REPORT OF THE AALL SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO PROMOTE LAW LIBRARIANS AS RESEARCH TRAINERS  
May 1, 2002

Chair: Judith Anspach
Members: Leanne Battle, Terry Cullen, Elizabeth Edinger, Rachel Jones, Connie Lenz

**Charge:** “This Special Committee is charged to develop a plan that addresses AALL’s Strategic Initiative 2D.1, Actively promote law librarians to the legal community as the premier legal research trainers and that can be implemented by AALL, its Chapters and other local groups of law librarians, as appropriate. This plan should include methods that can be used to promote law librarians as educators and legal research trainers to other professional groups such as local, state, regional, and national bar associations and law-related and library associations. The Special Committee may propose a variety of alternatives, including the development of a directory of qualified legal research trainers for referral purposes. The Special Committee should consider how promotion activities can be undertaken unilaterally or collaboratively by national, regional/state, or local groups of law librarians.”

**Summary:** The Committee recommends the development of a marketing plan with two distinct prongs:

1. A public relations campaign prong focused on marketing the concept of law librarians as educators/teachers of legal research, and  
2. A marketing prong promoting law librarian-developed research instructional programs (CLEs, paralegal courses, etc.) that law librarians can offer to the various legal communities.

**Discussion:** In order to successfully accomplish this strategic initiative, AALL should provide funding for a major marketing campaign targeted at law firms, solo practitioners, judges, and bar associations. The PR campaign would include full color flyers (e.g., "Get to know your law librarian, an expert on legal research instruction.") sent to judges, attorneys, court administrators, paralegal schools, etc. and ads placed in magazines (e.g., in Law Office Technology, ABA journal, etc.). The campaign should carefully avoid "self-marketing," i.e., promoting us to each other by sending materials to libraries and librarians. The target markets should be the various groups who need legal research instruction; other librarians already know law librarians can teach research.

The marketing should be more than a general "spam," but should be developed so that if the recipients think, "law librarian - expert on legal research instruction" they know who to contact and how to schedule a program. Some of the promotional materials developed by AALL should include a way librarians can personalize it to send to the lawyers, judges, clerks, etc., they serve so they would also get the contact information for the librarian or library. The materials could include a card holder or slots where a librarian’s card could be placed, or items could be provided that the target audience would be likely to find useful enough to keep on the desk instead of a flyer that may end up in the trash.
AALL should also have a presence in the vendors' area at regional and national bar association meetings promoting both the general message and the specific programs. AALL should take advantage of various law portals to "get out the message." Several of the portals maintained by academics, such as JURIST - University of Pittsburgh and Legal Information Institute Cornell would be good starting points. Legal publishers might also allow promotional material to appear on their web sites.

Regional and local organizations of law librarians should promote themselves to the legal community. The best and perhaps the only way to really promote librarians as the experts in teaching legal research is for librarians to get out there and show what they can do. Local chapters could have a column in the local bar association newsletter presenting research tips. They could contact local bar associations and offer to do research presentations and/or conduct CLE programs. Local chapters could ask their local bar associations to provide a link to their chapter's web site on the bar association's home page. AALL could recommend that local chapters have an officer or a Committee who assumes these duties.

One method that presents excellent possibilities and has been used successfully in several states is having librarians from the local and/or state chapters cooperate in presenting CLE programs or short programs at bar association meetings on legal research topics such as legal research for the small firm/solo attorney, a refresher on legal research resources, Internet legal research, and specific topical offerings in conjunction with sections of the state bar. Once the materials and teaching plan had been developed the CLE program could be offered in various locations throughout the state which would generate the type of PR that seems to be desired. Similar programs could be offered to various law firms and/or paralegal programs. The challenge would be to develop programs that are targeted to specific practitioners' groups such as tax research or e-commerce and not just offer only basic legal research CLEs for new attorneys. The programs should be available in a variety of delivery mechanisms in addition to on-site presentations. Some possibilities include the ability to dial into or link to a server maintained by AALL, or the development of an on-line university, with a number of faculty taking part in the delivery of the courses. An educational model that could be used for this type of delivery would be the work that Genie Tyburski has done with her Virtual Chase web site (www.virtualchase.com).

AALL should take the leadership role in promoting the CLE programs by discussing these possibilities with entities engaged in the CLE industry such Lexis, PLI and West and in providing each local chapter with materials of suggested ideas for conducting this type of PR campaign. These materials would include librarian contacts that have been involved in this type of activity who would be willing to provide advice in setting up these types of programs. Perhaps AALL's roving Legal Research Institute program coordinated through the Professional Development Committee could be utilized or AALL could act as a clearinghouse and help in getting the librarians and the groups together as well as assessing the costs of such programs. These programs, or the concept of these programs, could be used as a starting point to work with local, city, county, and state bar associations, as well as non-attorney legal professional associations, who would welcome the opportunity to offer this kind of instruction and education to their membership in live or multimedia format.
A coordinated effort to develop, promote and present the instructional programs will be required, and there should be a group within AALL appointed to begin implementation on a local, regional and national basis. Perhaps this responsibility could be delegated to the Research and Instruction and Patron Services SIS since they are already involved in a somewhat similar program with their “National Teach In” event and materials. The designated group would be responsible for developing outlines and training materials that would be provided by AALL to librarians who would be interested in doing the actual instruction. In order to deal with the heavy time commitment to prepare and update the materials and to present the programs various librarians could volunteer for specific tasks so that the workload could be spread among a number of librarians. These materials should also include PR kits for promoting the programs. Often research instruction program offerings are limited by staffing and funding. AALL should explore providing grant money or annual awards to foster such programs.

**Directory:** For this marketing plan to succeed, it is imperative that librarians involved in the programs deliver competent and professional instruction. The “word of mouth” praise or criticism coming from participants in these programs will play a major role in the success of the marketing campaign. The development of a directory of librarians who would be available to conduct various types of research programs was considered and rejected by the Committee due to concerns regarding screening, updating and distribution issues as well as the feeling that it would not be used. The development of a directory raises difficult questions such as the following: 

--- Should there be some qualifications that must be met to be listed in the directory and if so what should these qualifications be - teaching experience, degrees, interest?

--- How do those listed in the directory indicate compensation expectations? Will there be a standard compensation or no compensation?

--- What is being asked from those that are included in the directory? (That they will arrange, be a part of some legal research instruction in their local area beyond their regular duties at a firm, court or an academic institution? That if they are contacted by a small firm or solo practitioner without a librarian that they'll be willing to arrange for a class?)

--- How would the directory be kept up-to-date as librarians change employment?

--- How would the directory be made available to potential students (lawyers, paralegals, and judges)? An on-line version on AALLNET would not be a good vehicle since this is a web site that is not visited by many except law librarians and mailing out large quantities to attorneys, judges, organizations, etc. would be quite expensive and printed directories would be outdated very quickly.

One example of a directory which stemmed from the same sort of idea as this one (identifying law librarians as "experts" in an area and getting the word out) and was unsuccessful is the "Directory of Web Site Experts" developed by the Access to Electronic Legal Information Committee. No one listed in the directory received a single call in two years.

The Committee’s recommendation is that it is preferable to market the concept of librarians as instructors rather than trying to market individual librarians whose availability and particular
expertise may be unverifiable. One alternative to the directory of volunteers is that AALL could enlist the best teachers among us to participate in making video tapes or providing video streaming programs for attorneys, paralegals, etc., with royalties paid for their efforts. Online CLE programs developed by law librarians could be placed on the AALL web site where attorneys could both register and take the course online. This resource could be listed on national, regional and local bar association web sites as well as advertised in their printed publications. Marketing the tapes and CLE programs to attorneys, paralegal groups, businesses, and organizations would be crucial, but what is envisioned is a glossy LEXIS/WESTLAW-type advertisement created by AALL. Although librarianship is considered by many to be a “service profession,” some feeling was expressed that people expect that true “experts” don’t work for free, and that AALL should explore opportunities to advance the idea that librarians who provide this type of instruction should be paid for their work since it is difficult to promote the idea that a valuable service is being delivered otherwise.

AALL should provide programs for training librarians who want to offer legal research instructional programs, especially those for CLE. These programs could be presented as Annual Meeting Institutes, regional programs or by telecommunication. One way of dealing with the “qualifications required” and the directory issues would be to develop a series of programs that when completed would entitle a librarian to be placed on a list of instructors which AALL would maintain and provide “on request” to various bar associations or groups who wish to schedule legal research instruction programs.