

Minutes of the 2023 Meeting of the MMLA Executive Committee

Date: November 2nd, 2023

Location: Hyatt Regency Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio

Attendees

Olga Bezhanova, Nathan Jung, Joe Keener, Jack Kerkering, Michelle Medeiros, Gaywyn Moore, and Eric Wistrom

The meeting was called to order shortly after 9:00 a.m. and began with approval of the minutes for the 2021 Executive Committee meeting, approval of the minutes for the 2022 Executive Committee meeting, and approval of the agenda for this 2023 Executive Committee meeting. The Executive Director then reviewed a Summary of Revenue and Expenses that had been sent to the Executive Committee early in the 2023-24 fiscal year. Next, the Program Manager presented a Cash Flow Forecast Report, and the Executive Committee discussed the challenges of forecasting future convention participation in a post-pandemic context of diminished financial support for conference travel from universities. Next, the Executive Director presented a Report on Membership, including an update on the new membership portal provided through Memberclicks. Next, the Executive Committee approved a proposal to shift the manner of calculating membership dues: instead of linking dues amounts to an individual's position or rank in the profession, dues amounts for individuals will henceforward be linked to the individual's salary. Also part of this proposal was establishing Departmental and Institutional memberships, each with fixed dues amounts.

Next, the discussion turned to *JMMLA* with a report on the income it generates for the association. Next, the decision was made to postpone a decision on the guest editor and topic of the spring 2025 issue of *JMMLA* until early January of 2024. The Executive Committee then endorsed a proposal for continuing to use Manuscript Manager to receive and process articles submitted to the journal, and it endorsed the purchase of additional Manuscript Manager credits when and if needed. Next, the Executive Committee endorsed further consideration of the possibility of activating the Production Module of Manuscript Manager, delegating that decision to the discretion of the MMLA staff. Next, the Executive Committee approved a proposal to supplement the generally flexible assignment of roles in the production of *JMMLA* with the step of completing a Memorandum of Understanding for each issue that clearly specifies who, for that issue, is assigned a given task in that issue's production. Next, the Executive Committee approved a proposal to phase out the practice of mailing print copies of *JMMLA* to current members; this practice of distributing physical copies will be replaced with the practice of providing electronic access for current MMLA members, via the new member portal, to PDF files of all current and past issues of *JMMLA* and its predecessor publication, the MMLA *Bulletin*. Next, the Executive Committee approved a proposal to establish an Editorial Board for *JMMLA*. Finally, in order to expedite the journal's production process, the Executive Committee endorsed hiring a second copyeditor.

After a brief break, the discussion turned to plans for the 2024 convention in Chicago. The incoming President proposed a convention theme of "Health in/of the Humanities," which the

Executive Committee discussed and endorsed. Another break then occurred for lunch and for Executive Committee members to make their convention presentations. Upon reconvening, the discussion turned to a proposal to post on the MMLA website an endorsement of an MLA statement on Equity and Inclusion, and this proposal was approved. The discussion then turned to the format of the 2024 convention, and the Executive Committee decided on an all-in-person format; only as a last-resort response to an emergency will presenting a paper via Zoom be permitted, and then, only if the chair of the panel is willing to supply the software and hardware necessary for the remote speaker in question to appear and present in this manner. Next, the decision was made to continue providing members a free print copy of the convention program, and the MMLA staff will explore the possibility of securing a phone app that would serve as an electronic alternative to the print convention program. The Executive Committee then decided to replace the convention travel award with a convention lodging award of two nights at the convention hotel. The Executive Committee then encouraged replacing the Sunday breakfast that was removed from the 2023 program with a Saturday graduate-student and faculty breakfast in 2024. The discussion then turned to assessing and perhaps rethinking the workshop model for professionalizing sessions; such an assessment might be effected through questions in the post-convention survey or through surveys distributed via the Memberclicks platform. Regarding next year's book award, which will be awarded for creative work, Executive Committee members recommended publicizing it to small Chicago-based presses to encourage submissions.

Discussion then turned to future conventions, including plans to host the 2025 MMLA convention at Marquette University, which will book its space up to a year in advance. The MMLA's contact at Marquette requested information about the convention's space requirements, which will be required to negotiate the details a 2025 convention hosting agreement with the university. For 2026, the Executive Committee decided to return to Chicago and host the event at a downtown hotel, and they authorized the Executive Director to commence negotiations with Chicago hotels to contract a venue. Next, the Executive Committee approved two changes to the MMLA bylaws: one introduces language addressing how to fill vacant offices when an MMLA officer resigns; the other introduces language clarifying how and when the term of service of an Executive Committee member ends. The discussion then turned to assignments of Executive Committee members to two standing committees, the Program Committee and the Editorial Committee, and the committee assignments of all Executive Committee members were confirmed. The Executive Committee next approved a motion seeking to expand the current number of people on the Executive Committee by at least two, including a replacement for the current graduate student on the committee. Discussion then turned to strategies for increasing opportunities for the MMLA Vice-President to learn the duties of President during the year spent as Vice-President. The Executive Committee then heard from current Executive Committee members who were interested in being elected as the next Vice-President, and after discussion and a vote, Joe Keener was elected as the next MMLA Vice-President. The next item on the agenda was an update on the Undergraduate Research Symposium, and the final action taken was to approve a motion to adopt a policy, starting next year, of waiving the MMLA membership fee for Executive Committee members; this motion was approved. The meeting adjourned shortly before 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Jack Kerkering