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Student Services Town Hall: Inspiration from a Distance

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

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As AALL President Emily Florio mentioned at an AALL Connection webinar in November, the organization and the SISs are in the midst of getting ready for the AALL Annual Meeting. The timeline for submitting program proposals to AALL was greatly delayed this year, so while ALL-SIS put in their sponsorship bid for two programs we still do not know which one will be selected by the Annual Meeting Program Committee. Regardless of whether the Annual Meeting takes place in person or online, based on the program proposals I have seen, I know there will be a wealth of programming directed at our members. I encourage everyone to take advantage of this educational opportunity in whatever way they can.

When we receive confirmation that an in-person Annual Meeting will occur, I plan to form a Local Arrangements Committee for ALL-SIS for this current 2020-2021 year. If you live or work in the Cleveland area, or have lived or worked there in the past, and would like to participate and share your knowledge, please email me. My own personal knowledge of Cleveland is quite dated as I have not lived there since 2003!

In the meantime, several of our committees have been busy creating and planning webinar content for the more immediate benefit of us all. The ALL-SIS Student Services Committee held a Town Hall on November 9, the recording and transcript of which will be available on their committee page on the ALL-SIS website. In December, the ALL-SIS Continuing Education Committee held the first in a series of webinars focusing on equity and inclusion in different aspects of library work. More online programming is expected soon. Please look for announcements on the ALL-SIS listserv regarding webinars and roundtables being offered throughout the winter months.

Finally, in closing, while we are all becoming accustomed to the “new normal” this fall semester was still vastly atypical for so many of us. That kind of broad change and upheaval can be unsettling; you may find yourself unduly stressed or tired compared to how you usually feel at this time of year. I myself am finding it impossible to be excited about the spring semester the way I usually do. So, as I continue to remind myself, be kind to yourself and to others. Take breaks, be honest with yourself and others as to what you can achieve in the next day/week/month, and say ‘no’ occasionally. Schedule virtual meetings with your friends or time alone as needed to unwind. Be safe. I hope to see you at an ALL-SIS or AALL webinar soon and hopefully in person next July. //

STUDENT SERVICES TOWN HALL**INSPIRATION FROM A DISTANCE**

Geraldine Kalim
University of Georgia
Law Library

Edna Lewis
Berkeley Law

Kimberly Mattioli
Indiana University Bloomington
Law Library

Drawing on inspiration and the creativity of others has long been a hallmark of the Student Services Librarian. Never before, however, have we needed each other quite as much as we have during this wild ride of an academic year.

Motivated both by a desire to bring us all together and out of our own need to find inspiration, the three of us hatched a plan to host a Student Services Town Hall. We purposely scheduled the event far enough into the semester that some of us could report on successful (and not-so-successful) attempts to continue Student Services work during socially distanced in-person, hybrid, or completely remote fall semesters.

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STUDENT SERVICES TOWN HALL

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We gathered over Zoom on Monday, November 9th and were pleased to attract almost 50 attendees. Our planned discussion topics included activities and engagement, student communication, the library space, and the positive pivots we would like to keep going forward.

Several libraries reported using videos to reach their students. Some examples include the [Monday Morning Minute](#) at the University of South Dakota McKusick Law Library and [Meet the Librarians](#) at the UC Berkeley Law Library. Perhaps no video compares to Duke's [Library Takeout](#).

Many librarians are coming up with creative virtual stress relief activities. If you are interested in turning some of your usual stress busters virtual, check out some of the puzzles created by the librarians at Berkeley and UGA: [Bay Area Beauty](#) and [Law Hawk](#). You may also want to consider organizing Zoom trivia events for your students using one of the games from [Jackbox.tv](#). Some librarians also have had success with posting trivia questions on law library Instagram accounts.

For more ideas — geocaching, library escape rooms, pet forums (Show and Tail, Paws and Relax, Pet Therapy Room, Pet Parade), stress buster and wellness guides, seating strategies — the Zoom recording and chat transcript are available through the [ALL-SIS blog](#).

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented a unique challenge for law librarians who are focused on student wellbeing and engagement. This is a very difficult time for our students, and librarians are worried about those who may be struggling. The Town Hall made it clear that ALL-SIS members are dedicated to their students and will come up with creative and innovative services to help guide them through the remainder of this pandemic. //

PROVIDING PATRON SERVICES DURING A PANDEMIC

Ashli Wells
Vanderbilt Law Library

There have been many challenges and changes to providing services to patrons during the COVID-19 pandemic, and our library is not unique in this sentiment. The law school administration made numerous changes to the building and library, including creating a classroom in one of the main library spaces, which impacted the services provided to our patrons. Since so many factors impact the ability to offer in-person classes and services, many of our plans in the library were in limbo until just a few weeks before the fall semester began. These unknowns made planning challenging, but it allowed us to problem solve how we could still provide a high level of service to our students and faculty.

MATERIALS

As previously mentioned, part of the library was converted to classroom space, and the classroom made our stacks inaccessible for our students and faculty. This new arrangement also eliminated the availability of our typical circulation desk. How to provide physical materials to our patrons was a crucial issue to solve. Fortunately, the university's library system created a book pick-up service during the summer that helped provide the framework for the upcoming semester. This service allows patrons to request materials through the catalog using a form that routes the request to LibAnswers. The librarian on virtual reference for that day determines whether the book is available electronically and, if not, passes the book request to the staff members working in the physical building. Once one of the staff members receives the item request, they retrieve the item from the shelf and check it out to the patron. If it is for an on-ground law student, the

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