YALSA Board Meeting
2005 Midwinter Meeting
Boston, Massachusetts
January 14-19, 2005

Topic: Adoption of Strategic Plan

Background: YALSA leadership met with Paul Meyer from Tecker Consultants at Midwinter 2004 and again at Annual 2004 for a Strategic Planning Session. The Strategic Plan is complete but has not yet officially adopted by YALSA.

Action Required: Discussion/Decision

Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA)

Strategic Plan

(Revised: June 2004)

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The Young Adult Library Association (YALSA) has continued a strategic planning process to assist the association in creating clarity and focus on how it should invest its valuable resources on the identified wants, preferences, and needs of its members and other stakeholder groups. As part of this effort, the YALSA has continued its ongoing strategic planning and thinking process that is leading to a more focused organization. This plan will facilitate (a) YALSA’s identification of the future needs of members and other identified stakeholders and (b) YALSA’s options for satisfying those needs. The planning process marks a significant juncture in the organization’s history and the results of this plan will initiate choices that the association will make for future success.

On January 11, 2004, YALSA leadership met to refocus on the strategic direction of the organization. They began the strategic planning and thinking process with a discussion about current conditions and future assumptions regarding their profession. This information was used to form an initial set of options for defining the organization’s core ideology and envisioned future. The framework used for this discussion and the entire planning process is a model of strategic judgments organized into four time-related horizons outlined below.

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*Adapted from Built to Last, Collins and Porras, 1994*
In addition to the future assumptions, the Four Planning Horizon’s model was used as a framework to create the strategic plan:

- A list of relevant factors in the long-range horizon (10-15 years into the future), core purpose, core values, Big Audacious Goal (B.A.G.) and a vivid description of future success;
- Five goal areas that identify where the YALSA will direct its energy in the next several years. The goal areas focus on outcomes beneficial to YALSA and its members.
- A set of strategic objectives in each goal area setting measurable direction for the organization to head in to achieve its goals.
- A set of strategies that identify the actions the organization will undertake in the next 1-3 years in order to achieve each goal area.

A set of Action Plans that identify the steps YALSA leadership and staff will need to take in order to implement the strategic plan will need to be developed in order to assist in joining the strategic plan to the association’s annual operational plan and budget.

**An Ongoing Process of Thinking Strategically**

YALSA’s leadership views the process of strategic planning as an ongoing process within YALSA. This is not a “strategic planning project” that is completed. Adoption of a plan is an affirmation of the general intent and direction articulated by the vision, goals and strategic objectives.

Progress toward achieving plan strategic objectives and goals will be assessed annually, and the plan will be updated based on achievement and changes in the needs of the stakeholders served.
Core ideology describes an association’s consistent identity that transcends all changes related to its relevant environment. It consists of two elements - core purpose – the association’s reason for being – and core values – essential and enduring principles that guide an association. Envisioned future conveys a concrete yet unrealized vision for the association. It consists of a big audacious goal – a clear and compelling catalyst that serves as a focal point for effort – and a vivid description – vibrant and engaging descriptions of what it will be like to achieve the big audacious goal.

Core Ideology

Core Purpose:

To advocate for excellence in library services to the teen population.

Core Values:

- Visionary and passionate leadership.
- Commitment to member service.
- Absolute integrity.
- Open, inclusive, and collaborative environment.
- Excellence and innovation.
- Equity of access for young adults.

Envisioned Future

Big Audacious Goal

To be the driving force behind all excellent young adult services in every library serving teens.

A Vivid Description of the Desired Future:

The Library
- There will be a young adult librarian in every public and secondary school library.
- Every public library has a line item for teen services.
- Library staff will value teens as essential library users.
- Every public library has designated space set aside for teen activities.

YALSA
YALSA is recognized as the expert in young adult library services.
- YALSA is recognized as the “networking hub” for all young adult librarians.
- YALSA is the largest division in ALA.
- YALSA has wide visibility in the media.
- YALSA provides advocacy training.
- YALSA has the best leadership training.
- ALA leadership consistently comes from YALSA.
- YALSA is more than financially independent.

**Teens**
- Teens are the most active group in public libraries.
- All teens are library users and advocates.

**Communities**
- Communities recognize that Young Adult Librarians are the “go to” resource.
- Young Adult Librarians are “movers and shakers” in the community.
5-10 Year Planning Horizon
~ Assumptions About the Relevant Future ~

In order to make progress against the 10-30 year Envisioned Future; an organization must constantly anticipate the strategic factors likely to affect its ability to succeed, and to assess the implications of those factors. This process of building foresight about the future will help YALSA to constantly recalibrate its view of the relevant future, a basis upon which to update the strategic plan on an annual basis. As the outcome-oriented goals that will form the basis of the long-range strategic plan will be based on this foresight, annual review of these statements will be an appropriate method of determining and ensuring the ongoing relevance of the strategic plan.

Assumptions

Demographics

- The population will continue to age.
- YALSA will continue to attract younger members.
- 0-18 year olds will continue to make up the largest population group in the U.S.
- Young adults may continue to be grouped with children.
- Culturally diverse populations using the library will continue to grow.

Legislation/Regulation

- There will be more attempts to legislatively control information access.
- Personal confidentiality will continue to be threatened.
- Young adults will continue to have a weak voice within political arenas.
- Young adults will continue to have few advocates.
- Government funding for social services will continue to decline and be reverted to other issues and activities.
- There will be continued ignorance by legislators and regulators on the value of teen services.
- Within the library community, there will continue to be a lack of focus on issues affecting teens (focus will continue to be on children and adults).

Global Business/Economic Climate

- There will be increasingly less dollars to spend on traditional conference formats and membership dues.
- There is a growing reliance on branding and name recognition.
- The job market for teens may grow.
- There will be a shortage in training.
There will be increased specialization in education rather than a liberal arts education.
Businesses will continue to recognize the opportunities for targeted product sales to teens.

Science/Technology

- Through the use of new technologies paraprofessionals’ job responsibilities will expand.
- The way content is delivered will continue to evolve.
- Technology will continue to allow more and more people access to increasing amounts of information.
- Technology will increasingly require multiple forms of communication.
- “Plug and play” will increasingly be expected.
- Technology will increasingly compete with the services and programs offered by the association.

Social Values/Politics

- Young adults will continue to be seen as a burden by society.
- Teens will continue to not have a vote.
- Adults will continue to misunderstand teen behavior.
- The political climate will continue to be more conservative.
- Although the population of young adults is growing, they will continue to be viewed as “second-class citizens.” (change)
- There will continue to be a lack of understanding of the true value of young adult library services.
- There will be more unattended youth.
- There will be an increasing demand for libraries to offer “out-of-school” services for young adults.
- Young adults will continue to need structure, caring adults, and relaxing environments.
- There will be fewer librarians interested in public and school settings due to lower salaries.
- There will continue to be a need to attract diversity into the profession to better reflect the populations being served.
- A conservative political climate may impact risk taking by publishers.
- Spending power of teens will remain high.
- Increased advocacy for the political rights of older teens may influence accessibility issues for younger age groups.
3-5 Year Planning Horizon

~ Outcome-Oriented Goals, Objectives, and Strategies ~

The following thinking represents goal areas for the next three to five years. They are areas in which YALSA will explicitly state the conditions or attributes it wants to achieve. These outcome statements define “what will constitute future success.” The achievement of each goal will move the organization toward realization of its vision. The goal areas are not in priority order.

Strategic Objectives and Strategies provide direction and actions on how the association will accomplish its articulated goals. Strategic Objectives are considered in the 3-5 year planning horizon while Strategies are considered within the 1-3 year planning horizon. Strategies are reviewed annually by the YALSA leadership.

Goals, Strategic Objectives, and Strategies

Goal Area: Advocacy

The value of teen services within the library has increased as the result of YALSA member advocacy.

Strategic Objectives:
1. Increase advocacy tools for YALSA members.

Strategies:
- Create “talking points” for YALSA members to use in giving presentations. (FY05)
- Develop online advocacy training materials. (FY06)

2. Increase association resources allocated to advocacy.

Strategies:
- Develop a plan outlining the additional staff, financial, and volunteer resources to create an effective advocacy program. (FY05)
- Develop and offer a leadership institute for YALSA members. (FY07)
3. Increase advocacy within the local community.

   **Strategies:**
   - Refocus more resources on creating partnerships with strategic national organizations with local affiliations. (FY05)
   - Develop workshop materials for use within the local community to explain the value of library services for teens. (FY06)

4. Increase advocacy within the library institutions.

   **Strategies:**
   - Communicate to library schools the need for expanded course offerings in young adult services. (FY06).

**Goal Area: Marketing**

As a result of YALSA’s marketing efforts, the profession of librarianship understands the value of the organization’s products and services.

**Strategic Objectives:**

1. Increase member knowledge about YALSA’s products and services.

   **Strategies:**
   - Conduct research to assess success of current marketing and communication activities and strategies. (FY06)
   - Create and implement an integrated and strategic marketing plan to communicate to members about YALSA products and services. (FY07)

2. Increase awareness of YALSA to library decision-makers.

   **Strategies:**
   - Collect anecdotal evidence and success stories to support the value of young adult librarians. (FY05)
   - Create boilerplate packages to use for PR. (FY05)

3. Increase communications to targeted YALSA member prospects.
Goal Area: Research

YALSA members and ALA recognizes the organization as a clearinghouse for library relevant teen research.

Strategic Objectives:

1. Refocus YALSA’s Research Committee to align with objectives and strategies of the strategic plan.

    Strategies:
    ▪ Compile a bibliography of existing research relating to teen library issues. (FY05)
    ▪ Develop an annual research agenda. (FY06)
    ▪ Identify gaps in existing research. (FY06)

2. Increase YALSA’s ability to successfully pursue grants.

    Strategies:
    ▪ Pursue appropriate grants for identified research projects. (FY06)

3. Increase consolidation of YALSA research data.

    Strategies:
    ▪ Create centralized clearinghouse for association research projects. (FY07)

4. Increase communication and collaboration with other ALA research entities and activities.

    Strategies:
    ▪ Identify board liaison to interact with other ALA divisions on research projects. (FY05)
    ▪ Communicate with known data gatherers about our data needs. (FY05)

Goal Area: Continuous Learning

YALSA’s continuing education opportunities are more accessible to a wider audience of members.

Strategic Objectives:

1. Increase participation in educational programs.

    Strategies:
    ▪ Conduct member and member prospect research to determine education and information needs. (FY05)
- Research and pursue appropriate collaborative opportunities with other CE providers. (FY05)
- Develop regional institutes offered several times per year. (FY07)

2. Increase visibility of YALSA as a resource for continuing education.

  Strategies:
  - Investigate the opportunity to provide distance learning programs. (FY05)

Goal Area: Association Sustainability

YALSA is self-sustaining as a result of revenue growth.

Strategic Objectives:

1. Increase revenue from existing programs and services.

   Strategies:
   - Create new professional development opportunities that generate revenue over expenses. (FY05)
   - Add publications that will generate revenue over expenses. (FY06)

2. Increase revenue from new products and services.

   Strategies:
   - Create a “Friends of YALSA” donor opportunity to establish a permanent endowment for YALSA operations. (FY05)
   - Create program to obtain corporate sponsorships. (FY05)

3. Increase membership.

   Strategies:
   - Create a targeted strategy to increase member retention. (FY06)
   - Develop a targeted campaign to solicit new members. (FY07)
   - Create member-only products and services that will attract new members and to retain existing members. (FY07)