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School of Law
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Chair, Standards Review Committee

Becky Stretch, Assistant Consultant
American Bar Association
Section of Legal Education
321 N. Clark St. 21st Floor
Chicago, IL

December 21, 2011
Via Email

Re: ABA Standards for Accreditation of Law Schools, Section on Law Libraries

Dear Dean Polden & Ms. Stretch,

On behalf of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) Generation X/Y Caucus, we write in response to the American Bar Association's Proposed Draft of "Security of Position, Academic Freedom and Attract and Retain Faculty." Specifically, we are concerned with the proposed changes to Standard 603, "Director of the Law Library." The Caucus is comprised of approximately 200 of AALL's newer members. Many of us have entered the profession with aspirations to become Law Library Directors. It is with great concern for the future of our careers, that we submit these comments to the Proposed Standards.

Academic Freedom and Status

The status of law library directors is extremely important to newer law librarians. Tenured status in the law school for library directors insures that they have academic freedom in the law school community. Although many commentators have already addressed the issue of academic freedom, we underscore that for law library directors to fully and most credibly participate in faculty governance as well as contribute to the development of law school curriculum, directors must have all of the privileges afforded to permanent members of the faculty. Research instruction is a core component of the legal curriculum, and, as such, a tenured director must participate actively in the curricular decisions in the law school community.

Incentive for Scholarship and Leadership in the Profession

Tenure requires and provides incentives for scholarship. The field of legal information is growing exponentially and librarians are the gatekeepers of this information. Therefore, librarians must be provided with opportunities to make contributions to legal scholarship. Currently, there is a dearth of scholarship from our discipline because the field of legal information is evolving so quickly and few non-director librarians have the opportunity to engage in meaningful scholarship. If tenure were to vanish, there may no longer be incentives or

opportunities for librarians to contribute invaluable information to the law school community and the legal profession as a whole.

More critically, and most relevant to the Caucus, is the fact that the lack of tenure and incentives to contribute to legal scholarship may hinder newer librarians' desire for growth in the field. Many newer librarians have recently entered the profession with aspirations of becoming Directors. Many of these librarians consciously left the practice of law understanding that, with ambition, diligence, and activities such as scholarship and leadership in the field, they could advance. Recruiting and maintaining a standard for excellence in our field will surely suffer if there is no hope for growth and professional advancement.

Credentials

Draft Standard 603 (c) removes the language that requires a dual degree for the position of Director. Newer librarians have received dual degrees with the explicit understanding this as a requirement for achieving careers in law library administration. If newer law librarians are no longer encouraged to advance in the field, then the requirement of an MLS and JD will be worth very little and recruitment to the profession will be challenging, if not impossible.

An academic law library is far more than an administrative office. It is the intellectual center of the law school. A law library's mission is to support the law school using the skills and capabilities unique to our profession. Not only do librarians build and maintain collections of resources, we further the law school's goals in educating faculty, students, and the legal community. When a Director is merely an administrator, rather than a tenured member of the faculty, the law library loses this mission, and, as a result, legal education will be harmed. The Caucus represents newer librarians who are the next generation of Directors. The ABA Proposed Standards do a disservice not only to us, but to the legal academy as a whole. The future of law librarianship depends on newer librarians.

Respectfully,

/s/ Megan Jens
Chair
Generation X/Y Caucus
American Association of Law Libraries
Reference Librarian
Hamline University Law Library

/s/ Jennifer Wertkin
Vice Chair & Chair-Elect
Generation X/Y Caucus
American Association of Law Libraries
Reference Librarian
The Arthur W. Diamond Law Library
Columbia Law School

/s/ Julie Graves Krishnaswami
Member
Generation X/Y Caucus
American Association of Law Libraries
Lawyer Librarian
Vermont Law School

cc: Executive Board, American Association of Law Libraries (via email)
Academic Law Libraries, Special Interest Section (ALL-SIS), American Association of
Law Libraries