

**YALSA Board of Directors Meeting
ALA Midwinter Meeting, Atlanta
January 20 – 24, 2017**

Topic: **Proposal to Create ALA Liaison**

Background: **During the latest round of strategic planning, the Board was in general agreement that YALSA would benefit from cultivating stronger ties with ALA. One strategy for achieving that is refocusing the work of the Executive Committee to allow for this group to devote more of its time to relationship building within ALA. Another possible strategy for YALSA to pursue is better leveraging YALSA’s representative role on 18 specific ALA committees, assemblies and other groups. Gretchen Kolderup and Sarah Hill have provided the proposal below for the board’s consideration.**

Action Required: **Discussion**

Every year, one of the first tasks for the YALSA President to complete is to appoint YALSA members to serve as representatives to 18 ALA groups. The YALSA representatives to ALA groups are selected by one of two means: those automatically determined by another position the person holds, or by selection by the YALSA President. This process can be time consuming, and takes away from the YALSA President’s ability to settle into their new roles as board chair and chief elected officer of the organization.

Besides taking away from the President’s time at a critical period in their year, the current system of YALSA Reps lacks processes and supports to ensure success. Currently the feedback and directives to the multiple representatives is spotty and conference attendance is not required, which presents a challenge because most of the 18 ALA groups in question still meet in person.

After discussing this topic at the 2016 Fall Executive Committee Meeting, it was suggested that the Advocacy Board Standing Committee bring a proposal to the board creating a new position to simplify and improve YALSA’s representation to these ALA groups.

Proposal

Create a new member position in YALSA that serves as a liaison to 11 ALA groups which request Division representatives. Funds will be provided to the liaison to defray the cost of attending Midwinter and Annual.

Rationale

- During the strategic planning process, the board expressed a desire to build stronger ties with ALA

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- Having one individual serve as YALSA’s liaison creates efficiency, and frees up the YALSA President’s time to focus on board and governance matters, instead of appointments
- Providing funds for a member to take on this role creates accountability that is currently lacking. As part of a letter of agreement that is created, the official YALSA liaison will be expected to complete certain tasks, such as providing regular reports to the YALSA leadership
- Creating this new liaison position helps YALSA achieve its goal of building stronger ties with ALA, because an individual will be solely devoted to working with key ALA committees and groups
- A Liaison position will complement the Executive Committee’s work on building and maintaining ALA relationships, because the Liaison will focus on specific ALA committees while the Executive Committee will focus on governance level ALA relations, such as those with the ALA Executive Board, Finance & Audit Committee, and the Endowment Trustees
- Creating this new position provides a new type of member engagement activity for YALSA members, especially for those who have participated in other leadership activities and are ready for a new level of engagement

Broad Logistics and Timeline:

Feb. – March 2017 – staff work out details, create application, letter of agreement, etc.

April 2017 – call for applicants opens for 2017 – 2018 YALSA Liaison

June 2017 – YALSA board reviews applications and selects Liaison. Liaison reviews, signs and returns letter of agreement

July 2017 - President appoints YALSA Reps to remaining 7 ALA Groups

August 2017 – President hosts virtual orientation session for Reps and Liaison

November 2017 - YALSA Reps and Liaison to ALA Groups report to Executive Committee

January 2018 - YALSA Reps and Liaison to ALA Groups report to Executive Committee and attends ALA group meetings at Midwinter

April 2018 -YALSA Reps and Liaison to ALA Groups report to Executive Committee, call for applicants opens for 2018 – 2019 YALSA Liaison

June 2018 -YALSA Reps and Liaison to ALA Groups report to Executive Committee and attends ALA meetings at Annual, YALSA board reviews applications and selects Liaison

July 2018 – YALSA President identifies and implements evaluation process to measure first year impact

Fiscal Implications

YALSA will need to identify an additional \$1,000 per year in funding to support the travel

stipend of \$500 per conference for the Liaison. This could possibly come from FOY fundraising, redirecting a portion of funds from another project, or increasing a non-dues revenue stream. Since YALSA has either met or exceeded its FOY fundraising goals the past three years, FOY may be the most viable option.

Measuring Impact

In July 2018 the YALSA President will identify and implement an evaluation process to measure first year impact. The evaluation will seek to identify the degree to which the Liaison position was able to strengthen YALSA and ALA relations. Desired outcomes include improved communication between YALSA and ALA, and increased awareness of opportunities for collaboration. Possible questions to explore during the evaluation phase could include:

- What specific actions were taken to strengthen ties with ALA?
- To what degree was the transferring of knowledge between the ALA groups and YALSA (and vice versa), achieved?
- What opportunities for collaboration was YALSA able to leverage through the efforts of the Liaison?

Recommended Board Actions:

- Create a YALSA Liaison to liaise with the following ALA groups:
 - Accessibility Assembly
 - Advocacy Coordinating Group
 - Conference Committee
 - Conference Program Coordinating Team
 - Education Assembly
 - Freedom to Read Foundation
 - Intellectual Freedom Committee
 - Legislation Assembly
 - Literacy Assembly
 - Professional Ethics Committee
 - Website Advisory Committee
- Direct the Executive Director to work with staff to flesh out the details of creating the Liaison position, including such tasks as identifying the appropriate funding method; creating the letter of agreement, the application form, and marketing plan; and identifying the processes and supports needed for the new Liaison role
- Direct the Executive Director to work with staff to put processes and supports in place to improve the YALSA Representative effort for the 7 ALA groups that will not be the purview of the Liaison

Additional Resources:

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- List of YALSA reps: <http://www.ala.org/yalsa/workingwithyalsa/committees/alareps>
- [Updated Executive Committee Function](#) Board Document from ALA Annual 2016
- [Refocusing Executive Committee Proposal](#) Executive Committee Document Fall 2016