

**YALSA Board of Directors Meeting
ALA Midwinter Meeting, San Diego
January 7 – 11, 2011**

Topic: Interest & Discussion Group Convener Report

Background: Following Annual Conference 2010, a several committees were expanded from a process committee structure to an interest group structure. In order to help support these new interest groups, and those interest and discussion groups that already were in place, Linda Braun has been working with the conveners. The following report provides an update on the progress and work of the interest groups over the last six months.

Action Required: Information

In the early summer 2010 conveners were provided with a set of tools for working with their members. These included a convener only listserv and an ALA Connect space for those interest groups that did not already have a space in place.

In October a chat was held with conveners as a way for the group to brainstorm ideas about how to get members of the groups actively involved. Many of the groups are struggling to get activity going and during the chat there were several ideas about how to move forward. The group elected to have another chat in December, which took place midway through the month, but with much smaller participation.

During the October chat the group discussed advertising their work via short articles in YAttitudes. Following the chat many of the conveners signed-up for a month in which to write an article on their group. The first of these articles appeared in the December YAttitudes and articles are scheduled through June 2011.

An idea that came out of the December chat is to have a virtual open house in order to give those interested in interest groups a way to learn more. The open house will take place in Adobe Connect (probably in late January or early February) and each convener will take five minutes to talk with those attending about their interest group. There will also be time for those attending to ask questions about specific groups. The session will be recorded and archived so that at a later date those interested can review the information.

The interest groups are also considering monthly ALA Connect discussion board sessions that focus on a topic of interest to group members. An expert in the field would lead these weeklong discussions. If the discussions move forward the conveners will work with Eve Gaus on planning and scheduling the conversations. The discussions will be open to anyone, not just members of the sponsoring interest group, and can help the groups to advertise their work and extend participation.

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It has been difficult for the conveners to get members in their groups to participate. It is hoped that through some of the activities in the works – YAttitudes articles, an open house, and the expert discussions – the work of the interest groups will become more participatory and active.