

**YALSA Board of Directors Meeting  
ALA Annual Conference, Chicago  
June 23 – 27, 2017**

**Topic:** Recommendations from the Member Recognition Taskforce

**Background:** At their 2017 Midwinter Meeting, the Board directed President Sarah Hill to appoint a taskforce to explore members' preferences for recognition, and to make recommendations to the Board for improvements in this area. Kate Denier, the Taskforce Chair, has provided the following document for the Board's consideration.

**Action Required:** Consent

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**Taskforce Charge:**

Examine successful practices from the association community, and gather and use YALSA member feedback (including feedback from past award winners) to determine the most desirable and appropriate method(s) for recognizing member award winners, including the feasibility of an award event at an ALA conference or YALSA's symposium. Submit a recommendation to the board for consideration at their June 2017 meeting.

**Scope of Work Completed**

The Member Achievement Recognition Taskforce gathered successful practices from The Center for Association Leadership, state library organizations, businesses and general member recognition articles. Our Taskforce found many similarities in how employees and association award winners are recognized across a variety of fields. However, we did not find any innovative practices or identify any new best practices beyond what YALSA is already doing. We combined our findings and used that information to create survey questions to determine the most desirable and appropriate methods for recognizing member award winners. In addition to using our research to create the actual questions, we included a wide variety of recognition methods for members to choose from.

The Taskforce created two separate surveys. One survey was created for all YALSA members to complete. This was sent out via YALSA listservs, YALSAblog, social media and YALSA eNews. 131 members, or 2.8% of personal members, responded. The second survey was created for previous YALSA award winners to complete. This was emailed directly to past award winners from the past five years. Out of 67 past award winners, 25 responded, or 37.3%.

Nearly all members and past award winners responded that it was important for YALSA to recognize excellence in the profession through member awards.

**Recommendations:**

1. Award marketing and promotion needs to be 1) increased and 2) aimed at targeted audiences.

Topic: Recommendations from the Member Recognition TF

- a. 75% of members reported they have not applied for a YALSA award before.
  - b. 40% responded saying they have not applied because they did not know about the awards.
  - c. Members should be encouraged to feel comfortable nominating themselves.
  - d. YALSA members who are not MLIS librarians should be encouraged to apply.
- This topic came up several times throughout the individual responses.
2. Help members understand the qualifications needed for various awards and encourage individual or segments of members to apply, based on the particular award.
    - a. 44% of respondents feel they are not qualified for an award.
    - b. 17% feel the awards are not relevant.
    - c. Suggested awards from members that were mentioned multiple times in survey results:
      - a. Offer an award by member type: new, retired, etc.
      - b. Offer an award by job type: non-librarian, school librarian
      - c. Offer an award by type of work: outreach, research, partnering, advocacy, intellectual freedom, innovation, promoting literacy, fostering diversity,
      - d. Provide more academic scholarships for students
      - e. Offer travel scholarships for mid-career members
      - f. Create a “best librarian” award voted for by teen patrons
3. Member Recognition
    - a. 88% of Award Winners and 93% of Members said being formally recognized is very or somewhat important.
    - b. Preferred methods of recognition:
      - a. A Press Release from YALSA
        1. This was the top selection for Award Winners. It was the second highest selection for Members.
        2. This draws attention to the award winner and their Library.
        3. This makes teen advocacy easier for the award winner and the Library.
        4. It highlights the importance of teen services in libraries.
        5. This could potentially bring in more customers.
      - b. A letter should be written to the award winner’s supervisor notifying them of the accomplishment.
        1. This was the top selection for Members, and third highest selection for Award Winners.
        2. This was also mentioned multiple times in the individual responses.
      - c. Winners should be given the option of being interviewed for the YALSAblog.
        1. This draws attention to the award winner and their Library.

2. This makes teen advocacy easier for the award winner and the Library.
3. Highlighting the awards in this way will help with award promotion and may motivate other YALSA members to get involved.
- d. Survey respondents chose “at an event” as their 3<sup>rd</sup> most popular choice, and of those who chose that option, the majority preferred a reception over a sit-down meal. Since this option is costly, it is not worth pursuing at this time.
4. Preferred award and prizes:
  - a. A framed certificate can be given as the physical award, as it is inexpensive and can be hung on the wall.
    - a. 35.71% of Award Winners selected a framed certificate as their top option. 35.71% of Award Winners selected “Other” and noted in the individual responses that a certificate was their preference. While 47.19% of Members selected a plaque over a certificate (30.34%), some members mentioned in the “Other” section that a certificate was their preference.
    - b. Multiple people also mentioned that they thought having a physical award was a waste of YALSA funds or that the money spent on physical awards could be better allocated elsewhere. We recommend going with a certificate as a compromise, as it is likely the most inexpensive of the options and can still be displayed by the winners.
  - b. A year of YALSA membership given as the prize.
    - a. Clear instructions on how to get the free membership should be given to award winners.
    - b. The process of redeeming the free year should be simple for winners.
      1. Several members mentioned in the comments that they experienced challenges in redeeming their free year of membership in the past due to lack of instructions and degree of difficulty.
5. Members should be contacted after being selected as winner of an award.
  - a. Two past award winners noted they were not notified upon winning an award, and just received an award in the mail.
  - b. When applying for or nominating someone for an award, give members an approximate time frame for the winner announcement.

**Financial Impact:**

- There will be staff and volunteer time needed to do more award promotion, to write the press releases and letters to winners’ supervisors, and conduct YALSAblog interviews.
- It will take time and funding to add new awards, if doing this is desired.
- The cost of printing out and mailing certificates and letters to winner supervisors.

- The cost of giving out YALSA memberships.

**Additional Resources:**

- Member Survey Result data can be found here:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-5JH39G3H/>
- Past Award Winner Result data can be found here:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-SYPDZFYP/>
- *Beyond Banquets: Recognition Strategies that Support Volunteers and Organizations.* Webinar. Americorps VISTA.  
[https://www.vistacampus.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/37/OngoingLearning/WebinarsforVISTAs/Beyond\\_Banquets.pdf](https://www.vistacampus.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/37/OngoingLearning/WebinarsforVISTAs/Beyond_Banquets.pdf)
- “Celebrating Volunteers’ Success: Recognition as a Strategy,”  
[http://www.generationon.org/files/resources/readyssetgo\\_celebrating\\_volunteers\\_success.pdf](http://www.generationon.org/files/resources/readyssetgo_celebrating_volunteers_success.pdf)
- “Four Ways Your Association Can Better Recognize Members Using Social Media,”  
<https://inclinemarketingservices.com/tag/member-recognition/>
- “Recognition 3.0: New Rules for Making Millennials Feel Like they Matter,”  
<https://www.xyzuniversity.com/post/recognition-30-new-rules-for-making-millennials-feel-like-they-matter>
- “Recognition Strategies to Keep those Important Volunteers,”  
<http://intrinxec.com/2016/05/17/recognition-strategies-to-keep-those-important-volunteers/>
- “Volunteer Appreciation Guide,” <https://www.wildapricot.com/articles/volunteer-appreciation-guide>