FROM THE MAALL DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI) COMMITTEE

Darla Jackson, Director Mabee Legal Information Center, University of Tulsa College of Law (darla-jackson@utulsa.edu)

In the June issue of MAALL Markings, you were introduced to the DEI Committee. Matt Timko and I are serving as co-chairs and we are grateful to have Kieran Layton, Le'Shawn Turner, Gail Wechsler, and Laura Wilcoxon also serving on the DEI Committee. As we have begun meeting, it has become evident that the committee is composed of a diverse membership with differing interests and perspectives. As a result, as we work together, we will experience the benefits of diversity such as increased creativity and innovation, improved opportunities for professional growth, as well as improved problem-solving and decision-making skills.

While our diversity will certainly be advantageous, we do not foreclose the opportunity to learn from other organizations that are also committed to DEI. One such organization is the Association of Legal Administrators (ALA). The ALA has defined the terms used in its statement of commitment as follows:

Diversity recognizes, respects and values differences based on gender, race, skin color, ethnicity, national origin, age, religion, physical ability and sexual orientation. This also encompasses an infinite range of individual characteristics and experiences, such as communication style, career path, educational background, geographic location, income level, military experience, marital status, parental status and other variables that influence personal perspectives.

Equity eliminates barriers to fair treatment for underrepresented groups through systemic changes. Creating fair access, opportunity and advancement promotes the representation and participation of different groups of individuals.

Photo by Adi Goldstein on Unsplash
Inclusion efforts aim to create a welcoming environment for everyone. Successful inclusion programs proactively identify and remove the barriers that impede the success of everyone, including those historically underrepresented in the legal industry, and foster a culture of respect and belonging.

Given that I have a military background, I appreciate the expansive definition of diversity that considers military as well as other experiences that influence perspective. I also value the ties to the legal industry and the emphasis on respect and belonging contained in the definition of inclusion.

Importantly, the ALA’s statement of commitment goes one step further and addresses accessibility, which has long been a value shared by AALL, MAALL and all law librarians. The ALA defines accessibility as emphasizing “the importance of improving the degree to which an environment, information, or product or service can be obtained. It ensures a level playing field for people by addressing physical and nonphysical barriers.”

It is important that, like the ALA, MAALL defines our terminology while at the same time recognizing that these terms may evolve as we gain a shared understanding and experience integrating the concepts in our operations. It is important to recognize that being more precise and explicit with terminology could help reduce false assumptions and misunderstanding and catalyze deeper analysis. It is also to emphasize the essential importance of an Equity lens. Tucked in the middle of “DEI,” Equity can be overlooked. Actually, a robust and explicit Equity lens is critical to drive toward effective, just, and sustainable solutions to our most vexing and important challenges, including those related to representation and engagement.

If you are interested in DEI in law libraries, you may find the revised collection of resources available at https://www.aallnet.org/about-us/who-we-are/committees-juries/diversity-inclusion-committee/diversity-inclusion-resource-guide/ useful. Additionally, if you have an idea for a topic or a program or otherwise have input for the MAALL DEI Committee, we invite you to contact any of the members or to volunteer to serve on the DEI Committee through the link on the MAALL Committees webpage, https://maall.wildapricot.org/Committees.

Thank you for your help to and work with the committee to enhance MAALL’s mission to improve diversity, equity and inclusion within the law librarianship and legal information profession!

5 Association of Legal Administrators (ALA), ALA Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Statement, supra note 3.
6 Open Source Leadership Strategies, OSLS Diversity Inclusion Equity Table, https://www.ncnonprofits.org/sites/default/files/resource_attachments/OSLS%20Diversity%20Inclusion%20Equity%20Table.pdf
DAZED & INSTRUCTED

Matt Timko, Academic Technologies & Outreach Services Librarian and Assistant Professor, Northern Illinois University College of Law, (mtimko@niu.edu)

ENGAGEMENT BEYOND STUDENTS AND FACULTY

The semester has just begun, as has the regular outreach to students, including checking in for classes, letting them know about important deadlines and events coming up, and recruiting for student and other professional organizations. Students and faculty are always on our minds at academic institutions for (hopefully) obvious reasons. Not only are these the most important patrons in our library but they are also the easiest with whom to engage: We have their emails or other contact information, we see them in the halls, they come to the library, and attend our classes. Yet, they are not the only patrons we need to serve and reaching out to other types of patrons can create all sorts of headaches and heartache.

My institution is a public university which is open to the public during our regular library hours. I have written about public patrons in the past and how to help them. But a huge question that developed as a result of COVID is: how do we reach out to these patrons to let them know about our services, and how do we get feedback from these patrons about the services they need? The website is the most obvious access point; up-to-date information and a vibrant informational site are the most important aspects of engagement since the public’s first (and most regular) contact with the library is through the public website. Similarly, while the faculty and students have access to the legal databases, these are not available in any way to the public. Furthering the issue of access is the fact that the ubiquity of resources available online has led to a reduced need for those resources in print. This reduction most directly impacts the public patron group which relies on these print resources entirely.

Beyond the public, the University has access to the law library and library resources, though on a far more limited basis than that afforded the law students. Many of the restrictions apply to non-law University patrons that apply to the public, however we do have contact information for almost all patrons in the University, whether students or faculty. Unfortunately though, this creates the ability to reach out to these patrons without being able to provide them with additional resources. However, we can provide research assistance to them and touch base with instructors of other legally themed courses and with pre-law students, so we are able to provide more service that is academic in nature.

These patron groups are important populations for the mission of public academic law libraries, yet are groups that are often second or third tier in terms of resources and assistance available. We have made various efforts in our library to enhance these users’ experiences with the law library, but these efforts are inherently limited due to the resources we can provide. Luckily for us (and legal information overall), free and low-cost publicly
available databases have improved dramatically over the years at the same time larger corporate databases have retreated access to the public (For instance, public Westlaw and Lexis terminals may be located in public libraries, and are still available, but not as widely as ten to twenty years ago. LexisNexis still offers NexisUni, which is available to walk-in library users in some institutions, but in a much more limited format than Lexis+.) As these free and low-cost databases become more sophisticated, it becomes important for legal information experts and librarians to utilize them to aid these underserved patron bases.

While I am not calling for a complete overhaul of the academic law library model, these realities demonstrate that the current model further widens an access to information gap. While it does make sense that those who have paid the tuition to attend law school should see a tangible short-term benefit of that financial investment, such as access to these databases, the unavailability or limited availability of databases to public and University patrons has profound consequences for these groups who arguably need access more than current students (think of the student learning how to use the database compared to the public patron needing emergency access to legal resources in preparation for a case where they are representing themselves). I welcome any and all examples that you have used in your institutions to improve access beyond primary patron groups, and encourage you all to think about ways to improve the current paradigm to make legal information more readily accessible to everyone.

MANAGER TO MANAGER: TIPS TO KEEP YOU SANE AND EFFECTIVE

Gail Wechsler, Library Director, Law Library Association of St. Louis
(gwechsler@llastl.org)

BEST PRACTICES TO HELP YOUR EMPLOYEES GROW

As a manager, part of your job is to be a mentor/teacher/facilitator. This means that you want to cultivate growth in those you supervise. You want staff members to see you as someone who will advise them and help them as they go outside their comfort zones.

Just about every employee views their job as something that is not static. In order to thrive in a librarian position, each staff member wants opportunities to do new things and take on new responsibilities. Look for chances to make that happen.

For someone in an administrative position, that might mean offering trainings to that person on administrative topics (advanced Excel workshop, anyone?). Then allow that person to take on new tasks based on what they have learned in their training. For someone in a professional librarian position, that could mean having them take on a new project, such as a new LibGuide, in an academic law library.

Photo by charlesdeluvio on Unsplash
As always, you should be prepared to be a resource should the staff member have questions or need assistance as they move into this new responsibility. Also be willing to refer a staff member to someone outside your library who might be helpful to them as they embark on a new task.

Giving those you supervise new duties and more responsibility involves learning to let go of a task that perhaps you have always done and never before delegated to someone else. Be prepared for your staff member to do it their own way, rather than how you might do it.

There are many benefits to serving as a mentor and encouraging your staff continually to grow and learn. You may find that the person you thought was not capable of doing a certain new task rises to the occasion. That person may teach you a thing or two in the process of taking on a new project.

Also be prepared if the employee stumbles a bit with a new responsibility. Making mistakes is how we all learn. Be patient and understanding and willing to lend a hand if need be. Be supportive and let the employee know that this is okay.

Guiding your staff members into new duties is a great way to help them grow and thrive. It’s also a great way to keep your library nimble and keep staff morale up. It can be a win-win all around.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Christopher Steadham, Director, Wheat Law Library, University of Kansas School of Law (csteadham@ku.edu)

During this busy time of the year, I know there are many emails and publications competing for your time and attention. In light of that reality, I will get right to the point and give you the “TLDR” takeaway in the first paragraph. By the time this issue of MAALL Markings finds its way to your inbox, registration for the upcoming 2022 Annual Meeting should be up and running. There is no charge for our virtual conference this year, so there could not be a better opportunity to reconnect with your MAALL friends and enjoy some amazing programming on a wide variety of topics. Our theme this year is Virtually Unstoppable and the conference will take place on October 12th, 13th, and 14th.

I want to thank our presenters for the time and effort it takes to share their expertise with all of us, and I also want to thank the many people “behind the scenes” who are working hard to make this meeting happen. It is all too easy to take the excellent opportunities that MAALL offers for granted without realizing the tremendous amount of work that our membership volunteers to the organization. You have heard me say it before, but I will say it again: I am continually in awe of the dedication and camaraderie that the members of MAALL bring to these undertakings. You all have my unending gratitude and admiration. There will be updates on various current happenings to share at the meeting in October but I will keep this column short and hope that you will register for the meeting and join us to prove once again that MAALL is virtually unstoppable!
MAALL BOOK TO ACTION

Gail Wechsler, Library Director, Law Library Association of St. Louis, and MAALL Book to Action Co-Coordinator (gwechsler@llastl.org)

Since 2015, the MAALL Book to Action program has been working both to unite MAALL Annual Meeting attendees around the reading and discussion of a social justice-themed book and to support a charity with a book drive.

As we enter our eighth year of the program, we are excited to be reading the recently published and highly acclaimed book, *Just Pursuit: A Black Prosecutor’s Fight for Fairness* by Laura Coates.

When Laura Coates joined the Department of Justice as a prosecutor, she wanted to advocate for the most vulnerable among us. But she quickly realized that even with the best intentions, “the pursuit of justice creates injustice.” This book offers a compelling collection of vignettes from the author’s days as an attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice.

On the front lines of our legal system, Coates saw how Black communities are policed differently, how Black cases are prosecuted differently, and how Black defendants are judged differently. She also witnessed how others in the system either abused power or were abused by it.

Through these eye-opening scenes from the courtroom, Coates explores the tension between the idealism of the law and the reality of working within the parameters of our flawed legal system, exposing the chasm between what is right and what is lawful.

MAALL Book to Action Co-Coordinator Cindy Bassett and I are also happy to share information on our book drive for 2022. Because the 2022 Annual Meeting was born virtual (no host city selected), we decided to focus on a charity in a smaller MAALL community that typically would not be a conference site in any other year. We selected Vermillion, South Dakota, home of the University of South Dakota Knudson School of Law. Our charity is United Way of Vermillion, and specifically the Vermillion Food Pantry, Weekend Backpack Program and the Evan Project Diaper Bank. Our books will be distributed to children served by all of these programs.

Finally, we also are proud to support a local independent bookstore in Vermillion. Books will be purchased from Outside of a Dog independent book store, conveniently located just down the street from United Way. Go to the website at https://outsideofadogs.com/ to order your books from Outside of a Dog.

With a poverty rate of 29 percent, Vermillion is a community in need of resources to help those otherwise underserved. Providing children with their own books, as part of the food and diaper bank programs, will fill a real void.

Please plan to read *Just Pursuit* and to donate to the United Way of Vermillion as part of the 2022 MAALL Book to Action project. Your participation is so appreciated and will make a difference.
Northern Illinois University Law Library
The law library at Northern Illinois University undertook some major cleanup and moving projects this summer. We were able to clear out an onsite storage area to allow use for other items and to provide onsite storage for the university library. We also undertook a major shift with the collection. To better serve our patrons we have bifurcated the collection. A current collection containing monographs from about 2013 forward and all of the print serials and treatises still being updated are in one section of the library, while older monographs and earlier editions of treatises and looseleafs and those no longer updated are in a separate area. This allows students and practitioners needing the current law to easily locate materials while still preserving the historical materials often used in academic research. Thanks to Kate Hartman for coordinating these efforts and keeping us on track all summer.

Drake University Law Library
Alexandra (Lexi) Brennan joined the Drake University Law Library as a Reference and Instruction Librarian on July 1. Prior to Drake, she practiced law in the areas of Wills, Trusts, Estate Planning and Probate Law. She is currently pursuing her master's degree in library science at the University of Iowa.

University of Iowa
Druet Cameron Klugh, Sr. Reference Librarian, Bibliographer and Reference Coordinator, retired on July 1 after 40 years in Law Library Land. She enjoyed the variety of working in academia at the University of Iowa and the University of Colorado, at firm libraries in Denver and New York City, and as an early Westlaw rep for “that new CALR system” as well as the wonderful librarians she met along the way. Congratulations, Druet!

McKusick Law Library, University of South Dakota
This summer, the McKusick Law Library completed a major weeding project, including the recycling of over 22,000 volumes from our lower level and upper level, in anticipation of a future phase of Law School renovations. Head of Technical Services & Serials, Sue Benton (pictured center), spearheaded the project, which involved help from several student workers, the USD Campus Recycling and Sustainability Department, and Facilities Management (including the bucket loader!) The Law School completed the first phase of building-wide renovations this summer, which included updates to the classrooms. Assistant Dean and Library Director Eric Young has been integral to the renovation efforts via coordination with Facilities Management and their design team. Photos of the classroom renovations are available at https://libguides.law.usd.edu/renovations.
Nebraska Law Libraries
Members of the Klutznick Law Library (Creighton University), Nebraska State Library, and Schmid Law Library (University of Nebraska-Lincoln) got together this summer to tour the renovations in the Schmid Law Library and introduce our newest law librarians.

Schmid Law Library, University of Nebraska - Lincoln
The Schmid Law Library is happy to welcome Genesis Agosto as an Assistant Professor and Reference Librarian. Genesis received her JD/MA in history in 2022.

Stefanie Pearlman was appointed the Interim Associate Dean of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at the University of Nebraska College of Law. She will still work in the law library during this appointment.

To all our other members:
We hope no news is good news! Please let us know of any future news items at https://forms.gle/aSR9Ru6JvX7SjExx7!

MAALL MARKINGS INFORMATION

MAALL Markings is published four times a year by the Mid-America Association of Law Libraries, a chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries, and is a benefit of membership. The purpose of MAALL Markings is to publish news of the Chapter, selected news of AALL and other professional associations, and MAALL members, as well as to solicit and publish articles to add to the body of literature in the profession of law librarianship. All articles are copyrighted and any republication or use of any portion of the content for any purpose must have written permission from the author/s.

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The Mid-America Association of Law Libraries assumes no responsibility for the statements and opinions advanced by the contributors of its publications. Editorial views do not necessarily represent the official position of the Mid-America Association of Law Libraries or AALL.
## LINKS TO AALL CHAPTER & SIS PUBLICATIONS

Links originally compiled by Lindsey Carpino for the CALL Bulletin and reprinted with permission. *MAALL Markings* updates links on a yearly basis. The original post is available at [http://bulletin.chicagolawlib.org/2016/05/aall-chapter-sis-publications/](http://bulletin.chicagolawlib.org/2016/05/aall-chapter-sis-publications/).

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*positions not set at the time of publication

There are a number of opportunities available to serve MAALL. Please contact Christopher Steadham at csteadham@ku.edu if you would like to serve on a task force or committee.