TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: Progress Report, Young Librarians Task Force

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:

Review and comment on the status of the work of the Young Librarians Task Force

ACTION REQUESTED BY:

Laurel Bliss, Co-chair, Young Librarians Task Force
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DATE:

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BACKGROUND:

Progress report from the Young Librarians Task Force for review by the ALA Executive Board

Attachments: Progress Report
I. Introduction/Background

Camila Alire, as President-elect in 2009, created a Young Librarians Working Group to investigate ways to encourage young librarians to become better advocates for ALA and the profession. At the 2009 Annual Conference, the ALA Executive Board established the Young Librarians Task Force (YLTF), expanding Working Group membership to include representatives from ALA divisions, round tables, and ethnic caucuses. The YLTF spent 2009-2010 gathering data from young librarians and working on recommendations. At the 2010 Annual Conference, the ALA Executive Board approved an additional year for the YLTF to create recommendations for ALA to use in recruiting and retaining young librarians. Since the Annual Conference, the YLTF has reworked our recommendations to create achievable goals.

II. Revised recommendations

1. Work with ALA Membership to begin to collect birth-year information from our members. Disclosure will be voluntary, but it will help ALA strengthen its demographic information.

2. Encourage ALA to begin to track retention rates across age groups.

3. Determine guidelines for improved conference programming and activities for new/young members. These guidelines and recommendations can be distributed to divisions/round tables/interest groups.

4. Encourage divisions/round tables/interest groups to move to a virtual meeting/work model with auxiliary meetings at conference (i.e., minimize significant committee work at conference).

5. Allow members the option of a "paperless" membership (i.e., membership materials provided in electronic format only, so no American Libraries print edition, no conference mailings, no renewal mailings). There will be no reduction in the cost of the membership for the individual - the benefit will come in the form of social responsibility (ALA may also see savings from fewer printed materials and postage).

6. Increase promotion of ALA to library school students and improve partnerships with ALA-Accredited library schools.

7. Promote value-added services to new/young members (e.g., NMRT Resume Review Service).

8. Offer opportunities for young librarians to serve in elected positions within ALA and improve the elections process with respect to transparency of the process and access to information about candidates.
**III. Action items related to goals**

After reworking the recommendations/goals, we broke into subgroups to focus on creating action items. Given that some goals naturally clustered together, it made sense to consider them together under larger umbrella headings such as membership, conference, library schools, divisions/round tables, and elections.

The following provides information about the current work of these smaller groups.

**Membership Subgroup**

- Investigate ways to pull and distribute demographic data annually, especially "rate of retention." Member demographics are reported semi-annually at [http://www.ala.org/ala/research/initiatives/membershipsurveys/index.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/research/initiatives/membershipsurveys/index.cfm).
- Investigate if members could opt-in to a paperless membership on a renewal form or new member registration form, including communicating this information to *American Libraries*.
- Explore ways for ALA to partner with state and regional chapters for discounted dual membership, heightening the value of membership and streamlining the dues process. Currently about 19 states participate for students and 7 for support staff, and we might consider looking into a similar model for Trustee members.

**Conference Subgroup**

- Create a survey to ask young librarians about their most valuable conference experiences, as well as their use of the conference program.
- Examine what happens when someone checks the "First Time Attendee" box when registering for a conference - what 'bonuses' does this get for them?

**Library Schools Subgroup**

- Create face-to-face opportunities for LIS students to meet ALA Presidents and/or officials. Such as "coffee break with ALA President xxx" at xxx LIS schools.
- Conduct routine assessment on what LIS schools or student chapters need from ALA.
- Spotlight student chapters on ALA website or ALA publications. Offer complimentary membership to chapter leaders (e.g. presidents) to encourage LIS students to get involved with ALA.
- Advocate that all divisions/round tables/interest groups to offer student membership discounts.
- Expand student membership discounts to cover new grads (newly hired or non-salaried) up to xx years.
For divisions/round tables/interest groups that have their own publications, such as journals, newsletters, websites, etc, encourage them to create a space to showcase students and recent graduates in these publications. That way 1) the divisions/round tables/interest groups can help promote the students and recent graduates in the professional world, and 2) enhance the relationship between the divisions/round tables/interest groups and attract more students and recent grads to join.

Divisions/round tables Subgroup

- Look into tracking retention rates at the division/round table level. They get statistics on membership, including new members, but not retention data.
- Put together a matrix to outline what divisions/round tables are doing for young librarians to use as a comparison tool. A spreadsheet format would be more useful than straight text.
- Contact ALCTS and RUSA as a pilot project to open up dialogue between what young librarians want (which we know) and what they might already do or consider doing.

Elections Subgroup

- Add "young member" position(s) on council, ideally 3-5 reserved for librarians under a certain age or years in ALA.
- Create term limits for existing Council members, or at least a break, if term limits doesn't suffice.
- Create the ability to search or sort the candidates by years of experience, region, type of library.
- Add candidate photos to their statements and information.
- Have current council members start mentoring and grooming new candidates. They have several opportunities from NMRT, Spectrum Scholars, ARL, etc.
- Encourage the nominating committee to continue to take certain factors (such as region, years of experience) into consideration when they select candidates.
- Have election listings link to a unique profile page (outside election software) for each candidate instead of the standard election information page -- or have all candidates post information in a Facebook/Ning/etc. group for voters to review.

Note: Some of these suggestions will most likely require new elections software.