

# E-Competencies and Development of Standards: the American Association of Law Libraries' Competencies of Law Librarianship

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AALL Professional Development Committee

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# American Association of Law Libraries

- Some facts –
  - Founded in 1906
  - Approximately 5,000 members who work in nearly 1,900 libraries serving government officials, the bench, the bar, legal scholars and the public
  - Approximately 2,000-2,200 attend annual meeting and conference
  - Headquarters in Chicago – staff of 14
  - Educational Programming staff
  - Washington Affairs Office

# AALL Mission

“The American Association of Law Libraries supports and serves its members, promotes and enhances the value of law libraries, fosters law librarianship, and provides leadership and advocacy in the field of legal information and information policy.”  
(AALL 2000-2005 Strategic Plan)

# AALL Vision

“ ... thriving professional association whose members and libraries ... are recognized as critical to the success of their organizations and as central to society. ... AALL members possess the knowledge and skills to maintain effectiveness in a constantly changing legal environment. ....” (AALL 2000-2005 Strategic Plan)

# Professional Development Committee

- Charge:
  - Long-range planning
  - Programming priorities
  - Educational-related policies for AALL
  - Needs assessment
  - Collaborative educational endeavors
  - Educational standards
- “Competencies of Law Librarianship”
  - Approved by AALL Executive Board, March 2001

# Definitions

- Competencies: “the knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal characteristics that help distinguish superior performance.”
- E-competency: “... acquiring the systems and skills within the enterprise at both the managerial and operational levels needed to engage in e-business, e-commerce and e-trade.” (Alwyn Didar Singh, E-Commerce for Managers) (also defines e-commerce, e-trade, e-democracy, e-governance, and e-shirking)

# Purposes of the Document

- Librarians
  - Coordinate continuing education and professional growth
- Employers
  - Hiring, evaluation & promotion decisions; make recommendations for professional development
- AALL
  - Framework to structure professional development program (including Annual Meeting and Conference programs)

# Organization of the Competencies

- Core Competencies
  - Apply to all law librarians
  - Acquired early in one's career
- Specialized Competencies
  - Five different categories
    - Library management
    - Reference, research, and client services
    - Information technology
    - Collection care and management
    - Teaching



# Core Competencies - Examples

- 1.1: Demonstrates a strong commitment to excellent client services
- 1.6: Demonstrates knowledge of library and information science theory, information creation, organization, and delivery
- 1.10: Acts with the organization to implement the principles of knowledge management

# Specialized Competencies

- Library Management
  - Planning; budgeting; personnel; leadership; trends; facilities; policy/legislation; etc.
- Reference, Research, and Client Services
  - Reference services; legal research with print and electronic; quality, authenticity, accuracy, cost, etc. of traditional and electronic sources; etc.

# Specialized Competencies

- Collection Care and Management
  - Collection development policies; evaluation of information resources in all formats; selection decisions; arrangement and access; etc.
- Teaching
  - Educational needs of clients; teaching clients with different needs and technological skill levels; training; effective use of new technologies; etc.

# Specialized Competencies – Information Technology

- Creating, accessing & managing information
- Need for new and evolving technology
- Long-range planning/policy formulation
- Evaluating, testing, etc. software & hardware
- Assisting and educating clients in IS
- Hardware, software, website, network issues
- Library website

# “Master” Competencies

- Professional Development Committee
- AALL Special Interest Sections - Examples
  - Computing Services SIS
  - Government Documents SIS
  - Online Bibliographic Services SIS
  - Research Instruction and Patron Services SIS
  - Technical Services SIS
  - Types of libraries SIS (Academic; Private; State, Court & County)

# Performance Measures

- Special Committee to Develop Performance Measures (appointed in 2001)
  - Help law librarians attain the competencies
  - Measure progress toward that goal
  - Create a list of key elements or criteria derived from list of competencies

# Critical Competency Criteria

- Functional Expertise/Knowledge/ Abilities
- Personal Attributes/Qualities
- Professional Perspective
- Leadership
- Communication Skills

([http://aallhq.org/aallnet/committee/performance\\_news.asp](http://aallhq.org/aallnet/committee/performance_news.asp))

# Conclusion

- AALL
  - March, 2001 approval of Competencies of Law Librarianship
  - Competencies designed primarily to help law librarians review needs, plan how to meet them, evaluate own professional development; not designed to test knowledge
  - Master competencies in specific areas
  - Special Committee to Develop Performance Measures (developing measurable criteria)
- Thank you (tcoggins@richmond.edu)