

**Spring Executive Committee Meeting  
April 17, 2015, via Conference Call**

**Topic:** Selection Committee Evaluation Taskforce Report

**Background:** At the Midwinter 2014 Meeting the Board voted to establish a Selection Committee Evaluation Taskforce. The charge of the taskforce is: to review the current operations and outputs of YALSA selection and award committees, identifying best practices, and advising potential courses of action to improve 1) committee work processes, 2) the committees' work output, and 3) the overall volunteer experience for appointees. Activities include 1) seeking recent chair feedback in order to create an overview of how the committees are functioning; 2) identifying opportunities to standardize committee processes, policies and procedures, where possible; 3) further investigating the recommendations that the board ad-hoc group on selection committees put forward at Midwinter 2014; 4) seeking member feedback on the degree to which the existing lists and awards support their readers' advisory and collection development work in a timely and effective manner and whether there are any gaps or overlap in what YALSA provides; and 4) compiling findings and making recommendations to the board by Midwinter 2015. The Executive Committee will want to discuss the recommendations below provided by Pam Holley, the taskforce chair, and come up with a strategy for moving the issues forward to the board.

**Action Required:** Discussion

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### **Recommendations**

After the taskforce begin its work, it was determined that dealing with both the selected list and award committees at the same time was too much to handle. The taskforce, while focusing only on the award committees, has compiled an extensive report as well as a summary of survey results (see the Additional Resources Section). The initial report included a mix of recommendations, of which were some small changes that were immediately acted upon by staff, as well as more significant recommendations that will require board action. Beth Yoke culled the following items from the report, after further discussions with the taskforce chair, as those that are the highest priority for the taskforce and that will require board action before they can move forward:

- Create one standardized set of policies and procedures with content that is relevant across all six award committees and post online
  - Create and include a standardized voting procedure for all award committees, including a process for determining both honor and winning titles

- Include a clarification of title eligibility in terms of format, specifically e-books (for Odyssey this relates to downloadable audiobooks)
- Create and include a set of guidelines for administrative assistants
- Set deadlines for all field suggestions four weeks before, and for all committee nominations two weeks before
- Determine whether it is desirable for *Booklist* to continue its role of serving as a consultant to each award and/or selection committee, and if so co-create a set of guidelines for chairs and consultants so they know exactly what the role of the *Booklist* Consultant is
- Create a chair handbook specifically tailored for each of the six award committees that includes one section of general award chair information and another with information specific to that committee. Ensure each handbook will be housed in the YALSA office and direct the Program Officer for Conferences and Events to work with chairs at the end of each committee term to update them as needed
  - As part of the committee-specific information, include a calendar/timeline tailored for each committee
  - As part of the committee specific information, create a standard method for selecting vetted nominations for Alex and Nonfiction
  - Provide a template for chairs to compile notes and other information as a sort of addendum to their chair handbook, and ensure that it's passed from chair to chair
- Consider the creation of a policy to prohibit members from hopping from one award and/or selection committee to the next

### Questions for consideration

- Is there a strong consensus with the Executive Committee that these items should move forward?
- What items are the highest priority and should be addressed first?
- What is the best strategy for accomplishing the specific recommended tasks? Will this be assigned to staff, an existing member group, a new member group, or something else?
- Who will be responsible for drafting proposals to move these issues forward with the board?
- Does the Executive Committee feel that any issues have been overlooked?

### Additional Resources

2014 Midwinter Board Document: <http://ow.ly/LrPBM>

### Full Taskforce Report

Members of the Taskforce: Heather Dickerson, Angela Leeper, Gregory Lum, Maren Ostergard, Jessica Lorentz Smith, Sarah Marie Townsend and Chair, Pam Spencer Holley.

**Charge:** The purpose of the taskforce is to review the current operations and outputs of YALSA selection and award committees, identifying best practices, and advising potential courses of action to improve 1) committee work processes, 2) the committees' work output, and 3) the overall volunteer experience for appointees. Activities include 1) seeking recent chair feedback in order to create an overview of how the committees are functioning; 2) identifying

opportunities to standardize committee processes, policies and procedures, where possible; 3) further investigating the recommendations that the board ad-hoc group on selection committees put forward at Midwinter 2014; 4) seeking member feedback on the degree to which the existing lists and awards support their readers' advisory and collection development work in a timely and effective manner and whether there are any gaps or overlap in what YALSA provides; and 5) compiling findings and making recommendations to the board by Midwinter 2015. In addition, a subgroup of the task force will pilot the possible formation of an advisory board to respond to questions from Chairs, sent to the Advisory Board via the committee chair's board liaison. Response will be sent to YALSA staff during this pilot time, but if effective, would come directly from advisory board to committee board liaison.

Task force term: commencing immediately and ending January 31, 2015. Member group size: 6 virtual members, plus a chair.

**Suggestion:**

All Board members and O&B Committee members need to read the complete survey results to better respond to the recommendations. Much additional information is available in the compiled chair comments that will allow them to continue the task of updating and attempting to standardize some of Policies and Procedures of the award committees.

**Results**

Activities include

1) *seeking recent chair feedback in order to create an overview of how the committees are functioning;*

This task force looked only at award committees as mixing award and selection committees became like comparing grapefruits with grapes; similar, but not quite the same.

A survey was devised and sent to recent chairs of Alex, Morris, Nonfiction, Odyssey and Printz Award Committees. Edwards was not included as it doesn't rely on publication dates or receiving review copies in the same manner as the other committees; additionally, it is a virtual committee that is due to be evaluated on its own.

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/sr.aspx?sm=xNVk0ZUcrhlXv3IYr2KIOItALckH1DZ67uSV7HSgiPQ\\_3d](https://www.surveymonkey.com/sr.aspx?sm=xNVk0ZUcrhlXv3IYr2KIOItALckH1DZ67uSV7HSgiPQ_3d)

37 chairs contacted, 32 responded [86% return]; Alex – 6 of 10; Morris – 6 of 7; Nonfiction – 5 of 6; Odyssey – 4 of 4; Printz – 11 of 10 [*likely caused by a chair who had chaired two committees*]

Summary of Responses is attached [Attachment 1].

2) *identifying opportunities to standardize committee processes, policies and procedures, where possible;*

This proved more difficult than we first thought possible, partly because the calendars for the committees vary so much which had an impact on dates for nominations. However, we feel comfortable making the following recommendations:

1. All field nominations for Alex and Printz will have a “due date” of December 1 and a “due date” of October 1 for Morris, Nonfiction and Odyssey. [Odyssey does operate a little differently because of its being a joint committee with ALSC so anything referring to Odyssey may have to go through ALSC] [Question 11]

2. Each year the chairs for Alex and Printz will set a final due date for committee member nominations that will be 3 weeks before the beginning of Midwinter. This information should be shared by snail or e-mail with producers/publishers with a reminder that additional time is needed for listening or reading and for them to plan their mailings accordingly. [Question 6]
  3. Because of the usefulness of archiving committee discussions and nominations, it is recommended that chairs use the YALSA form and ALA Connect for nomination lists. [Question 28]
  4. One general Policies and Procedure document should be available on the website so that all info about timelines, nominations, voting procedure, and so on is in one spot. A template was developed and shared by the O&B Committee at the 2010 Midwinter meeting and that could be used to develop the one P&P document.
  5. Each chair should also have a handbook specific to each committee that is populated primarily by previous chair's notes. It is recommended that a template be devised to be completed by each chair and attached to the handbook, all of which would be made available electronically to each incoming chair as well as to the Program Manager. After ten years, there should be ten years worth of chair notes, comments, and recommendations that will continue to grow each year. This handbook would not reside on the YALSA website but be sent to each award chair when they accept the position. The TF recommends that a small TF be appointed [3 persons with previous chair experience, to work with Program Manager,] to develop Personal Chair Handbook. [Question 17]
  6. In addition to a chair handbook for each committee, there should be a one-page set of guidelines for the Administrative Assistants. [Question 27]
  7. It has been standard practice to have only the chair contact publishers but as administrative assistants have been added to committees, clarification has been made for three of the award committees that both the chair and/or the administrative assistant are the contacts for publishers. Until one general Policies and Procedures has been written, the P&P for Nonfiction and Printz needs to reflect this change. [Question 27]
  8. An agreed-upon method for selecting the "Official Nominations/Vetted List needs to be spelled out for Alex and Nonfiction. [Question 25]
  9. A standardized voting procedure, based on the voting procedure for Printz, needs to be developed that would apply to all award committees. Information should include voting for both the award and the honor titles. [Question 25]
  10. Because of the increase in self-published books, e-books, and downloadable audiobooks, a TF needs to be established to determine YALSA policy [Question 31]
  11. O&B should consider the comments in question 14 of Attachment 1 and determine if they want to respond to suggestions for changes in P&P.
  12. 65% of respondents recommended that all award committees, with the exception of Odyssey, should have a mix of elected and appointed members. [Question 34]
  13. One-pager set of guidelines for use of Booklist consultants be devised as chairs not always aware of what they can/should do. [Question 36]
  14. A timeline should be developed for any award committee that does not have one.
- 3) *further investigating the recommendations that the board ad-hoc group on selection committees put forward at Midwinter 2014;*

- a. Create a recommended standardized nomination timeline and deadlines  
[see above]
- b. Reconsider the Five Year Rule and make a recommendation  
[Taken care of by YALSA Board in 2014; now a Three Year Rule]
- c. Work with Organization and Bylaws Committee to conduct survey of award & selection  
committee chairs regarding efficiency of committee policies, procedures and practices and then analyze the results and make recommendations to the board.

[One member of our TF is chair of O&B, but we did not work directly with them. There was enough input available from the adhoc committee and our task force. Survey was conducted and results attached.]

Included on the survey were questions pertaining to contacting the previous chairs; asking for items in P&P that were unclear or not needed; checking on voting procedure; asking about practices that need to become part of P&P; best method for discussing titles between conference sessions, and committee size (chairs were happy with size of their committees).]

4) *seeking member feedback on the degree to which the existing lists and awards support their readers' advisory and collection development work in a timely and effective manner and whether there are any gaps or overlap in what YALSA provides;*

This is the one piece we have not completed, but will tackle this next and hope to have a report submitted to the YALSA Board before Annual.

5) *In addition, a subgroup of the task force will pilot the possible formation of an advisory board to respond to questions from Chairs, sent to the Advisory Board via the committee chair's board liaison. Response will be sent to YALSA staff during this pilot time, but if effective, would come directly from advisory board to committee board liaison.*

After listening to Board members respond to this idea at the 2014 Annual Conference, and later surveying the Board members, it seems that this idea does not have enough merit for further exploration. Board members felt comfortable interacting with the chairs; if they didn't know the answer, they knew where to find the answer; and they stated that they were better able to complete their Board member work by having the knowledge they acquired from their liaison role.

Survey results from Board liaisons attached [Attachment 2]

Some excellent suggestions were also received, which should be taken into account when Board liaison positions are assigned:

1. Select award committee liaisons who are able to stay with a committee for the entire one-year term. Third-year Board members should not be appointed as liaisons to award committees as they will not be able to stay for the duration of the committee term.
2. Previous Board member committee responsibilities should be made available to the YALSA President so that those with previous experience can be matched to similar committees, wherever possible.
3. Board members should also be polled to determine those committees where they feel they could be most effective.

Commendation:

The task force commends YALSA for instituting the Saturday morning meetings at conference with incoming and outgoing award and selection committee chairs having a chance to meet and trade information.

Survey Results

*Survey of YALSA members who chaired award committees between 2006 and 2015*

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/sr.aspx?sm=xNVk0ZUcrhIXv3IYr2KIOItALckH1DZ67uSV7HSgiPQ\\_3d](https://www.surveymonkey.com/sr.aspx?sm=xNVk0ZUcrhIXv3IYr2KIOItALckH1DZ67uSV7HSgiPQ_3d)

***Question 1 - Committee and number of chairs responding versus those contacted***

37 chairs contacted, 32 responded [86% return]

Alex – 6 of 10; Morris – 6 of 7; Nonfiction – 5 of 6; Odyssey – 4 of 4; Printz – 11 of 10

## **Dates and Deadlines**

***Question 2 – Terms for award committees begin after Midwinter with the first official face-to-face meeting at Annual. Did your committee have an informal meeting at Midwinter?***

Yes – 71%; No – 29%

Most had a face-to-face meeting, group when possible, otherwise one-on-one, with the members who were already attending Midwinter. Consensus that it's important to put names with faces; review charge, procedures and policies; and allow time for questions.

***Question 3 – You answered that you met informally during Midwinter, were all of your committee members able to attend?***

Yes – 31.6%                      No – 68.4%

***Question 4 – While all committees have a deadline for field and committee nominations, there is no official deadline for publisher/producer submissions. Did you impose a deadline for publishers/producers to submit titles to the committee for consideration?***

Yes – 29%                      No – 58.1%                      Can't recall – 12.9%

Most committees did not set a deadline for publisher submissions, but they did let publishers know the deadline for nominations and/or final lists [the shortlists for Morris and NF] hoping that logic was used with submissions. Several mentioned that deadlines were not set because that info wasn't in the Handbook.

FYI: Alex has a deadline of 12/31, but they request titles and don't rely on publishers sending review copies.

Odyssey has a deadline of 10/31 but finds they often have to make exception.

Printz has a deadline of 12/15

Morris and Nonfiction are bound by different times because of shortlist nominees

***Question 5 – You answered that you set a deadline for publishers/producers to submit titles for consideration to your committee. Did you consider any review copies that arrived past the deadline you gave publishers/producers?***

Yes – 33.3%

No – 66.6%

This was a forced answer question that didn't work for those who had not set a deadline.

***Question 6 – Do you think there should be a deadline for publisher/producer submissions to award committees [publishers/producers sending you titles]?***

Yes – 53.8%

No – 46.2%

Very thoughtful responses to this question that ranged from desire to NOT miss a great title to consideration for committee to have time to read and discuss last minute arrivals. Most seemed to feel that letting publishers know the final date for committee members to nominate, and not accepting nominations after that final date, as well as explaining the need for enough time to give each book careful consideration was most important. If there's time to read and recommend before the final date for nominations, chairs were inclined to accept titles up until almost the last minute.

***Question 7 – You answered that you think there should be a deadline for producers/publishers to submit titles to award committees. Do you think all award committees should have the same deadline?***

Yes – 50%

No – 50%

Answers for this one ranged from October 31 [2] to November 1 [1], November 15 [2], December 1 [3], December 31, and one month before Midwinter.

***Question 8 – Printz has a deadline of December 15 for committee nominations and Morris has a deadline of December 1. It is up to the Chair to determine the deadline for committee***

*nominations for all other committees [Odyssey, Alex, and Nonfiction]. What was the deadline you gave committee members to nominate a title?*

December 1 – 31.8%    December 15 – 31.8%    December 31 – 13.6%    Did not have deadline – 22.7%

***Question 9 – Morris and Nonfiction announce a shortlist the first week in December. Odyssey and Nonfiction do not consider titles produced after December 31 [should be October 31, not December] of the current year. Morris, Printz, and Alex consider titles published in a calendar year. All committees currently have a different deadline for committee nominations. Please select the statement that matches your opinion about committee nomination deadlines.***

All award committee should have the same deadline for committee nominations	33.3%
All award committees, except for Morris and Nonfiction, should have the same deadline for committee nominations	25.9%
Each chair should determine the nomination deadline for his/her committee	7.4%
The deadlines should vary between and among award committees	33.3%

***Question 10 – According to the Policies & Procedures, Printz, Alex, and Morris all have a December 1 deadline for field nominations. Nonfiction and Odyssey do not have a specific deadline for field nominations. What date did you cut off field nominations when you were chair?***

December 1	75%
December 15	10%
December 31	15%

Replies indicate that there are few field nominations received and of those sent in, many are from friends of the author or members/others who are unaware of specific criteria for each award.

***Question 11 – Do you think all award committees should have the same deadline for field nominations?***

Yes, all award committees should have same deadline for field nominations.	61.5%
No, each award committee should have a different deadline.	19.2%
The deadline should be determined by the chair.	11.5%
No, the deadline doesn't matter.	7.7%

### **Chair Documents**

***Question 12 – Were there parts of the Policies and Procedures that you would recommend changing?***

Yes	25.9%
No	63%

I submitted a request for Board Action to change P&P that was accepted	3.7%
I submitted a request for Board Action to change P&P that was <b>not</b> accepted	7.4%

Specific concerns included request to return NF to BBYA; clarify eligibility of title produced in other countries; clarification of self-published material; Morris eligibility calendar same as calendar for NF; problem of 1<sup>st</sup> year Morris with shortlist coming right after Thanksgiving.

***Question 13 – You selected that you submitted a request for Board Action. Please elaborate on that request here.***

Survey was not working correctly and some repliers were forced to reply [not happy!]. The two legitimate responses were about the Morris Award. One concerned the very short time between close of nominations and final short list due to YALSA Office. The other was to change the reception for Morris and Nonfiction to Annual.

***Question 14 - You selected that there were parts of the Policies & Procedures that you think should be changed. Please elaborate more about the changes here.***

ALL AWARD COMMITTEES: Uniform announcement and deadline dates would make it less confusing for publishers to send us books, not to mention less confusing for YALSA member and field nominators.

NONFICTION: Separate category for instructional books that are well-written, but not considered of high literary merit.

MORRIS: Eligibility calendar for Morris is inherently preferential to titles released prior to December 1.

ODYSSEY: There needs to be a requirement that members of the committee have prior experience with audio and that they can handle the digital download requirements.

PRINTZ: It was difficult to determine whether or not books actually met the Printz publishing criteria.

MORRIS and/or NONFICTION: Clarification of voting procedure for shortlist is needed as procedure calls for online vote and majority of committee members. Not sure how to proceed if too many or too few books receiving a majority of votes on first round. Nor is it clear how many votes each committee member gets – vote for one title? Several? Must be several otherwise there would not be multiple titles receiving a majority of votes.

***Question 15 – Did you find any conflicting statements in the Policies and Procedures?***

Yes	7.7%
No	42.3%
I don't recall	50%

Responses ranged from unclear procedures [not conflicting statements] to more involved examples, as illustrated here: “Field nominations must be seconded by a committee member prior to December 1.” “Nominations may be accepted from the field and from committee members up to December 1.” Does “Up to” mean including or excluding December 1? Due to the passage at the top, I have read it to mean excluding, as accepting field noms after the point at which they can be seconded is nonsensical. Also, due to December beginning on a Monday this year, our shortlist needs to be at the YALSA office on December 3, which gives us 2 days after nominations end to have our shortlist meeting, finalize annotations, etc.

**Handbook and Communication Methods**

***Question 16 – Were you given a chair handbook?***

Yes	68%
No	32%

If yes, by whom?

Former chair -	7 [1 copy was “unofficial”]
YALSA Office -	4
Chair and office –	1
Helped write it -	1

***Question 17 – Please select all the details that apply to the handbook you were given.***

Available only in print	0%
Available on YALSA website	26.7%
Sent to me electronically	73.3%
Included notes from previous chair	53.3%
Was “official”	26.7%

***Question 18 – When contacting committee members, which of the following methods did you use and how often?***

Choices: YALSA Committee Listserv; E-mail [not listserv]; ALA Connect; Google Hangout; Conference Calls and Adobe Connect

**Used weekly**

YALSA Committee Listserv -	74.1%
ALA Connect	30.4%
E-mail	20 %

**Used more than twice a month**

E-mail	40%
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ALA Connect 17.4%

**Used once a month or less**

Conference calls 37.5%

E-mail 36%

**Never used**

Adobe connect 100%

Google Hangout 78.3%

Conference calls 62.5%

ALA Connect 39.1%

As of November 2014, chairs used the following means of communication either weekly, monthly, or occasionally.

E-mail [not listserv] 96%

Listserv 88.9%

ALA Connect 60.8%

Conference Call 37.5%

Google Hangout 21.6%

Adobe Connect 0%

***Question 19 - Which communication method did you find to be most effective?***

Listserv 81.5%

E-mail 48.1%

ALA Connect 37%

Google Hangout 11.1%

Conference Calls 7.4%

Adobe Connect 0%

Comments: Google Hangout tends to be buggy; would mix ALA Connect with conference calls; would have used Google Hangout but required to run online chat sessions through ALA Connect

***Question 20 – Which communications methods did you prefer to use with your committee and why?***

Listserv 60%

Email 48%

ALA Connect 28%

Google Docs/Drive 12%

Phone 8%

Google Hangout 8%

Comments:

For many chairs, e-mail and the listserv were the only tools available to them  
E-mail and phone used for individual/personal contact  
E-mail kept us on organized and on track  
Google docs/drive used for straw polls; kept us organize;, allowed for spreadsheets on reading and eligible titles; good for tracking progress  
Listserv to keep all informed at the same time and with same info; could be used anyplace and anytime; convenient  
Google hangout allowed for robust discussions; connectivity problem for several  
ALACONnect as database to share reviews; chat weekly at designated time; archived our discussions; all received same information; working better now

***Question 21 – Please list any online communications you wanted to use, but for which you needed training***

Although not all the chairs used every means of communication, the only training requested was for ALA Connect. One chair had difficulty getting Adobe Connect and Google Hangout to function properly on her work computers and wondered if she could try Google Hangout on her iPad?

**Communication Methods and Chair Contact, continued**

***Question 22 – How would you characterize your communication with the previous chair?***

69.6% of the chairs indicated they contacted the previous chair while the remaining 30.4% were contacted by the previous chair.

Comments: Met at Midwinter; two-way communication; knew chair [served on committee or as admin assistant]

***Question 23 – Please estimate your number of contacts with previous chair***

Never	0%
Seldom	40%
Often	4%
Enough for me to be an effective chair	56%

***Question 24 – Are voting procedures clearly spelled out?***

Yes, in the Policies and Procedures	65.2%
Yes, in the chair handbook	21.7%
No	13%

Comments: “Some ambiguity for the committee to wrestle with is not a bad thing. Each year is unique”

Honor titles and short list selection procedures not spelled out.

***Question 25 – Please explain the voting procedure used by your committee***

Most chairs used the method outlined in the Policies & Procedures. Others used straw votes, voting by e-mail, Googleform ballot, paper ballots at meeting, and weighted voting. One suggestion that allows for whittling down a long list is to ask everyone to list, in order, their top five titles. That info can be weighted and collected and from that list the next top five, and so on.

**Chair and Administrative Assistant Roles**

***Question 26 – As chair, I had an administrative assistant. Yes or No.***

Yes - 76.9%

No - 23.1%

***Question 27 – Please identify who took on the various roles in your committee***

Determined reading/listening assignments for committee

Chair – 70.4%	Admin Asst – 14.5%	Committee Member – 14.8%
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Maintained nominations list

Chair – 66.7%	Admin Asst – 51.9%
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Maintained rejections list

Chair – 48.1%	Admin Asst – 59.3%
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Maintained review copies received

Chair – 37%	Admin Asst – 70.4	Committee Member – 14.8%
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Based on the results, it seems that some tasks were shared between the chair and the admin assistant. The use of a committee member was likely by a chair who did not have an administrative assistant.

Comments: At least five replies indicated that the administrative assistant was the main contact with publishers. Admin assistants also often checked on the eligibility of a title.

***Question 28 – How did your members notify the committee of their nominations?***

ALA Connect	12%
Listserv	36%
YALSA form on website	52%

Other means: Google Drive spreadsheet; listserv first then YALSA form; chair designed online form; online form then forwarded to listserv.

**Question 29 – Do you think there needs to be a handbook for administrative assistants?**

Yes - 60%  
No - 40%

Comments: Helpful but chairs vary in what they want admin assts to do; clear outline of duties as different from those of chair; minimum level of expectations; 1 page guideline should be enough; Odyssey alternates and ALSC does not use admin assts; first there needs to be one for chair.

**Formats**

**Question 30 – Which of the following formats did your committee accept or consider. Please check all that apply.**

Nontraditional	26.1%
E-book	13%
Audiobook	21.7%
Self-published	39.1%
Series	65.2%
Short stories	60.9%

No comments from responders

**Question 31 – Should YALSA develop a policy about e-books and downloads for award committees?**

Yes - 88%  
No - 12%

Comments:

- Choosing guidelines over strict policy to accommodate the rapid evolution of e-books and format changes
- Clarification: Are ebooks eligible for all awards, or ebook versions of print books being read for committee purposes instead of the physical print copies
- Questions regarding the impact of e-book format on Morris Award. If e-books are eligible for review, how would this impact determining true debut author status? Would the Morris committee need/want to adjust to include ebook debut authors, or continue with their current eligibility requirements? [Would ebooks published before a specific date be grandfathered in and not make the author ineligible for consideration?]
- Suggestion that publisher could send ebook version, as long as it is in the same final copy format as a print ARC
- Suggestion to “not quibble about format”

**Elections**

***Question 32 – What is the best way to identify the most qualified members for a committee?***

Appointments by incoming president 25.9%  
 Combination of elected and appointed 74.1%

Comments

- Elected positions reflect popularity and “known-ness” of a candidate and can often be a disadvantage for those unknown and qualified individuals
- Balance is key, both in terms of elected and appointed members and background.
- Suggestion to elect chairs that have served on a similar committee
- Suggestion to solicit feedback regarding an appointee’s ability to do the work before being appointed to more committees. (Sounded like someone had a negative experience with committee members who didn’t pull their weight).
- No comments about “appointments by the incoming President” only option, although 25% of respondents indicated that as a choice.

***Question 33 - What is the best way to have a balanced committee, with members having a mix of diversity, geography, gender, and types of libraries?***

Elections 0%  
 Appointments by the incoming President 22.2%  
 Combination of elected and appointed 77.8%

Again, the majority of respondents agreed that a combination of appointed and elected positions would be best. There were no additional comments.

***Question 34 - Currently Alex, Morris, and Odyssey have no elected members. Please select the option that best reflects your opinion about elected vs appointed members on YALSA award committees.***

Current election arrangements 19.2%  
 All award committees elected 0%  
 All award committees appointed 15.4%  
 All award committees a mix of elected and appointed 65.4%

Recommendations from comments:

- Concerns about the Odyssey committee finding member to run for election because they may lack experience with audiobooks. The Odyssey committee also raised concerns about the combination of elected and appointed members because of its shared committee status with ALSC.
- Suggestion that all chairs be elected and committee members be appointed.

- Comment regarding experience on the Award Nominating committee that it is “difficult to build a slate that’s both qualified and diverse...” I think this speaks to a larger issue that what our task force is doing!
- Continuing concern that members who are well-known or popular have a distinct advantage in elections

***Question 35 - Please select the statement that best describes your opinion on appointed members versus elected members.***

I felt both appointed and elected members performed equally	81.3%
I felt that elected members performed better than appointed ones	12.5%
I felt that appointed members performed better than elected ones	6.3%

Recommendations from comments:

- Level of commitment trumps how the individual got to the committee. Suggestions to vet both elected and appointed committee members, particularly in regards to how well suited they are to book award work. I think this is a very tangible takeaway that all committees could adopt moving forward.
- Interestingly, half of the respondents (16) skipped this question and most of the ones who answered had worked with appointed committees only.
- “I haven’t been part of a committee with elected members but have heard a substantial number of (horror) stories about some of these to wonder if appointment of all might not be a better process

### Miscellaneous

***Question 36 – Did your committee have a consultant from Booklist?***

All answered yes.

Various roles

- Helping write annotations [6]
- Answering questions/providing advice [8]
- Eligibility determination [3]
- Participated in discussion [4]
- Brought titles to committee attention [6]
- New consultant and little contact [short-staffed at Booklist?]
- Sent one new consultant to Nichole for clarification re voting process
- Historical perspective
- Tallying ballots, voting procedure

***Question 37 – Committee size varies for award committees from 6 to 9 members. Please select the statement below that best describes your opinion on committee size.***

My committee size was ideal	92.3%
I would have liked more committee members	3.8%
I would have liked fewer committee members	3.8%

Comments:

I think 9 works the best [8 and chair]

Smaller might work; large committees can be difficult to manage on several levels – personalities as well as challenges in scheduling conference calls and meetings.

***Question 38 – Please share your three top tips for organizing and working with a YALSA award committee.***

On separate sheet

***Question 39 – If you have additional comments, please list them here. If you would like to talk at length with one of the task force members about a matter that isn't on the survey, please leave your contact information below.***

Additional comments

- The unofficial Morris guide that the previous chair put together was extremely helpful, especially for looking at past eligibility decisions and work practices. I added on to it and passed it on to the next chair, who continues to build on what she was given.
- My major concerns are with the current configuration of BFYA. The nonfiction award does not replace what having nonfiction on BBYA did for librarians and teens [cdobrez@gmail.com]
- I really like the idea of standardizing the field nominations and publisher submission dates. This would make it so much easier for publishers and the public to remember.
- Re committee member background – past experience did not translate into good performance. My most challenging committee member had plenty of experience but still make a serious ethical error. This person went on to serve on another prestigious committee directly after their time on my committee. We need some way to avoid reappointing these folks over and over again to committees. It's not fair to the chair or other committee members, let alone to the many YALSA members who would love to serve and do so in a more professional manner.

Members who wanted to speak at length:

Diane Colson, Jamison Hedin and Robin Kurz – Spoke with Jamison and Robin; Diane did not respond to e-mail or phone calls. Both Jamison and Robin were satisfied with Board actions taken.

## **Attachment 2 - Survey of Board Liaisons to Award Committees**

Responses were received from fifteen Board members who served as board liaisons to award committees. All award committees were represented.

### **Question 2 – Number of times chair contacted Board member**

Responses ranged from never [one] to more than 5 [eight]

### **Question 3 – Characterize the contact**

Most responses involved just saying hello or asking about a Policies and Procedure question [ten each]. Right behind was a question about a member [nine].

Other responses: member reviewing title being considered; touch base monthly with committees; check in around time of submitting quarterly reports

### **Question 4 – Able to answer question**

Seven responded yes while five said sometimes.

### **Question 5 – If no, where did you turn for help?**

Most respondents [eight] replied that they either turned to the program manager for help [Nichole O'Connor] or the YALSA President [eight].

Other sources of help: Beth Yoke; the past chair; O&B chair or Letitia if Nichole not available.

### **Question 6 – Did you feel you had the background needed to effectively answer the chair's question? And if not, what would you recommend YALSA do to assist you in your role as Board liaison?**

Eight liaisons said yes, one said no and one said sometimes. [I'm guessing that those who didn't answer this question had no problem or they would have said so.]

#### **As to what YALSA could do to assist, here are the responses:**

Previous Board or committee work helps:

- 1) "It helped that we were working on some ethical guidelines for award committee members."
- 2) "I had no prior experience with the Alex Committee and how it worked. I didn't know the answers to some of the procedural questions. However, when there was a problem with one of the committee members, I initially was able to handle it b/c of my experience dealing with problems and staff. I had to bump it up to Beth and Shannon b/c of the circumstances.  
  
So, all in all, it was perfectly fine. I don't know how YALSA could assist in this role except to have someone who has prior knowledge of the committee – but that seems impossible. It was never a problem getting an answer from any YALSA staff member of any of the Board. They were more than willing to help when needed.
- 3) I was the YALSA President at the time, so I was pretty well equipped to handle most questions. The chair was very organized, but just somewhat nervous and would email or call just to be reassured about things.
- 4) I say yes because when I didn't know the answer I knew who would.

### Recommendations

- 1) I don't know how YALSA could assist in this role except to have someone who has prior knowledge of the committee – but that seems impossible.
- 2) I would suggest that YALSA try to select award committee liaisons that can stay with the committee for the duration, since these committees straddle two Board years. (I was liaison for the entire term on this committee, but on the committee I am currently a member of, the liaison changed in the middle—unnecessarily, since the Board member remains on the Board.) But in any case, I recommend that third-year Board members NOT be appointed as liaisons to award committees, since they won't be able to stay for the entire duration, and I recommend that liaisons to award committees NOT be changed midstream.
- 3) As I had never been on an audio committee, it was a bit of a challenge. Ideally I think when Board Liaison Roles are assigned that Board members are first polled as to which committees they think their skill sets are best matched.

### Other Comments

- 1) Although this wasn't my experience, I think some of the most challenging times for Board liaisons and chairs are when policies change (e.g. when BBYA transitioned to BFYA, the social media guidelines) and the liaison & chair are dealing with concerns from both committee members and members in general. The other biggest challenges are, of course, in dealing with non-performing committee members.
- 2) I did feel comfortable addressing committee basics like how to coach an underperforming member, create timelines, start off on the right foot, etc. In most cases though, both Chairs were experienced and adept enough at that point to not really need a high level of that. As a former O&B Chair, I also felt pretty comfortable navigating and talking through the language of the P&Ps to help guide committee action.

Because I had never served on an award committee though, I was definitely lacking some of the contextual knowledge (publishing relationships and trends, sense of timing with respect to how many titles should have been discussed by certain points of the year, etc.) that would have been helpful to have a more productive/supportive relationship with the Chair. There were also

specific policy issues that I think could have been addressed more effectively at the Board level, but I wasn't experienced or knowledgeable enough.

- 3) I think YALSA is already doing it. In the time I was on the board we went over how to deal with committee member's performance. When an issue came up that was not covered in those sessions I was able to consult with the president and Beth on the best way to deal with the problem.
- 4) So, all in all, it was perfectly fine. I don't know how YALSA could assist in this role except to have someone who has prior knowledge of the committee – but that seems impossible. It was never a problem getting an answer from any YALSA staff member of any of the Board. They were more than willing to help when needed.