

Fall Executive Committee Meeting
October 21-22, 2011, Chicago

Topic: Board Post Annual '11 Survey Results

Background: After the 2011 Annual Conference, I created a survey for Board members to help me determine the direction and focus for the year. Below is a summary of the key issues that arose in the comments. The Executive Committee may wish to determine if there are some areas that we should prioritize for the remainder of the year.

Action Required: Action

1. What is the number one thing you hope to accomplish this year as a YALSA Board Member?

The most frequent response was that board members wanted to be more effective in their role as a board liaison, and in support of the committees. The next most frequent response was that they wanted to help move the organization forward, increasing YALSA's national presence.

2. What is the number one thing you hope to learn as a YALSA Board Member?

The most frequent response was to learn more about board governance and the role of board members in the organization.

3. What are the board's greatest strengths?

The most common responses were about the board's diversity, commitment, and engagement.

4. What are the major accomplishments of the board in the past year?

Most board members mentioned the strategic plan and the research agenda. Others also mentioned the Board Fellowship and the Writing Award.

5. Is the board functioning as a team as well as it should? Why or why not?

Responses were split between those who felt that it is functioning well, with good discussions and decisions, and those who felt that there is unequal participation of board members and that consensus may be reached too quickly, either because discussions are shut down or because there are not enough "devil's advocates."

6. In order for our board to become a high performing board we need to _____

The two most common responses were to focus on the strategic plan and to be prepared for meetings and discussions.

7. As a board member, I am most pleased about _____

The most common responses were about the board's many recent accomplishments and the variety of topics in our discussions.

8. As a board member, I have concerns about _____

Several members listed workload and the time commitment involved in being a board member. Others were concerned about member engagement and the board's role in improving that, and there was also a concern about technology dominating the conversation.

9. What changes would you like to see in the way Board meetings are planned for, run, and assessed?

The most frequent response was to continue to do as much as possible on ALA Connect so that meetings can be used for the kinds of items that benefit the most from face-to-face discussion and brainstorming.

10. What topics/areas are you interested in having a board chat/webinar on this year?

- Connecting with members
- Navigating ALA & YALSA websites and ALA Connect
- Look at successful projects and initiatives from other divisions
- Marketing to subgroups of the membership
- Working with other divisions
- Fostering relationships with potential partners and sponsors
- Update discussions on topics from conferences so we don't lose track of them
- Fundraising, finance
- Advocacy

11. What can we do as a Board that will help us to be more nimble and more responsive to the members?

Several people mentioned that board members need to be more of a presence and more transparent to the membership: posting on listservs and social media were mentioned as examples. Using ALA Connect to deal in a timely manner with issues as they arise was also mentioned, as was being aware of divisive issues before they cause problems. Other suggestions included inviting specific members to attend board meetings, and empowering membership so that leadership doesn't have to micromanage.

Additional Resources:

- Complete survey results are available at: <http://tinyurl.com/3vfp2fq>

--respectfully submitted, Sarah Flowers