Completed activities:

The committee focused on evaluating the 2015 survey: analyzing the response rate, conducting a "Survey on the Survey" to solicit feedback of the membership on the current survey to understand potential changes that need to be made. This feedback will help direct any redesign of the 2017 survey. The primary focus was to understand the low response rate to the 2015 survey especially among private law firms. This follow-up survey was sent to all members in late June 2016, closing on July 8, 2016. We received a total of 646 responses: 302 Academic, 234 Law Firm/Corporate, and 110 Government. The survey consisted of 18 questions. Not all questions were mandatory as some would likely only be answerable by those in leadership positions. Therefore, the response rate for individual questions varied widely.

The results were reviewed by the committee at AALL annual conference on July 16, 2016. Please contact me if you would like to receive a copy of the survey results.

At the annual meeting Mark Estes and Diana Koppang attended the CONELL Marketplace to drive awareness of the salary survey and the new salary survey calculator. Our impression was that new members were largely unaware of the salary survey or the calculator. We recommend that committee members attend future CONELL Marketplaces to continue to educate new members on this valuable benefit of their AALL membership.

The committee meeting at the annual conference focused on the Survey on the Survey results. A primary concern is the participation rate and its acceptance by institutions as an authoritative resource on salaries in our field.

We identified three primary challenges to the survey based on the Survey on the Survey results and anecdotal conversations with the membership by committee members.

1. That the survey is considered "self-reported" by law firm administration. To not be considered "self-reported," the survey must be filled out by the Human Resources department. As the survey is sent to library directors and managers the assumption by law firm administrators is that the "right" people are not completing the survey.

2. That the survey has become too long and complex over time which may decrease the participation rate.

3. That the survey does not accurately reflect that as law libraries shrink in size, positions continue to combine, thereby making it difficult to slot individuals into the current survey categories.

Remainder of the year activities:

Roll out another all member survey in March 2017 to collect more anecdotal information on how individuals have observed structural changes in their positions and organizations.

Discuss and decide whether to significantly shorten the salary survey and perhaps split the survey into one focusing on salaries and budgets (financial focus) and one focusing on organizations™ structural and responsibilities changes (organizational focus), each running biennially. As the organizational survey would focus on less confidential information, that survey could be conducted through AALL™s Survey Monkey account instead of engaging ARI in a second survey, which would increase the survey budget considerably.

Continue to review position titles and descriptions and whether changes would necessitate more branching logic in the survey by organization type.

Provide Association Research, Inc. (ARI) with any changes to the 2017 survey. Review and approve final version of the 2017 survey.

The committee activities support:
(1) The Knowledge goal, specifically the goal to become a “co-collaborator of industry information.” The economic value of law libraries can be directly linked to how they are viewed within their organizations. We must understand this positioning through objective data of financial support and through anecdotal information of how our departments are perceived. The current survey, and possible additional survey, provides the state of our current position in our industry, provides guidance on how our strategies need to adapt to a changing industry.

(2) The Community goal to aid in providing “meaningful engagement between and among members and key stakeholders throughout their careers.” Understanding how our economic value has increased or decreased can only be achieved through active participation of the majority of AALL. This data sparks the discussions needed to assess what changes are needed in our field throughout our careers.

(3) The Leadership goal of “AALL and the profession [be] recognized experts in the field of legal information within the legal community.” How we are recognized in the legal industry is often reflected by our economic value to our organization. While that is not our only end goal it can be a very clear indicator of how we are perceived in the legal world at large.

Proposed Activities for 2017-2018:

Initiate the 2017 Salary Survey in July and promote participation through communication to the membership at large, to individual SIS groups, and at the local chapter level. Communicate the value of the survey and how the value increases with increased participation rates.

Develop a plan to increase survey participation.

Consider writing an article exploring trends found in the salary surveys. For example, number of locations, budgets, job descriptions/titles.

Review and compare the job titles/descriptions submitted by the library type SIS’s with job postings in the AALL job-line and on other information professional jobsites, and the responses from the membership survey to be conducted in Spring 2017.

Explore whether the survey should be conducted annually as is this common in other legal industry associations.

Explore with stakeholder affiliate groups like HR and compensation directors and the Association of Legal Administrators to see what they really look for in salary surveys.

Consider the development of an “off-year” survey that focuses on organizational and structural changes rather than the finance aspects of a law library. This survey would be more anecdotal and open-ended as opposed to “hard” data such as financial figures.