The Government Relations Committee continued its work to educate and inform AALL members about advocacy and public policy issues, and to influence government information policies, all in support of AALL’s strategic directions, in accordance with AALL’s Government Relations Policy, and in collaboration with AALL’s Government Relations Office.

The GRC continued to be organized by three topical subcommittees: Access to Information, Open Government, and Privacy. These small groups allow for more focus on complex policy issues. Each subcommittee monitors, discusses, and shares developments with the Director of Government Relations and the full committee. In addition, each subcommittee posts monthly to the AALL Advocacy listserv. The purpose of the posts is to share information with AALL and chapter members, and when appropriate, to advertise specific opportunities and encourage action.

Individual committee members are also liaisons with specific AALL chapters and special interest sections. This year, liaisons helped spread the word about online advocacy training and the spring 2016 Virtual Lobby Day.

Awards is a special GRC subcommittee, led by the Vice-Chair. The Awards subcommittee solicited and reviewed nominations for the two AALL public policy awards – the Robert L. Oakley Advocacy Award and the Public Access to Government Information (PAGI) Award.

All committee members participated in monthly conference calls. Subcommittees reported on each call, and in turn, heard a report from the Director of Government Relations. The call is a chance for in-depth discussion about policy issues and the practical work of the committee, such as best practices for monitoring issues and planning for the AALL annual meeting.

Specific legislation, regulation, and policy issues monitored by the GRC include:
- Cybersecurity and surveillance legislation (CISA).
- Electronic Communication Privacy Act reform.
- Freedom of Information Act reform.
- Public access to Congressional Research Service reports.
- Federal Communications Commission rulemaking on privacy of personal data collected by broadband service providers.
- Government Publishing Office’s new regional depository library discard policy.
- Proposed revision to Office of Management and Budget Circular A-130, Management of Federal Information Resources, including issues related to preservation.
- Legislation to both obstruct and codify net neutrality.
- Developments related to encryption to protect personal data.

At the 2016 AALL Annual Meeting in Chicago, the GRC will participate in these information policy programs, trainings, and activities:


- AALL Public Policy Update (program B-5). This program, which includes a report from the Director of Government Relations, features small group discussions lead by the policy committee chairs. The GRC focus will be on information policy efforts, both this year, and looking to next. The Robert L. Oakley Advocacy Award and the Public Access to Government Information (PAGI) Award will be given out at this program.

- Legislative Advocacy Training 2016. Participants in this half-day training will learn more about proposed federal and state legislation impacting law libraries and help to develop specific goals and practical tactics for influencing successful outcomes. This annual event provides AALL members with information and tools to advance AALL’s policy priorities.
• Conference of Newer Law Librarians (CONELL). The GRC will have a committee member at the marketplace to meet, inform, and encourage new members.

• AALL Activities Area. The GRC will have a poster and a committee members available during no-conflict times to connect with attendees and answer questions about public policy issues and opportunities for participation and action.

Proposed Activities for 2016-2017:

• Meet monthly by telephone.
• Continue Outreach to SISs and Chapters.
• Advocate on AALL’s behalf.
• Educate AALL members and the public about information policy issues of concern.
• Monitor information policy by policy area subcommittees.
• Develop expertise to share with the AALL membership regarding specific issue areas and help new committee members become more proficient in relevant issues.
• Work with the GRO to craft responses to policy developments and proposed changes as they happen.
• Award the Public Access to Government Information (PAGI) and Robert L. Oakley Advocacy Awards.
• Develop and submit AALL program proposals, including the Public Policy Update and the pre-meeting Advocacy Training.

Specific Policy Issues in 2016-2017:

Access to Government Information, including the following:
• Policies that promote government's responsibility to manage the life cycle of online information, including at the end of President’s Obama's term in office.
• Increased access to information on government websites, including federal court information available through PACER and federal court opinions on FDsys/govinfo.
• Adequate funding for the Government Publishing Office, including the Federal Depository Library Program and FDsys/govinfo; the Library of Congress, including the Law Library of Congress; the National Archives and Records Administration; and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.
• Increased access to information that is produced by the federal government at taxpayers' expense, including Congressional Research Service reports.
• Changes in the Federal Depository Library Program as GPO continues to pursue a National Plan for the Access to U.S. Government Information and implements the regional discard policy.

A commitment to transparent and open government, including the following:
• Classification policies that allow the release of as much information as possible while protecting necessary secrets.
• Policies that protect net neutrality, under which all content, sites, and platforms are treated equally improvements to the Freedom of Information Act that ensure that openness prevails, regardless of administration, presidential signing statements, or forms of executive privilege.

Policies that promote a government protection of privacy, including the following:
• Reforms to surveillance laws that limit the overbroad collection of personal information about members of the public.
• Strong oversight and transparency of government surveillance programs that monitor public communications.
• Updates to laws that protect individuals' privacy, including the privacy of electronic communications and data.

Other Matters:
• Advocacy is a core value of the AALL, and member input should be encouraged.
• Encourage AALL member participation in the yearly in-person GRC meeting through outreach.
• Continue to educate AALL members regarding specific public policy issues by writing and updating one-page overviews of current issues; offering advocacy updates to members; and encouraging wider knowledge of and engagement with public policy issues.
• The new administration will offer opportunities to engage on other issues depending on the new president's priorities and changes in federal agency leadership. The GRC will carefully monitor new issues as they arise in the new Congress.