

## Minutes of the 2025 Meeting of the MMLA Executive Committee

Date: Friday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Location: Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

### Attendees

Adrienne Angelo, Olga Bezhanova, Judah-Micah Lamar, Nathan Jung, Joe Keener, Jack Kerkering, Darío Sánchez-González, Heejoung Shin, Eric Wistrom, and Krislyn Zhorne; special guest: Julia di Liberti

The meeting was called to order shortly after 9:00 a.m. and began with approval of the minutes for the January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Election Meeting of the MMLA Executive Committee, which was followed by approval of the agenda for this 2025 Convention Meeting of the Executive Committee. The Executive Director then obtained officer signatures on the MMLA's 2025 Illinois Charity Bureau Report. Next, the Executive Committee considered a proposal from College of DuPage to succeed Loyola as the MMLA's host institution; Dr. Julia di Liberti of College of DuPage spoke about the proposal and fielded questions about details of the plan. After extensive discussion, the proposal was unanimously approved and is expected by all parties to go into effect on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026. Discussion next turned to MMLA finances, comparing revenue and expenses for the past two years (as rendered by new accounting software). The Executive Committee next unanimously approved a proposal to shift association savings to an interest-bearing money market account. Next, in light of anticipated high AV costs for the 2026 convention, the Executive Committee deferred a decision on whether to limit AV at the 2026 convention pending further research into costs. [Further research showed high anticipated AV costs at *voco* Downtown Chicago, so a later email exchange among Executive Committee members committed to providing AV for the 2026 convention's keynote address but not for presentations in the breakout rooms.] Discussion next turned to a report on membership, including numbers and percentages drawn from various member "types" (tenured and non-tenured faculty, graduate students, independent scholars, etc.) and revenues generated from membership dues. A proposal to increase by \$5.00 all 2026 dues amounts and all 2026 convention fees passed unanimously. After a brief break shortly after 11:00 a.m., the discussion turned to income from royalties paid to the association by JSTOR, Project MUSE, and EBSCO, the three distributors of the association's scholarly journal, *JMMLA*. The Executive Committee next discussed but declined for the present to accept a proposal to make *JMMLA* content available for use by AI LLMs. After discussion of Manuscript Manager's utility as the *JMMLA* submission platform, its continued use was unanimously endorsed. A decision on a guest editor and theme for the spring 2027 issue of *JMMLA* was postponed to the 2026 Election Meeting (anticipated to occur in late January or early February of 2026). Next ensued updates on the status of four issues of *JMMLA* now in progress. The meeting adjourned for a lunch break shortly before noon.

After lunch, the discussion turned first to a brief review of the association's 2025 convention contract with Marquette University before addressing plans for the 2026 convention at *voco* Chicago Downtown. The current MMLA Vice President, Eric Wistrom, presented several possible themes for the 2026 convention (over which he will preside), and after discussion,

strong support emerged for “After the Archive,” which was thus adopted. Next, the Executive Committee committed to an all-in-person format for the 2026 convention; in 2026 there will be no all-virtual day (as in 2022 and 2023), and there will be no designated room for virtual presenters (as in 2025). Executive Committee members next voted unanimously to set aside \$2,500.00 to fund 2026 lodging awards reimbursing award recipients for a two-night stay at the convention hotel. It was then noted that the 2026 book prize shall be awarded to a work of creative writing. Turning next to discussion of future conventions, the Executive Committee postponed committing to a return to Marquette in 2027 pending an assessment of the 2025 event, though they remained strongly supportive of holding the 2027 convention at a Midwest university rather than a hotel. Turning next to the 2028 convention, the Executive Committee considered bids from four Chicago hotels interested in hosting that event and decided to accept the bid from voco Chicago Downtown; the Executive Director was thereby instructed to complete that contract [which he did on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025].

Attention now turned to a proposed three-year renewal of the MMLA’s financial support of a short-term fellowship at the Newberry Library; the Executive Committee voted unanimously to extend that fellowship support for an additional three years. Discussion next turned to a review of the MMLA’s insurance coverage, which expanded this year and now includes three policies: general liability (now under a new provider), management liability, and media liability. Following this review, the Executive Committee received an update on the Undergraduate Research Symposium from Krislyn Zhorne, who described a thriving atmosphere in this important part of the association’s outreach to young and aspiring literary scholars. Attention now turned to personnel matters, including identifying the subcommittees (either Editorial or Program) on which Executive Committee members will serve in 2026 and anticipating the early-2026 Elections Meeting, which (per the association’s bylaws) will consider candidates for election to the MMLA Executive Committee from two distinct nomination streams: 1) self-nominations from MMLA members; and 2) outgoing Executive Committee members each nominating a potential successor. The discussion then turned to nominating current Executive Committee members to run for the office of Vice President, but since the eligible candidates present requested additional time to give further consideration to the possibility of taking on this role, the election of a new MMLA Vice President was postponed until the early-2026 Election Meeting (where the Executive Committee elects nominees as new members of the Executive Committee). There being no new business, the meeting adjourned at 2:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Jack Kerkering