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**Rolling memberships are coming in 2017!**

*Find out more on page 2.*

## Ofelia Zepeda Receives ADFL Award

The ADFL Executive Committee has awarded the twenty-first ADFL Award for Distinguished Service to the Profession to Ofelia Zepeda, Regents' Professor in the Departments of Linguistics and American Indian Studies at the University of Arizona. An accomplished poet, linguist, professor, and activist, Zepeda has long been a leader in the preservation of endangered indigenous languages. She is the leading expert in the Tohono O'odham language and has worked with her students to transcribe and translate O'odham songs as a means of preserving the O'odham linguistic and cultural heritage. In addition to her scholarly contributions, Zepeda has written several collections of poetry, coedited an anthology of Native American writing, and served as the editor of *Sun Tracks*, a series dedicated to the work of Native writers, published by the University of Arizona Press. Zepeda is one of the cofounders and now director of the nationally recognized American Indian Language Development Institute, which helps train Native and non-Native teachers working with American Indian students. In 1999 she received a MacArthur Fellowship for her commitment to "preserving Native American languages and to revitalizing tribal cultures."



TONY CELENANO

The award will be presented at the convention's awards ceremony on 7 January 2017. Since 1994, the ADFL Award for Distinguished Service to the Profession has recognized eminent scholar-teachers who serve the profession in the larger community.

## Sandra Sellers Hanson Receives ADE March Award

The ADE Executive Committee has named Sandra Sellers Hanson the recipient of the twenty-fifth Francis Andrew March Award. She will receive the award at the MLA Annual Convention's awards ceremony in Philadelphia on 7 January 2017. Hanson received her bachelor's degree from Luther College and her master's from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. After receiving her doctorate from New York University, she began her teaching career at Valparaiso College. She subsequently taught writing and literature at Los Angeles Valley Junior College, Wagner College, and Staten Island Community College. She joined the English Department at LaGuardia Community College, City University of New York, in 1976 and served for five years as director of composition. In 1984 she was elected to the first of seven three-year terms as department chair. In her time as chair, the department grew from twelve to sixty-five full-time faculty members. Hanson served on the ADE Executive Committee from 2013 to 2016.



The Francis Andrew March Award was established by the ADE Executive Committee in 1984 to honor exceptional service to the profession of English. The award is named for Francis March (1823–1911), professor of English at Lafayette College and the first professor of English in America.

## MLA Moves to Rolling Memberships

In January 2017, after the annual convention, the MLA will move to a rolling membership model. Under the new model, approved by the Executive Council in May 2016, new members will be able to join at any time of year and receive a full year of membership. A member who joins on 30 March 2017, for example, will be a member until 29 March 2018. In the past all MLA memberships began on 15 January and ended on 14 January of the following year.

### How will your membership be affected?

If you are a current (2017) member, your membership anniversary will remain the same: 15 January. We'll remind you to renew by January 2018. If you are a lapsed member who renews after the convention, your anniversary will be the date you renewed. Either way, we'll include the date your membership will expire on your dues notice and on your My MLA profile.

### Why make this change?

Under the old membership cycle, those who joined in the middle of the membership year received less than a full year of benefits. Now, regardless of when you join, you'll receive benefits for a year. The timing is up to you!

### How will this affect MLA deadlines?

For most activities that require MLA membership (e.g., voting, submitting a convention proposal), if you are a member on the deadline for the activity, you are eligible to participate. To find out about specific deadlines and learn more about rolling memberships, we encourage you to visit [www.mla.org/membership-faq](http://www.mla.org/membership-faq).

## Exhibit Hall and MLA PubCentral

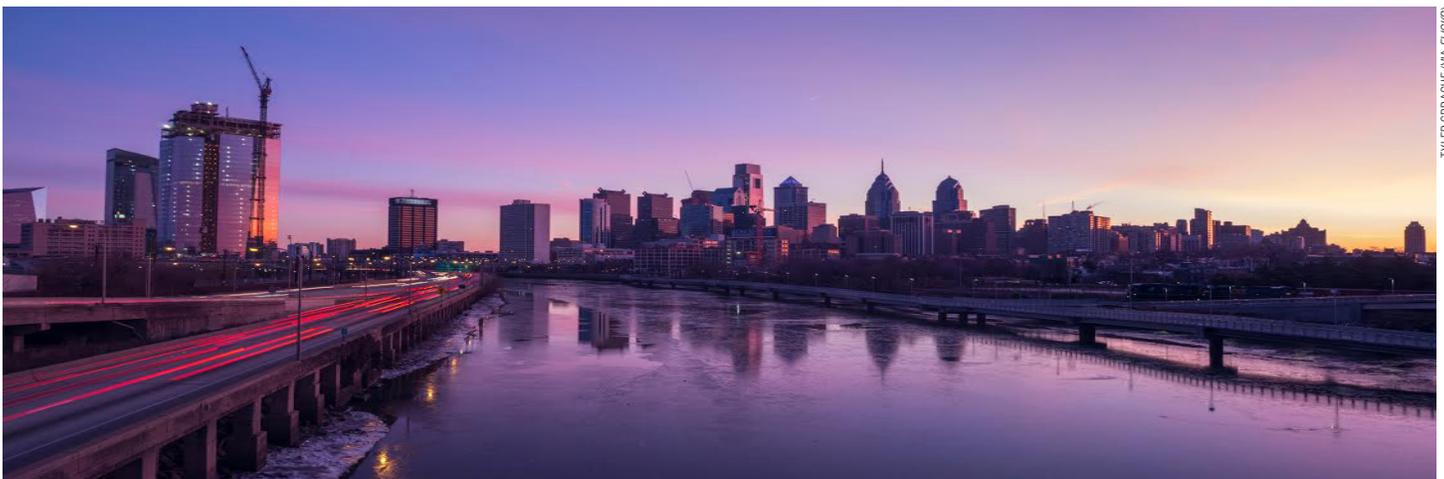
This year, the exhibit hall (Pennsylvania Convention Center, Ballroom AB, Ballroom level) will be centrally located near the MLA registration and welcome center, members' lounge, and MLA PubCentral. Featuring nearly one hundred book publishers, academic journals, and digital tools for research, writing, and teaching, the exhibit hall is the place to find the newest publications and products for classroom use and beyond. Visit your favorite exhibitors, discover new books and authors, and sample a wide range of products and services during exhibit hall hours (6 and 7 January, 9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.; 8 January, 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.). The *Convention Daily* provides the coffee stand schedule and updates to all exhibit hall events, including receptions and book signings.

The MLA exhibit booth is located in MLA PubCentral and will be open on 5 January and during the exhibit hall hours. Shop for MLA products and receive a 30% discount on all MLA titles ordered at the booth. Join us for a reception celebrating the release of the new *MLA Handbook*. Staff members from *MLA Commons* and the *MLA Bibliography* will be available to meet with attendees, and there will be a display of the 2016 MLA-prize-winning books to be honored at the MLA Awards Ceremony (7 January, 8:15 p.m., Philadelphia Marriott, Liberty Ballroom ABC, level 2). Please check the *Convention Daily* and the MLA Annual Convention *Twitter* feed (@MLAconvention) for up-to-date information.

## Delegate Assembly Meeting

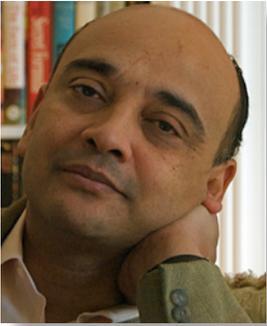
MLA members are invited to attend the meeting of the 2017 Delegate Assembly during the convention in Philadelphia. Members may speak to any of the items on the assembly's agenda. These items include regular staff and committee reports on association activities, proposed constitutional amendments, and proposals received from members. Documents related to these and other agenda items will be posted at the MLA Web site by mid-December (see [www.mla.org/da-agenda](http://www.mla.org/da-agenda)).

The assembly meeting will begin at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, 7 January, in Grand Ballroom Salon GH in the Philadelphia Marriott Hotel. Because the assembly meeting is open-ended, even latecomers will have a chance to join in important discussions of association policies.



Philadelphia skyline from the Schuylkill River

TYLER SPRAGUE (VA FLICKR)



## Taking Issue, Taking Stock

The Modern Language Association of America is a scholarly organization. Is it also a political one? Not in a straightforwardly partisan way: our legal status prohibits us from endorsing candidates for elected office. But on topics that are central to our mission and that we can address in a clear and unified voice, the MLA can make a contribution to the national conversation. Among the issues that the association has been concerned with are the growth of contingent labor and the decline of tenure in higher education; language study as an educational right; and, very broadly, a diminishment in support for the humanities.

I invoked a national conversation, yet composition and literary and cultural studies are transnational enterprises, even if some places speak louder (or, at any rate, are heard better) than others. Your MLA has sought to enrich our transnational connections. This past summer we had our first conference outside North America, with participants from thirty-six countries; it was held in Germany, and it was, in the opinion of this participant, a success. At the same time, the attacks on academic freedom in scores of nations affect all of us, wherever we work.<sup>1</sup> The MLA has spoken out recently about the appalling assaults on the academy in Turkey. Especially when we draw on our distinctive professional knowledge and understanding, we can help sustain cultures around the world where free inquiry is respected.

The proper remit of our political engagements, however, has occasioned heated discussion. At our convention this coming January, I've been asked to chair a town hall meeting to discuss the question "Should the MLA endorse a boycott of Israeli academic institutions?" We are likely to have related resolutions or motions to debate at the Delegate Assembly. It is evident that the membership is divided on the issue.

I've had many conversations and exchanges with advocates and opponents of the academic boycott, and I have been consistently impressed with their seriousness and good will. All are affected by a continuing sense of the tragedy that has overtaken the Palestinians. There is disagreement about how to apportion blame for this among the many parties involved. There is disagreement as to the special status of this tragedy in a world where billions of people lack the basic resources for a decent human life. The question on which MLA members are most deeply divided, however, pertains not to our roles as individual citizens of a country or of the world but to our collective role, as a scholarly association.

Some members believe that this is one of the great moral questions of our time and that the MLA should lay down a marker, whether or not it connects directly with our professional activities. Some think that it does relate to the primary purposes of the association, because the practices of the Israeli state curtail the freedom of Palestinian scholars and students. The relationship between the governments

of the United States and Israel gives Americans particular responsibility for Israel's actions, some say, regardless of whether those actions represent a unique enormity.

Others think it unfair to single out one government and one country in a world full of lamentable injustice, and they point to the infringements on free speech and academic freedom by the Palestinian authorities in the West Bank and in Gaza. Indeed, some have suggested that focusing on Israeli universities suggests that we are *not* opposed to the policies of other regimes that support universities while doing terrible things. They even ask, with Noam Chomsky, whether, by the logic of the boycott, academic associations around the world should shun American universities, which take money from a government that is Israel's leading supporter and whose policies, they reckon, have led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people over the past few decades in the Middle East.

In the town hall meeting, we will no doubt hear these and other arguments for and against the MLA's supporting the movement for boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) against Israel. But I have heard specifically institutional considerations, too, raised by members involved in the everyday work of the association.

They ask how pronouncing on this matter will affect issues that are uncontroversially basic to the MLA's mission. To improve the situation of language study, for example, we must influence public opinion—addressing politicians and university trustees and administrators, parents and students, and the wider citizenry. These members wonder whether adopting a position on a contentious issue about which we are divided could weaken our capacity to accomplish such goals. They wonder about effects on the external funding, public and private, we need to advance our work.

Finally, some members have expressed concern about how the MLA's collective voice is represented. If passed by the Delegate Assembly, a resolution can be ratified by a majority vote representing the support of just ten percent of our members. Is this percentage sufficient to present a ratified resolution as the consensus view of the Modern

*(cont. on p. 4)*

The *MLA Newsletter* (ISSN 0160-5720) is published four times a year (Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter) by the Modern Language Association of America, 85 Broad Street, suite 500, New York, NY 10004-2434. The *MLA Newsletter* is edited by the executive director of the association, Rosemary G. Feal. The managing editor is Anna S. A. Chang. The cost of an annual subscription is \$8. The subscription price is included in the dues of all members of the association. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. All news items and letters should be sent to the *MLA Newsletter* at the above address. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *MLA Newsletter*, 85 Broad Street, suite 500, New York, NY 10004-2434. MLA and the MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION are trademarks owned by the Modern Language Association of America.

(cont. from p. 3)

Language Association? A gesture of solidarity produced in the face of deep division, some members argue, may entrench and exacerbate that division. In their view, it thus risks being a self-undermining performance.

In the light of such concerns and complexities, I have asked the MLA Executive Council to convene a special working group charged with clarifying procedures for speaking out publicly on issues, reviewing current practices, and making recommendations for change. In what sense is this scholarly association also a political one? In a sense that is always to be negotiated and renegotiated. Inasmuch as politics is a rendezvous of interest, principle, and pragmatism, there is invariably a politics to staking out a “politics.” While the working group deliberates, though, let me say a word for that least glamorous of virtues, comity. Where we are not united, we can at least proceed with respect for those with whom we take issue. A regard for the past, present, and future of the MLA requires a shared culture—call it a political culture—that sustains us when we do not agree and enables us to work together when we do.

K. Anthony Appiah

#### Note

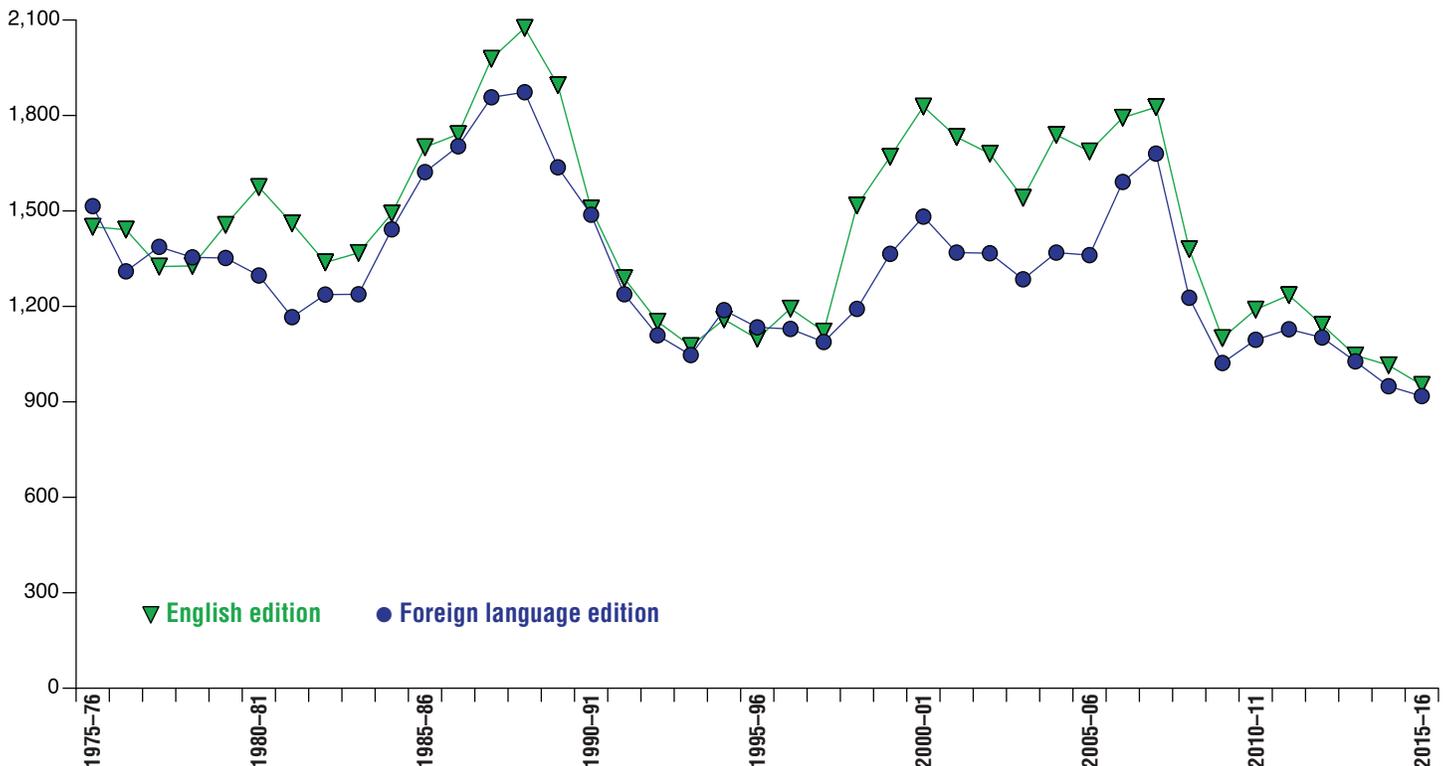
1. Visit <http://monitoring.academicfreedom.info/> to learn more.

Comment on this column at [president.common.mla.org](http://president.common.mla.org).

## Report on the MLA Job Information List

In 2015–16 the number of jobs advertised in the MLA *Job Information List (JIL)* fell for the fourth year in a row. The *JIL*'s English edition announced 953 jobs, 62 (6.1%) fewer than in 2014–15; the foreign language edition announced 918 jobs, 31 (3.3%) fewer than in 2014–15. Ads marked “tenure-track” accounted for 67.1% of the ads placed in the English edition and 53.2% of the ads in the foreign language edition. The declines of the past four years bring the number of advertised jobs to less than the level reached after the severe drop between 2007–08 and 2009–10. The figure below shows the trend lines for the number of jobs advertised from 1975–76 to 2015–16. The 953 jobs in the English edition for 2015–16 are 147 (13.4%) below the 1,100 advertised in 2009–10, the previous low point before last year's 1,015 jobs. The 918 jobs in the foreign language edition are 104 (10.2%) below the 1,022 advertised in 2009–10. This past year marks the seventh consecutive year the number of jobs advertised in the *JIL* has remained at a trough level just below or just above 1,000 jobs in each edition. The persistent depressed level of the past seven years has exceeded the trough of the mid-1990s in both depth and duration. The 2015–16 totals are 873 (47.8%) and 762 (45.4%) below the 2007–08 prerecession peaks of 1,826 jobs for the English edition and 1,680 jobs for the foreign language edition, respectively.

Number of Jobs Advertised in the MLA Job Information List, 1975–76 to 2015–16





## Your MLA, 2020 and Beyond

The Executive Council has put a great deal of thought into the future of the association as we approach a transition to a new executive director. As many of you know, the [executive director search committee](#) expects to conclude its work by the end of the academic year. Because humanities professions are rapidly changing to adapt to shifts in higher education, the council has also been developing and refining an ambitious strategic plan to take the organization through 2020 and beyond ([www.mla.org/Strategic-Planning](http://www.mla.org/Strategic-Planning)).

I hope you will look at the brief summary of the strategic plan we released at the start of the fall semester. We are working to build a flexible, responsive scholarly association for the future. This

endeavor means broadening the range of members that we serve, creating new opportunities for members' professional development, facilitating new connections between members and among their communities, and finding new ways to get members' work out to the world.

Yet all of that work requires investment, particularly in new technologies. Technological transformation is rarely straightforward and without complications, but we believe that investing in new technologies will enable the association to respond to developing member needs. The strategic plan will be a success if we sustain and support the vibrant intellectual communities within the MLA and create new ones beyond our current membership.

We might say, borrowing from Teresa de Lauretis's pioneering notion of the technologies of gender, that MLA intellectual communities are both the product and the process of technologies such as the material forms in which we disseminate and interpret scholarship and the institutional discourses that establish and subvert hierarchies. The council has studied the association's practices and technologies with an eye toward aligning them with our changing mission.

MLA members will undoubtedly be interested in what the strategic plan means as it applies to their research and

teaching. By employing new technologies, the MLA will soon be able to do things like release individual chapters of *Approaches to Teaching* volumes for instructors preparing to teach only one short story of an author's work.

The strategic plan will also serve members' professional lives and bolster the humanities. Technology will help the MLA create regional advocacy networks; provide departments with resources for helping PhDs discover a wide range of careers; and, yes, raise funds to support teachers, students, and programs.

To make all this possible, we are launching a campaign, *Paving the Way: For the Future of the Humanities*, which you'll hear more about at the convention in Philadelphia. In the meantime, I invite you to read the plan and offer feedback at [strategicplan@mla.org](mailto:strategicplan@mla.org).

Rosemary G. Feal

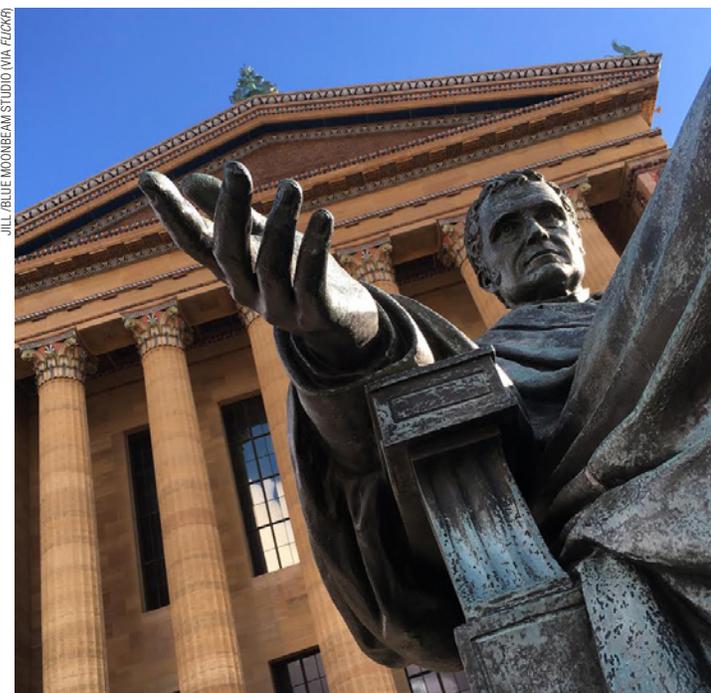
### Work Cited

de Lauretis, Teresa. *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film, and Fiction*. Indiana UP, 1987.

Comment on this column at [execdirector.commonsm्ला.org](http://execdirector.commonsm्ला.org).

## Humanities Commons

This November, *MLA Commons* will become part of the new *Humanities Commons* network, an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation-funded initiative to connect members of different scholarly societies to one another and to anyone working in the humanities. *MLA Commons* members will still be able to collaborate and communicate in society-specific groups but will also have opportunities to connect with people in humanities and humanities-adjacent fields all over the world. What's more, those working in these areas will now be able to join a discussion group for digital humanists or create one for theater lovers; build a *WordPress* site or blog; craft professional online profiles; or share their scholarship, creative work, teaching materials, and code with communities of interest through *CORE*, the open-access humanities repository. Works in the repository are discoverable through Google Scholar and are permanently archived. They can be instantly shared with up to five special-interest groups of the user's choosing and are downloadable by anyone. Many *MLA Commons* members have already been using *CORE*, and we're anticipating an influx of rich interdisciplinary materials after *Humanities Commons* launches. Find out more at [hcommons.org](http://hcommons.org).



Philadelphia Museum of Art

# Deadlines for 2018 Convention in New York City

Except where otherwise indicated, the deadline is the close of business on the date listed. For specific information, consult the MLA Web site ([www.mla.org/conv\\_procedures](http://www.mla.org/conv_procedures)). Please address all correspondence concerning committee sessions to Karin Bagnall ([kbagnall@mla.org](mailto:kbagnall@mla.org)); forum sessions to Hagar Bermudez ([hbermudez@mla.org](mailto:hbermudez@mla.org)); special sessions to Stacey Courtney ([scourtney@mla.org](mailto:scourtney@mla.org)); and allied organization sessions to Deirdre Henry ([dhenry@mla.org](mailto:dhenry@mla.org)).

- early Nov. 2016 Session organizers may begin posting calls for papers for 2018 convention
- 28 Feb. 2017 Deadline for submission of 2018 convention calls for papers. Any entity that plans to submit more than one session must submit at least one call for papers.
  - 1 Apr. Program copy deadline (including audiovisual equipment requests) for all convention sessions for 2018 convention
  - 1 Apr. Deadline for receipt of requests for waiver of membership requirements for participants in 2018 convention
  - 1 Apr. Deadline for Web submission of requests for audiovisual equipment for 2018 convention
  - 7 Apr. Deadline by which participants in 2018 convention must be listed on the MLA membership rolls
- early June Notification of Program Committee's decisions mailed to members who submitted proposals for special sessions and competitive sessions for 2018 convention
- mid-July Proofs of program copy and information on date, time, and place of 2018 convention sessions sent to organizers
- late July Deadline for receipt of corrections to proofs of program copy for the Sept. 2017 (Program) issue of *PMLA* for 2018 convention
- late Aug. Information on date, time, and place of the 2018 convention sessions to be sent by organizers to panelists
- early Sept. Early registration for MLA members opens for 2018 convention
- late Sept. Fall 2017 *MLA Newsletter* (convention issue) mailed to members and posted online
- early Oct. Early registration rates end. Regular registration opens for members and nonmembers for 2018 convention.
- early Dec. Regular registration deadline for 2018 convention
- mid-Dec. Hotel reservation deadline for 2018 convention
- 4-7 Jan. 2018 2018 MLA convention held in New York City

## Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

1. Publication Title: *MLA Newsletter*
2. Publication Number: 0035-6100
3. Filing Date: 30 September 2016
4. Issue Frequency: Quarterly (Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall)
5. Number of Issues Published Annually: Four
6. Annual Subscription Price: \$8
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication: Modern Language Association, 85 Broad St., suite 500, New York, NY 10004-2434; Contact Person: Judith Altreuter; Telephone: 646 576-5010
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher: Modern Language Association, 85 Broad St., suite 500, New York, NY 10004-2434
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor: Publisher—Modern Language Association, 85 Broad St., suite 500, New York, NY 10004-2434. Editor—Rosemary G. Feal, Modern Language Association, 85 Broad St., suite 500, New York, NY 10004-2434. Managing Editor—Anna Chang, Modern Language Association, 85 Broad St., suite 500, New York, NY 10004-2434
10. Owner: Modern Language Association of America, 85 Broad St., suite 500, New York, NY 10004-2434
11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities: None
12. Tax Status: The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes have not changed during preceding 12 months.
13. Publication Title: *MLA Newsletter*
14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: Summer 2016
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation

	Average No. Copies Each Issue during Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies	14,300	12,900
b. Paid Circulation		
1. Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions	10,935	10,065
2. Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions	0	0
3. Paid Distribution outside the Mails including Sales through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution outside USPS®	1,694	1,424
4. Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)	65	60
c. Total Paid Distribution	12,694	11,549
d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution		
1. Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies	0	0
2. Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies	0	0
3. Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes through the USPS	11	11
4. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution outside the Mail	0	0
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution	11	11
f. Total Distribution	12,705	11,560
g. Copies Not Distributed	1,595	1,340
h. Total	14,300	12,900
i. Percent Paid	99.9%	99.9%

16. Publication of Statement of Ownership: If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the Winter 2016 issue of this publication.

17. I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

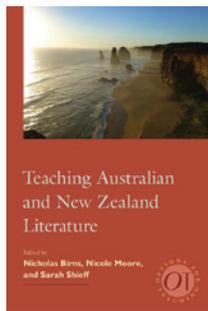
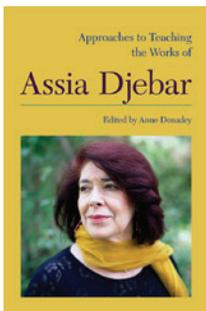
Rosemary G. Feal, Executive Director



METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK (VIA FELC/PR)

## MLA Book Awards

Is your book eligible for an MLA book award? The MLA Committee on Honors and Awards invites authors and editors to compete for the association's publication prizes. There are nine annual and sixteen biennial MLA prizes that honor outstanding work in languages, literatures, and interdisciplinary studies and in specific genres (e.g., translation, bibliography, letters, scholarly edition). For information on the individual prizes, their deadlines, and the application process, please visit the MLA Web site ([www.mla.org/awards\\_competitions](http://www.mla.org/awards_competitions)). You may also request detailed information on any MLA prize by contacting the programs office (646 576-5141; [awards@mla.org](mailto:awards@mla.org)).



## New and Forthcoming MLA Titles

- *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Assia Djebar*
- *Teaching Australian and New Zealand Literature*

For complete information on these and other new titles, and to place orders, please visit [www.mla.org/newtitles](http://www.mla.org/newtitles). MLA members receive 30% off list prices. These MLA titles will also be available in e-book formats.

## Elections Committee Seeks Candidates

The MLA Elections Committee will meet on 27 January 2017 to begin the process of identifying candidates for the professional-issues and regional seats in the Delegate Assembly that will fall vacant when current delegates complete their terms. Those elected in 2017 will serve in the assembly from 8 January 2018 through the close of the January 2021 convention and must attend the meetings of the assembly in January 2019, January 2020, and January 2021.

The Elections Committee is charged not only with nominating candidates and overseeing the elections but also with ensuring that the various groups within the MLA find representation in the Delegate Assembly. Committee members are therefore interested in hearing from all MLA members who are willing to be candidates in next year's Delegate Assembly elections. Members who would like to be considered should write to the Elections Committee, c/o Carol Zuses, at the MLA office ([czuses@mla.org](mailto:czuses@mla.org)).

## Making Suggestions for Committee Appointments

This year the MLA Executive Council will make appointments to sixteen standing committees of the association. The council invites members to consider suggesting themselves or other members for one of the anticipated vacancies on the sixteen committees. Members' suggestions will be accepted at the Web site ([www.mla.org/commsugg](http://www.mla.org/commsugg)) from mid-November through early February. The Web page for suggestions provides information on the factors relevant to this new round of committee appointments. Because these factors change from year to year, suggestions made the previous year are not brought forward for the council's consideration. Members will therefore need to deposit new or updated suggestions after consulting the new Web listing of vacancies.

The council will be making appointments to fill these vacancies at its February 2017 meeting. Any questions about committee suggestions should be addressed to Carol Zuses at the MLA office ([czuses@mla.org](mailto:czuses@mla.org)).

## Honorary Fellows

Members are encouraged to submit suggestions for honorary fellows of the association. Honorary fellows are distinguished persons of letters of any nationality. The current rosters of honorary members and fellows can be found at the MLA Web site ([www.mla.org/honorary\\_members](http://www.mla.org/honorary_members)).

Members who would like to recommend honorary fellows should refer to the instructions at [www.mla.org/nominations\\_hon](http://www.mla.org/nominations_hon). (Note: The Executive Council is not currently accepting new suggestions for honorary members.)

### Now Online

- Calls for Papers**
- News Digest Archive**
- MLA Calendar**
- MLA Commons**



85 Broad Street, suite 500  
New York, NY 10004-2434

## Be a Part of the 2018 Convention

The 2017 convention is upon us, which means that planning for 2018 has already begun.

**Where?** New York City!

**When?** 4–7 January

**Who?** You!

**Why?** Because MLA members create the sessions that make the convention.

**How?**

- Submit a call for presentations for that great session idea you have. You can submit a call at [www.mla.org/call-for-papers](http://www.mla.org/call-for-papers) from early November through 28 February 2017.
- Talk to colleagues while you're in Philadelphia and brainstorm session ideas.
- Reach out to people with shared interests through a forum group on *MLA Commons*.
- Get ideas about innovative session formats from the MLA Program Committee ([www.mla.org/innovative-proposals](http://www.mla.org/innovative-proposals)).
- Consult the Planning a Convention Session section of the MLA Web site for more information ([www.mla.org/conv-planning](http://www.mla.org/conv-planning)) and view upcoming deadlines on the convention calendar ([www.mla.org/conv-calendar](http://www.mla.org/conv-calendar)).

Questions? Ideas? Give us a call or drop us a line (646 576-5267 or [convention@mla.org](mailto:convention@mla.org)). We're happy to help!



SHIRLEY ZARAGOZA

*The Oculus at the World Trade Center*