

Editorial

This issue of LIM covers a number of themes and the Editorial Board hopes that there is something of interest to you all.

SLS/BIALL Academic Survey

Because the Autumn issue was devoted to Gillian Sands, publication of the SLS/BIALL Academic Law Library Survey has had to be held over until this issue, though it has already been published on the members section of the website. This year 103 forms were dispatched to institutions in the UK and Ireland and 88 forms were returned - a record response rate of 85.4%, which ensures that the survey continues to provide a very accurate picture of what is happening in UK legal academic institutions. It makes interesting reading, particularly in its latter stages where Peter Clinch, at the request of the SLS, asked respondents for the first time to give their personal views on what changes they think will occur over the next five years with regard to the provision of legal information and how any changes they envisage will affect their own institutions. I will not spoil your reading by revealing any more!

Conference Papers

Last year the Board took the decision not to attempt to publish all the Conference papers and this year we have been pre-empted by the fact that two of the most interesting and challenging speakers – Professors Susskind and Oppenheim – declined to write up their papers at all! Fortunately, Thomas Shaw, the BIALL Student Bursary Holder, has produced an excellent report of the Conference and he provides useful insights into what was said by the two professors. We are publishing papers from both the main Conference speakers and the parallel session presenters. Emily Allbon provided an update on the LawBore site – Emily has just received the BIALL – LexisNexis Award for Excellence – Legal Information Professional – Academic, a well-deserved honour in recognition of all her hard work in producing a very useful tool. Angela Otterwell and Nancy Matthews have produced a very interesting paper on the challenges of working in small jurisdictions; Simon Drane has given us a good insight into the intricacies of portals and Derek Sturdy has written a comprehensive report of the very interesting and lively workshops he held on the future of taxonomies.

Due to the change in timing of the Conference to June, it is impossible to publish the papers till some time after the event, as they just miss the end of June publication deadline for LIM. As the Survey has also been held over we are unfortunately not left with much space for the papers in this issue. This means that we have had to hold over other Conference papers including Candy Jannetta's report of her workshop, which was judged one of the best sessions in the delegate feedback. Juliet Humphries' provocative talk will appear in the next issue together with Janine Bryant's paper on how she promotes her library and information service. Paul Norman's excellent paper on West European sources will also appear in the Spring 2006 issue.

Current Issues

The Joint Academic Stage Board has recently published its Guidance on the Determination of Learning Resources for Recognised Law Programmes <http://www.legaleducation.org.uk/downloads/minresourcestatement.pdf>

This document is part of the quality assurance programme introduced by the Law Society and the General Council of the Bar when it issued its Joint Statement in 1999 setting out the minimum requirements which have to be complied with before an undergraduate degree is recognised as satisfying the first or academic stage of training for entry into the legal profession. A period of review and consultation with academic institutions took place last year to consider the learning resources needed to satisfy the quality assurance standards and this document is the result of those consultations. The document is, as it states, "guidance" only and a standard of good practice. It is expected that participating institutions will follow it, and non-compliance would almost certainly be an issue for the validation process. The requirements are identified through a set of "precepts" which the JASB expects institutions to comply with. Helen Young from Leicester University has looked at the guidance from the perspective of her institution and provides an excellent critical analysis of their merits or otherwise for one of the "old" universities. We hope to cover the Guidance further in a future issue of LIM.

The Board has been following the teaching of Practical Legal Research in the Legal Practice Course with some interest and in the past we have published various papers on the subject. In this issue, Eileen Fry, who is the Law Society's Chief Examiner for Skills and Pervasives, has very kindly responded to our invitation to write about

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what the Law Society expects from the course. Martin Hannibal and Alison Pope have written an accompanying article about the teachers' perspective of the course. It is to be hoped that what has been written here will not be overtaken by events. Many of you will have seen that the Law Society's Training Framework Review has recently reported following its consultation and it is proposing to remove the current requirement for students to complete the Legal Practice Course at law school before they can become qualified. The Law Society is suggesting a profound relaxation of the rules and instead students will be required to demonstrate that they can satisfy the requirements which the Society will set and they will not necessarily need to have attended law school or possibly even have used a law library to meet these requirements. BIALL has submitted a formal response to the proposals and further information can be found in the August Newsletter and on the website.

Also in our current issues section, we are grateful to Jenni Crossley and Claire Tylee for writing up the presentation they gave to a recent UKCLE/BIALL Seminar on teaching and learning skills for legal trainers. They have produced an interactive online guide for students at the University of the West of England which includes multimedia elements. Jenni & Claire were runners up in the BIALL – LexisNexis awards – Best use of Technology in a Library Project for this tool.

Checklist

The Checklist in this issue has been written by Philip Harman who is an employment partner at Cobbetts and he explains for us the new statutory procedures involved where there are disciplinary and grievance problems in the workplace.

From Our Own Correspondent...

With the plethora of similar offerings from the leading publishers and online providers it can become difficult to

decide which particular product is best suited to your needs. As well as the possibilities of consulting the LORD database, we are pleased to offer additional assistance in the form of an article from the Netherlands, where Elizabeth Bok and Paul Bartelings, both law firm librarians, have developed a model for selection based on a number of concrete criteria for assessing which is the best amongst a number of competitive legal resources.

Finally, we have our regular Current Awareness and Book Review columns. Since our last issue, the Board has bid farewell to Phil Stant, who has been an extremely long-standing member of the Board, and whose term of office has now expired. We are very grateful for all his hard work over the years and he will be missed at our meetings. We also welcome to the Board Julie Doran from the University of Gloucestershire.

Peer reviewed articles

We are planning to introduce a refereed section to the journal and are currently calling for contributions. We would like to emphasise that only one article per issue would be refereed. The following is an extract from the call for papers issued on LIS-LAW recently:-

"We are introducing a refereed section to the journal and are currently calling for contributions. The journal looks to provide commentary and analysis on all aspects of legal information management. While being focused on the four jurisdictions within the British Isles, articles discussing legal information management issues and developments in other jurisdictions are welcome. Articles on legal education will also be of interest where they touch on legal research issues or provision of library or similar support services

Authors interested in these areas are invited to submit articles or to contact the editor to discuss ideas for articles. Articles for publication should be submitted for consideration to the Editor".

Christine Miskin