

**YALSA Board of Directors Meeting  
ALA Midwinter Meeting, Dallas  
January 20 – 24, 2012**

**Topic:** DG/IG Evaluation Taskforce Preliminary Report

**Background:** At the Board's 2011 Annual Conference Meeting, the board voted to establish a taskforce to evaluate the effectiveness of YALSA's Discussion and Interest Groups as grassroots groups that foster member engagement. Sarah Flowers completed appointing the taskforce in early September. A preliminary report from the group is provided below.

**Action Required:** Discussion

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**YALSA Discussion/Interest Group Taskforce**

**Chair:** Stephanie D. Reynolds

**Charge:** Using evaluation techniques such as surveys and one-on-one discussions with those who have and haven't participated in Discussion and Interest Groups, evaluate the current structure of these groups and their level of success at providing members with an opportunity for virtual participation in the association.

**Progress to date:**

The task force has been discussing the issues facing both interest and discussion groups virtually via ALA Connect. The chair has faced many challenges over the last several months and takes responsibility for the taskforce members' sporadic participation. While not all members are able to attend Midwinter, I have arranged for a table at the Work Groups session on January 21<sup>st</sup>.

We will begin assessment with a survey tool that will seek feedback from discussion and interest group chairs/conveners. This survey will be ready for distribution in early January 2012. The questions that the members of the taskforce have contributed are:

**Group Chair/Convener Survey Questions:**

- What do you see as the primary purpose of discussion groups?
  - Simply to offer discussion?
  - To create networking opportunities?
  - To add positive value to the daily jobs of members?
- What do you see as the goal(s) of discussion groups?
  - Learning?
  - Sharing?

- Networking?
- Regularity of participation
  - Is there discussion every day, every week, every month?
  - How many of the members actually contribute?
- What do you think are good conversation starters? What works, what does not?
- Do you think that members of the group feel a sense of community?
  - If not, why do you think that is?
  - If yes, why do you think that is and do you think this makes the group more successful?

A second survey tool that will seek feedback from those who are not actively participating in discussion and interest groups is in development.

**Issues for the Board:**

- Any feedback is greatly appreciated.