Consumer Advocacy Caucus Annual Report 2012

Recognition

A group of AALL members coalesced around the problem of consumer advocacy. Michael Ginsborg emerged as the main leader before official recognition of this group.

On July 25, 2011, at the AALL annual meeting in Philadelphia, the proto-caucus held its inaugural meeting, hosted by Drinker Biddle. Ginsborg presided.

Over the course of the year, the group engaged the general membership in a petition drive, in an effort to show the extent of general support for the problem-solving a consumer advocacy caucus promised to address. The group promised those who signed petitions complete confidentiality. Thus, what was provided to the Executive Board, with helpful advice from then President Darcy Kirk, was the number of signatories to the petition, and a selection of statements from the petitions, stripped of name or identifying information.

The Executive Board voted to recognize the Caucus at its meeting in 2012.

Activities

The Caucus proposed a program for AALL Boston, for a Hot Topic and for a PLL program. None of the programming made the final cut. The Caucus hosted a table at the CONELL Marketplace at the Boston AALL meeting, and also staffed a well-decorated table in the Activities area. There were brochures, stickers, give-aways and candy to attract curious visitors. There was also a donated copy of the Svegalis classic book for a raffle. The Caucus held its second meeting on July 22 at AALL in Boston. Ginsborg presided through most of the meeting. Betsy McKenzie was elected by chair. She announced that Jamie Keller had agreed to serve as vice-chair for the next year.


In process

1. Develop a "score card" for legal publishers to assess compliance, or lack of compliance, with AALL's Fair Business Practices Guide.
2. Begin tracking complaints by libraries and libraries about consumer issues. Still experimenting with how to direct members to use the FTC form. Try to develop a way to automatically copy to AALL headquarters and track the complaints.
3. Survey state and federal consumer law on negative option plans and institutional buyers.
4. The FTC Prenotification Negative Option Rule Recommendation to the AALL Executive Board. The FTC rule now applies only to individuals, and excludes libraries. We wish to gather information to show how much of a problem this is to our institutions, to prompt the FTC to extend the rule to include libraries.
5. Build the AALL website for the Caucus.