Summary: AALL members are lukewarm to the idea of AALL offering ancillary benefits to members. If such benefits are offered, they should be directly related to law librarianship. Members are interested in AALL pursuing partnerships with related organizations to increase our purchasing power.

In June 2001, a Special Committee was formed for the purpose of exploring whether AALL should offer a range of new, ancillary benefits to members. We created a survey to assess member interest in such benefits, which was posted on AALLNET. The survey was announced to the membership via email on October 18, with follow-up reminders on October 25 and November 1. At the close of the survey on November 8, 153 members had completed the survey. A complete breakdown of the survey results, along with comments, is attached.

The Committee held a conference call to discuss the results of the survey and decide what course of action to recommend. Our consensus is that there is no clear mandate from the membership to pursue ancillary benefits. Any benefits that are offered should be directly related to the professional activities of law librarians, such as discounts with book jobbers and library supply vendors. Members did express an interest in partnering with related associations to increase our purchasing power.

Our overall impression from the survey is that AALL members are lukewarm to the idea of ancillary benefits. The response rate to the survey was quite low (153 responses, as compared with 926 responses to the 2001 Salary Survey and 577 responses to the 1999 Salary Survey). When asked generally whether they would like AALL to offer ancillary benefits, more respondents replied favorably than unfavorably (58 marked “agree somewhat” or “agree strongly”, compared to 44 marking “disagree somewhat” or “disagree strongly” and 43 marking “neutral.”). However, for individual benefits, “neutral” was the response most often given for all but “book jobbers” and “library supplies.” Members seemed most concerned about an increase in marketing materials from vendors who would supply these benefits.

The strongest positive response from the members was to the idea of partnering with other associations, either for greater purchasing power or for general professional development. I contacted SLA, ABA, ALA, and AALS to see what the possibilities for partnering were. I got the most positive response from the SLA. Sherry Eisenhower, the member benefits coordinator, said that SLA would be open to partnering opportunities.

Our conclusion is that members would ancillary benefits that directly relate to their professional work, but do not want to see a significant portion of the Association’s resources used for this. They would like to see AALL forge stronger relationships with other associations.