Committee Name: Government Relations Committee

Committee Charge: The Government Relations Committee monitors all federal and state legislative, regulatory, and judicial developments, with the exception of copyright issues, that may affect the Association, law librarianship, law libraries, or the dissemination of information. The Committee coordinates with the Government Relations Office to communicate Association views on information policy issues to all levels of government. The Committee informs the membership of notable information policy issues and provides educational opportunities and tools for the membership in information policy and advocacy. The Committee selects one or more recipients for advocacy awards each year, and Committee members support the local advocacy efforts of chapters and individual members though liaison relationships and other efforts.

Major Activities for 2012-2013:

• Participating in monthly conference calls to allow for an in-depth discussion of advocacy on information policy issues, including the development of strategies for networking with each Association chapter and SIS and general planning.
• Shared interesting articles and news from the RSS feeds that committee members monitor.
• The GRC worked with the GRO to launch a series of monthly online advocacy trainings.
• The Engaging Liaisons subcommittee drafted a report on how to make those relationships more successful.
• Members of the GRC worked with the GRO to submit comments to the Bulk Data Task Force on XML and authentication.
• Chair and Vice chair worked with the GRO to develop AALL’s Public Policy Positions for the 113th Congress.
• Members of the GRC provided examples of use of the US Courts collection on FDsys and helped draft a letter to Chief Justice Roberts to thank him and the Judicial Conference for approving expansion of the US Court opinions program in FDsys.
• Provided comments to the Office of Law Revision Counsel on the US Code Beta 2.0 site
• Provided comments to the Library of Congress on Congress.gov
• Share interesting articles and news items from RSS feeds
• Hosting a series of programs on information policy issues at the upcoming AALL Annual Meeting in Seattle in July of 2013, including:

The annual Legislative Advocacy Training 2013: Advocacy in Practice: AALL voices the needs and interests of law librarians at the national, state and international levels on vital policy issues like copyright, equitable, no-fee permanent public access to authentic online legal information, open government, and privacy. But no one knows the issues that impact law libraries across the country better than law librarians themselves! As experts in their field and voting constituents, law librarians play a critical role in influencing public policy at the federal and state levels. The start of a new Congress opens the door to many opportunities for AALL and law librarians. At the annual Legislative Advocacy Training, you'll learn the skills you need to effectively advocate for the information policy issues that matter to you, your library and your profession.

The annual AALL Public Policy Update: Connecting Members to AALL Advocacy Efforts, an interactive conversation on AALL's top policy priorities between the chairs of AALL's three policy committees. At this update, the Committee will award the Robert L. Oakley Advocacy Award and the Public Access to Government Information Award. In a new format this year, program participants will gain a broad understanding of the GRO and committees' past and upcoming legislative priorities before breaking into small, specific discussion sections led by each of the three committee chairs. The program will offer members the opportunity to engage in advocacy efforts on issues relevant to the Association and to their work specifically, and will provide a crucial opportunity to strategize through networking and idea-sharing. Topics will include recent copyright cases such as Kirtsaeng v. John Wiley & Sons; the Uniform Electronic Legal Material Act; and legislation that supports access to government information.

State Open Records Laws and Libraries: Can We Value Openness and Privacy at the Same Time? This program will discuss balancing the competing librarian values of encouraging open access to information and patron privacy by highlighting potential conflicts stemming from state public records laws. The panel will discuss recent legal challenges involving state records laws and privacy statutes, including FERPA, a statute demanding privacy for educational records.
State-Based Advocacy: Tales from the Trenches and Tips for Success in Your State. State legislatures across the country consider decisions that drastically impact law libraries every day. Several states recently considered proposed budget cuts threatening the very existence of public law libraries, which members of our profession were able to help defeat, and law librarians in other states successfully advocated to ensure permanent public access to authentic, official online legal information through adoption of the Uniform Electronic Legal Material Act (UELMA).

Proposed Activities for 2013-2014:

Regular activities to continue:
- Meeting monthly by telephone;
- Outreach to SISs and Chapters;
- Monitoring information policy, advocating on AALL’s behalf, and educating members and the public about information policy issues of concern;
- Awarding the PAGI and Oakley Awards; and
- Developing and submitting AALL program proposals, including the Policy Update and the pre-meeting Advocacy Training Day.

Specific Policy Issues in 2013-2014:
- Monitoring progress and supporting funding of the National Declassification Center;
- Full funding for the Government Printing Office, including the Federal Depository Library Program and FDsys; the Library of Congress, including the Law Library of Congress and the Copyright Office; NARA; and the Institute for Museum and Library Sciences;
- Full funding for the Legal Services Corporation;
- Monitoring bills that protect (or do not protect) the privacy of electronic communications and sensitive personal information;
- Advocating for UELMA adoption among the states; and
- Participating in relevant studies and conducting outreach, education, and advocacy in support of the FDLP in law libraries.

Other Matters:
- Encourage participation in yearly in-person GRC Committee meetings through outreach. Advocacy is a core value of the AALL, and member input should be encouraged.
- Implement the recommendations of the subcommittee on the GRC liaison program with the SISs and Chapters, and, if necessary, continue the work of the subcommittee.
- Consider ways that the GRC can help monitor and support state advocacy issues, including the possibility of having a state liaison for each state, and more state advocacy programs through webinars.
- Continue drafting One-Pager issue briefs. The following topics are being prepared:

  -- Cyber Intelligence Sharing and Protection Act (CISPA) - Marlene Harmon
  -- Fair Access to Science and Technology Research Act (FASTR) - Leslie Street
  -- Funding for Library of Congress - Mary Godfrey-Rickards
  -- Funding for NARA - Deborah Darin
  -- Funding for Legal Services Corporation - David McFadden
  -- Funding for GPO - Sue Lyons
  -- Funding for IMLS - Emilie Benoit
  -- E-Records Management Directive - Susan Nevelow Mart
  -- CRS Electronic Accessibility Act and/or ACMRA - Amy Levine