Continuing Professional Education Committee 2009-10 Annual Report

The Continuing Professional Education Committee (CPE) advised, advocated, supported, and encouraged AALL continuing professional education efforts as outlined in our charges.

A major goal of the CPE this year was to solicit input from the AALL membership in numerous ways in order to revise and update the Competencies for Law Librarianship. This was accomplished in the following manner: First, we researched similar benchmarks for performance used by other professional organizations serving librarians. We also reviewed the comments made by law librarians about the 2001 Competencies on various social media sites. Next, in April 2009, we advertised and conducted a guided discussion via AALL wiki over a two week period. We formulated sample questions for the participants to consider and reviewed each existing section of the 2001 Competencies. We received about 60 extremely detailed and substantive responses from librarians from government, academic, and private law libraries. The CPE committee then divided up the sections and prepared a draft that was submitted to the AALL Executive Board for their comments. We then considered their comments and also sent the draft to the chapters and SIS’s for their additional comments and suggestions. The final draft was sent to the AALL Executive Board for their April 2010 meeting where it was approved and placed on the AALL website. The CPE committee also presented a program at the 2010 Annual Meeting in Denver in order to make a report and receive input from the membership on the many ways that the Competencies can be used on the job. Over 100 people attended, and there was excellent audience participation.

The yearly task of the committee is to advertise to the membership, and in particular chapters and SIS’s, the availability of AALL/BNA grants. Celeste Smith, AALL education director, partners with the committee in this process by setting up webinars for participants, advising them on recording their programs, and advising the committee about all things with respect to continuing education for law librarians. These applications, as always, are received by the CPE committee four times per year, after which the committee reviews them in order to make grant awards for programs held between Annual Meetings. The programs that were sponsored by the grants were: “Spotlight on Your Career 2009: Building Your Professional Network,” Using CI to Stay Ahead of the Curve,” “SERU: Can it Work in My Library,” “The Value of Mentoring,” “Podcasting Programs,” Privacy, Security, and Public Records,” Legal Research Institute: Advanced Research Topics for Law Librarians,” Change as Opportunity: Staffing for Success,” Law Firm Economics 101: How to Respond to Current Conditions in Your Law Firm,” “ADR in the Law Library Environment,” “Supporting Historical Trials Research and Dramatization,” and “The Value of Mentoring.” These programs were recorded and are available on AALL2Go.

The committee marketed the continuing education activities of AALL in a “Member’s Briefing” article in Spectrum as well as in monthly blurbs in the AALL e-newsletter on educational programs available on AALL2Go.

The committee worked with Celeste Smith to assign competency categories for all the recorded programs on AALL2Go.
The committee also moderated a program at the 2009 Annual Meeting in order to feature a program that had received funding through an AALL/BNA grant in the previous year. This program, conducted by Cheryl Nyberg, was “Finding 50 State Surveys Fast.” It was rated one of the top ten programs of that Annual Meeting. It served as another way to market the availability of grants for continuing education programming.

The committee encouraged the chapters and SIS members to continue contributing to the Speaker Directory and the Calendar of Events, which are maintained by the CPE Committee. A requirement was established whereby the coordinators of accepted Annual Meeting programs enter speaker names in the Speaker Directory.

We did not survey the membership on their interest in mid-winter live institutes, which was one of our stated goals for the year, because surveys were done by AALL in 2009 and 2010 that we hoped would indicate whether members are interested in such institutes. Because of the economy, the committee decided that, at least for this year, virtual institutes are more cost-effective for members than live institutes.

The chair of the committee worked with the AMPC chair on a Special Annual Meeting Committee. The surveys used to decide on changes for the Annual Meeting asked if members were interested in more big name speakers, and they were.

The 2009-10 committee included April Schwartz, chair; Claudia Jalowka, vice chair; Scott Childs; Helane Davis; Kathleen Martin; Elizabeth Outler; Lisa Parisi; Sara Paul Raffel; Susan Skyzinski; Celeste Smith, staff liaison; and Board liaison Joyce Manna Janto.

Thank you to the committee for its dedication and hard work all year.

Respectfully Submitted,
April Schwartz
Chair 2009-2010