

2015 Executive Committee Minutes

1. Introductions. Incoming members, along with ongoing members, introduced themselves.
2. Summary of MMLA Revenue and Expenses. The committee looked over the records for the past year (June 2014-May 2015) and the forecast for the current and coming year. Net income for last year was \$55,472.14; net income for this year is projected to be \$34,571.91 (this is an intentionally low projection). The organization's two main sources of revenue are membership and conference fees and (as of last year) payments from JSTOR and Project Muse.

The committee reviewed the recent past, and discussed the issue of MMLA's housing at Loyola. The Loyola administration has not yet indicated whether it intends to go on housing the MMLA past 2017; the original agreement between the MMLA and Loyola requires that Loyola convey its decision in this regard by fall of 2016. It was agreed that the organization will encourage Loyola to make and communicate its decision earlier than this, so that in the event of its being negative the MMLA might have more time to find a new home institution.

3. Report of Income and Subscriptions for JMMLA. The shift of revenue from hardcopy library subscriptions to digital subscriptions was discussed. The added revenue from Project Muse and JSTOR has been welcome; there is no guarantee that it will continue to be so remunerative in the future. The role of the journal's "usage rate" (measured in "hits") was briefly discussed, and the importance of article keywords touched on. (It was agreed that the comparative data provided to the committee on journal prices did not warrant changing the price of hard copies of the journal. The shift to digital renders the question of hardcopy pricing less important than it would otherwise be.)

The question of whether we should continue with the printer we are using was discussed, with the tentative conclusion that only if we can find one who will do an equivalent job at less cost should we do this. Members were generally satisfied with the look of the journal, and happy about the new cover (which Chris Martiniano designed for the MMLA at no charge). It was noted that the program book this year is too big; next year the pages and the print should be smaller.

The matter of the editorial staff was discussed: there will be two editors at any given time—that is, the journal will be co-edited—and the editorial term of service will be three years.

4. Report on Membership and Registration. It was observed that the number of assistant professor members has decreased in the past few years, and measures were discussed by which to redress this. The committee discussed our current membership and registration fees. It was proposed that our graduate student (and contingent faculty?) membership fee should be dropped to \$25, thereby matching the MLA's fee.
5. New officers. Emily Lutenski will be the new President of the EC. Emily Isaacson will be the new Vice-President. Hillary Nunn moves from President to the position of past President and Treasurer. (It was agreed, contingent on Kansas City being chosen as the convention site

in 2018, that Jason Arthur will be Vice-President after Emily Isaacson, in 2017.) Erika Behrisch Elce, Emily Isaacson, and Matthew Barbee were confirmed as new members (Directors). (Erika will work on the Editorial Committee. Emily Isaacson will work on the Program Committee. Matthew will work on the Program Committee and the by-laws.)

Andrea Kaston Tange is rotating off the committee from her position as past President and Treasurer. Sam Cohen is rotating off the committee from his position as co-Editor of the journal. The consensus was that these departures represent a terrible loss to the committee.

It was agreed that we should have at least two representatives from foreign-language departments on the EC.

6. 2016 Conference Theme. Emily Lutenski suggested “Border States” as the theme for the 2016 convention, and this was discussed and approved by the committee. Here are associated terms that might be used in the write-up: states of being; borderlands; the liminal; migration; North/South; East/West; transnational; gateways; mobility; littoral zones; settlement/unsettlement ; identities; urban/suburban; adolescence; states of being; crossing borders/lines/genres; trans identities; refugees/asylum/border control; the precariat; state of the profession; state of the humanities; atmospheres; post-humanism; endings/beginnings; performance ; the digital divide; textuality in the digital age; interdisciplinarity; pedagogies; academic hurdles.
7. 2016 Local Conference Contact. Arline Cravens will be the contact.
8. Other Issues discussed.

The committee agreed that it would be desirable to increase our membership, and various means were proposed by which this might be addressed.

A) recruiting more affiliated organizations than we now have, with common interests where possible. (We can offer a permanent session to such organizations and up to three panels. Committee members should forward names and contact info for potential new affiliates to the executive director.)

B) awarding more graduate student “convention travel grants” (it was agreed that it would be a good idea to try to set up matching grants [of, say, \$200] with affiliated organizations).

C) increasing publicity about the convention, especially in the area of the convention city, by, e.g., writing departmental chairs of institutions in the area, asking them to post flyers, including reference to affiliate organizations, etc. (We should send outreach email containing CFP to chairs of departments at smaller colleges in vicinity of conference, in addition to approaching the departments with graduate programs, to seek out departmental sponsorships. We should emphasize that there are often threads of panels that create cohorts that might be of interest to particular faculty (e.g. the Civil War Caucus, or the many 19th century panels we had this year); and send them email out AGAIN once we have a program set to highlight the particular threads of interest in the coming year.)

D) offering (and advertising) more professionalizing panels, more “teaching literature and composition” panels, more panels on teaching and learning. Also: professionalizing sessions

for next year should include one on interviewing and job processes: writing CV, cover letter, how to be interviewed, difference between R1 schools and teaching heavy institutions.

E) including events (e.g., “mixers”) on publishing, on how to put together essay collections, etc.

F) enhancing our website presence, possibly partly through the use of a logo (the llama?; the possibility of selling or including T-shirts and/ or totebags was also discussed).

G) approaching the MLA to see if there is a way to have members easily pay annual dues for MLA plus a regional organization at the same time, and vice versa.

The committee discussed how we should use our finances if they continue to increase. Among the proposals: support for contingent faculty; more prizes and awards for graduate students; a best book by a member prize; another plenary (or a sub-plenary) lecture at the annual convention.

The committee discussed the matter of future sites for conventions (after the 2017 convention in Cincinnati). There was consensus that a hotel negotiator should be used to negotiate contracts for the years 2018 to 2022 in the following cities (in this order): Kansas City, Chicago, Indianapolis, Cleveland, Minneapolis/St. Paul). This should be arranged in the coming spring. We should take steps to make sure that the hotels selected are appropriate (especially with respect to site), before closing any deals. It was suggested that the agent might try negotiating with one hotel group (Hilton, Hyatt, etc.) so as to get better rates.

The committee decided formally to discontinue the policy of pre-circulating papers on some panels. It decided to stick to its current policy with respect to the reading of papers in absentia.

The committee decided to stick to the current policy with respect to requests to put JMMLA articles in individual college’s digital repositories: that is, if asked for permission, we allow it at no charge. The committee decided to grant publishers the right to reprint JMMLA articles in essay collections, etc., only if they agree to pay an appropriate amount (still to be determined).

The committee agreed to revise its bylaws, since the current bylaws are out-of-date and incomplete. Emily Lutenski and Matthew Barbee volunteered to be the committee for revising the bylaws.