AALLSpectrum

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2020 / VOLUME 25, NUMBER 1

COVID-19

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EDITOR’S NOTE

COVID-19: THE NEW FRONTIER OF LAW LIBRARIANSHIP

Welcome to this special issue of *AALL Spectrum*, dedicated to the impact of COVID-19 on the profession and how legal information professionals quickly adapted to an all-virtual service environment to support faculty, judges, lawyers, students, and other patrons. While the transition was sudden and difficult, AALL, vendors, and our professional colleagues provided critical support through webinars, coffee chats, online resources, and one-on-one conversations that helped us chart a path to success in this new virtual frontier to continue providing all of the valuable services our patrons expect of us.

Unfortunately, this pandemic continues to challenge us as a profession, and by the time you read this issue, many of us will have been working remotely for over four months and are now implementing plans for yet another “new normal” as we slowly return to our law schools, court houses, and law firms this fall, despite the rise of COVID-related deaths and infections in many parts of the U.S. In order to support our community in these unprecedented times, AALL is creating an expanded “COVID-19 Community Forum” so that members can share best practices, post questions, and obtain answers to pressing concerns. (Access the community at bit.ly/AALLCovidforum.) And don’t forget to reach out to the *AALL Spectrum* Editorial Board (bit.ly/AALLspecsub) if you or your institution have new insights about delivering library services in this new COVID-19 frontier.

*AALL Spectrum* has always strived to provide members with the best professional expert advice, and to serve as a vehicle for discussing the most important issues of our times. As editor, I am very proud to announce the debut of a new column called “Voices Across the Spectrum,” dedicated to reflections of diversity and inclusion in our community. While *AALL Spectrum* has previously published an occasional article on the topic, this column will provide an opportunity to keep the conversation front and center in every issue. Read the first column on page 41.

If we want to make further progress in anti-racism, diversity, and equality practices, policies, and initiatives, we must be better educated and engage in dialogue that leads to an awareness of our biases—biases that everyone has the power to change.

Steven A. Lastres
salastres@debevoise.com
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RETIRING?
CONTINUE YOUR LEGACY & SHARE YOUR EXPERTISE
BECOME A SUSTAINING MEMBER

If retirement is in your near future, and you want to stay connected to your friends and colleagues as well as the legal community, consider the AALL Sustaining Member option. For a one-time renewal rate of $425* continue enjoying all the benefits of membership:

- Networking
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*AALL’s Encore Caucus was created as a way for retired members to continue to collaborate with members of the legal information profession, share common interests, and further personal and professional activities.

DID YOU KNOW?

AALL’s Encore Caucus

know someone about to retire? The Sustaining Member benefit makes a great retirement gift!

learn more at bit.ly/AALLsustainingmember

learn more at bit.ly/AALLencore
In this issue of *AALL Spectrum*, we learn how our colleagues in law firms, academic, and government law libraries quickly sprang to action to address the needs of their institutions at the onset of COVID-19. Since March 2020, I have regularly reached out to colleagues and friends to hear how they are coping within their teams, with vendor discussions, and a number of issues that were not on our minds five months ago. I am someone who relies on others during challenging personal and professional times, and I am so thankful for everyone I’ve met through my years with the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL). While I truly missed gathering in person at the AALL Annual Meeting, I always felt reassured knowing everyone was just a text, email, web chat, or phone call away.

One of AALL’s greatest strengths is our vocal, engaged, and passionate membership. As AALL’s executive board, we listen, observe, engage, and act on what we learn. As you will see in this issue, this includes the debut of a new column, Voices Across the Spectrum, which builds upon our recent Coffee Chats centered on anti-racism (“Giving Voice to What Weighs Upon Us” and “Continuing the Conversation about Inclusion in the Profession”). In our Ask a Director column, we learn how these directors review diversity and inclusion opportunities within their organizations. Throughout the coming year, we will continue offering avenues for our members to reflect and engage on both shared and unique experiences dealing with the continued impact of COVID-19 and racial inequities.

As we enter the second year of our Strategic Plan—focusing on the three pillars of Talent, Engagement, and Alliances—we make progress toward our goals and objectives. We also incorporate a focus of coping during a pandemic, and a vigorously heartfelt emphasis on social justice. While we do not know how much longer we will be physically apart, there is comfort in knowing we are together in this shared experience.

I look forward to serving you and being together (physically and virtually) in the coming year. Be safe and well.

P.S. Kudos to our members and headquarters staff for AALL’s first Virtual Conference! Our adaptability as legal information professionals truly showed in our ability to adjust to a new format, while also providing exemplary programming that was both professional and of the moment. Thank you to everyone who contributed through presenting, coordinating, moderating, or otherwise engaging throughout the course of the conference.
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- Law Library Journal
- AALL Biennial Salary Survey & Organizational Characteristics
- AALL State of the Profession 2019
  $400+ Value

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- CALI Lessons
- Advocacy for the profession
- Grant and scholarship opportunities
- Career resources
  - Mentoring
  $300+ Value

ANNUAL MEETING REGISTRATION
$270 Annual AALL Membership Dues

TOTAL VALUE
$2,120+

AALL YOUR LEGAL KNOWLEDGE NETWORK™
The global pandemic meant that we couldn’t convene in New Orleans as planned. In spite of this, 1,245 law librarians and legal information professionals from across the country and globe were able to gather virtually for AALL’s first Virtual Conference to learn from peers and partners in the legal information field. Conference registrants now have on-demand access to more than 40 educational sessions at bit.ly/AALLAM20.

1,245
ATTENDEES: MEMBERS AND NONMEMBERS

7 COUNTRIES
ATTENDEES REPRESENTING 7 COUNTRIES AND 2 TERRITORIES ACROSS 13 TIME ZONES

40+
MORE THAN 40 EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

20
20 EXHIBITING COMPANIES, OFFERING 9 EXHIBITOR EDUCATION SESSIONS

TOP 3 MOST-ATTENDED LIVESTREAM SESSIONS*

- Legal Ethics in the Use of Artificial Intelligence
- Diversity & Inclusion Committee Symposium: Women in the Law: A Conversation with ABA President Martinez and Louisiana Chief Justice Johnson (sponsored by LexisNexis)
- What the Japanese, the Swedes, and the Minimalists Can Teach Us About Legal Instruction

MOST-VIEWED PRERECORDED SESSIONS*

- Legal Information from U.S. Territories: What a Conundrum!
- Improving Access to Law and Justice in Communities Around the World
- Open-Source Alternatives to Digital Commons

NEW ORLEANS-INSPIRED DISHES AT HOME

Beignets for breakfast from @MeredithKostal
Shrimp and cheesy grits from @LibrarianMorgan
Red beans and rice from @mak506

*Data as of July 28, 2020.
WHAT INSPIRES YOU MOST? Helping others. It pushes me to continually improve myself through questioning my beliefs. In the library it pushes me to continually assess our programs to ensure we are helping as many of our community members as possible. There is nothing more rewarding than observing a student’s expression when their research is successful.

A SKILL YOU’D LIKE TO LEARN? Plumbing. It sounds odd, but as I’ve learned from experience, it takes a special touch, and if something goes wrong, there is water everywhere. I can change a light switch and feel confident replacing a roof shingle, but plumbing is whole different animal.

FAVORITE THING ABOUT YOUR JOB? Continual learning. My job is not rote. Each day I am presented with new challenges and opportunities to learn something new about libraries, the law, a student, a colleague, or a faculty member.


IF YOU WROTE AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY, WHAT WOULD ITS TITLE BE AND WHY? Where Are We Moving This Time: A Story of Multiple Cross-Country Moves. I’ve moved across the country three times, plus one additional cross-country adventure. Each trip was a great opportunity to see the vastness and diversity of the American landscape and eat a lot of regional cuisine.

SUPERPOWER YOU WISH YOU HAD AND WHY? Teleportation. Travel has always been near and dear to my heart and teleportation would allow me to see the world.
AALL Executive Board Actions

The AALL Executive Board met virtually, July 9 and 10, just prior to the start of AALL’s Virtual Conference “Unmasking Our Potential.” During the meeting, the Executive Board considered a number of agenda items and approved the following:

- The minutes from the April 2-3, 2020, April 23, 2020, and May 20, 2020 Executive Board Meetings
- The appointments of:
  - Joseph Lawson, Deputy Director, Harris County Law Library, Houston, Texas, to serve as the Chair of the 2022 Annual Meeting Program Committee (AMPC)
  - Susan Nevelow Mart, Associate Professor and Director of the Law Library, University of Colorado Law School William A. Wise Law Library, Boulder, Colorado, to serve as the Chair of the Annual Meeting Local Arrangements Committee for the 2022 AALL Annual Meeting in Denver, Colorado
- The revised description and nomination forms for the Marian Gould Gallagher Distinguished Service Award and the Hall of Fame Award
- The AALL operating budget for the fiscal year 2020-2021 beginning October 1, 2020
- The 2019-2020 AALL Strategic Directions Action Plan update
- The creation of the Business and Corporate Research Instruction Caucus
- The creation of the Black Law Librarians Special Interest Section (BLL-SIS)
- Accept and take under advisement the recommendations of the Law Librarianship as a Career Guidance Review Special Committee final report

The Executive Board tabled the following:

- Revisions to the description for the Joseph L. Andrews Legal Literature Award requesting the Awards Committee to further clarify the description
- Revisions to the Economic Status of Law Librarians Committee charge to review the Salary Survey’s current vendor, as this will be tasked to AALL Headquarters for the 2023 AALL Salary Survey
- Revisions to the charge of the Economic Status of Law Librarians Committee to further research the possibility to add zip codes to the 2023 edition of the AALL Salary Survey
- Revisions to the charge and purpose of the Awards Committee that the Committee maintains oversight and coordination of the Marian Gould Gallagher Distinguished Service Award, Joseph L. Andrews Legal Literature Award, and the Hall of Fame; all other AALL awards are managed by award juries and select committees

The Executive Board book and related materials are available on AALLNET at bit.ly/AALLboard0720.
General Business Meeting Actions

The General Business Meeting was held virtually July 17 during the 2020 AALL Virtual Conference. The meeting kicked off with reports from AALL President Michelle Cosby and President-elect Emily R. Florio. The update included a recap of the Association’s work this past year.

Resolutions
Two resolutions were approved by members during the General Business Meeting. View the full text of the resolutions at bit.ly/AM20resolutions.

■ Resolution for a Pipeline Program to Improve Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Law Librarian Profession

■ Resolution to Improve Racial and Ethnic Diversity in AALL & the Law Librarian Profession

Please consult AALL’s resolution guidelines for next steps at bit.ly/AALLguidelines.

Following the Association highlights, AALL Executive Board Treasurer Cornell H. Winston presented his treasurer’s report to the membership regarding the Association’s financial statement for the 2019 fiscal year. To view the entire report, visit bit.ly/MJ20Treasurer.


View the reports of AALL Executive Director, Vani Ungapen, and AALL Director of Government Relations, Emily Feltren, at bit.ly/AM20AALL.

Members Open Forum
The Members Open Forum directly followed the General Business Meeting. Shira Megerman, senior legal information librarian at Boston University, served as moderator for the Members Open Forum. During this year’s Forum, members discussed a variety of issues from diversity and inclusion to privacy concerns over digitizing AALL’s archives, the effects of canceling the in-person AALL Annual Meeting, to providing closed captioning resources for future virtual meetings and webinars. Thank you to everyone who participated in the Forum.

A recording of both the General Business Meeting and Members Open Forum is available on AALLNET at bit.ly/AALL20GenBusiness.

Newly Elected AALL Board
Immediately following Winston’s presentation, AALL Executive Board Secretary Luis Acosta introduced the newly elected Executive Board Members:

■ Vice President/President-elect
  Diane Rodriguez

■ Secretary
  Mary Jenkins

■ Executive Board Members
  Susan David deMaine & Stacy Etheredge

Continuing on the board will be:

■ President
  Emily R. Florio

■ Immediate Past President
  Michelle Cosby

■ Treasurer
  Cornell H. Winston

■ Executive Board Members
  Emily M. Janoski-Hachlen, June Hsiao Liebert, Karen Selden, and Jason R. Sowards

Acosta also introduced the candidates for the 2021 Executive Board election. The election will be open to all members from October 1 to

Statement of Ownership and Management
AALL Spectrum, publication No. 1089-8689, is published bimonthly [2021-2022 (January/February, March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October, November/December)] by the American Association of Law Libraries, 105 W. Adams St. Ste. 3300, Chicago, IL 60603-6225. Annual subscription price, $75. American Association of Law Libraries, Vani Ungapen, executive director, owner, and publisher; Steven A. Lastres, editor; Heather Haemker, managing editor. Periodical-class postage paid at Chicago, Illinois. Printed in the U.S.A. As a nonprofit organization authorized to mail at special rates (Section 423-12, Domestic Mail Manual), the purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes have not changed during the preceding 12 months.

Extent and Nature of Circulation
“Average” figures denote the average number of copies printed each issue during the preceding 12 months; “Actual” figures denote actual number of copies of single issues published nearest to filing date. August 5, 2020. Total number of copies printed: Average, 3,983; Actual, 3,963. Paid and/or requested circulation: not applicable [i.e., no sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, and counter sales]. Mail subscription: Average, 3,584; Actual, 3,656. Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means, samples, complimentary and other free copies: Average, 25; Actual, 25. Total distribution: Average, 3,569; Actual, 3,763. Copies not distributed: office use, leftover, unaccounted, spoiled after printing: Average, 300; Actual, 300. Returns from news agents: not applicable. Total (sum previous two entries): Average, 3,996; Actual, 4,063 Percentage paid: Average, 98%; Actual, 93.98%.
AALL Champions /Membership Update

AALL Champions are ambassadors to the legal information profession and to AALL. Thank you to our champions.*

- Beth Adelman
- Jamie J. Baker
- Patricia E. Barbone
- Marcia R. Bell
- Michael G. Bernier
- Justin Brownstone
- Joanne Camejo
- Daniel Warren Cardwell
- Kathy Carlson
- Miriam D. Childs
- Michelle Cosby
- Joseph A. Custer
- Andre Davison
- John Joseph DiGilio
- Amy J. Eaton
- Stacy Etheredge
- Emily R. Florio
- Krista Ford
- Amy Latalladi-Fulton
- Eugene M. Giudice
- Edward T. Hart
- Penny A. Hazleton
- Joseph P. Hinger
- Mary Jenkins
- Tunisia Johnson
- Catherine Lemann
- June Hsiao Liebert
- Mike Martinez Jr.
- John Mayer
- Lawrence R. Meyer
- Dan Miller
- Alicia M. Pappas
- Charles A. Pipins II
- Holly M. Riccio
- Kathleen Richman
- Diane M. Rodriguez
- Maureen Rossi
- Karen Selden
- Jeffrey A. Sewell
- Keith Ann Stiverson
- Jonathan C. Stock
- Maryruth Storer
- Gretchen Van Dam
- Ed Walters
- Christopher Walunas
- Gail Warren
- Steve Wasserman
- Jean M. Wenger
- Deborah Wiesehan
- Jean L. Willis

Learn More about becoming an AALL Champion at bit.ly/AALLchampion

*AALL Champions as of June 18, 2020. Members who became champions after June 18 will be recognized in next year’s September/October issue of AALL Spectrum.

MEMBER-GET-A-MEMBER PROGRAM

ENRICH OTHERS + ENRICH YOURSELF

You know that we are stronger, smarter, and more successful together. Help create an even more vibrant Association—invite your peers, colleagues, and staff to join AALL—through the AALL Member-Get-a-Member (MGAM) Program.

For each member recruited receive:

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All recruiters receive website recognition:

› MGAM Leaderboard
› My Communities MGAM digital badge

learn more at bit.ly/AALL-mgam

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NOVEL RESPONSES: HELPING LAW FIRMS ANSWER CLIENTS’ COVID-19 QUESTIONS

LITTLER MENDELSON’S NOVEL RESPONSES TO THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

BY CYNTHIA BROWN & ALLISON REEVE DAVIS
By late February, however, the volume of direct client inquiries was beginning to overwhelm the shareholders. Library leadership was invited by the Chief Knowledge Officer to a strategic planning meeting to address the increased volume and urgent nature of these requests. Following this meeting, the needs of the Task Force attorneys were quickly matched with the unique skills of the firm’s librarians and legal information professionals. Littler’s Knowledge Desk and Knowledge Management Department were offered as key partners to meeting pressing client needs.

As client inquiries and concerns increased daily, the majority of their questions raised novel issues. A decentralized response process can sometimes lead to incongruous answers and to the frequent “reinvention of the wheel.” Providing consistency in the advice and counsel provided was paramount. The original Task Force grew exponentially as new areas of employment law were implicated in the situation, and transitioning from workplace safety issues to leaves of absence and compliance issues and matching the client’s need with the most focused subject-matter expert (SME) was critical.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic brought Littler Mendelson, a management-side labor and employment law firm, an unprecedented number of advice and counseling requests from clients. This work typically requires a client to speak directly with a shareholder who is an experienced attorney in a narrow area of law, and it does not initially sound like an opportunity for the library or a research team to assist. Indeed, client questions into novel areas of law rarely require heavy research, but rather rely on the experience and knowledge of the attorney. Littler’s first coronavirus question came in late December and was handled directly by a workplace safety attorney. In the early days of the pandemic, the library was not contacted with questions other than the occasional request to direct an attorney to the firm’s newly created Coronavirus Task Force.

Getting the Library Involved
With these issues in mind during the early stages of the strategic planning, library leadership offered to match the skills inherent in the research department with the needs of the Task Force. There was an immediate need to track incoming questions, assign the appropriate SME, and balance workloads among the Task Force members. In reviewing questions the Task Force received, it became clear that existing firm work product could assist in answering many of the repeated client requests. As documents were both identified and created, the information was categorized, curated, and stored for future use and easy accessibility. The Task Force needed better communication tools to share lessons learned with the firm, and there was both a need and opportunity to issue-spot and identify trends to enable the firm to provide
proactive advice to clients. Finally, as the virus continued to spread, local, state, federal, and international laws were changing literally by the hour. The Littler Knowledge Desk and knowledge management (KM) department set up detailed monitoring of news and legal updates to keep the firm and clients informed. Each of these issues presented unique challenges and risks, but information professionals are well versed in averting such risks. We collect questions, answers, build repositories, and, with frequently needed information, create novel databases or tools for reuse. Applying these skills to provide much needed service to the Task Force proved invaluable.

Littler’s Knowledge Desk collaborated with KM attorneys and the KM Innovations team to build an internal SharePoint page of COVID-19-related resources structured with Littler’s taxonomy. These foundational resources provided a cataloging system that would be ready for the next wave of arriving materials supporting client counsel, as the pandemic and its employment law implications continued to evolve.

**Tackling the Problem**
The Knowledge Desk reviewed each incoming request, sending toolkits, providing curated information, and as needed, escalating questions to Littler attorneys for further review, response, or triage. The Knowledge Desk team offered expertise in tracking requests using already established systems in ServiceNow (a digital workflow management system), populating tickets directly from questions emailed to the Task Force, and creating new ticket request categories. By utilizing existing tracking tools, analytics were provided to manage the workload and provide insight for future planning purposes. Initially, workflows and procedures changed nearly every day as attorneys and legal information professionals adapted to the influx of requests and new partnerships. Librarians worked tirelessly to keep up with demand and create a fluid process, which resulted in a strong partnership with a single point of contact for attorneys.

**BEST PRACTICES**

**Responding to New Opportunities**

- Stay involved in the strategic vision of your organization to identify potential opportunities.
- Look for opportunities; don’t wait for them to come to you.
- Speak up and offer your skills, knowledge, and tools.
- Find examples of previous successes to prove your idea, and share them with management.
- Embrace the idea that you can make a change at any level in your organization. You don’t have to be a director to share new ideas.
- Build a culture that embraces new opportunities.
- Identify champions in the library that will lead the team in new initiatives.
- Don’t wait for perfection or be afraid to fail; improvements can be made down the road.
- Ensure that your team gets recognition for their work.
- Promote your successes.
Further helping to align the Task Force with the ever-evolving response to the pandemic and workplace compliance challenges, the KM team created a repository in the document management system (DMS) and applied our taxonomy for efficient findability. As new tracking reports, documents, memos, and guidance were created, librarians and KM attorneys worked closely with other attorneys to organize their content into marketable toolkits and other client deliverables. As the Knowledge Management department is the research front line for our 50-state surveys and legal trackers, additional COVID-19-related executive orders tracking was led by this team. Partnering with the attorney-authors of the new COVID-related guides and toolkits meant Littler’s taxonomy and cataloging system would be applied to centralize, organize, and streamline the creation and maintenance of the COVID-19 response materials.

Examples of trackers created and maintained by the KM team include all federal, state, and local employment laws, regulations, and ordinances; state and local business closures executive orders; state-mandated industry-specific guidance; court responses; and eventually, state reopening plans. Librarians curated and distributed COVID-specific news to our attorneys. This was done in addition to the multiple 50-state surveys that the KM team already maintained pre-COVID to advise our clients as they navigated the ever-changing landscape of labor and employment laws.

**Taking a Closer Look**
The ticketing system allowed the firm to track all COVID-19 client requests and report on how many questions the library answered utilizing prepared resources and the number of inquiries escalated to Littler attorneys and SMEs. The library also worked with the information technology (IT) department to add new document tracking into ServiceNow, and began to tag each document sent to clients. This tagging has allowed the library to report the number of client-facing toolkits and packets clients purchased. Not only does this reporting allow for analytics, revenue tracking, and improved workflow, but shareholders are able to send clients updated information as the pandemic continues to evolve.

Within two weeks of developing the Task Force, client information requests for COVID-19 skyrocketed 230 percent, and through the months of March, April, and May, Littler’s Knowledge Desk received over 5,000 virus-related questions. Littler’s Knowledge Desk involvement allowed attorneys to spend their time handling the more sophisticated nuances and concerns of clients while the library made materials and answers to the most commonly asked questions readily available.

**The Aftermath**
Littler’s Knowledge Desk response has been praised by firm management for its integral role in the success of the COVID-19 Task Force. Not every day was easy, however. The world—science, policy, work environments—was changing daily. At the same moment that the Task Force was ramping up responses to clients, the firm’s workforce began working remotely. When remote work initially began at Littler, each department was asked to identify critical staff, who were then given the ability to work from home. With the dramatic increase in demand and the excellent work from the Knowledge Desk, firm leadership quickly recognized the need to increase the library’s remote workforce. The library team was one of the first departments to receive additional laptops, bringing all available staff back online.

Opportunities are rarely convenient, but the work ethic of the library team shined through the urgency of the first few weeks, even when the answer to some questions was “I don’t know,” or “We’ll find out tomorrow.” The skills of legal information professionals proved necessary for the success of such a large undertaking. Librarians help, respond, organize, and create. They observe, track, analyze, and report. Littler’s Knowledge Desk applied these fundamental skills to the Task Force response and continues to provide expertise as projects evolve, new litigation trends emerge, and firm leadership again looks to the library to evaluate critical decisions about the business of the firm.

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Examples of trackers created and maintained by the KM team include all federal, state, and local employment laws, regulations, and ordinances; state and local business closures executive orders; state-mandated industry-specific guidance; court responses; and eventually, state reopening plans.

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**READ**

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ACADEMIC LAW LIBRARIES & THE EARLY DAYS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

BY CLANITRA STEWART NEJDL & EDNA LEWIS
Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and its effects have dramatically changed the way that institutions and organizations function worldwide. Concerns about transmitting the disease have led to widespread changes in the provision of services and resources to the public. Like other entities, law libraries have had to make significant adjustments to safely meet the needs of their users. Academic law libraries, for example, have had to creatively rework their procedures and services to support law schools’ efforts to preserve their missions during the pandemic.

This article provides an overview of how two academic law libraries—the Alynne Queener Massey Law Library at Vanderbilt University and the UC Berkeley Law Library—navigated the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Initial Responses to COVID-19: Massey Law Library at Vanderbilt University

The Alynne Queener Massey Law Library serves the faculty and students of Vanderbilt Law School. The Law Library director and six full-time law librarians provide support to 557 JD students, 72 LLM students, 50 full-time faculty members, 91 non-full-time faculty members, and five academic journals. Students regularly use the Law Library as a place for study and quiet gathering. Members of the public are also allowed access during limited hours.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly changed how the Law Library has functioned. Physical access to the Law Library ceased on March 24, 2020. This was later than the originally scheduled date for closure of March 20, 2020. However, students requested additional time to access the printers, so Law Library Director Larry Reeves accommodated this request by opening the Law Library to students himself on March 23, 2020. Although physical access has not returned as of July 2020, the services and resources provided continue. Thus far, three major areas of Law Library activity have been affected by the pandemic: legal research instruction; provision of reference and research services; and access to Law Library resources.

Legal Research Instruction

One of the first changes to Law Library services at the beginning of the pandemic was the modification of legal research instruction. In-person classes across the university were canceled on March 11, 2020. Online instruction began on March 16, 2020. For both 1L and upper-level legal research instruction, this meant speedily adjusting class components for online implementation.

For spring 2020, there were five 1L legal research class sessions scheduled, the last of which was to be held the week of April 6, 2020. Law librarians quickly made changes to the session so it would work virtually. For upper-level legal research instruction, multiple class sessions had to be revamped to be held online. Zoom has been used to provide recorded material to replace the in-person lectures that were originally planned. Synchronous Zoom consultations were scheduled as needed to address student questions.

Reference and Research Services

Traditionally, the Massey Law Library provides in-person, telephone, and email reference and research assistance to the Law School. COVID-19 made it impossible to continue in-person reference and research services during the rest of spring 2020, but services were still provided remotely. In fact, to more quickly respond to user needs during the closure, the Law Library implemented a live chat reference service using LibChat from Springshare. This service is available from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM each weekday and has allowed the Law School community to receive help more quickly. It is likely that online chat reference will continue for the foreseeable future, even after the Law Library reopens.

Law students and faculty have also sought more extensive real-time assistance. It is not unusual for students to request Zoom conferences to discuss questions. Law faculty have traditionally contacted law librarians via email for assistance and that has continued even with the addition of live chat reference. However, law librarians do provide Zoom consultations with faculty members as needed. For example, Zoom consultations were instrumental in helping address many faculty members’
RESEARCH GUIDES
These research guides provide answers to the most common library-related questions, walk users through the process of requesting electronic materials, explain the changes to the Interlibrary Loan process, and highlight some COVID-19 issues and resources, respectively.
- “COVID-19 and Racism: Legislative Responses,” bit.ly/SO20COVID (tracks state and local laws passed to address racism and xenophobia since the pandemic started.)
- “Law Library Interlibrary Loan,” bit.ly/SO20loan
- “Lawyer Professional Development,” bit.ly/SO20prodev (provides students with information on available continued legal education and professional development opportunities, as some students have had their summer jobs postponed and need information about activities to aid in their professional growth during the hiatus.)

Law Library Resources
Of all the initial changes due to COVID-19, perhaps most extensive were those related to providing and expanding Law Library resources. Access to print Law Library materials was halted from March 23, 2020, until June 1, 2020. During that time, the Law Library was able to provide electronic versions of many print resources. Additionally, negotiation with vendors often resulted in new or expanded access to electronic resources on a temporary basis. On June 1, 2020, a book pick-up service was implemented to allow students and faculty members to request print items by completing a form provided in the library catalog. The item is then routed to a specific pick-up location. This service has proven to be very popular across the university library system.

Initial Responses to COVID-19: Law Library at UC Berkeley Law School
The UC Berkeley Law Library serves faculty, staff, and students of the UC Berkeley School of Law (approximately 1,100 students, 170 faculty, and other instructors), as well as several clinical programs and 13 student-run journals. As part of one of the state’s university systems, we are also open to the public. There are 30 people on our Law Library staff, 10 of whom routinely provide reference services. We provide in-person, telephone, and chat reference services. Students can schedule one-on-one focused research appointments with reference librarians. Faculty use an online faculty research request service and an online faculty paging service. Librarians also teach two legal research classes—Advanced Legal Research, and Foreign and International Legal Research. Students routinely use the Law Library’s reading rooms to study, our small study rooms to collaborate with other students, and our student computer lab for on-site tech assistance and computer work.

The COVID-19 impact on the Law School, and in turn the Law Library, unfolded over a period of weeks in early March as the crisis in the San Francisco Bay Area mounted. In accordance with university guidelines, all Law School classes moved online on March 9, 2020, using the Zoom platform. Beginning March 10, 2020, the Law Library stopped physically staffing the reference desk and providing in-person student reference appointments, instead offering chat reference and Zoom appointments. On March 16, 2020, the Law Library was still open to students when Alameda County announced that effective at midnight the county would move to shelter in place.

With the Law School’s physical closure, the Law Library shifted to a remote services model. The Law Library quickly produced a LibGuide entitled “Law Library in the Time of COVID-19: General Shutdown Information,” explaining how services would work during shutdown (read the guide at bit.ly/SO20libguide). Our “Student Computing Guide” was modified to add information on using Zoom and to provide computer chat support, since the computer lab was inaccessible (read the guide at bit.ly/SO20libguidecomputer). Like at Vanderbilt, the shutdown mostly affected how the Law Library provided legal research instruction, reference and research services, and access to legal resources.

Legal Research Instruction
The Zoom course instruction that began just prior to the shutdown continued for the remainder of the semester. Law Library instructors met individually with students on Zoom as necessary. Michael Levy, associate director and Advanced Legal Research instructor, notes that “every Zoom class session was a learning session for instructors, as we tried to find the most effective and inclusive use of the Zoom platform (polls, breakout rooms, chat, live video of guest speakers). I would try different approaches to engage students, but I never knew in advance what would work.” Instructors met during the semester and throughout the summer to discuss what worked and how best to build a virtual classroom community to prepare for fall virtual instruction.

Reference and Research Services
Despite the physical closure of the Law Library, our reference and research
services adapted well to a remote format. The chat reference service continued Monday through Friday during regular reference desk hours. Students also used our online student reference appointments service to schedule individual research appointments that the reference librarians set up on Zoom. Since faculty typically request research assistance through our online faculty requests service, our interaction was relatively unaffected, and we responded via email and Google document sharing. In general, reference librarians were able to assist faculty and students effectively using a combination of databases, ebooks, and other electronic resources. Dean Rowan, director of reference, states, “I think students might have gotten more from individual Zoom meetings than they did from in-person ones, because they had no choice but to watch how we identified and navigated the tools via the screens we shared with them. It demonstrated the superiority of showing rather than telling.” Still, reference librarians missed the easy on-site collaboration with colleagues, the casual interactions with students in the Law Library, and the print research collection.

Law Library Resources
With the closure, all access to print books and other physical material ceased. We used our existing catalog to identify electronic sources for materials on course reserve, although not all were available. Many publishers stepped up to provide temporary access to casebooks through the end of spring semester, and the Law Library created a “Casebook Access Guide” for students posted on our website. We expanded our efforts to increase our digital collections to support research and instruction by purchasing/licensing more digital content, as well as relying on services such as HathiTrust (a collaborative effort with our main library). We modified our library catalog to create special electronic collections and to add linking for new electronic resources in both our database list and catalog. Yet, as our associate director Marci Hoffman emphasizes, “Many of our print resources are not available electronically, and due to licensing restrictions and/or cost, it is not feasible to provide certain print resources electronically.”

The Law Library also reached out to the Law School with community building resources during this extraordinary time. Reference librarians presented a Zoom research series for staff on basic legal research topics (e.g., case law, statutes, secondary sources), which included remote access tips. We used our “Hot Tips” scrolling feature on our website to post ongoing COVID-19 related news and resources of interest to the Law School community. The Law Library created two lists based on recommendations from the Law School community: “Gimme Shelter,” a list of books, audiobooks, and podcasts, and “Gimme Shelter, Part 2,” a list of streaming movies and TV shows that we posted to our website. (View “Gimme Shelter, Part 1” at bit.ly/SO20part1 and “Gimme Shelter, Part 2” at bit.ly/SO20part2.) Since we could no longer furnish our typical finals stress busters (e.g., candy, jigsaw puzzles, plastic emotional support animals), we created and shared with students a list of virtual “Top 10 Stress Busters from the Law Library” (bit.ly/SO20stressbust).

Lessons for the Future
To quote from a classic Monty Python sketch: “Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition!” Certainly, academic law libraries did not expect the changes brought about by COVID-19. There has been much commiseration about the rapid pivot needed to quickly plan for providing exclusively virtual reference and research services, modifying legal research instruction, and enhancing access to databases, ebooks, and other resources. The good news for the Massey and UC Berkeley law librarians is that this period of learning has sharpened our skills and led to some important realizations:

- Remote reference services can be effective given the abundance of electronic resources available. Still, the process lacks the warmth of in-person consultations;
- Access to casebooks, ebooks, databases, and digital resources carried academic law libraries through the end of the spring semester. Still, some portions of the collections exist only in print and cannot easily be replaced electronically; and
- Even though law librarians have proven their ability to endure through tough times, we still miss the law students and faculty, our colleagues, and being at our wonderful law libraries.

READ
AALL’s Academic Law Librarians Special Interest Section My Communities post “4 Student Services Topics in 4 Weeks” at bit.ly/SO19ALLSIStopics.

GLOBAL COVID-19 RESEARCH EFFORTS

BY MARCELO RODRIGUEZ, XAVIER BEAUCHAMP-TREMBLAY & LUIS ACOSTA
This pandemic does not know political borders. From Latin America and the Caribbean to Canada and the U.S. Law Library of Congress, law librarians lead the way in their response to COVID-19.

**Law Librarians Monitoring COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean**

From the desire of doing something useful and productive with the resources at hand, the idea of monitoring the legal responses to the COVID-19 crisis in Latin America and the Caribbean came to fruition. Author Marcelo Rodriguez created the project Law Librarians Monitoring COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean because he believes it is important in this moment of global crisis affecting every single one of us to also be aware of what is happening in the rest of our shared continent.

Law librarians have the expertise and professional network to strive for a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the complexities of and possible solutions for this unprecedented crisis. The project’s working group of librarians includes Michele Villagran, Yasmin Morais, Victoria De La Torre, Abby Dos Santos, Ana Delgado, and Ulysses Jaen. They are all members of the Foreign, Comparative & International Law Special Interest Section (FCIL-SIS), the Latin American Interest Group, and the Latino Caucus.

The project aims to study every country in the region—from Belize to Argentina, from El Salvador to Barbados. (Review the project at bit.ly/SO20project.) Through COVID-19 reports, the librarians intend to provide a summary of the current situation in a cluster of countries and territories while paying special attention to the impacts on vulnerable and historically ostracized communities, such as the transgender community, refugees particularly from Venezuela and Haiti, indigenous people, migrants from rural areas, and disadvantaged socio-economic classes. The members of the project are also in the process of writing a few academic articles and presentations in various languages (Spanish, Portuguese, and French), with the help of local law and academic librarians. (View the reports at bit.ly/SO20COVIDreports.)

Besides the reports, the librarians also aim to give readers a list of sources, either on the entire region or on specific countries, with hopes that this information will empower them to follow local information closely. Evaluating sources of information and understanding the impact of how and what information gets disseminated is at the heart of the project. As law librarians, the project members are interested in both the changes in the legal and governmental responses to the pandemic as well as how those changes are communicated. At a time when civilians need it most, the overnight transformation of government information into a solely digital and virtual presence has created a plethora of content curation and accessibility issues—including contradictory, constantly changing, and at times erroneous messaging from governments and experts—that, ironically, are keeping critical information and insights from reaching the intended audience.

**The Law Library of Congress’s Response to COVID-19**

The Law Library of Congress, apart from housing the largest collection of legal literature in the world, also serves as the research arm for the United States Congress in foreign, comparative, and international law (FCIL). The Law Library’s Global Legal Research Directorate (GLRD) includes a team of multilingual foreign law specialists trained in the legal systems of foreign countries who are responsible for monitoring legal developments in the jurisdictions assigned to them. They conduct foreign law research for Congress as well as the judiciary and federal agencies, and also provide reference services on foreign law to public researchers.

While the Law Library has served as Congress’s FCIL research arm since the mid-twentieth century, COVID-19 provided a new and compelling reason to learn from other countries about public health policy and regulation.

One of the Law Library’s earliest projects during the pandemic was a comparative study of how national legislatures were conducting legislative activities when restrictions on traveling and in-person gathering was rendering normal legislative practices impossible. GLRD surveyed 36 jurisdictions throughout the world to learn about arrangements by national legislatures to continue their work, such as utilizing videoconferencing, special voting procedures to reduce necessary travel and attendance, and other measures. The report,
“Continuity of Legislative Activities during Emergency Situations,” is available among the Law Library’s online collection of reports. (View the report at bit.ly/S020Emergency and the entire collection at bit.ly/S020collection.)

A second multinational study relating to the pandemic focused on courts: GLRD surveyed 25 jurisdictions on whether measures had been adopted to facilitate the use of virtual technologies such as videoconferencing in civil hearings, mediations, and trials. (View the study at bit.ly/S020study.)

A third multinational report, “Regulating Electronic Means to Fight the Spread of COVID-19,” reviewed how 23 jurisdictions were using and regulating contact-tracing apps and similar apps used in combatting the virus, with a focus on the privacy and data protection implications of their use. (View the third report at bit.ly/S020report.)

GLRD also covered new developments relating to the pandemic in the Law Library’s legal news service, the Global Legal Monitor, and its blog, In Custodia Legis. Entries were compiled by the Law Library’s Public Services Division’s regularly updated Coronavirus Resource Guide, a portal to legislative and executive branch responses to the epidemic, which also included publicly available reports on domestic law by the Law Library’s sister agency, the Congressional Research Service. (View the resource guide at bit.ly/S020guide.)

The Law Library also featured, as part of its Legal Research Institute FCIL webinar series, programs related to the pandemic, covering topics such as “Between Cooperation and Conflict: Islamic Religious Authority and Governmental Responses to COVID-19 in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Pakistan”; and “Avoiding the New Wave: Response to the Pandemic in Japan and South Korea.”

AFRICA AND ASIA QUICK LINKS

Asian Legal Responses to COVID-19 is a monthly newsletter compiled by the Asian Law Interest Group of the FCIL-SIS. They strive to collect and track national level legislative, regulatory, and judicial responses from Asian jurisdictions to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Learn more at bit.ly/S020AsianLaw.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN QUICK LINKS
Relying on its impressive network of experts and journalists throughout the entire region, the Americas Society/Council of the Americas has been collecting pertinent legal and government information from different sources at bit.ly/S020coa.

THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC) includes its “COVID-19 observatory” with country-specific data on issues such as employment, social protection, and other pertinent categories at bit.ly/S020cepal.

CANADIAN QUICK LINKS
Legal researchers looking for information about Canadian COVID-19 emergency orders can see this compilation prepared by Canadian law professor Craig Forcese at bit.ly/S020intrepid.

For Quebec, the Barreau also tracked relevant COVID-19 documents at bit.ly/S020barreau.
A Crowdsourcing Experiment in Canada

A more experimental attempt at tracking COVID-19 resources took place in Canada. In hindsight, this attempt that can probably be seen as yet further confirmation of the inapplicability of a crowdsourced and decentralized approach to content creation in law.

To face the tsunami of COVID-19-related materials issued by Canadian legislatures, governments, and courts as the virus hit all spheres of legal activity, one of the article’s co-authors, Xavier Beauchamp-Tremblay, wondered on Twitter if a wiki wouldn’t be the best way to collect, organize, and eventually preserve that content.

A wiki-style site was set up and Xavier reached out to the Canadian Association of Law Libraries/ L’Association canadienne des bibliothèques de droit (CALL/ACBD) board to ask if they had an interest in contributing to the resource. (View the site at bit.ly/SO20wikisite.) The board was supportive of the idea and a message was sent to the CALL/ACBD membership. The main goal of the wiki was to serve as a one-stop shop for current information about the practice of law during the pandemic by tracking relevant documents, including practice notices, deadline suspension orders, virtual hearing instructions, government decrees, etc.

The reader can be forgiven for thinking that wikis and crowdsourcing are no longer buzzwords and that it’s a little bit passé to write about these things in 2020, when artificial intelligence continues to monopolize the attention of legal tech enthusiasts. Still, the author of these lines is adamant that, as Wired recently wrote, “Wikipedia is (one of) the last best place[s] on the internet.”

Given how frequently so-called intelligent speakers regurgitate content from Wikipedia, Silicon Valley seems to agree.

It’s been written before that only a few of the numerous attempts at crowdsourcing in law actually worked. CanLII is lucky to be able to say that it operates one of the few that did work. (Learn more about CanLII at bit.ly/SO20CanLIII.) The magic of Wikipedia just doesn’t seem to translate easily to building resources in law. There are successful projects in law that rely on a wiki-style technology, but they still rely on a “central leadership” that directs the effort as opposed to Wikipedia’s organic, decentralized process.

It’s not unreasonable to think that the main obstacle to replicating the success of Wikipedia in law is one of critical mass: Since the law is a national (and regional) topic, there are fewer people who can contribute to any given legal resource than can for a more universal topic. To refer to the title of what is perhaps the best-known book on the dynamics behind the success of Wikipedia, it seems like there’s just not enough “cognitive surplus” in law to make it work.

However, since the pandemic stopped many people’s professional activity dead in its tracks, one might easily have concluded that the pandemic meant that we could finally have the required cognitive surplus to make a decentralized crowdsourcing project happen in law, especially in reaction to a crisis of its magnitude.

That said, as we all quickly realized as the events of March 2020 unfolded, a lot of people whose “normal” professional lives were interrupted were not suddenly stagnant. They were likely hard at work setting up alternate ways to provide their services while reorganizing their life at home (e.g., staying with their children who were suddenly out of school or daycare).

In the end, a few enthusiastic volunteers responded to our call to participate in the wiki, but, sadly, not enough of them to tackle the monstrous task of taming the pandemic information tsunami, at least not in a decentralized way. The good news is that Gurvir Sangha, a particularly entrepreneurial law student who had just graduated from the University of Toronto Law School, volunteered to take on the task of creating the wiki at CanLII and turned it into a summer job with the CanLII team.

Moving Ahead: This Pandemic Knows No Borders

The efforts highlighted here aim to collect, analyze, and provide a wealth of information specific to the current pandemic affecting everyone in the world. This pandemic does not know of political borders. The more we understand and learn from each other, the more we can strive for a solution to the crisis for the benefit of everyone.
Emily R. Florio found herself on the path to law librarianship as many do, by accident. “My mom is a librarian, so I grew up familiar with public libraries and elementary school libraries,” notes Florio. “But when I was finishing library school, I was applying for a job—any, any, any job—and I ended up in a law firm and haven’t looked back.” She became a member of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) in January 2006 and has since been very active on committees, special interest sections, and within her local chapter. In her new role as president, she hopes to continue to move the legal information profession forward, to increase engagement with members, and to bring new librarians into the profession. She further plans to grow AALL’s eLearning platform, as well as to provide members with the right education and tools to become leaders within the profession.
In 2004, Florio received her BA in English from the University of Vermont before moving to Boston, Massachusetts, where she obtained her MLS degree from Simmons College. Her first official, though not professional, job was at a small law school in Boston doing interlibrary loan and document delivery, while she worked toward her degree.

She began her career in Boston at Fish & Richardson, where she held various positions, resulting in the manager of libraries and library information systems role. “It’s funny, I think probably a year and a half in I was looking for other work because I was bored,” said Florio. “But my boss at the time started giving me other opportunities that were far more interesting and allowed me to learn and continue on. And that led to my first promotion. After a while it was time to move on from that firm and that’s when I moved to DC.”

She then moved to Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner, LLP, an intellectual property firm, as the manager of library services, before expanding her role into directing all aspects of the research team, including budgeting, staffing, and training, along with leading the firm’s intranet redesign project. She then became director of library services/research and information services before moving to her latest role in July 2019.

Florio is currently senior research services manager at Hogan Lovells US LLP in Washington, DC, a global top 10 law firm, where she leads the implementation of the global Research Services strategy within the Americas. She has been a member of AALL for 14 years and has served on several committees, including chair of the Appointments Committee and Executive Board Strategic Directions Committee, and as a member of the Executive Board Finance & Budget Committee. In addition, Florio is a former president of the Law Librarians’ Society of Washington, DC (LLSDC), a member and former treasurer of the Private Law Librarians & Information Professionals Special Interest Section (PLLIP-SIS), and a member of the Professional Engagement, Growth & Advancement Special Interest Section (PEGA-SIS). In 2015, she received AALL’s Emerging Leader Award.

Here, Florio discusses her goals for the coming year, how COVID-19 has impacted her professionally, and how she stays engaged within the profession.

**Now that your term as president has officially begun, what is first on your agenda?**

A lot of special committees. We have at least three special committees that need to have their charges written, in some cases the members updated, and we are also looking ahead to the next year. There is the Law Librarianship as a Career Guidance Review Special Committee, which looks at bringing people into the profession. There will be a special committee for updating the *State of the Profession* report. The third committee doesn’t have a formal name yet, but it will look at racial diversity, inclusion, and equity within the entire profession, but primarily AALL. All of these committees are broadly focused on both the Association and the profession.

**What goals or initiatives has the AALL Executive Board set for the coming year? What will be their areas of focus?**

The Executive Board will task the various committees and juries to do a full review of their charges, policies, and procedures to ensure that they are both accurate and inclusive. Some of these things tend to get done and then not updated or looked at, so we need to make sure that we are doing this regularly.

We are also starting the second year of our Strategic Plan and we have a lot of different things going on. But particularly in this coming year, we’ll be focusing and looking at our first eLearning course centered on budgeting and then identifying other courses to develop or offer.

“Law librarians are well-informed, well-educated, and passionate about everything—especially law librarianship and social justice.”  
Emily R. Florio

***EMILY R. FLORIO***

* SENIOR RESEARCH SERVICES MANAGER
* HOGAN LOVELLS US LLP
* WASHINGTON, DC
We are also looking at a review of our membership survey and structure, particularly with the special committee I mentioned above, as well as a renewed commitment to identifying and developing our future leaders and continuing to bring folks into the profession.

As we continue to be physically apart, it’s important to stay connected to each other by identifying opportunities for collaboration amongst the associations or special interest sections, chapters and caucuses, and also related organizations. As this remains ongoing, we will be offering additional Coffee Chats and potentially looking at other digital avenues, whether it’s to share stories or request help, or just other ways that we can connect within the Association with one another as we remain apart.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, what new challenges are law libraries facing right now?
I think we’re going to see more staffing reductions and reduced budgets for resources—both database-specific and people-centered resources. We were hit pretty hard in 2008-2009 by the Great Recession and I’m hoping it won’t be as bad this go-around, but time will tell. I think another new challenge as we’re entering month five of being remote is continuing to find other avenues for outreach. My team went to practice group meetings and talked to people directly, and we had a research hub where people came up to the desk and asked questions. We don’t have that anymore and I don’t know when we will again. So, finding additional ways to interact with our peers, as a team, is crucial. But we also need to provide outreach to our lawyers that isn’t just “Oh, don’t forget I’m here to help.” We need to continue to be energetic about the work we do and provide the best level of service as we remain fully remote.

COVID-19 moved most organizations to a remote environment. What was the biggest challenge? The best perk?
My firm, for quite a while now, far before COVID-19, has a very liberal, agile working policy that allows everyone in the firm to work remotely a few days a week or on a schedule that fits their needs. So, I was used to people on my team being remote on any given day. And our team is also spread across the U.S.

But it was still a drastic change when suddenly we were all remote. We had no access to our print. We had an increased need for online sources, and things that had worked seamlessly in the office were suddenly not working. Folks truly needed alternative work schedules because they were suddenly schooling their kids at home.

Ultimately, I think we did an excellent job with how quickly we adjusted. I don’t think anybody could say there was a lapse in our service level, but I think the hardest thing was how quickly we had to do it and how many unknowns there were when we all went home that first time.

I really miss seeing my team in person, stopping by someone’s desk to chat about their weekend, or talking through a research request that came in. Ultimately, the hardest part is the unknown of when we’ll see each other or be together again as a team outside of the virtual space.

My best perk isn’t job-related necessarily, but I adopted a new cat and a dog early on in the pandemic, and they are keeping me happy and sane while I work remotely, and they bring me much joy. They also remind me to take breaks, sometimes by their laying across my keyboard or waiting patiently at the door.

With millennials joining baby boomers and Generation X in leadership roles and Generation Z now in law school and the workforce, what are your thoughts on making the most of this generational diversity?
I think we have a lot we can learn from each other. We’ve all been through different things...
in our lives. But at this point, everyone has probably dealt with some kind of adversity or worldwide issue. We can certainly build on our generational strengths and sort of help fill whatever gaps we might have. But I think having so many generations working together can be more positive than negative, for sure.

I have a couple folks that I hired that are definitely Generation Z. They’re 26 years old, but they are joiners, probably partially because I was their boss and made them so. But I think it takes change and adaptation from everyone to learn how to deal with all of the different generational differences.

**What role do you see for law librarians in the fight for social justice?**

Law librarians are well-informed, well-educated, and passionate about everything—especially law librarianship and social justice. I think we are in a time where social justice is seeping into everything that happens around us and impacts everyone, whether it’s on a personal basis or even in the news they read. It’s nationwide and it’s international.

We as law librarians and legal information professionals are well equipped with our knowledge, our experiences, and the resources we have at our fingertips to help in the fight for social justice, whether it is helping get out the vote or educating people on societal changes that need to be made. But I think we’ve at least seen within AALL over the last few months the passion that our members have, both for social justice at large as well as within the profession and the association. Our Government Relations Committee works hard to advocate for issues most important to our profession, such as access to justice, copyright, and privacy.

**How do you stay engaged and passionate about your work?**

It’s a fine balance. I find that I am working far more and longer hours than I would have with a commute. It used to be that I would walk to work, work my hours, log off, go to yoga, go home, and then if I needed to, log on again, so there was more of a break between work and home. Now, I just make the trek from my bedroom to my living room. I’ll admit I’m not always the best at taking a break. But I think that is because I’m so engaged and passionate about my work.

I draw a lot from connecting with my friends and peers. I’m someone who if I get in a pinch and want to know what other law firms are using for a certain tool, or if I need advice on how to deal with a personnel issue or something, goes to my friends first and foremost. Obviously, I can still do that with a phone, but I miss seeing people. That’s always one thing I love about the in-person AALL Annual Meeting, the people you may only get to see once a year.

So, I would say I remain engaged and passionate, because I know when to take a break (most of the time). But I also have so many colleagues who started as professional acquaintances who have now become friends. It’s easy to sort of be with people and talk about work but also not have my whole life revolve around work.

**What is one of the most valuable lessons you’ve learned in the professional leadership positions you’ve held?**

Don’t be afraid of or fear asking for help. I think sometimes it’s perceived that asking for help shows weakness. But I prefer to think of it as showing a willingness to learn and do what is best, since no one person has all the answers. The first 15 years of my career were in certain types of law firms. So, I knew law firms, but I didn’t know all of the broad subject areas that my current firm handles. I’m a good leader and I’m a good manager, but I had so much to learn on the research side, and that’s necessary to ask for help sometimes. I’m not always the best at this, but I’ve gotten better.

**What do you find most rewarding about your job?**

I still love the rush of connecting someone with the information that they need. We really are research experts. We keep so much in our brains and remember the nitty-gritty little things, and we’re able to tie everything together. I love that I can learn something new every day without even trying.
Question: What questions do you ask yourself when assessing the diversity and inclusion opportunities within your organization?

The first question I would ask myself about diversity and inclusion opportunities within my library is if we are in fact diverse and inclusive. More often than not, because the legal information profession is not particularly diverse, the answer is a resounding no. It is critical not to assume that everyone in the organization understands what it means to be diverse and inclusive, let alone how to foster such an environment. In many settings there is often a lack of awareness of the existing homogeneity and an entrenched complacency where the status quo typically prevails.

For example, I was once told very confidently by colleagues in an organization that we were diverse. This was because we had a few people of color who were in lower-ranked positions. Never mind that minority representation was almost non-existent in the professional ranks and at the decision-making table. So, it is always important to have shared understanding and goals from the outset. Quite often, hard historical institutional data proves
to be very revelatory. Most organizations have this information either in the human resources department or in a diversity and inclusion office.

The second question is if the organizational climate is welcoming and attractive to diverse candidates. As a person of color, it is almost guaranteed that when I am exploring opportunities in an organization, there are very few people, or sometimes none, who look like me. While this in itself is challenging, it is most often not the problem. What is often problematic is when it becomes quickly apparent that there is a level of discomfort with my presence, for a host of reasons, and an environment in which there is a palpable sense of non-inclusivity. This reinforces the importance of strategic and required diversity and equity training for staff at all levels.

The third question is if we are creatively developing opportunities for diverse candidates. This takes many shapes and forms, ranging from pipeline entry-level internships and fellowships that could morph into permanent opportunities within the organization or elsewhere. Or it could also be the targeted recruitment of experienced professionals. And by targeted, I mean identifying highly qualified candidates and aggressively pursuing them.

The final question I would ask is about retention and how to successfully motivate recruited employees to stay. It is one thing to attract diverse candidates, but this is totally useless if they walk away because of an unsupportive or, worse, hostile environment. Reasons for weaknesses in retention will need to be quickly addressed or progress will stall. An organization that wants to continue to succeed in creating genuine opportunities and attracting diverse talent must therefore develop and implement a cohesive diversity and inclusion organizational strategy, one that involves all levels of management and engages every employee. This strategy should include workforce planning, hiring, professional development, career management, leadership, and succession.

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Thoughtful and intentional examination of diversity and inclusion opportunities is not something an individual or an organization can simply decide to do on a single occasion or without forethought. Instead, it is a skill like any other, which requires commitment and continual effort to develop fully. It requires, more than anything else, a willingness to empathize with others who have had different life experiences, due to any number of factors that you may never have considered, especially if you yourself are privileged with respect to any particular factor.

If, for example, you are a straight, white, cisgender man, then you may not have intuitively recognized the role that heterosexism, racism, transphobia, or sexism plays in your organization, but that doesn’t mean those issues do not exist. These issues—and many others—without a doubt are present to varying degrees in every environment, and while the goal is eradication, that isn’t going to happen overnight. But attempting to put yourself in the position of someone of a different background is the minimum first step that can help every individual be more conscious of how their actions are perceived by, and impact, others. And, over time, we can collectively minimize the impact those issues have within our particular organizations.

So, the initial question that helps me begin to empathize and to meaningfully assess diversity and inclusion opportunities within my organization is this: How is the language chosen likely to be understood by people from different groups?

Initially, if you’ve never taken the time to intentionally consider this, it is fine for the short-term goal to be avoiding offensive language. That’s not to say only avoid language that you personally find offensive, but also language that others may find offensive. A considerable number of phrases and idioms in American English have racist, sexist, ableist, or other alienating origins, and taking a moment to consider the etymology of your word choices can help limit the unintentional exclusionary impact of your language.

Beyond that, however, you should choose language that does more than merely avoid offense; instead, you should work up to language that actively seeks to include people from diverse backgrounds. In a culture that often, at best, stops at that short-term goal, using more inclusive language can serve as a meaningful and profound welcoming signal to individuals who are part of minority groups. While there are many other questions, choosing language carefully can be an invaluable first step.
Examining key issues for students, faculty, and law librarians.

BY KAYLA REED & KAREN SHEPHARD

With students facing the challenges of high costs of higher education, open educational resources (OER) are being considered more and more across academia as a way to help reduce expenses and, hopefully, enable more students to attend college and graduate with less debt. A September 2019 news release from Rice University reported that “more than half of all colleges and 2.94 million students are using free OpenStax textbooks this year.” The OpenStax publisher, based at Rice University, is just one of the OER platforms available, although a very large one. Rice estimates the savings to students in 2019 at $233 million.

What Are OER?

So, what are “open educational resources”? The Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) LibGuide defers to Larry Kramer, president of the Hewlett Foundation, for its definition: “OER Defined: Open Educational Resources are teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and
repurposing by others. OER include full courses, course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, tests … used to support access to knowledge.” (Learn more about ACRL’s LibGuide at bit.ly/SO20Lib.)

To gain a basic understanding of the OER landscape in law schools and among law faculty, this article’s authors conducted a brief survey to determine if law librarians have been tasked with assisting faculty in open textbook endeavors. (View the survey and responses at bit.ly/SO20survey.) While OERs encompass many formats, this survey looks specifically at open casebooks and textbooks.

**OER Initiatives and Platforms**

In his 2013 article “Library Service for the Self-Interested Law School: Enhancing the Visibility of Faculty Scholarship,” Simon Canick recognized the potential savings for law students, stating that “law schools could save students $1,000 per year by using open access casebooks.” Since 2010, The Center for Computer-Assisted Learning Instruction (CALI) has led the way in this initiative, kicking off its eLangdell platform, encouraging law professors to post their own textbooks with a creative commons license. While renowned for its 1,000+ CALI Lessons (interactive tutorials on substantive topics), over 60 casebooks and textbooks are hosted on its eLangdell platform today. (View the platform at bit.ly/SO20elangdell.) Here, you can also find CALI Executive Director John Mayer’s Association of American Law Schools tech section webinar “How Law Schools Can Save Law Students $150 Million Using Open Casebooks,” from July 2019.

The platform also provides opportunities for law librarians to assist faculty with the creation, posting, and use of OERs on an array of platforms available today. (See sidebar on page 32.)

**Looking at the Numbers**

Helping law students reduce their academic expenses is important not only to individual students, but to the schools that strive to recruit them. Still, only just over 50 percent of our survey respondents (53.6%) reported seeking alternatives to the costly course books. Others (46.4%) have not yet addressed this issue.

Nearly 60 percent of responding librarians (57.1%) reported that their faculty members are creating or using open educational casebooks or textbooks. While most of those reported faculty incorporate OERs into some of their courses or as supplemental materials for some clinics, one school’s faculty member has organized his four courses “exclusively around OER assignments and assessments.” He self-identified as “something of an OER proselytizer.” Others reported faculty have shown interest in using OER resources in the near future, while some newer faculty are relying upon traditional course books with plans to consider OERs once they have more experience teaching.

The CALI eLangdell platform reportedly was most utilized for hosting faculty books, at least two law schools had used the H2O platform, and a few reported faculty using Westlaw (with TWEN or Blackboard) as OER platforms for their created casebooks. Another survey respondent mentioned a faculty casebook posted on LawCarta in 2019.

Most of the reporting libraries haven’t received questions or comments from students about open educational resources, although they certainly appreciate lower costs for textbooks.

**The Librarians Role**

Considering what role librarians are playing where OERs are concerned, only 21 percent of respondents said they assisted faculty in creating, posting, or otherwise helping with OER casebooks. Most librarians reported helping faculty upload their works into open access institutional repositories or one of the previously mentioned OER platforms. Identifying where faculty can post their open access casebooks or other resources was also reported.

Librarians have fielded more questions about OERs from faculty than from students, yet still not a lot. Perhaps this is because faculty are aware of the various platforms, such as eLangdell and H2O, or the librarians’ guides and notifications via email, etc., have provided the information they need or desire at this time. One librarian reported that, while they’ve assisted faculty with OERs on a very small scale, it is a campus initiative. Questions about OERs from faculty centered around how time-consuming it may be to create them, as well as where they could be located.

Just over one half of responding libraries reported that they are promoting use of OER casebooks and law textbooks to their faculty, most often through online guides, email communications, or direct communication as opportunities are available. Several expect this to be an increasing initiative at their institutions.

**The Value of OER**

How do faculty and students feel about open educational resources? While a majority of responding librarians said they haven’t received comments about them, those who had reported favorable views, noting, among other things, that students do prefer not having to

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**OER Defined:** Open Educational Resources are teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and repurposing by others.
You can also search more generally by searching for “Law” titles in the broader, interdisciplinary platforms:

- OER Commons
  bit.ly/SO20Commons
- MERLOT
  bit.ly/SO20MERLOT
- Open Textbook Library [OTL]
  bit.ly/SO20OTL
- The Mason OER Metafinder [MOM]
  bit.ly/SO20MOM

From George Mason University, MOM can help you find even more OERs by generating a search across more than 20 sources, including some of the previously mentioned resources, as well as the following:

- American Memory Project
  bit.ly/SO20AMP

Few concerns about OERs were expressed by faculty, students, or librarians, according to the survey results. The potential lack of incentives related to the loss of royalties was mentioned by a couple respondents, as was the quality of works created. Does saving students money provide enough incentive for faculty to create or adopt OER casebooks and textbooks? If other schools are doing it, it just might. As for book quality, faculty can review and choose, or simply not choose to use the available OERs created by themselves and their colleagues, or they may have rights to adapt them. As more professors incorporate OERs into their courses, how will faculty justify not using them? The use of OERs in law schools is growing; it will certainly be worth revisiting down the road to see what the future brings as more law professors create, adopt, and adapt OER casebooks and textbooks and share their stories. To what extent will your law school and law library be supporting this initiative?

If your law school has a guide you would like to share, please email the link(s) to the authors. A compiled list will be hosted on the AALL Law Repositories Caucus community at bit.ly/AALLLRcaucus.

**EXTRA**

For an example of how one professor has organized his courses around open education assignments and assessment, visit Michael J. Madison’s blog, the Madisonian.net at bit.ly/SO20Madisonian.
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How Suffolk University Law School librarians revamped their First-Year Summer Internship Program and designed a survey to further improve it.

BY ANA DELGADO, GREG EWING & LIZA ROSENOF

Redesigning an existing library research training program can be intimidating, but with the right tools, it is achievable. Suffolk University Law School’s Moakley Law Library provides mandatory research trainings for law students who choose to participate in the First-Year Summer Internship Program (FYSIP). The library has been coordinating with our school’s career services department for the last six years to support this program. The exercises for the trainings were inherited; the program itself predates the authors of this article. After several years of using these exercises with only minimal modification, we decided that...
Training Students for Summer Internships

Early in the spring semester, first-year law students can apply for the opportunity to work in a placement for the summer. Suffolk University Law School’s Office of Professional & Career Development (PCD) administers this program. PCD works with government offices to set up internship opportunities. Most FYSIP students work in the judiciary, including positions in juvenile, trial, state appellate, and federal courts. Some students in an Accelerator-to-Practice program work with small firms. The chart on page 37 shows the distribution of students within different placements.

The purpose of the library training is to familiarize students with resources they will use during their summer placements. Class sizes are limited to 20 students and are led by two librarians; this allows for close interactions between librarians and students. Three years ago, the exercises covered West’s print digests, print cases, and print statutes, as well as legal research using Westlaw and Lexis. The print exercises were completed by all of the students in groups, while students who would be working in federal courts worked on a federal law problem using Westlaw and Lexis, and students who would be working in state courts worked on a state law problem.

Our significant revamp began with shortening the sessions from 90 to 60 minutes, thus lopping off unnecessary class time and making scheduling easier. We were able to accomplish this without sacrificing our teaching goals by removing a duplicative print exercise, and by cutting down on the number of print resources covered—West’s digests and cases in print were taken out after some discussion. No longer covering a problem in print also solved one substantial practical problem: we had only two copies of the current state statutory set, and students had to work on separate problems and then switch. This always became complicated because one problem had involved the use of digests while the other did not, so students from the digest group always needed more time.

Many students work in courtrooms with limited internet access, so we kept two problems that use annotated statutes. We further reasoned that using statutes in print would reinforce their understanding of how statutes were organized in a way that using them electronically could not. The print exercises focused on making sure that students understood how to use the index, how to look up a statute in the appropriate volume, and how to find relevant Notes of Decisions.

After the print exercises, students worked on a problem using Westlaw or Lexis. The fact pattern followed a similar model to the printed statutes exercise, with the focus being on finding a statute and then locating relevant cases. In the past, we had students working in federal courts use a federal law fact pattern while students in state courts used a state law problem. Last year, we decided that this divide was unnecessary, as both problems required the same skill set; as a result, we had all students work on a federal problem. This streamlined the review process and did not force students to sit through an explanation of a problem that they did not work on.

For the final exercise, we introduced something new: we divided the students by placement. Librarians categorized the placements by type and determined that there were nine categories of placements, as seen in the chart on page 37. Librarians selected print and online resources for each of the placements. For example, we compiled primary and secondary source materials regarding Massachusetts Juvenile proceedings specifically for those students working as interns in juvenile courts. Exercises were designed to introduce students to the...
Acquiring student feedback and conducting a timely training debriefing is vital for identifying areas of improvement. For example, many of our students were placed at the trial court level, either federal or state, where they had to research evidence issues, a topic not covered in their first-year curriculum. They rightfully expressed an interest in learning about evidentiary resources, which we will types of specialized research sources unique to their placements.

Surveying Law Students Post-Training

When we first decided to write about our newly redesigned FYSIP research training, we were excited to share what we had learned throughout the process. Our first encounter with the university’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) happened after we concluded that the most effective way to include the student’s feedback would be through a survey. An IRB's main goal is to ensure the safe and ethical treatment of human subjects (research participants) through the review, approval, modification, or disapproval of research applications submitted by faculty, staff, or students.

The IRB submission and approval process includes multiple steps. As we soon learned, students filling out the survey for purposes of this research were considered human subjects. All of the librarians, therefore, were required to receive a training certification for “Human Subjects Research in Social/Behavioral Research,” an online course that took several hours to complete. When submitting an IRB application for the first time, a completed Human Subjects Research Application (HSRA), all recruitment materials, all consent forms, and all research instruments (the survey) should be included. At the end of the process, our research activity was declared exempt, meaning that one IRB member reviewed it, and no further steps were required. We had the green light to administer our survey.

The survey was a valuable tool to assess how the changes in the design and instruction of the research workshop impacted students’ research experiences during placement. Ultimately, we wanted to know if the training was helpful to the students participating in the first-year summer internship program and how we could further improve our training. The survey, which was designed using Qualtrics, contained a mix of radio button questions and short answers to elicit as much detail as possible. It consisted of a consent to participate in the research and 10 curated questions. All submissions were anonymous. As an incentive for students to participate in the survey, we included the option of voluntarily submitting their names and contact information in a separate form to participate in a raffle. The prize was a $25 gift card, and the winner was randomly chosen from those who volunteered their contact information after completing the survey.

Below are student responses from two open-ended questions that provided especially helpful feedback. When students were asked to share what kinds of research assignments they worked on during the summer after their training, they responded:

- “Researching statutes”
- “Researching cases”
- “Writing and drafting judgments”
- “Using citators – Sheparding”
- “Researching cases cited in memos/ briefs”
- “Writing research memos”

And when they were asked for suggestions to improve the training, we were happy to see that students did not shy away from expressing their ideas:

- “Print research”
- “More hands-on training”
- “State-specific resources”
- “Sample assignments”
- “Fewer program trainings, combined law library workshops with other FYSIP training”
work to include next year. Providing short trainings on general research tips could also be helpful because training fatigue is a real problem. Another idea we tossed around was modeling future FYSIP research problems from real-life questions students encountered in earlier internships.

Prospectively, as the FYSIP library training grows, we plan to further develop the instructional programming by reaching out to local law firm librarians for input on the challenges of associate and intern training. We will incorporate those pain points to better bridge the gap between legal research training and real-world practice.

Using Feedback to Our Advantage
Formative feedback should not only be valued for its ability to assess students’ understanding of a skill or subject. It is also a tool available to us as instructional librarians. Tools such as surveys with open-ended questions provide opportune information about classes, programming, and workshops that help modify or adjust how and what we are teaching. Some of the suggestions students provided regarding future training that they would be interested in attending included:

- “How to best start researching—strategies”
- “Research workshops geared toward small to medium-sized firm work”
- “More Bluebook training”
- “When to stop researching”

Final Thoughts
Teaching and designing innovative legal research is challenging at any level. As a team, we were grateful to have a starting point when we inherited the FYSIP library training. That initial experience gave us the forum to identify the current legal research needs of our students and how we could address those needs. We hope that sharing our experience revamping an existing library training program and outlining initial steps will allow others to create a similar program in their own library.

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2019 SUFFOLK LAW FYSIP PLACEMENTS

- 30% Mass. District Courts
- 16% Accelerator to Practice (Small Firm)
- 13% Boston Municipal Court
- 10% Juvenile Courts
- 10% Superior Court
- 9% Probate and Family Court
- 8% U.S. District Courts
- 2% Mass. Appeals Court
- 2% Supreme Judicial Court
Your Blueprint for Success

The AALL Body of Knowledge (BoK)—designed to serve as a blueprint for career development—defines the domains, competencies, and skills today’s legal information professionals need for success.

Visit www.aallnet.org/bok.

LEARN MORE
When the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to work remotely, law librarians and legal information professionals scrambled to respond. We packed up everything needed to work and teach online, and we closed our libraries. We were not alone in doing so; almost everyone in the legal industry shared the experience of working remotely. Forced seclusion upended our lives and our assumptions about normal work operations. For the first time, many law libraries relied fully on their digital collections, and service and teaching was offered exclusively online.

Working During Quarantine

As quarantine began, it seemed to me that the experience could have a lasting impact on law libraries. After 100-plus days in quarantine, this impression has been confirmed. By showing us how much we can provide virtually and how we can work effectively online, the unwelcome quarantine experience has demonstrated its power to challenge every underlying assumption in our decision-making about our collections, physical spaces, services, staffing, and teaching. We now know that we can rely on digital collections, provide reference and research support virtually, and successfully teach online.

Although some materials, such as print-only monographs, legislative history materials, and micrographics were unavailable during the quarantine, law librarians are seeking solutions to such limitations by encouraging publishers to offer more e-books, participating in Controlled Digital Lending, and rethinking how our libraries can accomplish their missions. The efforts now underway have the potential to expand our access to even greater digital resources and to change all of our daily operations.

Although reassured by what we have accomplished so far, it is natural to feel a sense of loss and to long for a return to
the pre-pandemic, normal face-to-face library. Unfortunately, the challenges continue. As of yet, no COVID-19 vaccine exists, and with flu season upon us, we may once again be asked to work from home. Beforehand, we must address a difficult but intriguing question: What should we do right now to prepare for a return to virtual work?

1. Collections: Go Back to the Future
In the opening essay in *Law Library Collection Development in the Digital Age*, published in 2002, Mike Chiorazzi demonstrated that most legal research could be done online, and he argued that “over 80% of the use of all legal materials is accounted for by the 20% of all legal materials that are available online.” Since 2002, the availability of online sources has grown. Many more materials are online, including secondary sources, court dockets, casebooks, and study aids. As budgets tighten, materials that may have once been considered sacred cows are being eliminated, and law libraries are increasingly relying on online materials. Today, collection choices should be “as nearly digital as possible.”

2. Physical Spaces: Think Radical Thoughts
What if your reading room or main workspace was needed during an emergency by your law school, court, or law firm? For example, your law school wants to offer 1L classes face-to-face but cannot find enough classrooms large enough to accommodate social distancing. The law school wants to use the library reading room as a classroom because it is the only space in the building that fills the bill. Depending on the circumstances of your law school, hosting classes in the library during an emergency offers an opportunity to show teamwork and commitment to the law school’s mission. Even if you do not face such a choice, it is worth considering how you would respond. What assumptions about law library spaces might we challenge through current and ongoing thought experiments? We should reexamine how much physical space is needed for people, operations, and legacy collections in a law library with a primarily virtual collection. Who will use the physical space and for what purposes? Which services are best offered face-to-face and which online? Will the library provide collaborative space and quiet space for its users despite having a largely digital collection? What should we do with legacy print and micrographic collections? The answers to these questions must be determined locally, but ideas from others can inform us. Let’s use the creativity and collegiality of our colleagues. It’s time to schedule a conference on Bricks and Bytes for the Virtual Law Library.

3. Services: Strengthen Decision-Making
Before COVID-19, threat response was not new to law libraries. Disaster plans prepared us to deal with threats such as water damage, fires, earthquakes, and hacks into library systems. But many, perhaps most, law libraries did not anticipate what dealing with a pandemic would require, how quickly we would need to respond, and what services we could continue to offer. Nevertheless, librarians did what librarians do best: we created research guides about the pandemic and tracked in real time the decisions we were making to allow us to continue library services online. We must build on these efforts by keeping the guides current and repurposing them into practical guides for decision-making, and training all library staff members in disaster response plans. To prevent confusion and stress in future emergencies, we must share these plans with patrons, administrations, collaborators, and vendors. Preparation to return to teaching online should also be included in our planning.

4. Staffing: Reduce Face-to-Face Transactions at All Service Points
Reducing or controlling personal interactions at circulation, reserves, and reference can minimize the potential for transmission of illness and allow us to streamline manual processes. Start by instituting a self-checkout system (such as Bintec’s meeScan app, or Bibliotheca’s selfCheck 1000D), or join the self-checkout system used by your parent institution. Implement contactless book delivery via smart lockers. If feasible, choose lockers that serve the dual purposes of delivering and receiving print materials and recharging phones and laptops. If technology is too expensive, use a dedicated return shelf. Reducing face-to-face transactions at circulation can also minimize the need for part-time staffing. Doing so may allow funds to be shifted from staffing to acquiring the needed technology. Use chatbots, video meetings, live chat, email, Slack, and phone calls for reference. Chatbot use is predicted to accelerate as a result of the pandemic. Already in widespread use in law firms, chatbots can answer repeatedly asked questions in all types of law libraries. Live chat, email, Slack, and phone reference may be most effective in serving smaller patron populations.

Embracing the Opportunity
Finally, we must accept and embrace the new normal: The Virtual Law Library. We must consider the future impact of the unanticipated experiment that the COVID-19 pandemic has thrust upon us. This crisis represents a unique opportunity for law libraries to imagine a different future and rethink our collections, physical spaces, services, staffing, and teaching.

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Welcome to our new column, where we will explore issues, perspectives, and resources that focus on promoting diversity and inclusion.

In Voices Across the Spectrum, our goal is to explore issues, perspectives, and resources that focus on promoting diversity, equality, anti-racism, LGBTQ rights, multicultural outreach and recruitment into the profession, inclusive workplaces, and more. While the first installments of this new column will focus on systemic racism issues, each column will examine different diversity and inclusion issues to help prompt conversations and break down silos within the profession.

Racial injustice is not a new concept or a new occurrence and, unfortunately, it is commonplace in America. Many people of color, especially African Americans, have dealt with so many inequities for so many years that they question whether their lives matter and if their voices are even heard. For instance, a routine police traffic stop is not the same experience for a black man as it is for a white man. It can much more easily go wrong, as seen in countless cases, including that of Philando Castile in Minnesota. And a walk to a local convenience store might end in death, as seen with Trayvon Martin in Florida. The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement addresses these types of injustices (learn more at bit.ly/SO20BLM).

Law libraries can help tell the story of the BLM movement and the ongoing struggle for diversity and inclusion in America. As Stacey Abrams stated in an interview by American Library Association Executive Director Tracie Hall, “We need libraries to help tell the truth about who we are.”

America’s Truth and the BLM Movement
America has a legacy of racial inequities that have been deeply harmful to people of color, as mentioned previously. In the past, African Americans were denied
access to education, denied the right to vote, and subjected to Jim Crow laws. Today, African Americans are three times more likely to be killed by police (learn more at bit.ly/SO20violence) than white people. Further, there is a disparity in the sentencing of African Americans compared to whites (bit.ly/SO20sentencing). The BLM movement seeks to remedy these issues and many others through advocacy.

The BLM movement has gained momentum recently due to the tragic deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd. Unfortunately, their deaths add to a growing list of African Americans and other people of color who have died wrongful deaths at the hands of police or other individuals who are, in most cases, white. Although the circumstances surrounding their deaths have been highly publicized, their killers remain overwhelmingly unprosecuted or unpunished. Thus, these three recent cases merit review to understand the reasoning behind the movement.

On February 23, 2020, 25-year-old Ahmaud Arbery was killed while jogging in Brunswick in Glynn County, Georgia. During his jog, he was followed by Gregory McMichael, 64, and his son, Travis McMichael, 34, in their pickup truck. The McMichaels are white. A third man, William Bryan, also white, tried to block Arbery during the pursuit. He also videoed the confrontation. Video of the encounter shows a different story from the McMichaels’ allegations of self-defense. The original prosecutor failed to file charges. Requests were made for the case to be handed over to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI). Eventually, GBI filed charges against the men involved, but it took a public outcry for it to happen.

On March 13, 2020, in Louisville, Breonna Taylor, a 28-year-old African American woman, was killed due to police executing a “no-knock warrant” just after midnight on March 13. Taylor and her partner Kenneth Walker were asleep. Upon the police entering the apartment, a gunfight ensued. Walker thought it was a home invasion and reached for this registered gun and began shooting to protect Taylor and himself. The officers exchanged fire with Walker as he called 911 for what he thought was a burglary. During the exchange, an officer was wounded, and Taylor, an emergency medical technician, was shot eight times. She died on her hallway floor. After the gunfight, Walker surrendered and was arrested on charges of attempted murder of a police officer. After a public outcry, he was released from police custody.

On May 25, 2020, in Minneapolis, George Floyd, a 46-year-old African American man, died while in police custody. The next day, a video of his death went viral. In the video, Floyd is shown being pinned down by four officers. Derek Chauvin, a white police officer, is shown prominently with his knee on Floyd’s neck, cutting off his air supply while Floyd is heard repeatedly saying, “I can’t breathe.” Despite the cries of onlookers to this point, the officer in question maintained his knee on Floyd’s neck for eight minutes and 46 seconds. Floyd subsequently died. The death of George Floyd was witnessed not only by America but the entire world. After seeing the video, protests erupted globally, calling for an end to police brutality and for a worldwide consensus that black lives matter.

What Can Libraries Do?

Law libraries already have a vested interest in presenting legal history. Many law libraries have painstakingly maintained collections that represent the Civil Rights movement. The BLM movement is an extension of the Civil Rights movement. Thus, we can continue to tell the story of Civil Rights via the BLM movement. Because of the impact of BLM, there will be many researchers, scholars, faculty, and students who would like to learn more. The following are some suggestions on how to help:

1. Understand the BLM movement is about advocating for racial justice and equality to African Americans. It does not promote the taking of rights from any other race or say their lives don’t matter as well.

2. Understand the importance of a diverse viewpoint when building a BLM collection or recommending resources. Patrons seek help in researching this movement and will need resources that help them understand the cause.

3. Understand that “race affects our day-to-day work as law librarians … [and] … this includes those of us who are white.” (Mary Whisner's Law Library Journal article, “Race and the Reference Librarian.” Learn more at bit.ly/LJ14 Race.)

4. Understand our own biases because we all have preconceived notions. We must maintain objectivity when patrons seek assistance.

5. Understand the importance of having a diverse staff. A diverse team can bring other points of view and a welcoming face for a BLM researcher.

A Law Librarian on Spring Break

For a personal perspective of these issues from one of this column’s authors, Ron Wheeler shares the following about his recent vacation, self-quarantining, and previous efforts to inform others about diversity- and inclusion-related experiences.

Flashing back to the first week of March 2020, although news of the Coronavirus pandemic are prominent in the media, the impact seems a lifetime away from my life in Boston. The March 8, 2020, New York Times headline about Italy locking down its northern region due to the Coronavirus seems so remote that it lacks relevance. The article describing the debate raging inside the Trump administration over what to tell the public about COVID-19 strikes me as just another politically motivated media dust up. The day before, I had embarked on a Spring Break trip to Phoenix, and vacationing had commandeered my entire consciousness. However, my focus was soon averted to matters both unexpected and troubling.

That same week, the week of March 9-13, 2020, was the week that my employer, Boston University (BU), announced it would begin holding all
classes remotely for the remainder of the semester. Additionally, University President Robert Brown issued a statement asking students who had traveled to their homes for the break not to return to campus. He asked those who had traveled to various other vacation destinations to return to their homes rather than to their dorms, apartments, or other residences in Boston. After consulting with local public safety experts, President Brown made the unprecedented decision to keep as many people as possible off the BU campus.

As I struggled to process president Brown’s uncommon and, for me, incomprehensible actions, equally troubling news of a different sort was making its way to Arizona. It was March 14, 2020, when I was listening to a local Maricopa County news broadcast that told of the killing of Breonna Taylor. The story was so bizarre and unthinkable that it almost seemed ludicrous. Yet the news was real, the broadcast not satire, and her death was indeed irreversible. The police mistakenly entered her apartment with a warrant for someone else. How could that be? The police fired shots, and eight mistaken bullets, bullets intended for someone else—someone who lived somewhere else—mistakenly found their way from trained police officers’ guns into this innocent black woman. I heard the words “Good God” before I realized they had come from my own mouth. I saw a tear land on my arm before I realized it was mine.

It was then that my elderly father called from Ann Arbor, Michigan. He was bedridden and confined to a nursing home there where he had been for over a year. His confinement there, so far away from me, had been a source of pain, guilt, and regret. It had become my mission—one that was proving time and time again to be almost impossible—to bring my father to Boston where we could visit in person more and time again to be almost impossible—to bring my father to Boston. After consulting with local public safety experts, President Brown made the unprecedented decision to keep as many people as possible off the BU campus.

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Had We Learned Nothing in Five Years?

Home from my Phoenix vacation, I found myself alone, around the clock. I was working from home indefinitely due to COVID-19 and the public health guidelines issued by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts aimed at stopping the virus from spreading. BU also issued guidelines for employees returning to Boston via airplane that required me to self-quarantine for 14 days. Thus, I had a lot of time to think about my social reality.

Five years previously, in 2015, I had penned an essay titled “Michael Brown, Eric Garner, and Law Librarianship” that appeared in Law Library Journal. In it, I described the constant fear I felt about my then 10-year-old, multiracial, and unusually tall godson, with his friendships taking him farther and farther from home for playdates and social events, and the likelihood that he might be mistaken for an adult by police. Now, five years later, that same godson is 15 and only an inch shy of six feet tall. His voice is deeper than mine, and if ever stopped by the police, there is no doubt that he would be mistaken for a much older young man.

Today’s reality gave me even more to fear than in 2015. The circumstances surrounding the 2014 murder of Eric Garner were eerily similar to those of George Floyd’s killing this year. Garner’s murder was also captured on videotape, and he could also be heard saying “I can’t breathe” over and over again as he lost consciousness and eventually died. I ask myself, “Have we really learned nothing?” I sit pondering that question for longer periods of time each day, and I am eventually engulfed by the dark clouds of grief and depression.

I relay these details from my personal life as a reminder to all of us. These are the events, the everyday life goings-on, the realities, emotions, and family difficulties that I was dealing with when the BLM movement and the murders that drew attention to it became front-and-center news in 2020. Thus, it is safe to assume that many of you reading this column, and many of the students who you serve, were also dealing with difficult family matters, COVID-19 fallout, isolation, anger, grief, and even depression. I find that students are, indeed, starved for an outlet, for a place or a person to whom they can vent, with whom they can discuss, and from whom they can receive understanding, empathy, support, and even research guidance.

In conclusion, the BLM movement has undoubtedly impacted our country, our students, our families, and the world. Law libraries can help tell that story and also the stories of how law has worked in these troubling times. Most importantly, law libraries can help our students, our faculty colleagues, and others tell their stories both verbally and through traditional and unconventional legal narratives.
George Floyd’s recent murder on May 25, 2020, initiated ongoing related Black Lives Matter protests and rallies. His murder, and prior similar incidents, are further proof to me of the systemic racism that continues to plague the Black community. I am an immigrant from Guyana, and my personal experiences thus far living in the United States prove that I am more of a Black American than DNA testing confirm. Detailed herein are some of my personal experiences as a Black American in law librarianship.

Back to My Roots
While in law school, I recall hearing white law students talk about how they received guidance and help with their legal studies from their respective fathers, uncles, aunts, or other relatives who were lawyers. Unfortunately, I had no relatives to give me any guidance or help with my legal studies. As a Black student, this was a disadvantage in multiple ways. For example, in certain first-year classes that were difficult, such as contracts, I had a hard time grappling with the meaning of certain terms and concepts, and I did not have family to further clarify these terms for me. But this did not stop me from persevering in becoming a lawyer.

I attended Touro Law School on a partial scholarship, which was necessary as I otherwise could not have afforded to attend. I was one of two Black male law students in my section of about 45 students in total. This affected me mentally, as I felt lonely and isolated at times. These feelings were somewhat alleviated after I joined the law school’s Black Law Student Association (BLSA). BLSA’s second- and third-year students provided me with the words of encouragement I needed to not feel so alone.
**Traumatic Events**

One afternoon, while taking my first-year constitutional law exam, two detectives from a nearby precinct walked into the classroom and asked me to step outside. In the hallway outside the classroom, the detectives proceeded to read me my rights and tell me I was under arrest. I was in such shock that I did not even ask what I was being arrested for. I went willingly to the precinct where I was booked and held overnight. I called my parents and they hired a lawyer. As I waited for the lawyer to arrive, I was taunted by the detectives to sign a confession statement, even though I did not know why I was under arrest. The following morning when I appeared before a judge, I finally learned my alleged crime was stealing and using a white female classmate’s credit card.

When I returned to school, I was told by friends that she had reported her card as lost while she was in the law library. During their investigation, the detectives discovered the card was used by a man fitting my description. They had an image of the back of a bald man of color from a pizzeria security camera where the card was used to purchase pizza for $11.43. I do not know the chain of events, but my recollection is that the detectives showed my female classmate the pizzeria image and the connection was made that I fit the description. I was never asked where I was at the time the card may have been stolen. Therefore, how could they determine that I “fit the description” based solely on the image of the back of the head of a bald man of color? As I was the only black male with a bald head at the law school, it could only make sense to them that I was the one who committed the crime.

**The Aftermath**

The trauma from this event reverberates to this day. I still respond and react in spaces based on this one experience, and it is one of many in my life. It was humiliating and embarrassing to be asked to leave the exam in front of all my classmates, especially as the only Black person in the room. Couldn’t they choose a better time and place? Between the financial difficulties, the trauma from the ordeal, and my disbelieving parents, I never sought legal action for being wrongfully accused. I still wonder if I had not been in law school where I would be now?

The case was ultimately dismissed, and I had the records sealed for fear they would hurt me professionally. Although it should not be an issue, I was not taking any chances. The trauma was so extreme that I had to take a year off from law school, which led to further alienation amongst my classmates as I was commencing my second academic year with a different class. But I did not drop out, even though the thought crossed my mind.

Most of my classmates in library school were white. I was, yet again, one of six males in my class. I was also the only black male with a JD who had prior law library experience.

**Working as a Law Librarian**

In the profession thus far, I wonder why organizations such as the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) cannot come up with a feasible methodology to conduct a meaningful salary survey that includes race. I have heard similar comments from other librarians of color that there is a significant inequity in salaries relative to white law librarians versus black law librarians. I have not considered the role of gender in this statement. However, for this to persist as long as it has, there is no other conclusion to make than that systemic racism is very prevalent in the law library profession. It is my hope that AALL’s new committee, per my recently approved resolution on diversity and inclusion, will determine an appropriate methodology to conduct such a salary survey.

In my first year as an academic reference librarian, while sitting at the reference desk with my name displayed as the reference librarian on duty, students regularly commenced their inquires with “I am not sure if you can help me…” In other instances, they bypassed me altogether and asked the white collection services staff their reference question, only to be referred to me.

Even today, I experience instances of disregard, such as when I see students’ quizzical facial expressions as I walk in the room the first day of their legal research course, seemingly indicating to me they do not believe I am a law librarian, with a JD, and qualified to teach them legal research. How would this make you feel?

In terms of networking events for my local chapter, the attendees are predominantly white. From speaking with other Black librarians, they choose not to attend these “networking” events because they don’t feel welcome in these predominantly white spaces.

I have been engaged in a variety of activities throughout my professional life that helped play a role in potentially reshaping and changing some of what was systemic. I was president of my law school’s Black Law Students Association. I presented on various related topics at AALL conferences, such as intersectionality and cultural competence. I am the current chair of BCAALL (Black Law Librarians Special Interest Section), and I was instrumental in submitting its first successful petition in over 10 years to become a special interest section. About three years ago, I initiated and developed the first Diversity & Inclusion Committee for the Law Library Association of Greater New York, where I still chair. This is who I am as a Black law librarian, someone who not only has a JD and an MLS with many years of experience in librarianship, but who is still also only a Black man. I know I am only one of many law librarians with similar stories, and I hope this series brings about a greater understanding of what it means or how it feels to be Black in law librarianship.
Staying Connected While Working Remotely

BY MARIBEL NASH & SCOTT VANDERLIN

Q I miss interacting in person with my co-workers. Do you have any tips or tricks for remaining actively engaged with your team while working remotely?

Scott: I think that many of us are in the same position you are in, and it’s uncharted territory. In the past few months, I have also been forced to realize how much “work” is actually done during chance meetings in hallways, quick trips over to a co-worker’s desk, or remembering something you’ve been meaning to ask a colleague when you see them at the proverbial water cooler.

If there is any positive to what we have experienced so far in 2020, it’s that we were supremely prepared technologically for an instant pivot to remote operations. Applications that many had never heard of a few months ago, such as Zoom, Teams, and Slack, have quickly become vital tools of our trade. Four months ago, I would have bet money that my father did not know how to use a webcam. He now not only participates in but organizes and sends out links for weekly family Zoom “meetings.” We have never been better equipped as a society or a workforce.
for communicating with each other remotely. Yet, seeing a green dot next to someone’s name on Slack is not the same as making eye contact and saying “hi” when you pass a co-worker in the hallway.

So, if we have the ability to communicate easily with our co-workers, why is it that it feels so hard to stay connected? I will leave the psychology discussion about introverts and extroverts and the value of face-to-face communication to … well, the hundreds of articles on that topic that we have all read in the past few months, and simply say that for work purposes, the key element to ensuring regular and active communication with your co-workers is structure. Now more than ever, we have to have a reason to engage with one another. We can’t rely on chance meetings, or the promise that “I’ll talk to so-and-so next time I see them.”

So, regular meetings—whether “face-to-face” via Zoom or Teams, or simply chatting via Slack—are vital. Schedule a standing meeting at regular intervals just to check in and see what is going on with your co-workers. These can take the form of “Coffee Breaks” with multiple participants, or one-on-one meetings with a supervisor or a team member with whom you work closely. If you have nothing work-related to discuss, resist the urge to cancel the meeting, and instead use it as a chance to check in on how their non-work life is going. Basically, set the expectation that you are going to communicate with your co-workers at X time each day, or week, or whatever interval makes sense for your schedule, and then stick to it. With the current state of technology, the only barriers to staying connected with one another are the desire to do so and the willingness to follow through. Our current situation won’t last forever, but in the meantime, it is more important than ever to make the effort to stay connected.

If you need help, I’m sure my dad would be thrilled to set up a few Zoom meetings for you.

Maribel: I completely agree with Scott—we are fortunate to be living in a time, and working in a profession, that is sort of made for a remote working situation. I started at a new firm at the beginning of California’s shelter-in-place orders and was amazed at how relatively smoothly I was onboarded, despite never having met any of my colleagues or visited the office. For me, regularly scheduled meetings—non-work related, agenda-less meetings—have been essential to feeling a part of my department and my firm. Our research department, which is spread across the globe, meets weekly to chat and catch up, and specifically not talk about work. Our San Francisco office has a weekly Zoom happy hour that has allowed me to get to know some of the names and faces of people I would normally meet in the office halls or break rooms. When we finally go back to the office, it will be a great relief not to feel like a stranger to colleagues I have never seen in person. Various American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) chapters have been connecting members through virtual happy hours as well.

That said, the abundance of scheduled virtual meetings, fun as they are, did lead me to a bit of video-fatigue. Turns out, any agenda-less meeting—professional or personal—in 2020 defaults to these few topics: COVID, guesses on when we will be back in the office, awkward silence, new show recommendations, and children and pets. If you are also starting to feel fatigued, but still want to connect with your colleagues in a meaningful way, I might suggest incorporating a group activity to mix up the routine. Northern California Association of Law Libraries (NOCALL) recently held a virtual scavenger hunt over Zoom, where the winner won a donation in her name to her local food bank. Our office administrator now hosts virtual games for us to play over lunch. Our firm’s Information Services team has regularly scheduled meetings where colleagues have played instruments, performed cooking demos, and even demonstrated a live home haircut. Our firm has a cycling group that rides at home together every day. I have even heard rumor of a weekly online “cake trolley” that I don’t really understand but I have now made it my mission to be invited. On a more serious and action-oriented level, we are holding scheduled virtual discussions on the topics of systemic racism and injustice in the legal profession and in society in general. These meetings take a little more work but allow people to be creative and to get to know each other in unexpected ways. I’m also waiting for my invitation to Scott’s dad’s Zoom meetings.

I don’t know how long we are going to be working from home. At this writing, I have been at home for 18 weeks. We are lucky to have so many options for communicating with friends and colleagues, but the longer this goes, it will take more work to stay engaged and connected with our co-workers. Consider it a part of your self-care during this time, but also remember that we are all in this together. Good luck!
In light of current events and the #blacklivesmatter movement, what are you reading to educate yourself on this important issue?

1. "TRAINING A DIVERSE STUDENT BODY FOR A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY," by Charles R. Calleros (La Raza Law Journal, Vol. 8, No. 2: 140–165 (1995). “This article is a great source of information for instructors who, like me, are looking for tools to integrate issues of diversity into legal research courses. I am an academic reference librarian and several of my colleagues on our reference team are trying to find better ways to integrate issues of diversity and inclusion into our lessons. This great tool includes personal stories of ‘ ethnically diverse law students who met with the author to discuss their law school experience.’ The themes of these personal stories still ring true. Part III, subsection B of the article provides techniques and strategies for addressing issues of diversity and inclusion in legal research courses, and Part IV discusses problems and challenges of addressing diversity and inclusion in the assignments. I hope to use some of these resources in my upcoming classes.”

Malikah A. Hall; Reference Librarian & Instructional Assistant Professor; Texas A&M University School of Law; Fort Worth, TX

2. THE EDUCATION PIPELINE TO THE PROFESSIONS: PROGRAMS THAT WORK TO INCREASE DIVERSITY edited by Sarah E. Redfield (Carolina Academic Press, 2012). “According to the ABA Profile of the Legal Profession, people of color remain disproportionately underrepresented. Because we don’t have these figures for AALL, it’s impossible to measure whether our efforts in outreach, funding, and support are working—or remain insufficient. This book focuses on the disparate educational outcomes and access to effective education that underrepresented groups have historically faced as they navigate the pipeline, which necessarily leads to a lack of diversity in the legal profession. Beginning with Pre-K, case studies are used to highlight successful programs. These studies build on the 3Rs (Rigor, Relevance, Relationship) and add a critical fourth: Results. Are programs identifying targets and measuring outcomes? Absent assessment, we don’t have the data to isolate which programs merit expansion and investment as opposed to those that should be revamped or disbanded.”

Kristina J. Alayan, Law Library Director & Assistant Professor of Law; Howard University School of Law; Washington, DC

3. THE END OF POLICING by Alex S. Vitale (Verso, October 10, 2017). “Now more than ever, Americans recognize a need for significant systemic changes to law enforcement in our country. Decades of race-based discrimination in policing, especially in the use of deadly force, have culminated today in calls to defund or even abolish the police in pursuit of truer justice. This book, written by a Brooklyn College sociologist, provides a sober, balanced, and engaging review of the many ails of our modern police system, almost all of which disproportionately impact minorities and disadvantaged communities. At a time when the very nature of the police force and its place in our society is being reexamined, this book is an essential starting point for understanding the origins of the violence, tragedy, and hard questions that would seem impossible to surmount without extreme and controversial measures.”

Andrew Christensen; Head of Digital Initiatives and Outreach; Wilbur C. Hall Law Library; Washington and Lee University School of Law; Lexington, VA

4. BLACK IMAGINATION: BLACK VOICES ON BLACK FUTURES by Natasha Marin (McSweeney’s Publishing, February 4, 2020). “Allies, which we all should be, have the burden of examining and correcting our own bias as well as honoring the humanity of those around us. Black Imagination helps us do the second. It is a rare invitation into a sacred celebration of Blackness. A place where these authors can express what they ‘need/want to imagine and heal’ without concern for code switching and tiptoeing. The book reminds those of us who may have forgotten that Blackness is a varied tapestry of experience and emotions. If reading this book makes you uncomfortable, sit with that. This is not your space.”

Casandra Laskowski; Technology & Research Services Librarian; Duke University School of Law; J. Michael Goodson Law Library; Durham, NC
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