

YALSA Board of Directors Meeting  
ALA Midwinter Meeting, San Diego  
January 7 - 11, 2011

**Topic:** Board Fellow Concept

**Background:** YALSA continually seeks ways to provide opportunities for members to get involved. The association also looks for ways to better inform and educate members about the work of the Board and the skills required to successfully serve as a Board member. Over the past year the association has taken several steps to increase governance information sharing through the more frequent publication of governance-related content on the YALSA Blog and YAttitudes, updates to the governance section of the YALSA website, and creation of governance marketing materials (such as the benefits of Board membership document created by the YALSA Board in 2010). These are first steps in assisting members in their understanding of how YALSA governance works. In order to move forward in this area, the YALSA Board will want to consider the development of a Board fellowship program.

**Action Required:** Discussion

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**Rationale:** A Board fellowship program would help address the need for identifying and preparing qualified Board candidates. It would support the YALSA strategic plan goal of member recruitment and engagement and at the same time help continue to increase member understanding of association governance by:

- Providing the YALSA Board Nominating Committee with an expanded set of names from which to choose potential Board candidates. Names of fellows who demonstrate interest in continuing in governance work and who show skill as a potential elected Board member will be passed on to the Board Nominating Committee for consideration for a future slate.
- Providing current members with a new way of getting involved in the association and increasing their professional skills, interests, and abilities. Similarly, new members who may have an interest in management and administration may find the Board fellowship a good match for their professional goals.
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to share information, related to the work of the YALSA Board, with other members via posts on the YALSA blog, articles in YALSA journals and newsletters, messages on listservs, and so on.

- Expanding YALSA membership and recruiting new leaders. ALA members who have an interest in association governance may find serving on the YALSA Board as an fellow a good way to meet professional goals. These ALA members may not be YALSA members but would join as a way to gain fellowship eligibility. This may also result in skills and knowledge being brought to the Board.

**Proposal:** Each September YALSA will announce the availability of an application for the Board fellow position. YALSA members who have not sat on the YALSA Board previously will be invited to submit an application for consideration as a Board fellow. The YALSA Executive Committee will vet applicants and make a recommendation to the Board.

The fellowship will begin at the end of Annual Conference each year and continue for a one-year period through the next Annual Conference. The fellow selected each year will be seated on the Board at the same time as the recently elected members. The fellow will be expected to attend all Board meetings, orientation, and events as required of those elected to Board positions. As with all new Board members, the Board fellow will be given a mentor who can answer questions and support the fellow in his or her participation on the Board.

As a part of the application process, potential fellows will be asked to include information about their professional skills and interests. This information will be considered when a fellow is selected, and each year the fellow appointed to serve on the Board will be given projects that meet the interests and skills included on the application.

Board fellows would not have a vote, however, they would be asked to add to the conversation during Board discussions both face-to-face and online. At the beginning of his or her term, the Board fellow will be asked to sign the same documents (Board contract and conflict of interest policy) that elected Board members sign.

**Evaluation:** At the end of a fellow's term, the current YALSA Board exit interview process, will interview the Board fellow. This will be way for the Board to gain feedback on the success of the program After two years the Board will conduct a full evaluation of the program, via an ad-hoc committee of the Board, and determine whether or not it should continue with the Board fellowship program and if so, if there are significant changes that need to be made to the program.

**Proposed Action:**

Establish an ad-hoc committee of the Board to work out the logistics of a proposed Board fellow program and present a report to the Executive Committee for their April meeting with the goal of submitting draft Board fellow guidelines and materials to the Board for consideration at their June 2011 meeting.

**Additional Resources:**

- JLLA Board Fellows Program - <http://tinyurl.com/22urfl6>

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