Economic Value of Law Libraries Special Committee

Annual Report 2013-2014

The Special Committee was charged with defining the best methodologies for determining the economic value of law libraries to their parent institution or constituency, then developing a report on law libraries’ value, and finally suggesting ways for AALL and its members to use the findings to promote the economic contributions made by law libraries and law librarians.

Committee members reviewed the literature on economic value of service functions in general and library return-on-investment studies specifically. Recognizing that the AALL study would benefit from the guidance and neutral view of an expert consultant, the Committee issued an RFP proposal and eventually selected HBR Consultants, a recognized leader in professional service firm surveys and reports.

Under Committee direction, HBR conducted interviews of a representative group of law librarians and their organizations’ stakeholders to determine key issues affecting how the value of law libraries is measured in different institutional settings. From those meetings, separate surveys were prepared for library directors, stakeholders and users. The survey was sent to members in August 2014 with responses due back by September. A report will be drafted after that, with the expectation of a completed report by early 2015.

The Committee expects the report to provide a toolkit for each library manager to determine the value standards held by their own organization and how those values are measured and reported. The report will provide guidance for each librarian in determining how best to align their services to their organization's mission. Since even the best services may go unrewarded if not recognized, the report will describe methods for reporting the library's value to its important stakeholders.

Submitted by Robert Oaks, Chair