

**YALSA Board of Directors  
2021 ALA Annual Conference  
June 26, 2021**

**Topic:** **Evolving the Social Media Marketing Taskforce into a Strategic Committee**

**Background:** YALSA’s Social Media Marketing Taskforce (SMMTF) was established to support the work of the YALSA Selected Lists, expand YALSA volunteer recognition, and explore sustaining strategies for communication on social media. This board document is brought for discussion by Christine Pyles, YALSA’s SMMTF’s chair.

**Action Required:** **Discussion**

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**Overview:**

YALSA’s Social Media Marketing Taskforce is tasked with the following objectives: 1) widely marketing YALSA selection lists (Amazing Audiobooks, Best Fiction for Young Adults, Great Graphic Novels, and Quick Picks) for the current and previous years and the Teens' Top Ten list, 2) member recognition of volunteer efforts, and 3) Support for the YALSA Symposium and the Youth Media Awards events. Members complete weekly assignments, for which volume can vary based on the output and needs of the Chairs of the YALSA selection lists.

The first rendition of the Social Media Marketing Taskforce (SMMTF) was poised to start in 2019 but was derailed by COVID-19. Similarly, the second rendition of the SMMTF was initially planned to begin efforts in Fall 2020, but experienced delay. In 2021, the inaugural SMMTF began its work as a group of six with one chair and five members.

The term for current SMMTF members started in November 2020 and was scheduled to end on June 30, 2021. Member terms have been temporarily extended through the end of August 2021 until the YALSA Board of Directors can make a decision on this topic. The original 2021 SMMTF chair made initial contact with the taskforce members at the end of December and stepped down in mid-January. A new chair was named and the taskforce was reduced to five total members. Due to this late start and transition period, SMMTF members did not have ample information or time to complete one of its main objectives - supporting the YMAs using social media.

SMMTF members complete weekly tweet assignments to support the YALSA selection lists. Specifically, each title that is listed below the featured review on The Hub and does not receive a full review, receives a tweet from the SMMTF. Volume of work can vary based on the output

and needs of the Chairs of the YALSA selection lists. For example, Amazing Audiobooks for Young Adults had very high volume in March 2021 when SMMTF work began. In those early weeks, there were 4-6 Amazing Audiobooks nominees requiring tweets each week.

SMMTF members are in a unique position; members must be able to write engaging, yet brief tweets related to books that they may not have read, do research on the plot, look up accounts to tag authors, illustrators, and publishers, and also turn in their work on a hard deadline. Tweets are most effective when posted on the day the featured review is posted to The Hub and that routine is one that took a while to establish. It has been difficult to achieve 100% completion of work each week because SMMTF members have different levels of available time to give to YALSA. While SMMTF assignments rotate every four weeks, the volume for each list ebbs and flows, still requiring immediate attention.

Unlike some other YALSA volunteer opportunities, such as working on a selection list committee, the SMMTF's work is based on the work of other YALSA volunteers. The SMMTF must be responsive to the needs of other YALSA volunteers and make changes expediently. For example, the auto-tweet that accompanied the Featured Reviews when The Hub post went live, was bare bones and didn't make the waves that Selected List Coordinators had hoped. The titles that did not get a featured review but did get a tweet, received far more social media attention and engagement than the blogged title. The Chair was able to work with The Hub Member Manager and Selected List Coordinators to come up with a plan for the SMMTF to complete shorter tweets to accompany the Featured Reviews.

### **Recommendations:**

There are several recommendations to help guide this YALSA volunteer group going forward:

- Transition from a taskforce to a strategic committee.
- Terms should be extended to 14 months in length: November through December of the following year.
- Make it clear in calls for volunteers that this volunteer opportunity has weekly assignments with hard deadlines; volunteers must be able to consistently commit 1-5 hours per week to this work.

Optional but optimal recommendation:

- As part of the application process, request that applicants write "try-out tweets" to gauge their ability to write tweets. It helps if members already have an idea of how to do this.
- Consider reaching out to individuals who tweet about YALSA events, such as the YALSA Symposium, to have them consider volunteering for this committee.

*Transition from a taskforce to a strategic committee:*

It can be tempting to make this a larger committee. However, this needs to be a smaller group to facilitate the work quickly. In addition to a committee Chair/Coordinator, it is recommended that there be 3-4 committee members. There are four selection lists, member recognition, and YMA/Symposium work. The selection lists can be the focus of the 3-4 members with group

work for YMA and Symposium, and the Chair focusing on editing posts, executing posts, and member recognition based on press releases.

*Term Length:*

The current term of November to the following June does not allow the SMMTF to support the Symposium or to support the Selection Lists beyond June. The Selection List reviews did not start to be posted on The Hub until March and with the current term length, that only covers four months of Selection List work. Essentially, the level of support will end and only happen for a third of the year if the current term length is maintained.

A 14-month term from November to the following December allows the volunteers to support the Selection Lists all year, support the Symposium (toward end of term), and help the new Chair and members with transition so the incoming group can adequately support the YMAs.

*Weekly Commitment:*

Documenting the weekly commitment up front is important to ensure the group's work is completed. Depending on the number of nominees/tweets per week, a member commitment can be up to two (2) hours per week (usually lower). The Chair may spend an average of five (5) hours per week writing tweets, editing tweets, posting/scheduling tweets, writing reports, and assigning other work to members.

*Try-Out Tweets:*

It can be helpful for YALSA to see what applicants are capable of before volunteers are named with the SMMTF. Volunteers should understand that the audience from the work is librarians, specifically librarians who purchase for their collections. There have been tendencies to target tweets to teens and general readers and, despite following up with members, there is a lot of editing that needs done week over week.

**Alignment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Goals:**

The Selection Lists focus more on EDI as they read, vet, and nominate titles with diverse characters and authors. The SMMTF further contributes in centering diverse authors voices by targeting their messages to selecting librarians and library staff that conduct readers advisory in their communications.

**Fiscal Implications:**

There are no fiscal implications for YALSA if this taskforce becomes a committee. There would be the same level of orientation for new members as terms end. The work continues but with more structure.

**Measuring Impact:**

The committee will continue to monitor data, evaluate strategies to improve collaboration and sustainability, seek input from the board liaison when needed, and make recommendations to the YALSA Board.

**Additional Resources:**

- Interim Strategic Plan FY21,  
[http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/Board%20Doc%20Interim%20Strategic%20Plan%20FY%2021\\_0.pdf](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/Board%20Doc%20Interim%20Strategic%20Plan%20FY%2021_0.pdf)
- YALSA EDI Plan,  
[http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/2018\\_YALSA\\_EDI%20Plan.pdf](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/2018_YALSA_EDI%20Plan.pdf)
- Selection List Marketing Plan,  
[http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/BoardDoc24\\_SelectionListMarketing.pdf](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/BoardDoc24_SelectionListMarketing.pdf)
- Social Media Marketing Taskforce Expansion,  
<http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/Item%20%2310.%20Social%20Media%20Marketing%20Taskforce%20Expansion.pdf>
- YALSA Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/yalsa>
- Twitter, <https://twitter.com/@yalsa>
- YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/user/YALSA1957>
- Current Hashtags, <http://www.yalsa.ala.org/thehub/about/selected-lists-the-hub/>