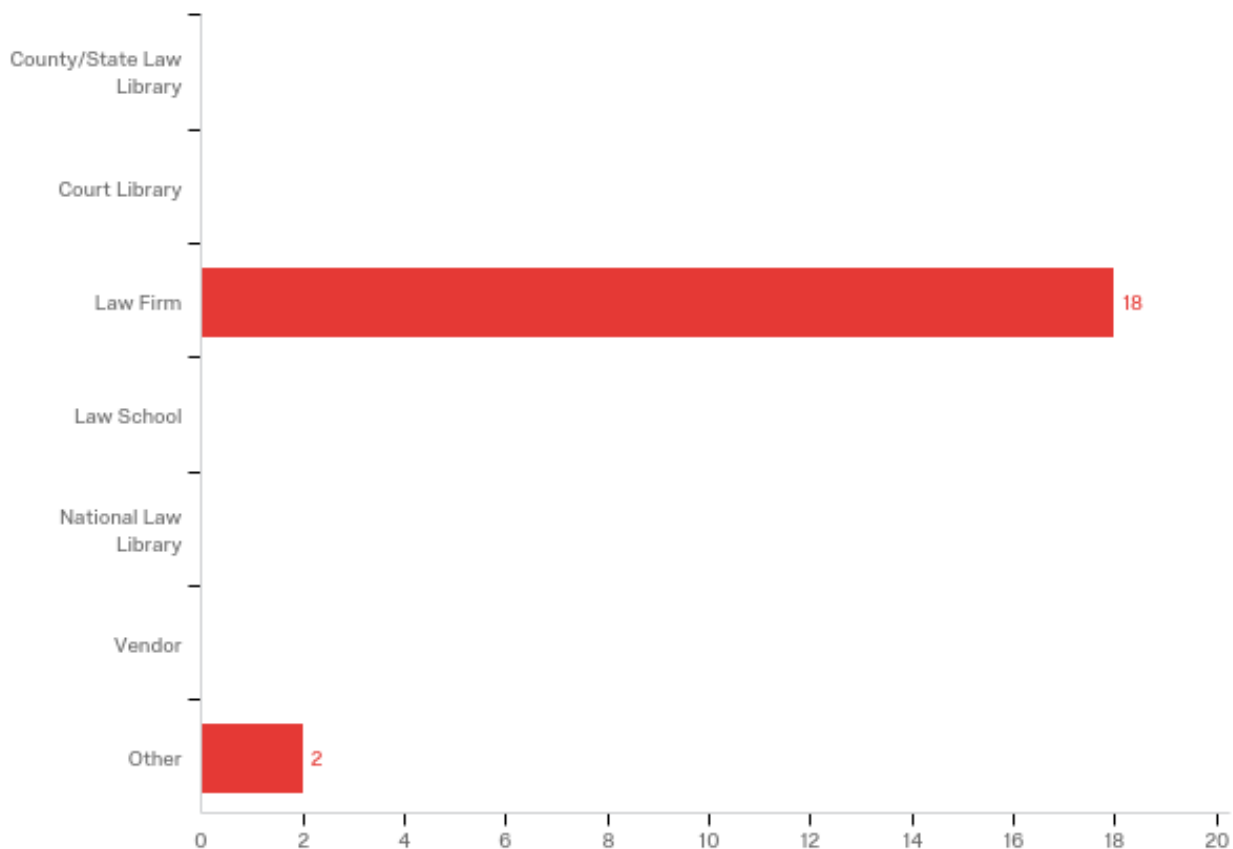
**Is there anything else you would like the committee to consider?**

8 comments redacted for privacy

**If you have comments that you would like to share directly with the committee, please enter your contact information below.**

No comments

## In what type of library do you work?



#	Answer	%	Count
2	County/State Law Library	0.00%	0
3	Court Library	0.00%	0
4	Law Firm	90.00%	18
1	Law School	0.00%	0
5	National Law Library	0.00%	0
6	Vendor	0.00%	0
7	Other	10.00%	2
	Total	100%	20

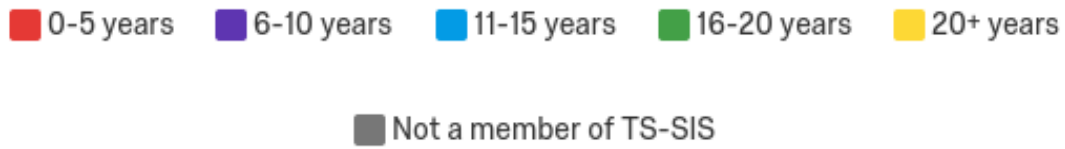
## Please elaborate

Small private membership law library

membership library



## How long have you been a member of TS-SIS?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	0-5 years	20.00%	4
2	6-10 years	0.00%	0
3	11-15 years	10.00%	2
4	16-20 years	10.00%	2
5	20+ years	10.00%	2
6	Not a member of TS-SIS	50.00%	10
	Total	100%	20