It transpires that the costs for audio-visual equipment at the Chicago convention are considerably higher than expected—nearly three times what we’ve paid in the past, and more than the rest of the convention put together. In light of this, the MMLA Executive Committee and team have regretfully decided that we cannot afford, as we have done the past few years, to equip all meeting rooms with audio-visual equipment. Instead, we will have audio-visual setups in three rooms (Williford A, Room 4-M, and Room 4-J), for panels, such as film studies, with indisputable a-v needs. (Note that hotel guidelines don’t permit panelists to use their own a-v equipment.) We have negotiated for wi-fi in all meeting rooms, which—we hope—will make it possible for people with laptops to download material from the net.

This means that presenters should wherever possible craft presentations that do not rely on projectors and screens. We encourage people to use handouts for requisite or useful passages and illustrations; it would be best to come to the convention with these in hand; there are, though, copy machines in the Hilton’s business center for people (or at least people staying at the Hilton) who need to make copies at the conference. People intending to read their presentations from laptops should have them stored on their hard drive, since access to cloud services may be slow. Panelists in the three a-v-equipped rooms should bring their laptops to connect to projectors; thumb drives won’t work. Mac users in the a-v rooms should be sure to bring converters.

We are very sorry for decreasing a-v availability at this year’s conference, and regret the inconvenience it will cause to many; we undertake not to let it be the beginning of a trend. But if we agreed to the charges for universal a-v this year, we would lose enough money on the conference that we would find ourselves in the position of having to think about things like raising membership and registration fees, and cutting travel grants and book awards, in order to balance our budget sheets. We would much prefer to keep dues where they are, or lower them; and increase outlays on awards and grants. We hope that our members share these priorities.