

YALSA Board of Directors
2020 Annual Conference
June 25-30, 2020

Topic: Reconsidering the 2020 YALSA Symposium

Background:

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, large gatherings of people, including work-related conferences, symposia, and institutes, are being strongly discouraged by medical and scientific experts for the foreseeable future. Until treatments, herd immunity, and/or a vaccine is widely available, these events will be unable to go forward in the way that they have in the past without serious risk to the individuals participating, the staff hosting the event, residents of the host city, and families, friends and colleagues of attendees. President Todd Krueger brings this Board document forward.

Action Required: Action

Overview:

The YALSA Symposium is scheduled to take place November 6-8, 2020 in Reno, Nevada. Because of the current Covid-19 pandemic, an in-person Symposium cannot go forward without the potential of serious risk to the attendees and others. After a discussion between the YALSA Executive Director and YALSA President, members of the YALSA Executive Committee were asked to submit their thoughts about reconsidering the Symposium. The Executive Committee's thoughts have been compiled with those of the Executive Director to form this document, along with the article "What do Post-Coronavirus Events Look Like?", which was shared with members of the ALA staff by the ALA Conference Services director.

Recommendations:

Because of the likelihood that an in-person YALSA Symposium could be detrimental to the health of attendees and others, the YALSA Board:

- 1. Directs the Executive Director and YALSA Staff to investigate a virtual Symposium format, and work with the Symposium Task Force to determine which planned sessions and author events can move forward in a virtual setting;**

2. **Directs YALSA Staff, due to travel restrictions forcing the inability to investigate other sites for a 2021 Symposium, to work with their contacts in Reno to reschedule the canceled 2020 event for November, 2021 in the same location.**

Fiscal Implications:

Canceling the Symposium would require costs incurred by using ALA Legal Services in terms of enacting a *Force Majeure* clause to the contract. While the Symposium has made money for YALSA, a virtual Symposium has the potential to attract more attendees at a lower registration rate and a lower cost to YALSA. At this time, registration for the Symposium has not yet opened so there are no current registrants and therefore no refunds are necessary. The potential of setting up some sort of online donation mechanism for Friends of YALSA may be considered to offset losses incurred regarding the lack of in-person donations and prize auction.

EDI Element:

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, many library budgets, particularly for professional development, have been considerably cut or will likely be severely diminished. This would make non-essential travel very unlikely for many potential in-person attendees. A virtual setting would be considerably more affordable in terms of registration and would eliminate the need for transportation, accommodations, and per diem costs to those libraries or individuals.

Action:

The YALSA Board directs the Executive Director to cancel the in-person YALSA Symposium scheduled for Reno, Nevada, November 6-8, 2020, and adopts the recommendations as stated above.

Additional Resources:

What do Post-Coronavirus Events Look Like?

<https://www.eventmanagerblog.com/post-coronavirus-events>

The Coronavirus and Force Majeure Clauses in Contracts

<https://www.akerman.com/en/perspectives/the-coronavirus-and-force-majeure-clauses-in-contracts.html>