

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

Topic: Aligning *YALS* with the Futures Report

Background: On June 16th, the *YALS* Editor, Communication Specialist and Executive Director met by phone to plan for and discuss the next volume of *YALS*. During the call a discussion arose about the need to change the format of the journal and the Editorial Advisory Board in order to better align the publication with the principles and recommendations in the Futures Report. As a result of that conversation, Linda Braun, *YALS* Editor, has provided the following request for board action.

Action Required: Action

Request: in order to more closely align *YALS* to the principles in the Futures Report and in order to ensure the journal stays relevant to members:

- Change the *YALS* Editorial Advisory Board overall function/focus
- Restructure the journal format in order to better facilitate publishing more timely content as well as content that supports the concepts in the Futures Report

Current function statement

To serve as advisor to the editor of *YALS* on the content of the print journal and online presence which may include identifying timely topics for print and/or web articles, developing content for the online journal site, and generating ideas for topical or theme issues when requested from the editor. To assist with the search process for a new editor, when appropriate. Committee Size: 6 virtual members including at least two members from the previous year. Term: 2 years, commencing after Annual and ending after Annual.

Proposed new function statement would read

To serve as advisor to the editor of *YALS* on the overall content of the print journal and online presence. To take an active role in determining content for the journal by creating together an annual editorial calendar that identifies timely topics as well as authors for articles. To create messages and content to promote the journal through appropriate channels including social media and the YALSAblog. To work to ensure that key YALSA guidelines, resources, initiatives, etc. are integrated into the journal. To assist with the search process for a new editor, when appropriate. Committee Size: 6 virtual members including at least two members from the previous year. Term: 2 years, commencing after Annual and ending after Annual.

Proposed 2015 – 2016 task list for the Advisory Board

- To work with and advise the editor of *YALS* in order to develop and implement a new model for the journal that is in line with the YALSA Futures Report

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- Review content of the journal over the past two years to analyze how it has supported the association’s Futures Report and to identify any gaps
- Create a framework and focus for the content in the journal which may include, categories of content, column focal points, recurring columns, and so on
- Develop an editorial calendar for the journal that aligns with the ideas of the YALSA Futures Report
- Work with potential authors on content for each of the issues of the journal
- Help publicize the journal through social media and YALSAblog content
- Provide feedback on a revised design for the publication
- Advise the editor as needed

Recommended changes to the format/structure

- Eliminate annually recurring ‘theme’ issues in order to focus on timely content. In the past each winter issue focused on TTW, each spring issue focused on book and media awards and each summer issue focused on TRW
- Create columns or specific types of articles, such as Resource Round-Up and Ask an Expert, to make it easy for advisory board members to author or identify authors for articles
- Encourage authors to think about any digital extras that they could create to supplement the content of their print article
- Tie the journal more closely to the blogs and *JRLYA* by including a short list of related *JRLYA* articles and/or blog posts at the end of each *YALS* article
- Restructure the advisory board so that they take an active role in developing the content for each issue which may include creating content and/or identifying authors.
- Implement a graphic redesign of the journal to increase its visual appeal

Timing

The visioning work would take place in the summer and early fall of 2015 and the “new” *YALS* would launch with the winter 2016 issue of the journal - which will mail to subscribers in January 2016.

Rationale

- The Board has agreed that the work of YALSA should support the Futures Report. *YALS* is a key resource that members rely on to learn about best and emerging practices, so it should be one that is closely aligned with the report to better help members integrate the report’s recommendations into their work with and for teens.
- Moving away from the same themes year after year can help attract authors with more diverse backgrounds and expertise. It can also provide members with more timely and interesting content.
 - The Editor has recently referred authors of several unsolicited manuscripts to the member managers of the YALSAblog and the Hub because the manuscripts did not align with the need to move towards a futures focus for the journal.
- In the past the Advisory Board has sometimes struggled to understand its purpose and carry out meaningful work. Giving them a more active role can provide a way to ensure that members’ expertise and interest are better leveraged.

- Subscriptions to *YALS* have been virtually flat for the past four years, but seem to be slipping this year. A change could help spur new interest in the journal and perhaps boost subscriptions.

Fiscal Year	Total subscription revenue
FY15	\$10,000 (est. based on reports thru May)
FY14	\$13,900
FY13	\$14,000
FY12	\$13,800
FY11	\$13,500

Funding Required: an estimated \$300 - \$500 for the graphic redesign

Considerations

Since the Advisory Board was recruited with the understanding that they'd be responsible for work as outlined in the old charge, it will be important for the editor to have a conversation with the AB members to ensure that they are interested in and able to do the new work that will be expected of them. It may be possible that some AB members may not want to continue on the board, and if that is the case then the President-Elect can work with them to find them a new committee or group that better fits their interests and expertise.

Requested Action

The Board votes to approve the new charge for the Editorial Advisory Board as presented, which will go into effect with the 2015 – 2016 EAB, and directs the *YALS* Editor to work with the EAB to implement the recommended changes as outlined.

Additional Resources

2014 Association Publishing Survey Results, www.foliomag.com/2014/2014-association-publishing-survey/