

**Fall Executive Committee Meeting
October 22-23, 2010, Chicago**

Topic: Mega Issue

Background: What is YALSA’s role in leading the profession? This question was slated to be a discussion item for the Board at their 2010 Annual Conference meeting; however, due to time constraints the topic was not addressed. The Executive Committee may want to discuss the issue and decide what, if any, recommendations they would like to take to the Board.

Action Required: Exploration

For whatever reason, YALSA is not widely recognized as the standard setter for the profession of young adult librarianship. In recent years the organization has taken some steps in this direction. For example, Linda Braun and other members staffed a booth at the 2010 ALISE conference and YALSA completed a mailing to all accredited library schools and state library agencies over the summer. However, YALSA leaders may want to discuss the possibility of a more coordinated and extensive approach in order to ensure YALSA is meeting member needs, fulfilling its mission and advancing the profession. Given the on-going recession and the widespread cuts in library service, it is more important than ever for YALSA and our members to ensure stakeholders understand the importance of library services to teens.

Why being the standard setter is important:

- It’s the core of YALSA’s mission. The “big, hairy audacious goal in YALSA’s strategic plan is for YALSA “to be the driving force behind providing excellent library services to all teens.” It stands to reason that in order to become a driving force YALSA needs to develop and articulate a vision for the teen services profession and then create and disseminate materials, resources and information that support the vision.
- Members want it. The 2008 member survey asked members what they valued most in YALSA, and then went on to ask them to measure YALSA’s performance in those areas. Members ranked “identifying and supporting best practices” as the 4th most important thing YALSA does (out of 16 choices). However, members ranked YALSA’s performance in this area fairly low.
- YALSA is uniquely positioned to accomplish this. As the world’s only organization focused on supporting librarians and library workers who serve teens, YALSA should be the voice in guiding the profession.

Issues and Concerns:

- Why haven’t YALSA’s guiding documents for the profession been adopted by all states, regions, etc.? How can YALSA change that? For example, Massachusetts recently

published its own set of standards for young adult services. Why did they not simply adopt the Competencies developed by YALSA?

- What does YALSA need to do in order to help the profession embrace and make use of documents such as the Competencies? For example, along with the evaluation tool should YALSA develop training for administrators on using the Competencies to evaluate and improve library teen services?
- What can YALSA do to raise awareness about these resources throughout the profession? For example, should YALSA create a brand for the core resources and documents developed by the Association in order to better promote the role that these resources and documents play at a regional, state, and local level?
- How does YALSA become a recognized leader in setting standards in areas related to teen services?
- What else should YALSA be doing to guide and support the profession?
- How do we actively engage the membership in the effort to be the driving force behind the profession?
- Is it necessary to reallocate resources in order to make strides in obtaining wider acceptance and use of YALSA guidelines, training etc.?
- Would a certification program be beneficial as a means of promoting best practices and providing a path for individuals to learn about and embrace them?
- YALSA is widely recognized among the library community for its literary awards and selected lists. Does this somehow compete with or impede YALSA from gaining recognition for the other work it does? Should YALSA revisit its marketing and branding efforts to address this?
- Is there a particular audience YALSA should focus on reaching with these guidelines and resources, such as graduate school instructors, state library youth consultants and/or library administrators?
- Is there an opportunity to learn from other organizations, like AASL, whose members have long embraced their standards and recognize their organization as the leader in establishing guidelines?
- Are there opportunities for generating revenue in relation to guidelines and standards?

YALSA's efforts relating to guiding the profession:

- **Guidelines:**
 - Competencies for Librarians Serving Youth
 - The competencies were originally developed in 1981. The most recent revision was approved by the YALSA Board in January 2010.
 - Young Adults Deserve the Best: Competencies in Action, YALSA/ALA Editions, 2010.
 - A Competencies evaluation tool is being developed and will be presented to the YALSA Board for approval at Midwinter 2011.
 - Teen Space Guidelines
 - A YALSA Task Force is currently at work on a set of guidelines for teen spaces in libraries.

- The space guidelines will be presented to the Board for approval at Midwinter 2011.
- Guidelines for Youth Participation in Libraries
- Reference Guidelines for Library Services to Teens
 - Co-developed by RUSA and YALSA in 2008
- **White Papers:** During 2008 – 2009 four white papers were adopted by the Board and published by YALSA. Together these documents layout a framework for a set of guiding principles for young adult services.
 - Value of Young Adult Literature
 - Need for Teen Spaces in Public Libraries
 - Importance of Young Adult Services in the LIS Curricula
 - Benefits of Including Dedicated Young Adult Librarians on Public Library Staffs
- **Books:**
 - *New Directions for Library Service to Young Adults* (2002). First published in 1977 as *Directions for Library Service to Young Adults* and updated in 1993.
 - *Young Adults Deserve the Best: YALSA Competencies in Action* (forthcoming 2010)
- **Training & Education:**
 - Train the trainer program
 - Pre-conferences & Midwinter institutes
 - Licensed institutes
 - E-courses
 - Webinars
- **Promoting best practices:**
 - Excellence in Library Services to Young Adults competition and book
 - *YALS*
 - Member awards, including advocacy contest that is currently running
 - Youth participation book – contributions are being collected now

Additional Resources

- All of the YALSA guidelines and white papers mentioned above are available from the Professional Development section of YALSA's web site:
www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/profdev/professionaldevelopment.cfm
- Certification Made to Suit <http://tinyurl.com/2f6d9k3>