It is well documented that an insufficient number of persons are entering the field of Librarianship to replace those scheduled to retire within the next several years. Entry into the profession of law librarianship requires significant and costly training. Law librarians' remuneration is lower than that of other professions that require similar levels of educational investment. The low compensation associated with law librarianship is correlated with, and is a likely cause, of the projected future shortages that will result from inadequate entry into the profession. The success of future initiatives of AALL, including those relating to access to and preservation of legal information, will depend on an adequate number of members who share the professional values embodied by AALL. Apart from AALL's future well-being as an association, access to legal information is essential to a democratic and transparent political culture, and law librarians play a central role in maintaining public access to legal information. Because adequate entry of properly trained professionals into law librarianship is central not only to the future well-being of this association, but also to the proper functioning of our democracy, the issue of law librarian compensation should be recognized by AALL as a problem not only warranting significant attention, but indeed, as a fundamental matter of information policy. In addition, AALL members overwhelmingly believe that law librarians are not equitably compensated. In the AALL/Altman Weil Compensation Satisfaction Survey, when asked the question, “Do you consider current levels of compensation in the law librarian profession overall to be satisfactory given the amount of training required for the profession,” 85.6% of survey respondents answered “no.”

MOTION FOR BOARD ACTION:

Recommendation 1. The 2000-2005 Strategic Plan of AALL, under “Outcome C,” states that AALL will “regularly compile detailed compensation analyses comparing law librarians' salaries, education and contributions to those of comparable professionals in different types of organizations, firms, schools and courts.” To date, no such comparative salary-equity studies have been conducted by AALL (to the Special Committee's knowledge). Such salary-equity studies would be vitally helpful to law librarians who negotiate salaries in settings where pay equity is a policy goal or, as in the case of some states, a legal requirement. It is imperative that the AALL Executive Board act to ensure that the association lives up to its promise in the 2000-2005 Strategic Plan to conduct such salary-equity studies. The Special Committee recommends hiring an outside consultant with expertise in conducting such studies, or placing this responsibility with the new staff position proposed in Recommendation 2 below.
Recommendation 2: In the report considered by the Executive Board in April 2002, the Special Committee as originally constituted proposed that AALL create a new staff position for a Marketing/Public Relations Coordinator, to coordinate a campaign to educate appropriate decision makers concerning the value of law librarians to firms and other institutions, and to oversee efforts aimed at improving law librarian salaries. In its April 2002 meeting, the Executive Board determined that financial resources at that time were unavailable for this recommendation. The current Special Committee renews the prior recommendation that a new staff position be created, and urges the current Executive Board to authorize AALL to invest in a new staff position to undertake, oversee and coordinate the association’s activities relating to marketing, public relations, and advocacy relating to compensation.

Recommendation 3: Improving law librarian compensation is a matter of vital importance to the future of AALL. This issue requires sustained attention by the association over fluctuating business cycles, changes in the legal services and legal information marketplace, and changes in employers’ perceptions of law librarians. In order to ensure such sustained attention, the Executive Board should create a new standing committee, the Committee on the Economic Status of Law Librarianship. The standing committee’s charge could include activities such as:

- Monitoring the work of other associations that share an interest in compensation and pay equity for librarians and related professions (including such associations as the American Library Association, the ALA Allied Professional Association, the Special Libraries Association, the American Association of University Professors, the National Committee on Pay Equity, AFSCME, and other like-minded groups), and, where appropriate, transmitting ideas, techniques, and policy suggestions relating to compensation and pay equity to AALL and its members;
- Developing a database on “best practices” relating to improving compensation of law librarians in the various types of work settings (private law firms, academic law libraries, state/county/court/government law libraries, etc.), including marketing, public relations, negotiation skills, advocacy, and publications;
- Monitoring scholarly developments in the fields of labor economics, sociology, human resources management, policy analysis, and related fields for ideas, findings and developments relevant to advancing the economic well-being of law librarians;
- Evaluating the economic impact on law librarians of new forms of legal information distribution and changes in the regulation of the legal profession (e.g., multidisciplinary practice), and determining how law librarians’ skills can be leveraged in changing environments; and
- Conducting the salary-equity studies referred to in the 2000-2005 Strategic Plan (see Recommendation 1 above), in the event that the Executive Board decides that they should be performed by an AALL committee rather than by an outside consultant or AALL staff.

Follow Up Assignments & Responsibilities Checklist

The following are some of the options available to the Executive Board:
- Table until the next Executive Board Meeting
- Refer to or Inform the Chair of an AALL Chapter, Committee, Special Committee or Task Force
- Add to Annual Business Meeting Agenda
- Revise or add to the AALL Financial, Legislative or other Policies
- Revise the approved budget
- Issue a news release
- Post on AALLNET
- Publish in AALL Spectrum
- Update the Board, Committee, Representative, Chapter or SIS Handbook
- Transmit action to an external organization or individual
- Revise an existing flyer or form
AALL Special Committee on Law Librarian Compensation  
Report to the AALL Executive Board  
May 23, 2003

In the Executive Board’s meeting April 2002, the Board approved a motion to reconstitute for an additional year (through July 2003) the Special Committee on Law Librarian Compensation (originally formed in 2001). This report will summarize the accomplishments of the Special Committee since April 2002. This report will also make recommendations to the Executive Board relating to the compensation issue.

I. Activities and Accomplishments of the Special Committee on Law Librarian Compensation during 2002-03:

- The Special Committee provided the Altman Weil firm with revised law librarian job descriptions to be used in that firm’s annual *Survey of Law Firm Economics*.
- The Special Committee provided Altman Weil with revised job descriptions for law library personnel for the forthcoming revised edition of that firm’s publication, *Job Descriptions for Law Firms, Corporate Law Departments and Government Agencies*.
- The Special Committee submitted comments to the AALL Task Force to Review the Biennial Salary Survey.
- The Special Committee, working with Altman Weil, helped draft the AALL/Altman Weil Compensation Satisfaction Survey, which survey was distributed electronically to AALL members during February 2003; the results of this survey will be presented to AALL members at a program at the 2003 Annual Meeting in Seattle.\(^1\)
- The Chair of the Special Committee served as liaison to the American Library Association’s Task Force on Better Salaries and Pay Equity, attending the 2002 ALA Annual Meeting in Atlanta and the 2003 Midwinter Meeting in Philadelphia, and participated in the activities of the Research Working Group of the Task Force.
- The Special Committee has coordinated a program concerning law librarian compensation that will take place at the 2003 Annual Meeting in Seattle, at which Virginia Grant of Altman Weil, Mitch Freedman of the American Library Association, and the Chair of the Special Committee will speak.

II. Recommendations

It is well documented that an insufficient number of persons are entering the field of librarianship to replace those scheduled to retire within the next several years. Entry into the profession of law librarianship requires significant and costly training. Law librarians’ remuneration is lower than that of other professions that require similar levels of

---

\(^1\) The Chair of the Special Committee has forwarded an electronic version of the Compensation Satisfaction Survey Results to the Executive Director and has asked that it be made available to the Executive Board.
educational investment. The low compensation associated with law librarianship is correlated with, and is a likely cause, of the projected future shortages that will result from inadequate entry into the profession.

The success of future initiatives of AALL, including those relating to access to and preservation of legal information, will depend on an adequate number of members who share the professional values embodied by AALL. Apart from AALL's future well-being as an association, access to legal information is essential to a democratic and transparent political culture, and law librarians play a central role in maintaining public access to legal information. Because adequate entry of properly trained professionals into law librarianship is central not only to the future well-being of this association, but also to the proper functioning of our democracy, the issue of law librarian compensation should be recognized by AALL as a problem not only warranting significant attention, but indeed, as a fundamental matter of information policy.

In addition, AALL members overwhelmingly believe that law librarians are not equitably compensated. In the AALL/Altman Weil Compensation Satisfaction Survey, when asked the question, “Do you consider current levels of compensation in the law librarian profession overall to be satisfactory given the amount of training required for the profession,” 85.6% of survey respondents answered “no.”

In light of the foregoing, the Special Committee of Law Librarian Compensation submits the following recommendations to the Executive Board:

**Recommendation 1.** The 2000-2005 Strategic Plan of AALL, under “Outcome C,” states that AALL will “regularly compile detailed compensation analyses comparing law librarians’ salaries, education and contributions to those of comparable professionals in different types of organizations, firms, schools and courts.” To date, no such comparative salary-equity studies have been conducted by AALL (to the Special Committee’s knowledge). Such salary-equity studies would be vitally helpful to law librarians who negotiate salaries in settings where pay equity is a policy goal or, as in the case of some states, a legal requirement. It is imperative that the AALL Executive Board act to ensure that the association lives up to its promise in the 2000-2005 Strategic Plan to conduct such salary-equity studies. The Special Committee recommends hiring an outside consultant with expertise in conducting such studies, or placing this responsibility with the new staff position proposed in Recommendation 2 below.

**Recommendation 2:** In the report considered by the Executive Board in April 2002, the Special Committee as originally constituted proposed that AALL create a new staff position for a Marketing/Public Relations Coordinator, to coordinate a campaign to educate appropriate decision makers concerning the value of law librarians to firms and other institutions, and to oversee efforts aimed at improving law librarian salaries. In its April 2002 meeting, the Executive Board determined that financial resources at that time were unavailable for this recommendation. The current Special Committee renews the prior recommendation that a new staff position be created, and urges the current

---

2 Compensation Satisfaction Survey Results at 15 (Response to Question 14).
Executive Board to authorize AALL to invest in a new staff position to undertake, oversee and coordinate the association’s activities relating to marketing, public relations, and advocacy relating to compensation.

Recommendation 3: Improving law librarian compensation is a matter of vital importance to the future of AALL. This issue requires sustained attention by the association over fluctuating business cycles, changes in the legal services and legal information marketplace, and changes in employers’ perceptions of law librarians. In order to ensure such sustained attention, the Executive Board should create a new standing committee, the Committee on the Economic Status of Law Librarianship. The standing committee’s charge could include activities such as:

- Monitoring the work of other associations that share an interest in compensation and pay equity for librarians and related professions (including such associations as the American Library Association, the ALA Allied Professional Association, the Special Libraries Association, the American Association of University Professors, the National Committee on Pay Equity, AFSCME, and other like-minded groups), and, where appropriate, transmitting ideas, techniques, and policy suggestions relating to compensation and pay equity to AALL and its members;
- Developing a database on “best practices” relating to improving compensation of law librarians in the various types of work settings (private law firms, academic law libraries, state/county/court/government law libraries, etc.), including marketing, public relations, negotiation skills, advocacy, and publications;
- Monitoring scholarly developments in the fields of labor economics, sociology, human resources management, policy analysis, and related fields for ideas, findings and developments relevant to advancing the economic well-being of law librarians;
- Evaluating the economic impact on law librarians of new forms of legal information distribution and changes in the regulation of the legal profession (e.g., multidisciplinary practice), and determining how law librarians’ skills can be leveraged in changing environments; and
- Conducting the salary-equity studies referred to in the 2000-2005 Strategic Plan (see Recommendation 1 above), in the event that the Executive Board decides that they should be performed by an AALL committee rather than by an outside consultant or AALL staff.

* * *

Lastly, the members of the Special Committee on Law Librarian Compensation wish to express their appreciation to the Executive Board for the opportunity to serve the association.