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EDITOR’S NOTE

A CALL TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

As of this writing, the 2020 presidential election is less than a week away, a new Supreme Court Justice has just been confirmed with virtually no bipartisan support for the first time in modern American history, and the legal information industry is continuing to adapt to a new, virtual way of working. Now, more than ever, our country, our democratic and educational institutions, and the organizations we work for are in need of a new generation of leaders to help pave the way forward during this time of unprecedented change.

Over the last few issues of *AALL Spectrum*, we have seen examples of how law librarians are leading the way in shaping the future of legal education, virtual library services, and the adoption of artificial intelligence and other sophisticated technologies to better serve our patrons—be they clients, faculty, lawyers, students, or pro se litigants. In this issue, we continue to highlight how law librarians’ expertise, adaptability, and excellent communication skills made the difference in the successful pivot to a remote work environment, and how law librarians are establishing new paths by creating self-help clinics that promote experiential student learning, attorney engagement, and community assistance. We also share new methods of thinking about onboarding, integrating, and developing the next generation of law librarian leaders, and we present some best practice tips on leadership so that you not only feel empowered, but also better prepared to step into a leadership role.

*AALL Spectrum* also debuts a new practical advice column, *On the Ground: Real-World Solutions*, which takes a practical look at common library problems and provides best practice solutions. Each article in this column will explore a new topic on library services, best practices, and everything in between. On the

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If retirement is in your near future, and you want to stay connected to your friends and colleagues as well as to 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
- Publications
- Leadership Opportunities
- Advocacy

* Does not include SIS memberships

DID YOU KNOW?

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.

Learn more at bit.ly/AALLEncore.
A few personal high points include adopting a new cat and dog, spending more time at my friend’s horse farm, and staying with my mom in Vermont for several weeks. Professionally, I have tuned in to several AALL coffee chats, and they have provided me with an opportunity to hear from and speak with members when being together in person is not possible.

As with many things today, leadership and career development have taken on a new appearance and importance. In some ways, our commitment to lifelong learning remains steadfast, though we are now also juggling adopting new tech tools and approaches to facilitating meetings, in addition to keeping up with developments in law librarianship. We spend even more of our daily lives in front of screens, though not necessarily by choice. I try to set aside time each week, even if only for 30 minutes, to focus on my personal development, which is often catching up on a webinar or on my reading. This issue of *AALL Spectrum* includes many examples of how members are tackling strategic and successful learning opportunities for themselves, their teams, and their organizations.

While I wish we could have been together in person for the fall meetings on the AALL calendar (Annual Meeting Program Committee, Executive Board), we made do by using our virtual options. At the virtual fall Executive Board meeting, in advance of and in addition to our normal meeting activities, we participated in a Mind Science Workshop from the Perception Institute. (Learn more about the Perception Institute at bit.ly/JF21perception.) The workshop focused on how our brains process identity differences. Discussions included the Board’s aspirations for equity and inclusiveness within AALL and law librarianship, identifying tensions that may be getting in the way, and the particular roles Board members can play in developing an inclusive culture within the Association. A similar workshop will be offered in AALL’s Management Institute this spring.

This year’s special committees hit the ground running and have all embarked on their various tasks. And while our normal schedule shifted a bit in 2020, we carried on with the election of new board members (see page 9), held the fall AALL Connection (which took place in November), and opened program proposals for the 2021 Annual Meeting & Conference. And rest assured, we will continue to offer the informal coffee chats this year.

I encourage you to join me in finding silver linings in these ongoing times of change and uncertainty.

PS. Congrats to the newly named Legal Innovation and Technology SIS (LIT-SIS), formerly known as Computing Services SIS.

Emily R. Florio
emily.florio@hoganlovells.com
The AALL Management Institute prepares managers to handle staff development, manage conflict, and build commitment to strategic goals, and it equips them with managerial leadership practices that impact culture and inspire change.

The upcoming Institute will include:
- New training on implicit bias
- Inclusive communication strategies
- Decision-making and consensus building
- Strategies for improving performance management

Learn more at bit.ly/AALLmi21
For some, the pandemic has meant job cuts due to reduced budgets and resources. The AALL Spectrum Editorial Board recently conducted a short survey to find out what the job search/hiring process has been like since the start of the pandemic. The Editorial Board wanted to know who had interviewed for a new position (likely through a virtual interview process) and who had hired someone to fill an open position. The charts show the respondents’ answers. In addition, some best practice guidelines from the survey are highlighted below.

**BEST PRACTICES FOR CONDUCTING A VIRTUAL INTERVIEW**

**FOR THE INTERVIEWEE**
- “If you are using a tablet, tell the interviewer that you may not have access to the same tools that would be available if you were giving your mock instructional session from a library computer.”
- “Always ask the hiring team what changes the library has made due to COVID-19, when/if the library closed down, and how library administration has advocated for the safety of their staff since COVID began.”
- “Anticipate and practice questions beforehand. Research the institution at least three separate times to get a sense of what they focus on and what they are looking for in candidates.”
- “Be honest about the pandemic and what we are all going through. Talk about what you have done for students and faculty since the start of the pandemic.”

**FOR THE INTERVIEWER**
- “Make sure you send links ahead of time. Know if your applicant will have trouble with Zoom or Teams or something similar.”
- “Do not take up all the time with your answers. Let the interviewee talk and expand on answers. Use follow-ups and clarifiers. Not enough people do that.”
- “Try to make sure you’re in a distraction-free environment.”
- “Be very cognizant of what’s in your Zoom background! Try not to move around too much, but still be vibrant and engaging.”
- “Sound quality! Keep this in mind for any interview.”
- “Silence cell phones, avoid being distracted, wear headphones, make eye contact, smile, and mute yourself when you’re not speaking.”

**WHAT CAN APPLICANTS DO TO STAND OUT?**
- “Master the Zoom experience. Pick your background, be in a quiet setting, wear a suit (at least from the waist up!), have questions prepared to keep the conversation moving.”
- “I explain in my cover letter why I want this job. I’ve been on many hiring committees and I’m often left wondering why someone wants the job we’ve advertised for. For the interview itself, addressing everyone and saying hi to everyone is a must. Even if they are mostly silent. Also, thank everyone at the end.”
- “Show enthusiasm, avoid being distracted, wear headphones, take your time when answering questions, and follow up with an email.”

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**HAVE YOU INTERVIEWED FOR A JOB SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC?**
- **YES:** 56%
- **NO:** 44%

**HAVE YOU HIRED SOMEONE FOR A POSITION DURING THE PANDEMIC?**
- **YES:** 27%
- **NO:** 64%

Data based on survey responses.

*Interviewed but did not hire.
SEAN HARRINGTON
ELECTRONIC RESOURCES LIBRARIAN
ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY ROSS-BLAKLEY LAW LIBRARY
PHOENIX, AZ

WHAT INSPIRES YOU MOST?
The excitement and curiosity of law students.

IF YOU WROTE AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY, WHAT WOULD ITS TITLE BE AND WHY? 
An Average Man’s Quest to Learn Everything. I don’t think I’m particularly great at anything, but I’m curious and willing to learn.

FAVORITE QUOTE?
“He who knows only his own side of the case knows little of that.”
— John Stuart Mill

WHAT’S YOUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT AND HOW HAS IT SHAPED YOU?
Getting a B+ in an advanced statistics class in my STEM MS last semester. I haven’t taken a math class since 2004 and it showed.

A SKILL YOU’D LIKE TO LEARN?
Code in Python.

FAVORITE TRAVEL DESTINATION?
Nice, France. It’s a nice mash-up of my hometown [Seal Beach, California] and the South of France.

VANTAGE POINT
AALL Executive Board Fall Meeting Actions

The AALL Executive Board met virtually on Friday, November 6, and Saturday, November 7, 2020. During the meeting, the Board approved the following:

- Minutes from the July 9-10, 2020 Executive Board Meeting.
- Making the State of the Profession Special Committee a standing committee, the State of the Profession Report Committee, effective July 2021.
- A revision to the charge of the Appointments Committee to increase its size from four to five members.
- The 2020-2021 Committee Action Plans.
- The 2020-2021 AALL Strategic Directions Action Plan.
- Moving to a digital-only format for Law Library Journal (LLJ) and AALL Spectrum.

The pandemic has impacted everyone, including AALL. Just as many of you have had to make changes in your law libraries to adjust to lower budgets, AALL is doing the same while continuing to offer you the professional development resources you need.

- LLJ will switch to a digital-only format at the start of the new volume year (Vol. 113) in winter 2021 (late February). Please note that the decision to stop mailing print copies of LLJ to all members was made in April 2016. Members had the option to sign up for a print copy for a fee and at present 32 members are using this option. AALL is required to order a minimum set of print copies regardless of demand, so moving to a print-on-demand option will eliminate the additional cost to AALL while providing members with the option to order a hard copy on their own.
- AALL Spectrum will move to a digital-only format this year beginning with the March/April 2021 issue (Vol. 25). AALL has continued to mail print copies to all AALL members, but our records show that more and more members are accessing AALL Spectrum digitally.

The creation of the First-Gen Professionals Caucus.

Listen to the virtual member update—AALL Connection—recording at bit.ly/AALLcon1120.

The Executive Board book and related materials are available on AALLNET at bit.ly/AALL1120.

AALL Nominations Committee Seeks Candidates for Office

The AALL Nominations Committee selects candidates for the Executive Board elections. This spring, the seven-member committee will present to the membership a slate of candidates for the 2021 election. They will choose two candidates for the position of vice president/president-elect (2022-2023; on the Board until 2025), two candidates for the position of Treasurer (2022-2025), and four candidates for two open seats on the Executive Board (2022-2025). In accordance with its charge, the committee must choose candidates who reflect the diversity of AALL’s membership, thus ensuring the members of the Executive Board represent a balance of library types, geographic locations, genders, and minorities. For the elections, ballots will be distributed electronically to all voting members of the Association in September. The ballots will be tabulated at AALL Headquarters at the beginning of November and election results will be announced once all candidates have been notified.

NEWS & NOTES

2021 CALENDAR

JANUARY

11  AALL Executive Board nominations form opens
13  AALL Webinar: Maximizing the Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals in All Law Libraries

FEBRUARY

12  AALL Executive Board nominations due
22-23  AALL Appointments Committee Meeting

MARCH

01  AALL Awards Program nominations due for:
   □  AALL Spectrum Article of the Year Award
   □  AALL/LexisNexis Call for Papers Awards
   □  Emerging Leader Award
   □  Hall of Fame Award
   □  Innovations in Technology Award
   □  Joseph L. Andrews Legal Literature Award
   □  Law Library Journal Article of the Year Award
   □  Marian Gould Gallagher Distinguished Service Award
   □  Minority Leadership Development Award
   □  New Product Award
   □  Public Access to Government Information Award
   □  Robert L. Oakley Advocacy Award
   □  Volunteer Service Award
05-06  AALL Executive Board Winter Finance & Budget Committee Meeting
23-24  AALL Management Institute

APRIL

01  AALL Annual Meeting grant applications due
    AALL LexisNexis Research Grant applications due
    AALL Scholarship Program applications due for:
    □  AALL Educational Scholarship
    □  George A. Strait Minority Scholarship & Fellowship
    □  LexisNexis John R. Johnson Memorial Scholarship
    □  Marcia J. Koslov Scholarship
08-10  AALL Executive Board Spring Meeting

MAY

13  AALL/Bloomberg Law Continuing Education Grants proposal due

JULY

TBD  AALL Chapter & Jury Leadership Training
15-16  AALL Executive Board Summer Meeting
17-20  114th AALL Annual Meeting & Conference

QUICK LINKS

AALL ANNUAL MEETING  
bit.ly/AALL2021
AALL AWARDS  
bit.ly/AALL-awards
AALL/LEXISNEXIS CALL FOR PAPERS  
bit.ly/AALL-callforpapers
AALL EDUCATION  
bit.ly/AALLEducation
AALL eLEARNING  
bit.ly/AALLelearning
AALL GRANTS  
bit.ly/AALL-grants
AALL MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE  
bit.ly/AALLmi21
AALL SCHOLARSHIPS  
bit.ly/AALL-scholarships

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

This course has been developed by subject matter experts who are your colleagues and fellow members. It will introduce law library professionals to the budgeting process and prepare you to ask informed questions about funding, allocations, and how the library supports its strategic goals.

This course will help you address important issues such as:

■ Identifying and managing competing priorities.
■ Explaining day-to-day operations.
■ Connecting financial resources to meet goals.

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visit www.aallnet.org/careers
INNOVATION & ACCESS TO JUSTICE: THE ROLE OF THE ACADEMIC LAW LIBRARY
BY STACI PRATT & MONTANNA HOSTERMAN

Creating self-help clinics that promote experiential student learning, attorney engagement, and community assistance.

AALL 2020 EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AWARD WINNERS
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-KANSAS CITY SCHOOL OF LAW, LEON E. BLOCH LAW LIBRARY & LEGAL AID OF WESTERN MISSOURI
The Preamble to the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) Ethical Principles encourages law librarians to “promote open, equitable, and effective access to legal and related information.” We are asked to “devise, implement, and improve methods for its access, preservation, discovery, and retrieval.” As academic law librarians, we possess the resources, knowledge, and relationships in the legal community that enable us to successfully serve the needs of the public and our law schools. And we have an ethical obligation to our community.

Promoting access to justice by providing on-site experiential learning opportunities for our law students helps the library support the larger academic goals of the law school. The American Bar Association Accreditation of Law Schools Curriculum Standard 303(b) states that a law school should provide substantial opportunities for students to participate in pro bono legal services, including law-related public service opportunities. These standards require law librarians to constantly think outside the box and become innovative in the resources they provide. Law libraries may become the information empowerment zones of the future, and we need to commit to a new approach to serving public patrons and to teaching our students.

Expanding Access to Justice
We took Paul McGlothlin’s Leveraging Academic Law Libraries to Expand Access to Justice as an invitation to develop a self-help clinic (SHC) that encompasses student learning, attorney engagement, and community assistance. He stated, “[a]cademic law libraries, with their inherent combination of legal information experts and sources, can become indispensable to their communities and schools and make significant contributions to access to justice efforts through the creation of self-help clinics.” In academic legal environments, self-help clinics are at the cutting edge of enhancing access to justice, providing invaluable experiential learning to law students, and bolstering the role of law librarians across the country.

There is a clear justice gap in the United States. According to the Legal Services Corporation (LSC), it is “the difference between the civil legal needs of low-income Americans and the resources available to meet those needs.” In 2017, LSC found that 71 percent of households living at or below the federal poverty level experience at least one civil legal problem. Additionally, 86 percent of the time, the problems received no or minimal legal attention. Likewise, the National Center for State Courts has found that at least one party was self-represented in more than 75 percent of cases. As a result of this profound need, law libraries are stepping in to help.
Recently, the Self-Represented Litigation Network (SRLN) published a survey identifying the level of services offered to self-represented litigants (SRLs) in law libraries across the country. Fourteen academic libraries achieved “intermediate” levels of service, while 19 provided “basic” resources. Basic services include a publicly accessible space, research assistance, court forms, public computers, internet access, and access to a fax machine, copier, scanner, or phone. Intermediate services go further, by incorporating legal community partnerships, an on-site self-help center, additional court forms, and e-Filing services.

**The Self-Help Clinic & Adaptation to a Virtual Platform**

As one of the “intermediate” providers, the Leon E. Bloch Law Library at the University of Missouri Kansas City (UMKC) School of Law joined Legal Aid of Western Missouri (LAWMO) to create an on-site SHC. As a physical presence on our main floor, the SHC provides free limited-scope legal representation to hundreds of community members, while also supporting experiential learning for law students. Students interview clients, develop forms, and work hand-in-hand with volunteer attorneys recruited by LAWMO.

We opened the SHC a year prior to the global pandemic that has upended our physical environment and complicated access to the civil justice system. Crisis invites innovation, however, and we quickly transformed into a virtual clinic to continue meeting the needs of our community. Together with LAWMO, UMKC law librarians created an online intake form that can be completed and submitted via a smartphone. Law student volunteers can call applicants to investigate their legal issue, acquire any missing information, and confirm an applicant’s availability for a secured zoom conference call with a volunteer attorney. Then, the attorney and applicant can work on documents together virtually. As of September 16, 2020, the virtual SHC has helped over 181 applicants. Prior to the pandemic shutdown, the SHC served more than 700 people.

The SHC is dedicated to our community and serves a diverse range of applicants who self-identify as: 42 percent African-American, 38 percent Caucasian, 6 percent Hispanic, 3 percent Asian, and 10 percent other.

**Best Practices & Keys to Success**

Our project benefited from support of our law school administration: Law School dean Glesner-Fines readily
embraced the value of the SHC and the opportunity for on-site experiential learning, encouraging alumni to volunteer, and supporting the law school’s community-driven mission. Here are some lessons we learned in developing the SHC.

Collaboration
Our partnership with LAWMO is central to our success. Benefits include:

- Malpractice insurance for volunteer attorneys
- Recruitment and coordination of volunteer attorneys
- Training resources
- Form development guidance

OTHER NATURAL PARTNERS TO CONSIDER

- Local courts
- Bar associations
- Public libraries

COMMUNICATE AROUND KEY TOPICS

- Who will be served? Your SHC partner may have different rules than your law school.
- Collaborative decision-making protocols, for when issues arise.
- Resource provision—clarify who provides what, and the willingness to collectively apply for grants.
- Volunteer management—identify who will find and coordinate attorney and law student volunteers.
- Acknowledge and support volunteers.
- Recruit retired attorneys and alumni.
- Schedule for regular meetings.

Technology

- Establish a shared platform for intake materials, policies, and standard forms. We use Box as our secure content management platform.
- Create shared tracking tools for your work, such as Gimlet.

STANDARD FORMS DEVELOPMENT

- Limited-scope representation agreements
- Briefing outlines for commonly encountered issues
- Regularly used forms

People & Space
The SHC began with the dean, two faculty members, one student, and about four volunteer attorneys. A year later, generous commitments of time from volunteer students, volunteer attorneys, and a law librarian with an active Missouri license have strengthened the clinic.

The clinic sits on the second floor of the law library. We provide closed offices and space for the volunteer student to conduct intakes and refer applicants to a small waiting area.

HOURS, FREQUENCY & SCHEDULING
The SHC started with walk-in availability on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The virtual clinic observes those hours too.

When in operation in the library space, we scheduled two volunteer attorneys each day. For our virtual clinic, LAWMO developed an expanded roster of volunteers. We can now assign legal problems to attorneys who specialize in specific areas of law. Law student volunteers serve as the backbone of the clinic, and SHC has a flexible schedule to meet their needs.

RESOURCES

The SHC clinic provides volunteers access to Westlaw. It also supplies “briefing papers” to assist volunteers and students. Briefing papers are a short synopsis of an area of law, and they include a typical presenting problem, a summary of the issue, a summary of law, initial interview questions, and what the SHC can do to help with this issue.

Law Students & Experiential Learning
A number of students volunteer at the SHC as part of their commitment to pro bono service and access to justice. Second- and third-year law students who desire pro bono honors can obtain the required 200 hours at the SHC. Law students can also enroll in the SHC internship for credit.

Others enjoy the opportunity to obtain practical experience and receive supervision from faculty and volunteer attorneys. Law students apply classroom skills to legitimate cases and real-life situations. Learned skills will directly translate into handling an obstacle with ease following graduation.

Moving Ahead
Self-help clinics do not require a lot of space, can operate on little to no funding, and provide great opportunities for law students and retired, or practicing, attorneys and judges. The SHC also allows the law school to contribute to the community. Third-year law student volunteer Emily Butler noted, “Volunteering at the Self-Help Center is a very rewarding experience that allows me to help those in need navigate the complex legal system and help them access justice.”

A great resource to start your own journey may be found at the Self-Represented Litigation Network, with resources specifically for libraries. Learn more at bit.ly/JF21SRLN.
Leadership strikes me as personal, contextual, and contingent—qualities that would preclude generalization. But I was honored and inspired by an invitation to speak on this topic, and I overcame my first instinct, which was to run in the opposite direction! Consequently, I have developed some A to Z leadership tips, which I have listed below, in hopes they will have broad applicability.

ABC: Always Be Collecting Ideas
Leaders respond to the insights of others to help create and nourish their own vision and strategies for implementation of that vision. Consultation with stakeholders can expand a set of options and reveal pitfalls to be avoided. Peers can also be important sources of ideas and expertise. Leaders often need only to show up and listen to gather insights, and the demonstrated intention to listen often helps build support along the way. Research is another helpful tool for
gathering ideas. Surveys, scholarship, and other more informal publications are terrific resources. Sometimes exploration into unfamiliar media and disciplines can offer applicable insights and ideas. This idea collection strategy requires looking beyond the filter bubbles of information normally assumed to be most relevant.

Once in the flow of ideas, leaders must test, reflect, and refine. A diversity of opinions can facilitate critical review of ideas, so checking in with others during the reflection process can be useful. After collecting ideas and using them to help shape your vision, a leader should give appropriate credit to acknowledge others’ contributions and encourage further idea generation.

**DEFGHI: Delegate Extensively For Greater Health of the Institution**

Project management, problem solving, priority setting, and coaching others are all examples of responsibilities that leaders might delegate or share. Even without authority to assign responsibilities, a leader can explore ways to pull in useful collaborators. Sharing the workload helps make any of these types of leadership roles more sustainable. Delegating also encourages others to develop expertise and judgement. Leaders who remain accountable for decisions and projects must maintain communication to ensure the scope of delegation is clear, and to provide support when needed. Again, a leader should also give credit to those who take on delegated or shared responsibilities.

**J: Juggle**

Tools, even simple lists, are helpful, but they require constant updating in response to new developments. Keeping all the balls up in the air can be tricky, so leaders often hope that balls will bounce or be caught by someone else who can join the juggling. Prioritizing requires constant reordering to address changing circumstances.

**KLMNO: Keep Long-, Mid-, and Near-Term Options in View**

An important strategy for leaders is to cultivate both patience and opportunistic action. This strategy includes anticipating environmental changes and maintaining decision tree plans for multiple scenarios. Leaders need to cultivate resources even if they may take a while to come through. A related insight is that misfortune or disappointments may offer an unanticipated path for meeting goals that are on the wish list. Acceptance of change and new support for goals may be more forthcoming when some special circumstance upsets the normal order of things.

**PQ: Practice Being Quiet**

Sometimes … leaders can learn a lot and avoid missteps by staying quiet.

**R: Relationships**

As fellow AALL member Joan Howland says, “relationships are everything.” Don’t wait until you need support. Cultivate trust. Demonstrate respect. Provide support whenever you can, both for the joy of it and because the effort usually finds some avenue for reciprocation. Remember that every interaction is about much more than the specific discussion.

**STUV: Staff (and Supervisors) Need You to Translate for a Usable Vision**

Communication is hard. Clear, measurable goals with deadlines can help communicate an otherwise vague vision into a plan of action. Ideally, individuals’ goals should be a negotiated plan, updated regularly. While risks in some ambitious goals should be accommodated, rewards and accountability can grow from this kind of clear foundation. Similarly, leaders need to translate jargon and in-the-weeds issues for the non-expert who oversees the broader institution. Synthesis and simplification are important, as is the ability to place the library’s priorities within the agenda and language of the broader institution.

**WX: Win Support with Examples**

Rarely do stakeholders grasp the impact of abstract goals. Efficiency. Innovation. Service. Those banners pale in comparison with a story of how Tiffany stepped up to manage library HR when the school had a vacancy, or how Nicole transformed the Prep for Practice program with technology classes that drew high student attendance. Or how Aaron developed the faculty scholarship repository yielding hundreds of downloads for Professor W’s new article. Or how Jesse worked with LeTroy to manage stack storage and shifts during renovation, leading professor C to cheer the organization on for restored access. Examples can also be negative; for example, how professor R wanted access to an unavailable database for her research, or how an oversubscribed Advanced Legal Research class was cancelled when a reference librarian vacancy was not filled.

**YZ: Say Yes to Zany Invitations**

Like speaking about leadership and then writing about it. Opportunities may not always come when you are prepared for them. Being open to the unexpected helps us not only grow as people, but also as professionals and leaders.

**After A-Z, it’s up to U**

I hope this brief A to Z guide has given you new insights about leadership and inspired you to apply some of its principles to your own leadership activities.
Onboarding is exciting for both new employees and the law library. The organization has likely operated short-staffed for a few months, and new librarians are hopeful for new challenges and opportunities. A methodical orientation program is the first step to creating a successful environment for new staff and the institution. Employers provide training and orientation to welcome new hires to the law library, make them feel part of the team, align them with institutional initiatives, and teach procedures. These goals are not reached as a result of a few emails or brief meetings. It takes time for someone to feel confident in a new job. It is also imperative for managers and existing staff to recognize that they possess institutional knowledge and acknowledge that an expectation of early retention of all new information is untenable. Structured, purposeful, and engaged onboarding will alleviate future struggles with integrating a new hire into projects and the library’s culture. Additionally, a standardized onboarding process helps to ensure that all new employees are given equal opportunities to succeed.

**Goals for Orientation and Onboarding**

New employees lack three areas of knowledge necessary for job success and satisfaction: policies and procedures, institutional culture, and colleague personality. Policies and procedures are passed down through manuals and training. The other two types of knowledge are tacit and challenging to transfer. A manager’s response

**SUCCESSFUL ONBOARDING:**

*CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE NEW EMPLOYEES CAN SUCCEED*

Strategies, guidelines, and a checklist for creating a structured, purposeful, and engaged onboarding process.

**BY JANEEN WILLIAMS & ALLISON C. REEVE DAVIS**
Before the New Employee Arrives
Planning is essential to identify knowledge gaps and potential onboarding pitfalls. First, assess what already exists. You likely have an arsenal of emails, procedural documents, peer trainers, and human resources (HR) videos at your disposal.

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To continue inquiries from a new librarian should not be to ask them to memorize or refer to previous emails, because new hires should feel comfortable contacting colleagues, requesting meetings with management, and asking questions. However, gaps in knowledge need to be addressed early in a librarian’s tenure. The goal is to provide undocumented information in a methodical trajectory that also encourages collaboration and continued communication throughout the first few months after a new hire begins.

There is a balance between spacing out information and keeping a new hire engaged. We all remember new jobs where, during the first two weeks, we read manuals front to back with little hands-on experience. This scenario creates boredom and confusion over the job description. Instead, offer a variety of emails, videos, meetings, and task training to keep the day interesting. Below are strategies for creating successful onboarding programs that can easily be adapted across various institutions.

**Before the New Employee Arrives**
Planning is essential to identify knowledge gaps and potential onboarding pitfalls. First, assess what already exists. You likely have an arsenal of emails, procedural documents, peer trainers, and human resources (HR) videos at your disposal. List those documents and communications, including their contents, and create a schedule for distributing them and the completion of tasks. In most institutions, managers cannot alter the HR orientation process. Paperwork, instructional videos, and technology training are mandatory and must be completed in the timeline dictated. Within your own department, however, lies more flexibility.

Do not try to go it alone. Enlisting a team of more recently hired librarians provides a wealth of insight. Ask, “What do you know now that you wish you’d known when you first started?” The answers may be surprising but will highlight knowledge gaps that should be incorporated into an orientation program. Following an assessment of what you already have and a review of staff suggestions, you will be able to plan for a captivating orientation that combines a mix of in-person meetings, emails, printed materials, and peer-to-peer contact.

Librarians become experts in their library environments. They are expected to know the library building and the library collection well enough to navigate the physical space efficiently and direct patrons to appropriate resources. Patrons frequently ask librarians for directional assistance to get to meetings, special programs, and lectures. In her former position at the Law Library of Congress, Janeen and her co-workers created a plan for a new employee three months before their arrival, one that addressed the unique challenges of the setting. They drafted a detailed orientation schedule for the first two weeks of employment that included building and collection tours. The Library campus is spread across three buildings, and it has the largest law collection in the world. Within the first couple of weeks of starting, managers or mentors should give a tour of buildings and offices to the new hire. Incorporating time for building and unit tours ensures new employees gain familiarity with the physical space, and it is a great way to spend time before task training begins or software access is secured.

**Mentorship**
True mentors are often found through organic comradery development, but at the start of a new librarian’s tenure, it is a great idea to pair them with a friendly face. Part of the mentor’s responsibilities may be planning onboarding schedules and training with milestones for new employee integration. All staff in the organization should make the new employee feel welcome, but selected mentors take on a more involved role.

New employees can have a difficult time building new relationships in large organizations. For this reason, Janeen created a new role to help support new librarians. The new role was a “buddy.” The buddy was an informal source of information for the new employee, such as the tacit knowledge about the team’s culture. This tacit knowledge can make a big difference during the probation period because this is when “fit” of the employee will be determined.

In congruence with relationship building between new hires and supervisors, new employees can benefit from building a relationship with experienced co-workers. Working together, managers and colleagues can create a trusting and open environment for new employee curiosity and learning. Peers may be more experienced in the tasks required of the new hire and may speak more candidly about the environment and culture. Tacit knowledge, like the work culture, undocumented practices, and work styles, can be difficult for a new employee to grasp. Peer mentors provide not only job-specific instruction but supportive guidance in the employee’s new environment.

**After Arrival**
Once training schedules have been set, materials evaluated, and mentors chosen, new hires are on course to succeed in their first few months.

**HR ORIENTATION**
As mentioned, HR requires a schedule of paperwork, in-person training, and a variety of training videos. It is essential to provide new hires time to accomplish these early tasks and be ready with other activities to fill gaps in time. At many institutions, HR activities span the first two weeks of employment, but
CREATING A SUCCESSFUL ONBOARDING PROGRAM

- HR orientation schedule and deadlines.
- Assess and incorporate knowledge gaps.
- Create schedule of preliminary emails and what will be included:
  - Welcome and bio: invitation for a brief meeting and introduction to colleagues, request for a short bio, and initial tasks of signing up for library distribution lists and exploring the intranet.
  - Jargon and orientations: familiarize oneself with institution and department services, big library projects, acronym library, database IDs and passwords, and required orientations.
  - Department policies and professional development: attachments, including library-specific email and paid time off procedures, resources for career growth and networking, expectation of email and in-person communication with manager.
- Philosophy of librarianship at your institution: overview of research request types, library sub-teams, quotes about librarianship philosophies on service, best practices, and service standards.
- Articles and PowerPoint presentations.
- Build new employee handbook.
- Assign peer mentor.
- Schedule regular in-person meetings with supervisor and peers.
- Look for additional resources to help introduce new law librarians to the profession, such as:

they rarely require a full day’s attention. If you know the new employee will not have access to email for a few days, print out their schedule, job description, and any procedural documents. During these early days, sprinkle a variety of tasks into the schedule, such as library welcome and training emails. See above for a checklist of orientation activities to welcome a new employee and create a thriving environment.

**SCHEDULE OF EMAILS**

A schedule of emails helps engage new employees while leaving time for HR obligations. Send no more than two per day. Examples of preliminary emails with brief descriptions are provided above in the Checklist for Creating a Successful Onboarding Program.

**IN-PERSON MEETINGS**

Schedule regular but brief meetings with the new librarian to cover the most crucial information conveyed in videos, orientation sessions, or emails. Between emails, articles, and meetings, the new librarian will be able to build a notebook for future reference, and policy and communication expectations are set together.

**IN-PERSON BIG-TOPIC TRAINING**

At Littler Mendelson, two formal, in-person orientation sessions are required for new librarians, but the sessions are also open to those who already work in the department. There is never any shame in reacquainting oneself with important topics. The first session covers online legal research costs recovery, and the second session covers the basics of the law, the legal marketplace, and specific issues in labor and employment practice. Outside of everyday tasks and expectations, managers of all library types should consider what big-picture topics provide deeper insight and understanding of the institution’s mission and goals. Providing new hires and veterans with these trainings helps ground them in the fundamentals and serves as a foundation on which to build their careers.

**Process Training with Peers**

While all new librarians require training in their new roles, training should be spread out and reinforced throughout the onboarding process. Working with peers on various tasks in a weeks-long schedule ensures that the new hire gets to know their colleagues and is not overwhelmed by being introduced to all duties at one time.

The onboarding process serves the important purpose of introducing the new employee to their new job and new work environment. The employer sets the stage for employee success by creating a welcoming environment, establishing clear expectations, and encouraging open lines of communication. Purposeful orientation increases the likelihood that the new employee meets or exceeds expectations.

**READ**


AALL’S LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

elearning.aallnet.org

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

AALL’s eLearning platform is your hub for the latest legal information education and professional development. You’ll be able to find, register for, and access learning opportunities all in one place. Browse by type of content, or use the keyword search—you can even adjust your interest categories to see recommended content.

- Access recent AALL Annual Meeting Recordings
- Register for upcoming Virtual Coffee Chats
- Register for upcoming AALL webinars and access recent AALL webinar recordings
- Register and access AALL’s self-paced courses. Register for the first self-paced course, “Introduction to Law Library Budgets”
- Register for AALL’s upcoming live programs such as the 2021 AALL Management Institute, Innovation Bootcamp, etc.
Andrew Winston had a passion for practicing law, but, after seizing an opportunity to complete a practicum at an academic law library while finishing his library science degree, he decided to change course and focus his attention on a career in law librarianship. Since becoming a member of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) in 2010, Winston’s professional development and leadership skills have continued to expand as he has pursued new leadership opportunities within the Association and within his career. A proponent of advocating for one’s law library as well as one’s own career, he enjoys the daily challenges involved in helping his team excel in serving congressional and other government users, as well as researchers from across the country and around the world.
Andrew Winston developed an interest in law librarianship after practicing law at large law firms for eleven years. Winston earned his JD from the University of Virginia in 1998 and obtained his MLS from Drexel University in 2011. He started his career at the University of Richmond’s Muse Law Library, where he performed a practicum during the final quarter of his library science program. He expected to return to the law firm world after finishing up his library science degree, but after he completed the practicum, his plans changed. “That experience made me reconsider my path and where I wanted to go,” said Winston.

In addition to his practicum, he interned at the Muse Law Library for six months. “It was really an outstanding place to get started in law librarianship. The librarians there were enthusiastic and dedicated to their work. And I was able to learn the ropes on a variety of reference, research, and collection projects.” He then worked as a law librarian in a temporary position at the Congressional Research Service before returning to the Muse Law Library as a research and instructional services librarian.

At Richmond, Winston had the opportunity to work with the library director at the time, Tim Coggins, who he said continues to be one of his main role models for library leadership. “I had the opportunity to work in Tim’s library and to observe his leadership style, which is one that I admire a lot,” notes Winston. “In fact, even today, when I’m in challenging leadership situations, I’ll often pause before I hit send on an email and ask myself, ‘How would Tim handle this?’”

After leaving Richmond, he moved to DC to work as a reference librarian at the Library of Congress before taking on his current role as chief of the public services division—a position he started just months before the start of the pandemic.

A member of AALL since 2010, he has been active in several leadership positions. He served on and chaired the Economic Status of Law Librarians Committee and the Bylaws and Resolutions Committee and now serves on the LexisNexis Research Grant Jury. He is also active with several special interest sections (SISs), including the Academic Law Libraries SIS, Government Law Libraries SIS, and the Research Instruction & Patron Services SIS. He is a member of the Virginia Association of Law Libraries (VALL), having served as president and in other leadership roles within VALL, and is a member of the Law Librarians Society of Washington, DC. Further, he won AALL’s 2016 Emerging Leader Award.

Here, Winston discusses the challenges and opportunities the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to his career, and the impact AALL has had on his leadership capabilities.

How has COVID-19 impacted the Library of Congress and your particular position?

What are the biggest challenges?

The biggest change, understandably, is the access to our collection and physical space. The Library of Congress has been closed to the public since March, and we’re currently in a phased restoration of our on-site operations, with a portion of our staff now going on-site to perform essential functions. The library has, of course, established health screening and protocols for those who are coming back into the building.

Although the library has not yet reopened its reading rooms to the public, it has opened an electronic resources center that allows users to come on-site to use subscription databases and digital materials on library premises.

For my division, it was certainly a shift in perspective—we had to immediately adjust to working remotely. We quickly implemented a strategy to maintain full services to our congressional users, which is our foremost obligation. The library’s IT experts created a system that allows us to forward our congressional telephone line to the reference librarians to ensure coverage. We
have also continued to provide digital reference services to all users throughout the pandemic.

We also modified our legal research instruction program. Before the pandemic, our reference librarians had been teaching mainly in-person legal research classes, although we had just begun offering webinar versions of our classes. This was an initiative that the Law Librarian of Congress, Jane Sánchez, had encouraged us to pursue, and it turned out to be a prescient move. Our head instructional librarian had laid the groundwork for it at the beginning of the year, and we were able to convert all of our public legal research classes and our series of more in-depth legal research classes for congressional staff to webinars.

As a result, we’ve actually been able to do more teaching and reach a far bigger audience with our webinars. We’ve also been able to experiment and offer new webinars as we’ve gone along. Based on this success, when we reopen, our goal is to expand our instruction by maintaining and further developing our webinar offerings alongside our traditional in-person classes.

The law library’s foreign law specialists have continued to perform research for Congress virtually uninterrupted during the pandemic. The digital resources division has been active with a collaborative Serial Set digitization project with GPO and other projects. The collection services division has been on-site the most, performing critical collection development and maintenance.

What advice would you give to those looking to advocate for themselves or their libraries?

It’s important to have a clear understanding of the value your library provides to its major users and stakeholders. Getting familiar with your library’s mission and vision statements and those of the larger organization can be a good starting point. But it’s necessary to go beyond that and be able to articulate your library’s mission and how it supports the institution in your own words.

Part of this is staying fully informed about how your library has been contributing to its organization. For my division, that includes things such as first-rate reference services, major research assignments, new legal research webinars, and collection development projects. For other parts of the law library, that might involve preparing comparative law reports for Congress aligned with the anticipated legislative agenda, optimizing collection spaces, planning major digitization projects, or launching innovative outreach initiatives.

Another aspect is finding ways to share information about that value regularly to decision makers. This can be done in multiple ways—through formal reports to your superiors, through informal reports via email about recent successes, and just through conversation—the proverbial elevator speech.

I have found that if you have a good grasp on the value your library delivers and a set of recent examples, it becomes easy to provide relevant, impactful updates when the opportunity arises. And if you’ve been regularly communicating your library’s value, then when the time comes to advocate, your audience will already be well-informed about your contribution to the organization and will hopefully be receptive to what you’re advocating for.

How do you stay on top of developments in legal technology?

In my current role, I rely a lot on professional reading. At our law library, we’re not necessarily subscribing to all of the law firm practice technologies, because that’s not what the majority of our users come to us needing to use. I believe, though, that as artificial intelligence and other more advanced technologies become more widespread and well developed, we will see more and more use of them outside of law firms and legal offices.
It’s important for all types of law libraries to stay informed on this topic. *AALL Spectrum* has been a great resource to stay on top of major developments. The vendor exhibitions at the AALL Annual Meeting are another way to gather intelligence on what’s new in databases, research tools, and law practice technologies.

**How has participation in AALL impacted your career and/or leadership capabilities?**

AALL has been a cornerstone of my career development. I was fortunate to have been selected for the 2014 AALL Leadership Academy, and that experience helped me to begin thinking seriously about pursuing leadership roles in the profession.

Since then I’ve had the opportunity to chair the Economic Status of Law Librarians Committee and the Bylaws and Resolutions Committee. Both of these were great development experiences that taught me a lot about leading teams that were not located in the same place, which has turned out to be very helpful in the recent months of remote work.

Winning the 2016 AALL Emerging Leader Award was a great honor, and I think it made a big impression on my superiors at the law library. And of course, the annual meetings have been invaluable in terms of both professional education and making and renewing connections with colleagues all over the country and around the world. Being an active AALL member has been a tremendous advantage in my professional growth.

**What do you enjoy most about your job?**

In this role, what I like most is helping to enable those in my division to do great work. The division includes incredibly talented law librarians with a great diversity of backgrounds, experience, and interests and a high degree of professional commitment to the law library and the profession. Supporting my team and their successes, whether it’s through feedback or coaching, helping navigate administrative or organizational challenges, or connecting them with opportunities, is something I find tremendously rewarding.

**What advice do you have for newer law librarians?**

I have three ideas on this topic. The first one is to be on the lookout for potential role models and mentors. Regarding role models, I read a really interesting article in the *Harvard Business Review* years ago that said a role model doesn’t necessarily need to be a role model for everything. As a law librarian, you might have a role model for, say, reference work, and a different role model for how to be an effective supervisor. You can pick and choose your role models based upon the skill sets that you want to model after them. In my case, the reference librarians in my division frequently serve as my models for reference and for teaching legal research—I learn from them constantly. For leadership and management, I have Jane Sánchez, the law librarian of Congress, and my supervisor Peter Roudik, the assistant law librarian of Congress. And, of course, Tim Coggins, as I mentioned.

Mentoring relationships are invaluable, whether they’re formal relationships such as those arranged through the AALL Leadership Academy, or informal ones that develop organically. Use these relationships wisely and tend to them with care—they can have a massive positive impact on your career growth.

**What do you wish everyone knew about law librarians?**

Law librarians are unstoppable—in finding information and acquiring resources, we regularly pull rabbits out of hats, find needles in haystacks, and any other relevant metaphors you can think of. We have a deep sense of professionalism about our work and can be relied upon to approach any project in the law library or elsewhere in our organizations with intelligence, dedication, rigor, and good judgment.
Leading During Times of Uncertainty

Question: Having lived through a pandemic for almost one year, what changes or adjustments have you had to make in your leadership style? Would you say this has been the most difficult time of your professional career?

I’m not certain that I’ve had to change anything about my leadership style, but I definitely had to take a step back to see which parts should be amplified and which parts should be dialed down. One of the biggest challenges for me has been setting the right tone. While I think it is important to try to put a positive spin on things and remain upbeat and optimistic, I don’t want to discount the anxiety and uncertainty that everyone is feeling right now.
The challenge is striking the right balance between leading by inspiring a “can-do” attitude that helps pull people together and leading by showing empathy for people’s fears—cutting them some slack as they try to navigate all the disruptions this pandemic has brought to their personal and professional lives. It is important to recognize the enormous toll all of this can take on everyone’s emotional well-being. I have also read a lot about the importance of listening, so I am trying to hone my communication skills so that people will feel secure in being forthcoming in their dealings with me.

Believe it or not, the pandemic has not really made my professional career difficult. Our team had already worked remotely a great deal while being on call at night and on weekends, so we were “shovel-ready” to operate in a virtual environment when COVID-19 hit. During a time when so much is uncertain and planning is nearly impossible, doing challenging and interesting work with people I really like has been the one thing that has remained consistent and a great occupier of time.

Everyone has heard the expression “Another thing we didn’t learn in library school!” It’s what we say when encountering a problem, task, or responsibility we’ve never done before (and perhaps never wanted to do). Well, welcome to 2020, where the theme is: Things you didn’t learn in library school! How do you operate an active academic research and teaching library without the library? How do you allow in-library usage of books when the American Library Association proposes a 72-hour quarantine for all circulated materials? How do you enforce social distancing guidelines in study rooms? And so much more!

This year has been the most difficult time of my professional career. Not only because none of us were trained for the things happening every day, but because the combination of quarantining, masking, and social distancing simply makes everything more difficult. I love teaching, but I hate teaching with my mouth and nose covered and not being able to pass around materials I’m talking about. I also hate teaching to a room half full of students (who have their faces half covered) while the other half participates remotely. I love being creative about solving problems and I enjoy a good challenge, but when every move or decision becomes a novel challenge, it adds up to too much. We’ve taken the doors off of study rooms, installed plexiglass partitions at the circulation desk, and are handing out surgical gloves to patrons who wish to use books.

I’ve come to discover that leadership in a time of crisis means two things: it reveals the strength of your sense of humor, and it demands humility. Since no one has navigated a pandemic of this scale in the modern era, there is little past experience to draw upon to confidently make intelligent, thoughtful decisions. Late last spring and throughout the summer as we were planning for school reopening, we would take on a challenge, make a decision about it, and then change our minds as many as three or four times a day based on new and evolving facts and factors. Having a sense of humor about decisions you make is critical, otherwise you will find yourself feeling terrible about being wrong so much of the time. This is where humility comes in. I’ve learned to laugh about (nearly) anything, and to not take my decisions too seriously.

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**RICHARD LEITER**
**DIRECTOR OF THE SCHMID LAW LIBRARY & PROFESSOR OF LAW**
University of Nebraska College of Law Lincoln, NE rich.leiter@unl.edu
Welcome to our new column, On the Ground: Real-World Solutions, which takes a practical look at common library problems and provides solutions. Each article in this column will explore a new topic on library services, best practices, and everything in between. On the Ground: Real-World Solutions will also feature various guest columnists who will expand on their expertise in specific areas of everyday library services.

In summer 2017, the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Law Library sought a better way to gather information from students on their experience with library services. We were specifically interested in the student experience with reference and circulation services, and with our collections. During our initial research on surveys, we discovered how difficult it was to hold the attention of survey takers, so we devised a plan to offer incentivized mini-surveys throughout the 2017-2018 academic year. The goals for the project were to identify unmet student needs, raise awareness of existing services, and assess our communication methods.
In total, we conducted 11 surveys and received more than 500 responses throughout the project. Our small survey incentive—being entered into a drawing for a $5 gift card—was a big hit. The specific survey topics included library services, communication, research training and workshops, study aids, productivity items, research guides, reference desk services, and library space and hours. As a result of these surveys, we identified and implemented a number of new services, and we proposed an overall marketing and communications strategy to better reach our students. Below are seven best practices that will help you with your surveys.

1 **Know Your Survey Subjects.** In our planning stage, we spent lots of time discussing the best ways to reach our students, the best times to release surveys, and the feedback we had already received from students. One of our first surveys asked students for their preferred method of communication. We then incorporated their feedback into our survey strategy.

   The timing of the surveys was important because we viewed them as a tool to both educate and gain feedback from the students. For example, we offered our study aids survey in mid-October, before students started studying for exams. This allowed us to let students know that we had study aids while asking them about the study aids they were familiar with so that we could supplement our collection.

2 **Pick a Very Narrow Topic for Each Survey.** The narrower the topic, the easier it is to limit the number of substantive questions. For example, after consulting with the reference staff, the reference desk survey asked between five and six substantive questions focusing on the students’ experience with the reference desk and reference librarians, as well as how they would like to communicate with reference staff.

3 **Carefully Construct Your Questions and Responses.** While we had been attentive in constructing our questions, we realized how important it was to carefully construct responses in our second survey that asked students about their preferred method of communication. When reviewing the survey results, we realized that the two most popular responses, email or MyLaw, could be confused. MyLaw, the school’s communication portal, communicates through web content and by email. It was difficult to determine if the student’s preference was for the website or the regular emails. While the results were still valuable, we realized that going forward we had to be very specific, not only when constructing our questions, but also when constructing the possible responses.

4 **Keep It Short.** Every survey included a few standard questions to collect basic data, including year level (1L, 2L, 3L, LLM, and other) and a space for students to enter their email if they wanted to be entered in the gift card drawing. Beyond the standard questions, we asked between one and six questions. We occasionally used jump logic (where the survey would jump to the next question based on their answer) so students were only answering questions relevant to their experiences and interests.

5 **Make It Easy.** Initially, the survey was distributed via email, MyLaw announcements, and social media. When we released survey three, it was also offered on an iPad at the library entrance guard station. Since this is the single point of entry for the library and students must show an ID to the guard, every student entering would see this survey opportunity. Additionally, many students are friendly with our security guards and often stop to chat with them. The guards encouraged students to take the survey. We also added signage to the iPad as we changed surveys so students would know it was a new survey. Of the 11 surveys conducted throughout the year, survey three received the largest number of responses.

   The iPad also made the surveys portable, and librarians were able to offer the survey at a table in the busy law school courtyard during lunch hours. By providing candy and snacks, students were very willing to participate.

6 **Constantly Evaluate.** Being able to constantly evaluate the surveys made for a steep learning curve, but it also made each subsequent survey better.

   The following are a few examples from our project. We launched our first survey shortly after the first-year orientation, asking students if there were
library services that they had used at other institutions that they would like to see offered at UCLA Law. Most of the responses indicated that they were not yet familiar enough with our services. We realized we asked this question too early in the term and made the decision to re-ask this question later in the academic year. Another issue we identified between surveys two and three was that we were too ambitious with our goal to offer a new survey every two to three weeks. We quickly abandoned that idea and offered a new survey every four to five weeks. We were also able to quickly recover from our poorly worded question in survey two. We did not have another issue with unclear or confusing responses for the remainder of the program.

**IMPLEMENTATION.** You spent lots of time creating the survey and then collecting the data, so make sure you use the survey. The limited scope of each mini-survey allowed us to immediately implement some changes, and we implemented others within a few months. Some of the newly implemented services included the revitalization of a research workshop series, which covered topics such as Bluebooking, searching techniques, and seminar paper research offered throughout the semester. We began offering the workshops the same semester in response to a survey. In the spring semester, we were able to purchase some new furniture, including a larger standing desk station, laptop tables to be used with the soft seating, and seat cushions that fit the library chairs. These purchases were low cost, required minimal staff time, and offered an immediate benefit to students.

The mini-survey project was a success; it provided some unexpected outcomes, and we would highly recommend this program to others. We became experts in running surveys on iPads and also iPad stands. We also created a comprehensive communications plan for the UCLA Law Library. We hope these best practices will help you find ways to improve services to your students.

Three Key Takeaways

1. Plan, but be flexible. We planned our survey topics out for the entire semester in advance, but we made changes over the course of the survey project—some we anticipated and some we did not.

2. Ask questions about aspects of the library that you can address. For example, library temperature is centrally controlled and we cannot change it, so we did not ask a question about it. We did have a commitment from the library director that he would consider purchasing items depending on cost.

3. Look for other unexpected outcomes. We planned to make the survey portable and meet students in their spaces in hopes of getting responses from students who may not use the physical library. During our survey tabling, we found that many students came by to ask general library and reference questions. This later led to organized and recurring library tabling in the school courtyard to reach out to students and bring the library to their space.
Who can imagine a law library providing all of its services in a virtual environment that includes remote legal research, virtual legal classes, and access to a completely virtual collection? This entirely virtual operation not only became our daily routine, but also a functional and sustainable reality for law libraries in a matter of days.

As law librarians, we know firsthand how the legal industry remains a passive and disinterested user of new virtual platforms and remote technology. The American Bar Association (ABA) Standard 306 is one of the most concrete examples of constraints to providing all services virtually. Nevertheless, COVID-19 forced the industry to embrace the virtual world and its promise of providing all library services continuously, despite the unprecedented and trying times. How did law librarians perform in this challenging environment? What made the difference between following our pre-established disaster plans and adapting to the unprecedented situation? What are some best practices we learned in making the complete virtual services shift while remaining “disaster plan ready?” What follows is an attempt to answer these questions, based on our experiences.

**Communication Is Key**

Public-facing law libraries have a number of competing stakeholders who require unique consideration and planning strategies. For example, government law librarians must navigate guidelines and policies that respond to numerous government
entities and address the accompanying legal and ethical considerations, all of which can complicate even the most effective disaster plans currently in place. The unexpected twist of providing all library services online during a pandemic presented a new challenge and at times required a balancing act of managing expectations while navigating new circumstances. Therefore, constant and clear communication became key to everything. A healthy and significant amount of ongoing dialogue through all channels available is essential when working with multiple and sometimes contradictory disaster plans, as well as their respective stakeholders.

Experiencing similar challenges, academic law libraries were asked to not only support the semester’s work as it shifted online, but also to function as a “virtual open space.” Library administrations, in collaboration with staff, started the process of holding meetings online, creating business hours schedules for departments and on-site staff schedules with limited overlap to maintain social distancing. This new virtual open space provided a platform for all library users to communicate with our librarians and, to some extent, imitate the feeling our physical spaces bring to the community at large.

Existing Online

Law libraries providing access to the public always need to take into consideration this important stakeholder (the public) in their disaster plans. COVID-19 showed us how the virtual law libraries supporting virtual courts became a crucial component of the disaster response. The virtual court system managed to provide most services in a timely and orderly fashion, and it helped maintain a level of access to justice for the public. Existing online and providing services virtually during the pandemic has allowed law librarians to envision the twenty-first century library not only as a physical space, but also as one that operates in a completely virtual environment and still supports a staff and the needs of the public.

Whether it’s serving the public or your regular internal users, another area where existing online during a disaster posed unforeseen problems and alternative solutions was the reference desk. Thankfully, the in-person reference interview itself was easily shifted to online appointments. Additionally, the equipment needed to exist online and provide a successful service was not equally distributed. Despite all the inventory and needs assessment plans available, certain staff and supervisors needed to address the lack of computers or internet access at home. Not all staff had access to technology outside of work, and several libraries needed to either create projects that allowed staff to work with what was available in their home environment or provide support for wireless networks and portable devices.

Electronic Access for All

The scale of necessary resources, coupled with the sheer number of people now needing electronic access to them, was quite unforeseen in disaster plans vetted multiple times before. Providing online access to legal materials to all users became one of the greatest challenges. Law libraries either previously did not provide the electronic access now needed, or certain print materials were simply unavailable in an electronic format.

For example, several law schools were also on spring break when their home institutions announced closings, and faculty and students were not allowed to return to campus to retrieve their belongings. Thus, law libraries were responsible for providing online access to ensure the semester continued at no extra cost or burden to their community members.

Initially, libraries reached out to faculty for their remaining class reading assignments and frantically scanned casebooks as a means to solve this access problem. Copyright conversations were seen on discussion boards, but it was clear the fair use exception applied. As reading lists were collected, Technical Services departments were expertly negotiating with publishers about electronic access for all materials on their platforms. Faculty and students not only needed access to casebooks, but also journals, study aids, the Bluebook, etc., from multiple publishers with varying degrees of permission and user access. Items that were previously too cost prohibitive for institutions to purchase, or that publishers previously denied access to, were now offered at extremely reduced rates or free for the rest of the semester.

Whether institutions did not have a plan in place or could adapt their current disaster plan, law libraries learned the lesson that electronic access to all users sounds like a great idea until you are in the midst of an emergency. Copyrights, vendor and contract negotiations, levels of users’ comfort with technology, and the availability of online legal materials are among some of the concrete issues that make the virtual law library both a challenge and a panacea during a pandemic.

Relying on Your Peers

When faced with these unknowns, a level of frustration and disappointment always arises. Relying on library peers from all over the country and the world for their sound advice was a helping hand, and is one of the basic tenets to being disaster-ready. Since mid-March, as lockdown orders progressed across the country, special interest sections (SIS) discussion boards, such as the Academic Law Librarians (ALL-SIS), Government Law Libraries (GLL-SIS), and Research Instruction & Patron Services (RIPS-SIS), served as platforms for sharing experiences and expertise with one another. These virtual spaces provided librarians with opportunities to ask questions and receive real-time responses and feedback from peers facing the same challenging and rapidly developing crises.

What is clear from the pandemic is that, based on how agilely and efficiently we were able to react and respond to each unexpected situation, law librarians are prepared no matter the level of disaster plan or emergency situation. The resilience, expertise, and diligence that our law libraries and staff displayed saved the day and allowed our institutions to operate virtually in...
rapidly evolving, unprecedented, and challenging times.

To-Do List:

- Communicate early, often, and regularly.
- Conduct needs assessment and inventories annually.
- Maintain and update a Disaster and Recovery plan.
- Train staff and users on electronic access constantly.
- Ask others for help!

This article is part of a four-part series, and we are looking for people to interview. Did your library have a disaster plan that prepared you for this global pandemic? Did you need to make substantial changes to your disaster plan in order to continue operations during the pandemic? We want to hear from all library types, sizes, and staff. Please contact either Marcelo or Shira if you want to be interviewed and share your story.

JOIN AALL’S NEW COVID-19 COMMUNITY FORUM

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact our communities and how we work within them. To help navigate the long- and short-term effects of this disruption, AALL has created a new forum on My Communities, “COVID-19 Community Forum,” where members can share information about how their organizations are adapting, ask questions, and check in with one another. To participate, please click the “Join Community” button in the upper right-hand corner of the web page.

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Save the Date

AALL VIRTUAL INNOVATION BOOTCAMP
SPRING 2021

First introduced as an in-person workshop, the Innovation Bootcamp is now being offered virtually. As the effects of the pandemic continue to impact us all, they’re revealing new challenges and opportunities to rethink the way we work. This virtual course is designed specifically for legal information professionals—to create new value, gain momentum for your ideas, and foster a culture of innovation.

Learn more at bit.ly/AALLinnovation21
Tips and strategies to help you succeed.

BY MARI CHENEY

The stereotype of a librarian shushing her patrons is exactly the opposite of what happens when I interact with a patron in the library. Despite my powerful hearing aids, I’m often saying “What?” or, “I didn’t catch that.” I dread teaching in certain classrooms because of the terrible acoustics, and if I do have to teach in those rooms, I first weigh the pros and cons of telling the room full of students that I have a hearing impairment and that I need them to speak up.

I don’t hide my hearing aids, and only one is noticeably visible. When I wear my hair up, I experience pitying looks, and I want to shout that just because I have hearing aids, I’m not any less qualified to help the person in front of me. I’m proud that I’m navigating a profession that requires paying acute attention to detail, answering many verbal questions by phone and in person, and having frequent interactions with students whose mouths are hidden behind computers or tablets (and now masks) in the classroom. While I’m proud of my accomplishments, navigating this profession with an invisible disability is isolating, lonely, frustrating, and as Shonda Rhimes says, “an extra responsibility—whether you want it or not.”

An Invisible Disability
The Invisible Disabilities Association defines an invisible disability as “symptoms such as debilitating pain, fatigue, dizziness, cognitive dysfunctions, brain injuries, learning differences, and mental health disorders, as well as hearing and vision impairments. These are not always obvious to the onlooker, but can sometimes or always limit daily activities, range from mild challenges to severe limitations, and vary from person to person.” I was unwilling to believe that I was the first or only law librarian living with this invisible disability of hearing impairment; while I may be different than the colleagues at my own institution, I was sure other librarians around the country had similar experiences to mine simply based on the alarming statistics about hearing loss and impairment.
The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders reports that approximately 28.8 million adults in the United States could benefit from the use of hearing aids, and that about 15 percent of adults in the United States (37.5 million) age 18 and over report some hearing issues.

I put out a call for hearing-impaired law librarians to share their experiences with me, and the responses came swiftly and enthusiastically. Thanks to their willingness to share, I no longer feel first, only, or different. If you have a hearing loss or impairment, or work with someone who does, this article is for you.

As one librarian put it: “Working with people who have a disability shouldn’t be any different than hiring someone without a disability; if the candidate is competent, then hire them.” The more we talk about hearing loss and impairment in the workplace, the more we can squelch the unsound fears of employers and the resentment, isolation, and loneliness that employees are experiencing. In the end, most of us want the same thing: to provide the best possible customer service to our patrons, and even with a hearing impairment, this can often be accomplished with small changes.

It is important to note that all hearing loss and impairment is different. The law librarians who responded to this survey have a wide variety of impairments, including age-related hearing loss, single-sided deafness, auditory processing disorder, bilateral mild hearing loss, bilateral severe hearing loss, and tinnitus.

Navigating the Workplace

Some hearing loss accommodations are as simple as rearranging a reference desk, while other accommodations may require time off for surgery and recovery, or an extensive wish list for office renovation. The U.S. Department of Justice’s Disability Rights Section has published a helpful fact sheet on effective communication under ADA requirements, including hearing disabilities. (View the ADA requirements at bit.ly/JF21ADA.) Regardless of the type of accommodation—whether it is required under the law or a strong preference by the hearing-impaired person—most librarians recommend being open, honest, and upfront with employers, supervisors, and co-workers. This allows them to understand why a hearing-impaired person may be asking for help in certain circumstances and makes them feel comfortable with the hearing-impaired individual’s communication techniques. Additionally, this prevents misunderstanding by others, as sometimes hearing loss is perceived as a lack of attention or that the hearing-impaired person is intentionally ignoring a co-worker or patron. This is a small (and free) way to reduce frustration on both sides.

Other low-cost and simple accommodations include: 1) installation of an amplified or volume-enhanced telephone; 2) a designated notetaker at staff meetings who provides written notes to anyone who wants them; and 3) allowing the hearing-impaired individual, particularly someone with hyperacusis (a reduced tolerance for sound), to temporarily move offices or move to a quiet area in the library if necessary to accommodate noises that can be distracting. These suggestions may involve interacting with Human Resources (HR) as well as having conversations with the supervisor, but all are easily accomplished, especially if co-workers are supportive, as has been the case for most law librarians who responded to my questions.

Expensive, time-consuming, and wished-for workplace accommodations include: 1) employer assistance in purchasing hearing aids (they are expensive—hearing aids range in price from just under $1,000 to over $4,000 per device); 2) the standardization of captions on voice-over recordings, or adequate written documentation that can replace these voice-over recordings, especially on vendor-provided trainings; 3) closed-captioning of live virtual meetings, such as interviews and committee meetings; and 4) significant alterations to the reference or library desk setup, which may require that built-in furniture be removed.

Regardless of the type of accommodation requested, it’s best to be upfront about what you’d like to see changed, whether it’s a small thing, such as a new phone, or a larger issue, such as furniture placement. One law librarian commented, “It is wise to be proactive about this issue,” a statement echoed by another respondent who said: “I have found that being open and honest about my hearing/processing issues with my supervisors and co-workers has really made it easier for me whenever difficult situations arise.”

Reference desk interactions can be complicated for the hearing-impaired law librarian. Some law librarians suggest asking the patron to submit their question via email or chat, especially...

“I am what I have come to call an F.O.D.—a First. Only. Different. We are a very select club, but there are more of us out there than you’d think. We know one another on sight. We all have that same weary look in our eyes. The one that wishes people would stop thinking it remarkable that we can be great at what we do while black, while Asian, while a woman, while Latino, while gay, while a paraplegic, while deaf. But when you are an F.O.D., you are saddled with that burden of extra responsibility—whether you want it or not.”

–Shonda Rhimes, Year of Yes
Here are some additional tips for working and thriving with a hearing impairment:

- Join a support group, such as the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Bar Association.
- See a hearing specialist as soon as you suspect you may have a hearing problem.
- Check if you qualify for a free CaptionCall phone; visit bit.ly/JF21phone.
- Determine if you’re eligible for financial assistance in purchasing or replacing your hearing aids by consulting Funding Sources for Audiology Services and Hearing Aids at bit.ly/JF21funding.
- If you have hearing aids, wear them as much as possible. When you strain to hear, it’s easy to get exhausted and you may have additional issues such as headaches and an inability to pay attention and focus.
- Make sure you know your rights under federal and state law. If you need assistance, consult with your state’s disabilities office and your local Equal Employment Opportunity Commission office to help understand what rights you have at work. If your employer has a disability center—even if it’s geared toward students—ask them what services are available to you as an employee.
- Ask your employer about medical and protected-leave benefits such as sick leave pools and optional insurance. Work with Human Resources to ensure they provide employer-wide training on invisible disabilities, including hearing impairment. Volunteer to speak.
- Recommend a low-cost AI caption integration for video calls, such as Otter.ai. During the pandemic, it’s become increasingly apparent that many employers do not have the tools to support hard of hearing employees. If your employer is unable to pay for a Zoom integration, work with your employer to use a service that provides free AI captioning, such as Google Meet or Skype. Other options are available; check out a comparison chart at bit.ly/JF21mereryl.

if the patron has a hard-to-hear vocal range. If possible, invite the patron into a quiet area to answer the question in person. In this setting, the patron may be more comfortable speaking as loudly as the hearing-impaired law librarian would prefer. One simple accommodation is to install a volume-enhanced phone at the reference desk and in the hearing-impaired law librarians’ office. Thankfully, phone technology is improving and it’s likely an office phone that can stream directly into Bluetooth-enabled hearing aids will (hopefully) be available in the near future.

Classroom teaching can also be difficult for hearing-impaired law librarians due to the layout or acoustics of the room, or simply because students’ mouths are hidden behind computer screens. As one law librarian suggests, “I encourage the students to raise their hands until I make eye contact—this suggestion seems to go well.” It’s okay to remind students to speak clearly and loudly as most people forget and return to their normal speech levels quickly.

Outside of the classroom and reference desk, there are other work-related situations that require careful navigation. If you supervise students, it might be necessary to let them know you are hearing-impaired. When giving tours of the library, you might decide to put up signs warning students in quiet areas that a “loud” disruption will be happening at certain times—for some hearing-impaired law librarians, it’s impossible to hear whispers. However, the better accommodation would be to post signs any time a tour is scheduled to take place by any law librarian, rather than singling out the hearing-impaired tour guide.

Additional Helpful Tips

If you own a Connect Clip or similar streaming device, consider asking people speaking in a meeting to wear the clip or pass it around so that their voices can be transmitted via Bluetooth to your hearing aids. If you attend a lot of meetings for work, discuss with your supervisor whether the library would purchase the device on your behalf.

Another tip to help navigate small group meetings is to ask for written confirmation and follow-up to make sure you’re all on the same page. In an ideal situation, supervisors and co-workers would avoid scheduling meetings at restaurants or other noisy environments, but if this is impossible, ask if you can pick a meeting place known for its quiet ambiance. As one law librarian notes, “The saddest thing about being hearing-impaired is that you miss all the jokes and the gossip because the first thing people do when they have a good punch line or a piece of information to share is lower their voices. Also, in a group setting (such as a conference) when everyone laughs, but you don’t, because you didn’t hear the joke, it’s the loneliest feeling. You just have to get used to it, though, and appreciate the things you do hear because it could be a lot worse.” Another librarian echoes these sentiments: “It can be isolating, and I often have to push myself to get out socially knowing how exhausting it can be.”

Many employers are not aware of the availability of CART (Communication Access Real-time Translation) technology. CART is a service performed using a stenotype machine, computer, and real-time software to produce text that can be displayed on a computer. While smaller employers may not be able to afford it, you could still advocate for the use of CART technology at major events (such as commencements) and conferences. The real-time captioning will likely benefit more than just those who experience hearing impairment.

At conferences, there are several ways to make attendance easier for
hearing-impaired law librarians. Encourage all speakers to ask if the sound level is okay, then adjust accordingly, and remind members of the audience to use a microphone when asking questions. Schedule small-group meetings off-site or move breakout sessions away from main meeting areas that have a lot of foot traffic. Give yourself permission to leave large noisy gatherings early and to schedule meetings with vendors in quiet locations—not the exhibit hall. Use the conference session recordings, such as the American Association of Law Libraries AALL2go, to re-listen to the program to make sure you didn’t miss anything important, and encourage conference sponsors to provide closed captioning for the recorded programs.

Creating a Greater Understanding

For the most part, supervisors and co-workers are supportive of hearing-impaired law librarians. As one law librarian notes, “I am very lucky that all of my co-workers are caring individuals who truly want to help me succeed.” Another says, “While the level of my impairment doesn’t interfere with most conversations, I want to ensure my patrons and colleagues that when I ask them to repeat something it is because of my hearing limits, not their delivery (in most cases).” At the end of the day, our goal is the same as that of the person living and working without an invisible disability: to do our jobs and do them well. Thankfully, technology is available to help with many hearing impairments, and, for the most part, frustration and misunderstandings can be prevented by open and frank conversations with both co-workers and patrons. Small changes, such as a new office phone or having a notetaker at meetings, can make a world of difference to the hearing-impaired law librarian.

If you happen to find us at a conference talking in a group about our shared experiences, ask to join us. We want to tell our stories. It’s time to stop being silent about the disability that makes us feel first, only, and different, and, thanks to a community of librarians willing to share their experiences, we can, as Shonda Rhimes says, “dance it out” together.

Thank you to the law librarians who responded to my questions about living and navigating our profession with a hearing impairment, to the 2019 Boulder Conference participants, and to Kristina Alayan, AALL Spectrum editorial board member, for their comments.

Best Practices for Employers

- Ensure you are familiar with your institution’s accommodation-related policies so you can support your hearing-impaired employee to the best of your ability and knowledge.
- Collaborate with HR and your hearing-impaired employee to ensure the employee has an HR contact if they have questions or concerns. This includes making sure the employee has time to meet with HR during their workday.
- Familiarize yourself with the ADA-required accommodations for hearing-impaired employees and advocate for those accommodations if your institution is falling short.
- Make sure your hearing-impaired employee’s workspace is as accommodating as possible. Do they need a different phone? Is the placement of their office furniture best situated for hearing when people come into their office, or for the hearing-impaired law librarian to read lips?
- Do not single out the hearing-impaired employee in meetings. Make it a best practice to have a notetaker at meetings and to distribute the notes to everyone who attended the meeting. If the meeting is held virtually, check if the software has a built-in transcription option.
- Encourage your employee to share their experience as a hearing-impaired law librarian. Make work a safe space to educate others about what it’s like to live with an invisible disability.
- Do not penalize your hearing-impaired employee for requesting accommodations. This also means not discriminating when it comes to pay increases or promotions.
- If you’re advertising for an open position, consult with HR and your hearing-impaired employee to ensure the job posting does not contain implicitly biased language. Your hearing-impaired employee is a great resource for this.
- Do not pressure your hearing-impaired employee to attend in-person conferences, since many conferences do not provide adequate accommodations. Do encourage your employee to attend virtual learning opportunities if they are more comfortable learning that way.
- Apologize when you get it wrong, then move on.
As the world becomes even more interconnected, how do librarians keep up with the growing international and comparative legal information needs of today’s increasingly transnational and multilingual legal professionals and law students? The Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals (IFLP), one of AALL’s premier publications, can help meet the never-ending need for accurate and diverse information from around the globe. During this webinar, learn how to search IFLP effectively, how to utilize the Index when teaching and training others, and better understand IFLP’s potential as a low-cost/high-impact resource for your legal research toolkit.

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Wednesday, January 13, 2021
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Register for this webinar at: bit.ly/AALLIFLPwebinar
How librarians can use their knowledge of books and reading to help communities change.

Talking about racism is tough. Not talking about it is not an option when people are dying. Across our country, people are having difficult conversations about the racism they see in their communities and the effects that systemic racism—racism that is built into the very structures of our society—have on people of color.

The University of Missouri School of Law has been having intentional conversations about the many ways that people in our country are treated as “other” for many years, but the need to talk about it in a new way surfaced after Michael Brown was killed in Ferguson, Missouri, in the fall of 2014. Some of the University of Missouri Law School students called Ferguson home, and his death hit them hard. Others in the school simply could not see why people were protesting and blocking highways, which seemed to be counterproductive to their cause. Tensions rose and the school needed to find a way to talk about and understand how different members of our society experience the world.

A New Initiative Is Born
Out of the need to have difficult conversations and more education about diversity, the One Read initiative was born. (Learn more about the initiative at bit.ly/JF21One.) Law School and library faculty, staff, and students volunteered to choose a common text to read and discuss together as a community. Suggestions poured in from the Law School community, indicating just
TIPS FOR BOOK GROUPS

- Decide whether participation is mandatory or optional.
- Set a budget.
- Assign an overall point person or committee to coordinate.
- Ask faculty and staff to facilitate the groups (e.g., schedule meetings, reserve rooms, and lead discussions).
- Use a survey software (e.g., Qualtrics) for organizing.
- Set up groups based on day/time preference to help with scheduling.
- Opt for larger groups as attendance may drop off.
- Use Zoom to expand participation.
- Establish book selection criteria and an approval process.
- Limit book choices to one common text or a few texts.
- Solicit a variety of book recommendations and review book lists.
- Ensure book availability in print and online.
- Choose books with discussion guides, or draft discussion questions.
- Offer complementary events and speakers.
- Ask for feedback on ways to improve.

RESOURCES FOR BOOK GROUPS

- American Library Association Book Discussion Groups
  bit.ly/JF21ALA
- California Council for the Humanities: Organizing and Managing a Book Discussion Group
  bit.ly/JF21Californiacouncil
- “News: Book Club Going Virtual? Consider These 3 Things,” Programming Librarian (A website of the American Library Association Public Programs Office)
  bit.ly/JF21Bookclub

New Ways to Discuss Race

The University of Missouri’s One Read model can be easily adapted to any organization, but it certainly isn’t the only way to use books and reading to discuss racial justice topics. For example, Seattle University School of Law has adopted a slightly different approach. In the fall of 2016, Seattle University School of Law launched their Racial Justice Book Group Initiative in response to interest in additional diversity training. (Learn more about the initiative at bit.ly/JF21Racialjustice.)

Dean Annette Clark explained, “My goal in inviting you to join this effort is to engage us as a community in a learning enterprise on a subject that has such immediacy for all of us, and that also has particular relevance for lawyers and law students. Being in small groups will hopefully foster conversations that might not otherwise occur, and having combined students/faculty/staff reading groups, will broaden the conversations and help us to get to know each other better.”

Seattle University Law Library has taken the lead on organizing the book groups with the Dean’s Office. Book groups are comprised of a mix of eight to 10 students, staff, and faculty who choose a racial-justice themed book from a curated reading list. A faculty or staff member is assigned to each group to facilitate discussions during spring semester. Participation is optional.

Overall, the book groups have been quite successful, and participants have even had opportunities to hear some of the authors speak locally (e.g., Bryan Stevenson, Anthony Ray Hinton, Carol Anderson, and this spring, Ibram X. Kendi). Being a part of the book groups offers the law school community an excellent opportunity to discuss important topics with incredibly knowledgeable students, faculty, and staff, and to hear a variety of perspectives.

Private Law Librarians Participate

From curating diversity resources to organizing book groups, law firm libraries are actively participating in diversity initiatives. Reference librarian Jayse Sessi, at Alston & Bird,
report that the firm’s Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Committee has held several popular Racial Justice Zoom presentations and placed a Racial Justice Banner on the firm’s intranet main page, which features Articles & Books, Podcasts & Videos, Pro Bono & Community Service, and Philanthropy & Fundraising. The Articles & Books section includes items from the weekly D&I Library email. Alston & Bird is one of more than 250 firms to join the Law Firm Antiracism Alliance (LFAA).

According to Mark Desierto, manager of Davis Wright Tremaine Library and Research Services, the library staff at their firm organized a book group to promote the firm’s collaboration and diversity efforts and to reach out to new patrons. After much discussion from the firm’s D&I Committee and others, they chose to read *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson. The library held three book group sessions via Zoom and, although attendance was optional, they had an excellent turnout of attorneys and staff, some of whom had not met previously. Desierto said, “It has been gratifying and energizing for the library team to provide a space for co-workers to have honest and in-depth conversations around pressing social issues and the role a law firm should play in the midst of these issues. We have colleagues who were directly involved in voter registration efforts in the 1960s, and colleagues directly affected by systemic racism and social injustice. Some felt so strongly about the book that they attended multiple book club sessions.”

**The Path Forward**

Librarians can lead the way for their organizations using the tools they have at hand—their knowledge about books and readers—to create spaces where a community can change, one conversation at a time.

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**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.

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**Visit www.aallnet.org/bok.**
Imagine sitting in a nearly empty courtroom late one afternoon. You are the accused, and you are a bit disoriented from waiting in jail. You are still there because your family only had enough money to either make your bail or hire an attorney for you, so you waited for a preliminary hearing. While listening to a discussion between your attorney and the judge, much of which you don’t understand, you slowly begin to realize there is an issue with some paperwork. Your attorney did not submit the right kind of computer file and will have to try again. Laughter begins to bubble between the judge and counsel after the bailiff suggests your attorney “Google how to make a PDF again” and, before you fully grasp why all of this matters, the judge reschedules your hearing and the bailiff is leading you to the door. As you sit in a cell, you have time to hash out that your attorney’s digital illiteracy kept you from your family and your job for another week. How much confidence do you have in your attorney? How much hope do you have that the system will treat you fairly?

Technology is disruptive and its costs are often swept aside by the victors. No more brick-and-mortar stores? Cost of progress—shop online. Jobs lost when unregulated “ridesharing” out-competes the highly regulated taxi industry? Cost of progress—get the app. A solo attorney struggles to create a PDF that can be e-filed in his or her jurisdiction? Cost of progress—learn or lose your license. In each case, we, as participants in an information-based economy, have either collectively accepted these costs or, at least, decided not to complain about them too much. And yet the costs of excluding attorneys from the legal field for failure to compete effectively in a digital system ripple substantially to their clients. For some clients, the cost is finding another attorney, perhaps at a larger firm at an increased rate. For others, the cost is life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

In part one of this two-part column, we look at the need for legal tech training to promote access to justice. In the next issue, we will look at the role law libraries of all types can play.

BY JOSEPH D. LAWSON
The Rain Does Not Fall on All Alike

Legal technology has entered a transitional period. For more than three decades, lawyers have been promised that technology will give them a competitive edge. While this paradigm has raised the ceiling in terms of adoption of innovative technologies, more recent trends point toward strict enforcement of the floor. Legal technology standards are now increasingly incorporated into ethical requirements, court rules, and local court procedures.

For example, Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure (TRAP) Rule 9.2 requires electronic filing of documents. TRAP Rule 9.4 provides specific requirements for PDFs and a dismissal mechanism for nonconforming documents. A recent decision in which a solo attorney represented a parent in a custody appeal chronicled the effect of these rules. After the court granted five extensions to file a brief in response to evidence that the attorney’s “computer ‘crashed,’ deleting ‘[t]he entire contents of [the] brief’” and the attorney experienced “technical malfunctions,” the appeal was dismissed. While few could argue the attorney deserved more chances, it is clear from the record that the attorney did not experience the dismissal. The client did.

Why does it matter if clients feel the impact of increasingly punitive legal tech rules? Because not all clients are equal. Some clients have bargaining power. When then in-house counsel D. Casey Flaherty required firms to compete for Kia Motors’ business to overcome technology hurdles, the firms that serve large businesses are quickly outpacing firms that serve individuals. Technologies that become commonplace in large firms will soon become mandatory for all. While we could once again write off the cost as a necessary result of progress, the ever-widening gap through which small firm attorneys fall disproportionately affects individuals with legal needs. It is highly unlikely that the client who walks into a small law firm during a pandemic can jump to a Plan B of using virtual services from a large law firm. Without sufficient learning opportunities, the pandemic is stretching access-to-justice cracks into chasms.

Sailing Solo in a Perfect Storm

The confluence of mandatory legal tech standards and an increasing need for low-cost legal services might offer sufficient monetary incentives to resolve the issue, but for a third factor that uniquely limits the ability of small firm lawyers to comply with emerging standards: When it comes to legal tech, solos and small firm practitioners face a distinct lack of training opportunities. According to the 2019 American Bar Association Tech Report, only 28 percent of solos report availability of technology training, while more than 95 percent of attorneys at large firms reported access to training. (View the report at bit.ly/JF21ABA.) It is noteworthy that these statistics were gathered well after the 2005 launch of YouTube, which is purported to have a nearly infinite collection of training materials. Without adequate learning opportunities, there is little chance that most attorneys who fall into this legal-tech Bermuda Triangle can keep up.

COVID-19 Turns Cracks into Chasms

Few could have predicted the toll of our current global pandemic. However, it is clear that small firm practitioners were less prepared than their large firm counterparts. In late 2019, 86 percent of large firms had business continuity plans, whereas only 21 percent of solos could say the same. As a result, solo attorneys are losing business from walk-in clients and spending a disproportionate amount of time trying to figure out technology. (Read the article at bit.ly/JF21IndianaLawyer.) Because of the disparity in training opportunities, the firms that serve large businesses are quickly outpacing firms that serve individuals. Technologies that become commonplace in large firms will soon become mandatory for all. While we could once again write off the cost as a necessary result of progress, the ever-widening gap through which small firm attorneys fall disproportionately affects individuals with legal needs.

Stay Tuned for Solutions

So, what do we do? Turn off the internet and go home? Of course not, but we likewise cannot ignore those swept aside in the legal community’s clamor to make disruptive technologies mandatory. The consequences are too severe. Luckily, law libraries already have the tools to be part of the solution. In part two of this column, we will explore ways we can improve access to justice by teaching legal tech.

Information Management
Teaching + Training

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Taking on CI in the Virtual World

How to get a seat at the (remote) table to ensure your CI voice is heard.

BY KEVIN MILES

Your reference librarian recently transferred to a competitive intelligence (CI) professional role. How does he or she get and keep a seat at the firm’s virtual (remote) business development table during this pandemic? Even though we are not currently working together in an office, collecting, analyzing, and acting on information from CI efforts is more important than ever. The financial markets are increasingly volatile, more attorneys and support staff are changing firms, and some practice groups are underutilized. A physical table has size limitations, but a virtual table is infinitely large. In other words, there is room for more seats and voices at the virtual business development table.
Changes and Challenges
As we all know, the pandemic has challenged how we conduct business. For many law firms, employees work well from home. Yet working from home sets new expectations, such as 24/7 availability. What are the boundaries between home and work during the pandemic? Having a working knowledge of communication via Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype, WebEx, or similar tools is now critical for sharing ideas. But because we also know that law librarians are very adaptable, such challenges can be readily met and overcome.

Ask for a Seat at the (Remote) Table
One way to gain a seat at the virtual table is to reach out to the partner who is setting the agenda and request permission to attend the next meeting. Ask the partner, “What’s the most important thing you are facing?” Your purpose at the first meeting is to address the issue in five minutes and propose a CI-based solution with documentation. Then, ask for more issues that you can help resolve. The table below outlines some strengths and opportunities that you can build on using CI to help your firm.

Use Special Purpose CI Reports
The article “Special Purpose CI Reports” from the March/April 2020 issue of *AALL Spectrum* discussed special purpose CI reports that you can modify for the first meeting:
- For the firm’s patent litigation practice group, show the number of law firms representing a particular client, and the judges who make the decisions.
- For the firm’s corporate practice group, show a corporation’s subsidiaries, but include the names and contact information of the General Counsel.
- For the firm’s trademark practice group, present a survey of royalty rates for a target company.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Market Strategy</td>
<td>Present an overview of shrinking and expanding markets. Describe what is</td>
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<td>causing each one in your market. How do we get from here to there?</td>
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<td>Business Research</td>
<td>What new activities are happening in your immediate market? You can monitor</td>
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<td>resources to discover who is moving into your market. Graph the statistics</td>
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<td>that suggest new trends. Develop a SWOT [Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities,</td>
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<td>and Threats] analysis on an existing client.</td>
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<td>Cross-Selling</td>
<td>Where is the pandemic hitting your firm? HIPAA, OSHA, insurance, data breaches,</td>
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<td>supply chain issues are affecting many clients. Other areas include food</td>
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<td>security or food technology, fintech, and IT services. You can help the firm</td>
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<td>craft a plan to cross-sell new services to existing clients.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Article Writing</td>
<td>Your skills at writing can place firm stories in the legal press. Mapping</td>
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<td>regulation tables, writing client alerts, and writing great proposals are</td>
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<td>some of the documents you can create.</td>
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CI Leadership in a Virtual Environment
While you can’t quite knock on a partner’s door these days, librarians can nevertheless proactively create CI reports and send them to partners to demonstrate the value of CI in a virtual environment. A virtual environment creates new opportunities—“When one door closes, another door opens.” Besides the limitless number of seats at virtual tables, there are also limitless virtual doors to knock on.

Remember to keep tabs on the CI needs of your attorneys in order to provide them with high-quality data and insightful information. Remember: Each new client or new matter from CI-based research, strategy, outreach, and cross-selling will build and enhance your reputation—and that of your firm’s.

READ
Kevin Miles’s Practical Competitive Intelligence column “Special Purpose CI Reports,” in the March/April 2020 issue of *AALL Spectrum* at bit.ly/MA20Miles.

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Research + Analytics
Information Management

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Best Practices for Remote Instruction

Last spring, when we were all thrust into online teaching/training, we basically winged it and assumed that virtual instruction was only going to last a few weeks. Eight months later, it looks like we’ll be doing some version of remote instruction for quite some time. Do you have any lessons learned or best practices that you’ve taken away from the first eight months of remote teaching/instruction?

Maribel: Unlike Scott and other academic law librarians, we had a bit more time to prepare for our first big concerted virtual teaching effort at our law firm: summer associate orientation. I’m fortunate enough to be at a law firm that was able to welcome all of our summers, but the start of our summer program was pushed back a few weeks, giving us a little bit more time to plan and prepare to train them in a new way. The summer associates have always received some national training through our firm, but most of the summer training sessions were conducted in person by librarians in the local offices. This year, each of the librarians conducted a virtual training session for the law students in their local offices, rather than conducting in-person or nationwide training. Though the summers may not have physically been in town—I had a “San Francisco” summer associate who was in Chicago the entire time—we found that it was helpful for the summers to maintain their cohort in some loose sense. Keeping them in
their groups also encouraged them to develop relationships with the other summers, attorneys, and librarians who would be in their offices.

Though there was a definite technical learning curve when it came to virtual training, there were some benefits. We found that attendance and engagement were much higher in the remote training sessions than they were in person, even though we assumed they would be experiencing Zoom fatigue after an all-virtual orientation. We were grateful to have great participation by our summer associates in our training sessions. We have been doing virtual new hire orientations and one-off attorney training since the summer program ended, but our next big opportunity for new hire orientations and one-off attorney sessions will be when our new first-year associates start. Below are some lessons learned from the summer program that we can apply to our new associate training:

- **Enlist a back-up instructor:** After one instance in which a lost internet connection ended a training session early, we found it helpful (and reassuring) to invite a co-worker to sit in as a back-up instructor, so that they could seamlessly take over if there were internet, sound, or power problems … which there were.

- **Monitor the chat:** Until we started our summer training sessions, my colleagues and I basically only used Zoom for staff calls and did not initially expect the summers to use Zoom’s chat feature to ask questions. Once we started monitoring the chat and answering questions as they came in, the training sessions became much more interactive and engaging.

- **Be interactive:** This is always something we are struggling with, both in person and virtually. We are still brainstorming ideas to be even more interactive and engaging with our new associates.

- **Follow up:** My normal practice is to follow up with new hires, summer associates, and new associates by dropping by the offices in person. I admit that I was much less diligent about following up this summer. I would suggest checking in with the new hires via email on a regular basis as a substitute for office rounds.

- **Remember that people are patient:** People tend to be much more patient with technical issues over virtual calls than in person, so don’t worry too much if you run into a glitch. Prepare for it (if you can), calmly fix it, and move on.

**Scott:** Since the beginning of “The COVID Times,” we have made a concerted attempt to approach our instructional efforts in a different way from how we’ve taught in the past—both for obvious reasons (we’re doing everything online), but also for deliberate, opportunistic reasons. Instead of thinking of the online format as a limitation, we have attempted to lean into the online format by presenting classes as a simulation of a multi-office law firm environment.

We have told students to approach each class as if we are the leaders of their practice groups working out of offices in different cities, or even on different continents. As Maribel points out, some amount of work has been taking place virtually for years at large, multi-office firms. With the American Bar Association’s increased emphasis in recent years on experiential learning, and given the inherently practical nature of legal research training, many among our academic law librarian ranks have already embraced the idea of simulation courses. Remote learning has simply given us a chance to simulate a different type of work environment—one that is actually aided by our current situation.

Another incidental opportunity that remote instruction has created is the necessity of improving my own video production skills. I have had “learn to make higher-quality instructional videos” on my to-do list for, I don’t know, a decade? The potential payoff has been clear to me for some time: Creating recyclable instructional videos either to supplement or even replace certain aspects of in-class lecturing allows class time to be spent on hands-on research training. Yet, for all of my good intentions, until the pandemic struck I had yet to dedicate the time it would take to produce high-quality, multimedia instructional materials. Not only have I produced a number of videos that I am confident I will reuse in future iterations of my course, but I also feel infinitely more proficient at video creation than I did before this opportunity (and I use that word deliberately) arose.

Like Maribel, I have been pleasantly surprised by the active engagement and participation by the students in my classes. Our results and feedback have been extremely encouraging, both in terms of course structure and instructional materials. While we are all aware that our current circumstances will not last forever, I have every intention of carrying many of the pedagogical techniques and materials into whatever version of normal exists in the future.

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In light of COVID-19, what leadership resources have you relied on to help you navigate through unprecedented change in your organization and personal life?

1. “Practical Wisdom: A Virtue for Leaders. Bringing Together Aquinas and Authentic Leadership,” by Ignacio Ferrero, Marta Rocchi, Massimiliano Matteo Pellegrini & Elizabeth Reichert (Business Ethics: A European Review, June 15, 2020). “Leadership studies often provide guidance on how to lead through difficult times, but the COVID-19 pandemic has created unparalleled challenges for individuals and organizations. This article examines Thomas Aquinas’s virtue of practical wisdom and how it can inform authentic leadership. The authors describe how leaders can think richly about the virtues, vices, and values that guide us through life’s complexities. The strength of this article is in its non-prescriptive nature. The authors do not outline specific actions. They examine how practical wisdom—something we all need during these uncertain times—can guide us through the million varied, complex, messy situations we find ourselves in on a day-to-day basis.”

   Jennifer E. Chapman; Easley Research Fellow; University of Maryland Carey School of Law; Thurgood Marshall Law Library; Baltimore, MD


   Matthew Nealy; Reference Librarian; North Carolina Central University School of Law Library; Durham, NC

3. Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action by Simon Sinek (Penguin Group, 2009). “During the uncertainty of last summer’s quarantine, this book grounded me and provided me with focus. Its message is simple: ‘When an organization defines itself by what it does, that’s all it will ever be able to do.’ Instead, ‘organizations should define themselves by why they do what they do.’ Employing this mindset enabled us to convey our library’s purpose with clarity and thereby successfully hire two librarians during a hiring freeze. Soon after, it enabled us to obtain a budget increase in order to purchase an ebook package, despite budget constraints. Going forward, libraries must continue to articulate why if we are to thrive in this changing world.”

   Amy Emerson; Assistant Dean for Library and Information Services & Assistant Professor of Law; Villanova University School of Law Library; Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law; Villanova, PA

4. How to Succeed in Your Office Job When There is No Office by Julie Weed (New York Times, June 21, 2020). “Though this article is not specific to the library profession, I found its focus on some of the emerging best practices for working remotely during this pandemic crisis very helpful. The article came out three months into the pandemic, when we were still all probably pretty optimistic that we would be returning to our libraries by the end of summer or early fall, and even though that has been the case for some libraries, most of us are still having to navigate the work-from-home mindset. As a manager, finding ways to balance your own mental and physical well-being as well as your team members’ is a huge challenge. This article helps the reader understand the need to keep the focus on the people we work with and not just the work.”

   Dawn Smith; Head of Acquisitions; Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School; New Haven, CT
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