

## Technical Services SIS

# Funding AALL Representatives, 2015

In March 2015, AALL announced that it would discontinue funding the three liaisons who represent the interests of technical services law librarians to the American Library Association and MARC Steering Group.

The following is from an email from Suzanne Graham, TS-SIS Chair, 2014-2015, and Karen Selden, OBS-SIS Chair, 2014-2015, sent on March 24, 2015:

It is with a great sense of relief that we announce that the AALL Executive Board voted to reverse its decision to discontinue our three representatives.

AALL will continue to financially support representatives to the MARC Advisory Committee, the Subject Analysis Committee, and the Committee on Cataloging: Description & Access.

Together we compiled a persuasive case that helped our cause, not only in this specific exchange, but that was informative generally about the landscape we navigate and that we are building in technical services. Thank you for all your perspectives, concerns, and expressions of support. Karen and I learned from your collective wisdom and experience. Your input made our position more compelling.

The AALL Executive Board listened to us and took our concerns seriously. We sincerely appreciate the leadership and professionalism shown by our president, Holly Riccio. She addressed our petition very quickly and presided over a special Board meeting today rather than wait until April's regular meeting to address our concerns.

The documents listed below and included in this file were submitted in support of continued funding for the liaisons. The documents are 1) the response of the TS-SIS and OBS-SIS Executive Boards that respectfully disagree with AALL's decision and outline support for the positions and 2) statements from current and past representatives that further describe their roles and activities.

- TS-SIS / OBS-SIS Executive Boards Response
- Committee on Cataloging: Description & Access (CC:DA) Representatives Statement
- MARC Advisory Committee (MAC) Representatives' Statement
- Subject Analysis Committee (SAC) Representative's Statement
- Statement from CC:DA Chair

## MEMORANDUM

To: Holly Riccio, President, American Association of Law Libraries Members of the American Association of Law Libraries Executive Board  
Kate Hagan, Executive Director, American Association of Law Libraries

From: Suzanne Graham, Chair Technical Services Section on behalf of the TS-SIS Executive Board  
Karen Selden, Chair of Online Bibliographic Services Special Interest Section on behalf of the OBS-SIS Executive Board

Subject: AALL Funding for Three Technical Services Representatives

Date: March 13, 2015

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The Executive Boards of the Technical Services Special Interest Section and Online Bibliographic Services Special Interest Section of the American Association of Law Libraries respectfully disagree with the AALL Executive Board decision to discontinue its support for AALL representatives to technical services committees of the American Library Association and MARC Steering Group. The TS-SIS and OBS-SIS Executive Boards highly value the work and dedication of our liaisons, who serve as valuable links between law catalogers and three influential and active committees of the larger cataloging community.

We believe that the work of these groups goes beyond our library catalogs and grapples with the future of access to information. Their discussions are more than fields, semantics, and punctuation. They are redefining which data points are critical to discovery, how to uniquely identify and parse them, and how to best represent them in the evolving Semantic Web. We feel that the special nature of the materials we handle demands our presence in these deliberations.

The current decade is a transformative one for libraries: we adopted a new set of description standards, continue to create new taxonomies for relationships and genres, and now look to a new linked data based framework for encoding our descriptions. We would hope that the AALL Executive Board would continue to support official representatives through this period of major transition.

In the past two years our representatives to ALA's Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access (CC:DA) have proposed major revisions to the cataloging code *Resource Description and Access* (RDA). These proposals have been adopted by the wider community and have resulted in significant improvements to the cataloging of treaties and compilations of laws. This kind of direct influence on shared standards is only possible because AALL has a recognized seat at the table.

Our MARC Advisory Committee (MAC) representative is a full, voting member. Continued presence on this committee is critical as we believe this group will oversee the pivotal transition from the MARC encoding format to the new BIBFRAME model.

Thanks to the efforts of our representative to ALA's Subject Analysis Committee (SAC), the law community became the first specialized area to devise and implement Library of Congress-approved genre headings, allowing us to separate books *about* laws from actual codes and statutes. These new terms enhance discoverability of resources in our faceted catalogs. Our representative marshalled our trailblazing work three years ahead of the art and literature communities and two years ahead of the music community.

Our current AALL representatives help to set the agendas of the meetings they attend and actively participate in the real-time discussion of cataloging reform. The expertise of the liaisons is greatly appreciated, and actively sought after, by these groups. Without an official association recognition, they will no longer be party to closed sessions nor will they be able to submit reports to inform the committees of the activities and discussions of law catalogers.

Membership on each of the committees varies, but we wish to underscore that our liaison program is not unique. Many smaller and similarly-sized organizations support representatives on these same committees. We believe the Board's decision disadvantages the interests of law libraries compared to the support given by the Music Library Association, Art Libraries Society of North America, Special Libraries Association, American Theological Library Association, and the Society of American Archivists.

Beyond the committee meetings, the representatives serve to keep AALL members well-informed of wider professional discourse. Through presentations at Annual Meeting, conference debriefs, queries to TS and OBS committees, postings to *Technical Services Law Librarian*, and annual reports, the representatives communicate with their colleagues concerning possible changes and solicit feedback.

Our AALL representatives serve to update and advance the way we describe our materials. We believe that it is critical to have an expert in the meeting when proposals and ideas are first being discussed to help inform discussion and guide future developments that will affect us all.

We believe that the work done by these representatives is a core expectation that our membership has in our association—that it is engaged actively in transformative discussions. The presence of our representatives in the committees that develop national and international cataloging standards and policies means that we shape these policies and standards, rather than being passive observers and implementers of policies and standards created by others.

To: The members of the AALL Executive Committee

From: Robert Bratton and John Hostage, current and immediate past AALL representatives to the Committee on Cataloging: Description & Access (CC:DA)

March 13, 2015

We were shocked and dismayed to learn that all three AALL representative positions related to technical services are being eliminated. This message explains the work of the Committee on Cataloging: Description & Access, why the work of the AALL representative on that Committee is important to both ALA and AALL, and why the Executive Board should reconsider its decision to withdraw support for this and two other cataloging related representatives.

The American Library Association's (ALA) Committee on Cataloging: Description & Access (CC:DA) continually assesses needed changes in the field of descriptive cataloging. CC:DA recommends solutions to problems relating not only to bibliographic description but also to choice and form of access points, other than subjects. The bulk of the Committee's work is devoted to initiating proposals for additions to and revisions of the current cataloging code (Resource Description & Access (RDA)) and to reviewing proposals initiated by other groups. After internal discussions online and in person, CC:DA develops official ALA positions on such proposals in consultation with other appropriate ALA units and organizations in the U.S.A. The Committee then works with the ALA representative to the Joint Steering Committee for the Development of RDA (JSC) regarding the official ALA position and to suggest acceptable bases for negotiations. To be a member of the committee (even a non-voting member) one is **required** to attend the CC:DA meetings at ALA Annual and ALA Midwinter.

CC:DA consists of 9 voting members, 12 ALA liaisons, 15 non-ALA liaisons, 2 interns, 1 webmaster and 6 non-voting ex officio representatives. The non-ALA liaisons represent:

- American Association of Law Libraries
- American Theological Library Association
- Art Libraries Society of North America
- Catholic Library Association
- Dublin Core Metadata Initiative
- IFLA Cataloguing Section
- MARC Advisory Committee
- Medical Library Association
- Music Library Association
- Online Audiovisual Catalogers
- Program for Cooperative Cataloging
- Society of American Archivists
- Special Libraries Association

The voting members of CC:DA and the ALA representative to the JSC rely very heavily on the expertise of the liaisons from specialist communities and actively collaborate with the liaisons in doing the ongoing work of the Committee. They call on the AALL liaison to work on formulating official ALA positions on proposals relating to cataloging legal resources. The AALL liaison (in consultation with the AALL cataloging community) has recently proposed three RDA rule changes that were formulated by the AALL

cataloging community. CC:DA approved all of these proposals; one is now officially in RDA, and the two others are before the JSC awaiting their decisions.

Discontinuing the AALL liaison to CC:DA would result in the following scenario: when the Committee discusses proposals that affect cataloging of (and access to) legal resources, there would be no one in the conversation who has any experience cataloging legal resources. This is analogous to a group of law catalogers formulating the official ALA position on proposals related to music cataloging. This is ludicrous.

When you look at the list of non-ALA liaisons that serve on CC:DA, consider what an embarrassing omission it would be if AALL was not represented. The AALL liaison to CC:DA gives law catalogers influence well beyond their numbers in the development of cataloging standards. The development and continual refinement of these standards results in enhanced access to both legal- and non-legal resources for all library users. It also provides a dedicated avenue of two way communication between the ALA and AALL cataloging communities, mutually benefiting members of both organizations. The AALL representative to CC:DA regularly engages with members of AALL's Descriptive Cataloging Advisory Working Group and Classification and Subject Cataloging Advisory Working Group to discuss issues before CC:DA that are relevant to those Groups. It is in collaboration with members of these AALL Groups that the representative to CC:DA formulates proposals to submit to the Committee.

None of the representatives who serve as liaisons on the three technical services committees were consulted regarding the decision to eliminate some (but not all) of the AALL representatives. No one in AALL's Technical Services Special Interest Section (TS-SIS) was consulted prior to the AALL Executive Board making this decision. Nor was anyone on the cataloging committees consulted about the need for AALL's liaisons.

We respectfully urge the members of the AALL Executive Board to reconsider their decision to withdraw support from the cataloging representatives to: Committee on Cataloging: Description & Access, the MARC Advisory Committee, and the Subject Analysis Committee.

To: The Members of the AALL Executive Committee

From: Jean Pajerek and Pat Sayre-McCoy, current and immediate past AALL representatives to the MARC Advisory Committee

March 11, 2015

The MARC Advisory Committee (MAC) advises the MARC Steering Group concerning changes to the MARC 21 formats. The MARC 21 formats for Bibliographic, Authority, Holdings, Classification, and Community Information data are maintained for the MARC 21 user community based on open discussion of issues. The MARC Steering Group is an international body composed of the Library of Congress, Library and Archives Canada, British Library, and the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek.

The membership of MAC includes eight national libraries and a long list of representatives from library association committees and groups, networks, and communities of users, of which AALL is one. Other groups represented on MAC include:

- Art Libraries Society of North America
- Association of College and Research Libraries, Science and Technology Section
- ISSN Review Group
- Music Library Association
- OCLC
- Online Audio-Visual Catalogers
- Program for Cooperative Cataloging
- Public Library Association
- Society of American Archivists
- Visual Resources Association

When the MARC Advisory Committee was reconstituted in 2013 (upon the dissolution of the Machine-Readable Bibliographic Information Committee, commonly known as MARBI), the AALL representative to MARBI at the time was approached by Sally McCallum of the Library of Congress (LC) and asked to serve as a full member of MAC, with full voting rights. Ms. McCallum clearly recognized that expertise with legal materials was needed on the Committee. Legal materials are unique and technical services law librarians are the ones best suited to guide future developments that will affect us.

Currently, law libraries and libraries in general are poised at a pivotal moment in the history of our profession. The implementation in 2013 of a new cataloging standard (*Resource Description and Access*, also known as *RDA*) by LC and many other libraries worldwide has generated tremendous interest in the deployment of library data as linked data on the World Wide Web. This migration of library data to the Web will only be possible if our “closed” MARC 21 formats are replaced by a more open, Web-friendly communications format. The first steps in this direction were taken when dozens of new fields and subfields were added to the MARC formats by MARBI and its successor, MAC, enabling more precise designation of the data entities contained within a MARC record. LC and a number of other libraries are already deeply involved in the development of BIBFRAME, which is the intended replacement for MARC 21. AALL must be involved in BIBFRAME development efforts from their earliest stages to ensure that the law library community’s interests, and those of our constituents, are effectively represented and

promoted. Now is not the time for law librarians to disengage from this vital task. The plan to develop a replacement format for MARC will revolutionize the representation of bibliographic metadata and involve much discussion about legacy data in MARC. MAC is certain to be one of the groups leading such discussions; we cannot afford to forfeit our vote when decisions that will affect us for years to come are made.

In reading AALL's stated Vision and Core Purpose, it is hard not to see a disconnect between them and the AALL Executive Board's recent elimination of the cataloging representatives' positions. The cataloging representatives are literally the embodiment of the Association's Vision ("AALL and its members will be the recognized authority in all aspects of legal information") and Core Purpose ("AALL will advance the profession and the professional growth of its members"). We advance the excellence of law librarianship in our roles as representatives to national and international policy-making groups where decisions with enduring and wide-ranging impact on our profession are made. We heighten the visibility of law librarianship when we share our expertise with those in other areas of librarianship. Silencing us will in no way advance our profession; rather, we will become isolated and invisible to these policy-making groups and the interests of our community will no longer be taken into consideration.

We respectfully urge the members of the AALL Executive Board to reconsider their decision to withdraw support from the cataloging representatives. The work the representatives do is too important abandon, especially at this time of ongoing and intense upheaval in the cataloging world.

To the Members of the AALL Executive Committee

CAMMS Subject Analysis Committee (SAC)

The Subject Analysis Committee (SAC) examines problems related to subject analysis and genre/form, including particular issues concerning the relationship between classification and subject headings. It provides a liaison between SAC and other ALA and non-ALA associations that have an interest in the development of subject analysis. Membership of SAC includes elected members as well as representatives from other groups and associations interested in voicing special concerns and advancing the common interests of subject analysis and discovery in a global and coherent manner.

Groups and associations represented at SAC include:

**Sears List of Subject Headings**

**ALA Committee on Cataloging: Description & Access**

**Decimal Classification Editorial Policy Committee**

**AALL**

**International Federation of Library Associations**

**Music Library Association**

**Library of Congress**

Our past representatives (Yael Mandelstam and Suzanne Graham) have worked hard over the past six years to promote the interests of law cataloging and to collaborate with SAC as well as with the Library of Congress in order to create a controlled vocabulary for law genre and form terms and their application. Our online catalogs are becoming more sophisticated every year, and their faceted features are increasingly empowering library users with more effective search abilities to discover special materials. Together with the TS-SIS Classification and Subject Cataloging Working Group, the SAC representatives initiated the pioneering project of creating a controlled vocabulary of law genre terms; they have consulted with other members of SAC and their working sub-groups; they have worked with the Library of Congress very closely and finally have been able to compile the vocabulary of law genre/form terms which the majority of law libraries are now applying. The AALL SAC representatives endure long hours of meetings at ALA Midwinter and ALA Annual; they also meet with members of *ad hoc* SAC subgroups to review new issues emerging from the applications of subject headings and genre terms. All those meetings are followed by months of active discussions via email and real work on resolving new problems or proposing new terms and new ways of their application. The work of the SAC representatives is not a ceremonial formality; they do not simply step up to a podium for a few minutes, thanking colleagues and promoting AALL. They stay connected to SAC all year round; they work on projects organized by the SAC sub-groups; they immerse themselves deeply in the work of SAC in order to participate meaningfully in the discussions held at ALA Midwinter and ALA Annual.

Most recently the representative of SAC has been acting as the voice of law catalogers in a new SAC sub-group which has been assigned the task of finding a more comprehensive definition of genre term, as it needs to be applied uniformly across a variety of disciplines. The necessity of such an

approach arises from a confluence of circumstances. After the recent approval of the Music Genre Terms and the General Genre Terms, together with the imminent approval of the Literature Genre Terms and the work currently underway on genre term vocabularies for Art and Religion, it has become important to review the general semantics of genre and forms in cataloging, because catalogers need to ensure that there are no conflicts or incongruences among the vocabularies across all the disciplines. This is an example of how the work of the SAC representatives intersects with, and has an important impact on, that of other library communities.

This is a critical moment in libraries where the vision of linked data is becoming a new reality. However linked data and discoverability can only be effective if libraries can guarantee a coherent structure of their databases. SAC is the perfect example of a forum that seeks consensus and cooperation among all the different specialized subject areas. SAC is the organ which seeks to establish clear and harmonized standards. It is vital that law catalogers continue to participate and contribute to the debate and the developments of those standards in subject analysis. We cannot stay away from this and other cataloging caucuses where crucial decisions are made to promote the integrity of our databases. The work of the TS-SIS Representatives guarantees that the interests of legal information are advocated and protected. Being silent and observing from the margins will undermine the AALL Vision of being recognized as an authority in the world of legal information. Staying at the margins will betray the AALL Core Purpose of advancing professional growth and making the law libraries relevant.

I respectfully urge the Executive Board to reinstate the positions of the SAC Representative, the MAC Representative and CC:DA Representative of AALL to ALA.

Best regards,

Lia Contursi  
(Current AALL representative to Subject Analysis Committee)

## **Statement from Chair of Committee on Cataloging: Description & Access**

From my perspective as a former AALL and current ALA member, this position and the opportunity it gives AALL not only to put forward its own proposals but provide coordinated, thoughtful and real-time responses to other cataloging issues under discussion in CC:DA has benefited both AALL and ALA immeasurably. It has given law catalogers influence well beyond their numbers in the development of cataloging standards in the US and internationally, and has enhanced access to both legal and non-legal resources for law library patrons and for everyone else.

AALL is one of many specialist communities represented on ALA committees devoted to cataloging. Other specialist communities with this status include music, cartographic, audiovisual, government documents, rare books, art, etc. The permanent presence of a representative on CC:DA who actively participates in our in-person meetings ensures that the law cataloging community is a full partner in the development of current cataloging standards. RDA contains specific instructions for naming law resources, and AALL and its representatives have played a critical role in the discussion and improvement of these instructions. Without AALL representation on CC:DA, it would be up to generalists to understand and propose changes to law instructions.

AALL members have a high profile in the American cataloging community because of their interest in and involvement with the development of cataloging standards; this participation forms a significant part of how AALL is viewed by non-specialists. AALL's expertise has also been recognized at the international level due to their efforts to improve these standards. Senior leaders in ALA have testified that the AALL liaisons to CC:DA they have known over the last 20 years have always been strong advocates, active contributors, and extremely thoughtful. It would be a tremendous loss to both AALL and ALA to have the liaison relationship cease.

Robert J. Rendall, Chair of CC:DA  
with input from Kathy Glennan, ALA Representative to the JSC