

**YALSA Board of Directors Meeting
ALA Midwinter Meeting, Seattle
January 25 – 29, 2013**

Topic: Student Chapter Proposal

Background: In the fall of 2012, Rebecca Tischler, a student at the University of Alabama’s School of Library and Information Science, contacted the YALSA Office to ask if the organization would support the idea of establishing a student chapter at the graduate school. Beth Yoke encouraged Ms. Tischler to write up the idea into a formal document for presenting to the Board. Her proposal is provided below.

Action Required: Discussion

Proposal for a YALSA Special Interest Group as a Sub-Division of the ALA Student Chapter at the University of Alabama

What the student community would like to see

Rebecca Tischler and Callie Ann Starkey (President of the University of Alabama’s ALA student chapter) interviewed many of the students who are interested in youth services, and, based on the information and the feedback that was gained, there are certain requests that were echoed several times:

- Speakers and panels with librarians
- Library tours
- Community Interaction
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Resume Building Activities
- Join with other local youth literacy programs and provide support

The Plan for the Student Chapter

The University of Alabama (UA) School of Library and Information Studies (SLIS) administration is concerned about fragmenting our student population with too many separate student organizations. As such we are proposing, for this pilot run, that we will follow the example of our parent organizations. Therefore the YALSA student chapter will be a special interest sub-group (SIG) of the ALA student chapter. This would mean that the ALA and the YALSA student chapters would be partners and share many of the same students, allowing for joint volunteer and outreach opportunities including those specific to young adult librarians. This could also be a format for future special interest student groups that could be added as a sub-group in ALA. However, it is possible that if this student organization flourishes, it will become an independent organization. The ALA student chapter president at the University of Alabama is very enthusiastic about the idea of having a YALSA student chapter on campus, and Callie Ann Starkey (the ALA student chapter President) is working on adding an amendment to the ALA

student chapter constitution which would allow for the creation of special interest sub-groups under the umbrella of the ALA student chapter.

There will be a YALSA SIG Chair (which would resemble the position of the President), Secretary and a Distance Education Ambassador. If the group is large enough, then there will also be an Assistant Chair (which would resemble the position of the Vice-President). Because this is a Special Interest Sub-division of ALA, the head of this group cannot be known as the President since the ALA student chapter President will be the official umbrella leader of the ALA student chapter as well as all Special Interest Sub-Groups. This special interest group will be focused on Youth Services and act fairly independently, but the group will support all of ALA's events. Also, all events and activities will need to be approved by the ALA student chapter President. However, since the plan is for the YALSA student chapter to act fairly independently of the ALA student chapter, the YALSA student chapter Chair and the ALA student chapter President would have to meet regularly so that the ALA student chapter President can be kept up-to-date on the activities and plans. The ALA student chapter Treasurer would be handling the funds for both the YALSA sub-group as well as the funds for the umbrella ALA student chapter. There will not be a separate bank account for the YALSA student chapter. The SIG Chair of the YALSA student chapter (as well as the Assistant Chair if there is one) would act as YALSA's designated contact, and the secondary contact would be the ALA student chapter's President.

The faculty advisor would be the same faculty advisor as the ALA student chapter organization, because the YALSA student chapter would be a sub-group. However, there are two members of the present UA faculty that specialize in youth (children and young adult library services and materials), who are willing to assist or consult with the organization when able.

One of the goals of this student chapter would be to reach out and to increase interest in young adult services and materials, as well as community enrichment. Therefore the only requirements would be that they have an interest in young adult librarianship and are able to prove that they are a student of the University of Alabama. Unfortunately, the group would require a membership fee, as the ALA student chapter does. The ALA student chapter has a \$10 membership fee, however, anyone who is a member of the ALA national organization is granted a \$5 discount. This is also a standard among the other student organizations that originate from UA's School of Library and Information Studies, and therefore, the YALSA student chapter would follow this same set-up. However, since a student does not have to be a member of the ALA student chapter in order to be a member of the YALSA student chapter, in order to encourage participation in both organizations, there will be a further \$2 discount for those who join both organizations. For example, if a student had joined the ALA student chapter, and was also a member of the ALA national organization, and the decided to join the YALSA student chapter, but not the YALSA national organization, they would pay \$13, for the membership to both.

Membership Fees and Discounts for the YALSA student chapter

- ALA student chapter membership dues \$10
- ALA national membership discount – \$5
- YALSA student chapter membership dues \$10
- YALSA national membership discount – \$5

- Joint membership discount – \$2

The fees will be processed and kept accounted by the ALA Treasurer, and the funds may not be withdrawn and used without the approval of the ALA student chapter President's approval, and no events or activities can be arranged without the majority approval of the YALSA members.

Since the School of Library and Information Studies at UA has students who are interested children's services and students who are interested in youth services, we reached out to both YALSA and ALSC. ALSC has agreed to provide some minimal support, such as sending us names of viable speakers, but they have informed us that at this time, they have no interest in setting up student chapters or developing a more formal connection. However, since YALSA has expressed an interest in setting up a pilot chapter at the University of Alabama, and ALSC has not, the plan is to have this student organization focus on young adult services, but to also provide support and information about children's services so that those interested in children's services are also granted valuable support. We want to provide for all youth services specialists (children and young adults); including students who are interested in public libraries as well as those interested in school media centers. However, if this student organization is granted the official support of YALSA, it will be named the "YALSA student chapter."

It is the students' hope that YALSA's student chapter would flourish and that the administration will see how important such an organization would be to the students, which would hopefully lead to the YALSA student chapter becoming its own organization instead of being a sub-group. If this should happen, the organization would have to develop a constitution of its own. Until such a time, as a special interest sub-group, the YALSA student chapter would follow the rules listed in the ALA student chapter's constitution., and the YALSA organization (while still be acting as a sub-group) chapter would create a charter document, which would still refer back to the ALA student chapter's constitution. This charter would have to be voted in by the members of the organization, and would act like a constitution for the group, however, the ALA's constitution would take precedence. The University of Alabama requires that the operating document provides the organization with guidelines for operations and activities. These documents should be well written and kept up-to date to meet the needs of the student organization.

The Constitution / Charter:

- Would establishes the broad structure and fundamental principles that govern the organization
- Should be straightforward and difficult to amend

The bylaws:

- Would outline the rules of procedure for an organization
- Should be consistent with the constitution / charter
- Should be easier to amend than the constitution / charter

What would be requested of YALSA

This student chapter is looking for the support and recognition of YALSA; however, this support does not include funding for the student chapter. It is not expected that the national organization

will pay for the student chapter's events and activities, such as: the production of advertisements, speaker fees, travel costs, conference fees, etc.

What the proposed YALSA student chapter is asking for is:

- the support of YALSA to help bring in speakers, such as providing volunteers and speaker recommendations when possible; however, this does not include financial support, such as paying speaker fees
- the support to help set up library tours
- the connection with YALSA so that the student chapter would have the credibility to do community volunteer projects – this connection would include being able to assure those we are working with, or attempting to work with, that we are partners with a nationally recognized and appreciated organization and not just a group of students with no credentials, his name recognition and connection would provide us with credentials
- help developing connections between students and professionals
- provide official posters, brochures and promotional items for YALSA so that we can promote the organization and events on campus

Should YALSA agree to starting up a pilot student chapter at the University of Alabama, we could create an agreement document stating what assistance and support that YALSA has agreed to provide. In researching other national organizations, the support and aid that they are willing to grant for their student chapters is listed and explained on their website; there were no signed documents or written agreements. However, since this would be a pilot program, if YALSA desires a formal written agreement, the agreement could be created based on the web pages that other organizations provide (such as ALA's website) explaining the support that student chapters can expect from them, and what YALSA would expect from the student chapter.

We are excited about this opportunity to help develop support for the youth services student specialists in our department. We look forward to working with YALSA in order to make this YALSA student chapter a reality and to provide for our youth services specialists here at the University of Alabama School of Library and Information Studies.