

YALSA Board of Directors Meeting  
ALA Annual Conference, San Francisco  
June 26 – June 30, 2015

**Topic:** Targeted Member Recruitment

**Background:** As a part of recent discussions about strategic planning, the Futures Report, the audience YALSA serves, and developing an association impact statement, the topic of member recruitment was raised. The Board will want to discuss goals and options for targeted member recruitment. Linda Braun has submitted the information below for Board's consideration.

**Action Required:** Discussion

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YALSA's overall member numbers have changed little over the past two - three years and stayed between 5,100 and 5,200 members. During that time the Board, DMP Committee and staff have worked to connect with potential members in numerous ways including:

- Participation in local, state, regional, and national library conferences
- Participation in national youth-focused conferences
- Creating an advocates' category for dues
- Seeking out opportunities to connect and partner with youth-focused organizations
- Implementing an online survey of potential members

Each of these activities has provided YALSA with an opportunity connect with people in the library field and beyond. However, the association should continue to seek out ways to expand membership, in order to:

- Increase dues revenues to support the mission of YALSA
- Create a more diverse and inclusive organization that welcomes and leverages a range of expertise and perspectives from all aspects of teen services and youth development
- Bring in skills and knowledge to the association that will support the work related to the Futures Report
- Stay relevant to a field that is undergoing rapid changes

There are several ways YALSA may work towards achieving this type of expansion:

- **Opportunities:** In order to successfully recruit a more diverse range of individuals to the organization, YALSA needs to have opportunities in place that go beyond what is available today. Potential members need to see that YALSA supports their needs and interests and can provide them with opportunities to connect with individuals who share their same interests and passions.
  - **Supporting the work of YALSA:** The Board has spent time over the past two years aligning YALSA's appointed groups to the strategic plan. However, since the Board voted in January to focus the work of the organization on the principles in the Futures Report, the portfolio of existing groups has gaps that do not address

key areas of the report, such as connected learning, cultural competence, multiple literacies, and youth participation. Additionally, only a few existing groups address aspects of librarianship beyond collection development and readers' advisory. Creating new groups could not only help advance the work of the Futures Report, but it could help with recruitment by demonstrating to potential members that the organization has involvement opportunities that fit with their expertise and interests.

- **Networking and continuous learning:** A basic reason people join an organization is to interact with like-minded individuals. Therefore, YALSA's Board may want to explore reinvigorating the Interest Group concept with an expanded audience in mind. For example, the Board might identify and reach out to members interested in creating a community engagement interest group that brings in library staff and those working with youth in employment programs, Boys and Girls Clubs, the YMCA, and so on. Another example of a potential interest group would be one that focuses on STEM and brings in members from a variety of fields and backgrounds that support STEM learning in informal learning environments.
- **Financial support:** YALSA's existing portfolio of grants, awards and scholarships are currently limited in focus to a few things like conference travel scholarships, collection development grants and awards for best YA literature programs. Could YALSA effectively recruit a more diverse group of members if other kinds of financial support were available, such as an award for an exemplary teen space or funding for college and career readiness programming? Could a wider range of awards, grants, etc. also help support members as they transition to the new vision for teen services as outlined in the Futures Report?
- **Relationship Building**
  - Asking Board members to liaise with specific organizations that have similar interests as YALSA could be one way to strengthen ties with organizations, especially those beyond the library community. For example, Board members might be asked to make and sustain connections with a state, regional, or national organization that focuses on youth workforce development. These targeted connections would help to inform organization leaders and staff what YALSA is all about and also provide opportunities to bring leadership from these groups into YALSA programs, meetings, and ultimately membership.
  - Ensuring that partners that YALSA staff and Board members already work with understand that their staff and members are welcome to join the association. This might be achieved through one-on-one conversations and also targeted campaigns with opportunities to join as a part of a larger effort to participate in YALSA initiatives.
- **Recruitment:** Once opportunities have been created and relationships have been strengthened, YALSA could implement a recruitment marketing campaign to members of organizations that are in fields related to librarianship and teen services and/or members of organizations whose focus or mission aligns with YALSA's. This might include attendees at conferences and events like the Digital Media and Learning Conference, IMLS convenings, and/or the NEXT Library Conference, as well as members of organizations like the:

- ASPIRA Association
- Association for Educational Communications and Technology
- International Society for Technology in Education
- National Afterschool Association
- National Association of Extension 4-H Agents
- National Rural Education Association
- **Other?**

### **Questions to Consider**

- What are our desired outcomes for a targeted recruitment and engagement effort and how do we assess and determine success?
- What exactly are we looking for from potential members who could be tapped to support the work of the organization in terms of skills, interests, knowledge, etc.?
- What is YALSA's capacity - fiscal and human - to perform some or all of the tasks suggested above?
- What, if any, of the activities mentioned above does the Board want to pursue? What activities that weren't mentioned may also be worth pursuing?

### **Additional Resources**

#### **Building a Stronger YALSA**

[http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/StrongerYALSA\\_spring14.pdf](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/StrongerYALSA_spring14.pdf)

This Executive Committee Document from Spring 2014 provides some additional background and points to consider.

#### **Diversifying your Association's Membership: Know the Answers before you Begin**

<http://xyzuniversity.com/2013/02/diversifying-your-associations-membership/>

#### **Targeted Recruitment of 4-H Volunteers Involves Understanding Who Currently Volunteers and Why**

<http://www.joe.org/joe/2004august/a6.php>

The information on who volunteers and why could be useful to us as we consider this topic and the skills and interests we need in order to advance the work of the Futures Report.