

Minutes of the MLA Executive Council

[Note: The Executive Council voted to approve these minutes at its May 2017 meeting.]

The council met on 24–25 February 2017 at the Downtown Conference Center in New York. President Diana Taylor presided. The officers present were First Vice President Anne Ruggles Gere, Second Vice President Simon E. Gikandi, and Executive Director Rosemary G. Feal. The Executive Council members present were Emily Apter, Angelika Bammer, Brian Croxall, Gaurav G. Desai, Lenora Hanson, Eric Hayot, David Palumbo-Liu, David Tse-chien Pan, Rafael A. Ramirez Mendoza, Tracy Denean Sharpley-Whiting (25 Feb. only), Vicky Unruh, and Dana A. Williams. Margaret R. Higonnet and Evie Shockley were absent. The MLA staff members present were Director of Administration and Finance Terrence Callaghan, Director of Bibliographic Information Services and Editor of the *MLA International Bibliography* Barbara Chen, Associate Executive Director and Director of Scholarly Communication Kathleen Fitzpatrick, Director of Research and ADE David Laurence, Director of Programs and ADFL Dennis Looney, Director of Outreach Siovahn Walker, and Assistant to the Executive Director and Coordinator of Governance Carol Zuses. Controller Arlene Barnard was present for discussions of the MLA budget (see item 1, below).

On 24 February, the council first convened in executive session to review the council members' fiduciary responsibilities. Then the council convened in regular session to begin working through its agenda. After lunch, the council met in subcommittees to develop short lists for committee appointments. The Subcommittee on Administration and Finance (Diana Taylor, chair; Emily Apter; Eric Hayot; David Pan; Rafael Ramirez Mendoza) considered appointments to five MLA committees; the Subcommittee on Projects (Anne Gere, chair; Gaurav Desai; Lenora Hanson; David Palumbo-Liu; Vicky Unruh) was assigned six MLA committees; and the Subcommittee on Meetings and Publications (Simon Gikandi, chair; Angelika Bammer; Brian Croxall; Dana Williams) worked on short lists for five MLA committees. Following the subcommittee meetings, the council reconvened in regular session to continue working through its agenda. On 25 February, the council held two morning regular sessions and adjourned at 12:10 p.m., having concluded all the business before it.

The council took the following actions:

1. *Administration and Finance.* The council received the independent auditor's report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2016, which showed that the association concluded the fiscal year with a deficit of \$484,304 in the unrestricted fund. This deficit was primarily due to expenses associated with a number of infrastructure development projects, including a modern electronic platform for the *MLA*

International Bibliography. Members of the council's Audit Committee commented briefly on their meeting with representatives of the independent auditor, EisnerAmper LLP, and Rosemary Feal responded to a question about the scope of the audit. The council concluded its discussion by voting to accept and approve the audit report and financial statements.

The council also received the Finance Committee's report, which reviewed the budget for the current fiscal year using four-month projections. Feal noted that the projected deficit (\$404,190) was due to the continuation of development projects that were expected to help generate increased revenue and bring some expenses down. She added that the staff would closely monitor revenue and expenses through the year and work to reduce the deficit to the extent possible. She reviewed the amounts in the association's cash reserves, which were almost equal to a year's worth of expenses, much more than the three to four months' worth that is considered prudent practice. Feal and staff members responded to council members' questions about the current fiscal year.

The Finance Committee's report also reviewed the schedule for the preparation of a budget for the fiscal year 2017–18. The council authorized the staff to prepare a balanced budget.

The council adopted the following resolution relating to financial management. [Note: The president certified the council's action by signing the original document containing the resolution. The document was then stamped with the association's corporate seal.]

WHEREAS, article 4, section E, of the constitution of the Modern Language Association provides as follows: "The permanent fund of the association and its other endowment funds shall be administered by a board of three trustees, each appointed by the Executive Council for a three-year term, the three terms to be staggered by one year. One of the trustees shall be designated the managing trustee"; and

WHEREAS, Malcolm Smith, Domna Stanton, and Catharine Stimpson have been appointed by the Executive Council as the three trustees with authority to administer the permanent fund of the association and its

other endowment funds, and Malcolm Smith has been designated the managing trustee of this committee (the "Permanent Fund Committee");

NOW, THEREFORE, be it

RESOLVED, that, upon the direction to Rosemary G. Feal as executive director, Kathleen Fitzpatrick as associate executive director and director of scholarly communication, and Terrence Callaghan as director of administration and finance of any member of the Permanent Fund Committee to effect the purchase, transfer, sale, or other disposition of any security or securities held in the permanent fund or any other endowment funds, the executive director, associate executive director and director of scholarly communication, and director of administration and finance be and hereby are authorized and directed to take all such steps and to execute and deliver all such documents as they shall deem necessary or appropriate to effect such purchase, transfer, sale, or other disposition; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the president of the MLA be and hereby is authorized and directed to certify this resolution to any third party requiring delivery of same in order to substantiate the proper authority for the disposition of the securities of the permanent fund or any other endowment funds.

Finally, the council authorized the following staff members to sign nonpayroll checks: Terrence Callaghan, Barbara Chen, Rosemary Feal, Kathleen Fitzpatrick, David Laurence, Dennis Looney, and Siovah Walker. Two signatures are required on checks in amounts over two thousand dollars. The council also authorized Terrence Callaghan, Rosemary Feal, and Kathleen Fitzpatrick to sign payroll checks.

2. *Changes to the MLA Dues Structure*. The Executive Council confirmed the three changes to the MLA's dues structure that the 2017 Delegate Assembly approved (see *PMLA*, vol. 132, no. 3, May 2017, pp. 750 and 762). First, the assembly approved a new dues schedule. The following table presents the current dues schedule and the new schedule, which includes a dues category for members employed less than full-time and reduces the number of regular dues categories from fifteen to nine.

Current Dues Schedule		New Dues Schedule	
Dues Class	Amount	Dues Class	Amount
1 Under \$15,000	\$28	B Employed Less Than Full-Time	\$25
2 \$15,000–\$20,000	\$46	1 Up to \$30,000	\$50
3 \$20,000–\$30,000	\$56	2 \$30,000–\$50,000	\$80
4 \$30,000–\$40,000	\$79	3 \$50,000–\$70,000	\$120
5 \$40,000–\$50,000	\$94	4 \$70,000–\$100,000	\$160
6 \$50,000–\$60,000	\$112	5 \$100,000–\$140,000	\$200
7 \$60,000–\$70,000	\$130	6 \$140,000–\$180,000	\$250
8 \$70,000–\$80,000	\$145	7 \$180,000–\$220,000	\$300
9 \$80,000–\$100,000	\$163	8 Over \$220,000	\$350
R \$100,000–\$120,000	\$187	L Joint Secondary	\$50
T \$120,000–\$140,000	\$210	E Student	\$25
V \$140,000–\$160,000	\$232		
W \$160,000–\$180,000	\$260		
X \$180,000–\$200,000	\$289		
Z Over \$200,000	\$317		
L Joint Secondary	\$46		
E Student	\$23		

Second, the assembly approved the implementation of a multiple-year membership option under which regular members paying their dues for the current year would be able to pay in advance for up to two additional years. Finally, the assembly approved an automatic annual increase in the dues amount for every membership category of 2.5%, rounded to the next dollar, an increase that is subject to confirmation by the Delegate Assembly at its meeting each January.

3. *Charge for and Appointments to the Executive Council's Finance and Audit Committee.* The staff Finance Committee recommended that the council's Audit Committee become the council's Finance and Audit Committee. The new committee would have increased responsibility for assisting with the construction and monitoring of the MLA budget and with the review of the retirement investments in which the MLA staff participates. The staff drafted the following charge for the Finance and Audit Committee, which the council reviewed and approved.

The Finance and Audit Committee of the Executive Council of the Modern Language Association of America is charged with overseeing the quality and integrity of the MLA's financial, accounting, auditing, and reporting practices. The committee provides counsel to the executive director and staff regarding council initiatives and priorities, reviews the tentative and final annual budgets proposed by the executive director, and makes a recommendation to the council on the approval of the annual budget. The committee is made aware of any anticipated fluctuations in revenues or expenses when it receives and reviews every two months the projections

of staff budget managers. The committee holds at least two meetings each year: a preaudit meeting with the independent auditor to define the scope of the audit to be performed and a postaudit meeting to review the association's audited financial statements with the auditor. Results of these meetings are reported to the full council at the council's next meeting. Additional meetings may be held as the committee or the council deems necessary.

The members of the Finance and Audit Committee are the president, the two vice presidents, and two other Executive Council members appointed by the council.

The council also reviewed and confirmed its understanding of the specific responsibilities entailed by the Finance and Audit Committee's charge.

Finally, the council appointed Eric Hayot and David Pan to the council's Finance and Audit Committee for 2017.

4. *Report on Business Matters Affecting the MLA International Bibliography.* The council received the report it had requested in October (see *PMLA*, vol. 132, no. 3, May 2017, p. 744) on the handling of business matters that affect the *MLA International Bibliography*. The report explained the market environment for products like the bibliography, the rationale for the use of outside vendors to host and sell the bibliography, and the complexities involved in monitoring this marketing system. During the discussion of the report, the staff noted that the oversight role of the Advisory Committee on the *MLA International Bibliography* did not extend to these business matters but that the council's input was very much in keeping with its fiduciary responsibilities. In response to a question, the staff noted that consultants were brought in to address certain

business matters. The staff will share the most recent consultant's report with the council and will also prepare a short report for the next council meeting on competing products and the bibliography's relevance and value.

5. *Proposal of Constitutional Amendments.* The association's lawyer recommended to the council that a council member serve as a trustee. To effect this change in the composition of the association's board of trustees, the council needed to propose an amendment to article 4 of the MLA constitution. The staff recommended that the council also consider proposing amendments that would (1) formalize the current arrangement whereby the current association president sits with the trustees, (2) provide for different term lengths and for term limits for the trustees, and (3) eliminate constitutional references to restricted funds and budget accounts that no longer exist. Pursuant to these recommendations, the council proposed the following constitutional amendments (language to be replaced or deleted struck; revised and new language in boldface):

F. The permanent fund of the association and its other endowment funds shall be administered by a board of ~~three trustees, each appointed by the Executive Council for a three-year term, the three terms to be staggered by one year~~ **trustees composed of the association president and four other trustees appointed by the Executive Council.** One of the trustees shall be designated the managing trustee, **and one of the trustees shall be a current member of the Executive Council.** **Each appointed trustee shall serve for three years, except that the trustee appointed from the Executive Council shall serve for two years. No trustee other than the managing trustee shall serve for more than three consecutive terms. The association president shall not vote except to break a tie.**

G. The trustees shall invest and reinvest the principal of all funds received so as to preserve the principal unimpaired to the best of their ability. The income accruing on all property in their hands may be reinvested with the authorization of the Executive Council; otherwise it shall be paid over to the executive director of the association, who shall add the income received from the permanent fund to the current funds of the association; ~~the income received from the Monograph Endowment Fund to the Monograph Current Account, and the income received from the Research Endowment Fund to the Research Current Account.~~

H. The Executive Council may remove any **appointed** trustee by a unanimous vote of those present at a meeting called for the purpose and shall fill any vacancy arising from the death, resignation, or removal of any trustee.

These proposed amendments will be forwarded to the Committee on Amendments to the Constitution (CAC) for action.

A council member asked the council to consider proposing an amendment to require council representation for community college faculty members. The council agreed to propose this amendment and forwarded a draft amendment to the CAC, which will need to adjust the draft language once the outcome of the pending membership ratification vote on an amendment to the same article of the constitution is known. During the discussion of this amendment proposal, council members asked if a more general review of the categories of representation specified in the constitution for the council was needed. The council decided to establish a three-person subcommittee to undertake this review and to consider the question of the size of the council; the subcommittee is to report to the council in May. [Note: The members of the subcommittee are Emily Apter, chair; Brian Croxall; and Margaret Higonnet.]

6. *Report of the MLA Trustees.* The council received the trustees' annual report, which showed that at the end of the calendar year 2016 the association's endowment fund and four of the seven donor-restricted funds that support a number of association prizes had increased in market value. The trustees reviewed the independent auditor's report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2016, which included information on the value of the endowment, and noted two October 2016 Executive Council decisions: to move \$3,500,000 from the cash reserve to the endowment fund and to include in the annual budget a drawdown of 2.5% of the three-year rolling average balance of the endowment beginning in 2017–18, provided that the amount in the endowment remains at or above \$4 million (see *PMLA*, vol. 132, no. 3, May 2017, p. 741). The trustees also conducted their annual review of the mutual funds in the MLA's equities portfolio and noted that, as a group, the funds did not perform as well as the S&P 500 stock index and that their performance was more in keeping with their peer group of median stock funds. Since the continued negative performance of one of the funds was attributed to a failure in management, the trustees decided to redeem all shares in this fund. The proceeds of this sale and the \$3,500,000 that was transferred to the endowment from the cash reserve were to be distributed proportionally among the remaining holdings in the portfolio. During their review of the six smaller donor-restricted funds, the trustees confirmed the need to minimize risk for these funds by not investing them in equities. The trustees decided to redeem several of these funds' investments in underperforming certificates of deposit and to invest the proceeds in a money-market fund and a short-term bond fund.

The trustees reviewed the council's investment policy (see *PMLA*, vol. 130, no. 5, Oct. 2015, p. 1520; *PMLA*, vol. 129, no. 3, May 2014, p. 584; and *PMLA*, vol. 120, no. 5, Oct. 2005, pp. 1674–76) and reported on the current investment allocation between fixed-income instruments (48.1%) and equities (51.9%). This is very close to the 50%-50% allocation the trustees were aiming for. The

trustees suggested that the investment policy be revised to take account of the council's action authorizing an annual drawdown of endowment funds to supplement the association's operating budget.

7. *Review and Revision of Investment Policy.* The council reviewed its statement on investment policy pursuant to a request from the MLA's trustees (see previous item). The council revised its investment policy to include a reference to the annual drawdown from the endowment that the council had authorized and a suggestion as to how the drawdown might affect the trustees' investment strategy.

8. *Search for a Managing Trustee.* Rosemary Feal reported that a search for a new managing trustee had been initiated in anticipation of the February 2017 retirement of Malcolm B. Smith, the association's current managing trustee, and that the search was ongoing. Feal said that Smith had agreed to continue his service until the council appoints his replacement. The council wished to honor Smith and issued the following statement of appreciation:

It is with great appreciation that the Executive Council of the Modern Language Association of America recognizes the long tenure and distinguished service of Malcolm B. Smith, the association's managing trustee from 1988 to 2017. His wise, patient, and steady guidance through the years and the many ups and downs of the financial markets is without doubt the key factor underlying the steady growth of the MLA Endowment Fund. It is our great good fortune that he has honored us with his dedicated service, and we extend to him our thanks for a job well done.

9. *Approval of the October 2016 Council Minutes.* The council approved the minutes of its October 2016 meeting for publication in the May 2017 issue of *PMLA*.

10. *Ratification or Confirmation of Actions Taken between Council Meetings.* The council took four actions between its October and February meetings. (1) In November, the council appointed Cinthia Gannett as the representative of the Conference on College Composition and Communication on the Advisory Committee on the *MLA International Bibliography*. (2) Also in November, the council approved a statement on the 2016 United States presidential election. (3) In January, a statement on watch lists was approved. (4) In early February, the council approved a statement denouncing President Trump's executive order on immigration. When these actions were proposed, the council's procedure for making decisions between meetings was implemented (see *PMLA*, vol. 125, no. 5, Oct. 2010, p. 1102), and the full council was given the opportunity to discuss the actions on its electronic discussion list. Since the council did not reach a unanimous decision on the third action, the council's advisory committee was asked to make the decision. The advisory committee approved the statement unanimously, as the council's procedure required it to do before action could be taken. At the present meeting, the council ratified

the advisory committee's decision. Since the council was unanimous in its approval of the other three actions, the advisory committee did not have to act. At the present meeting, the council confirmed these three decisions.

11. *Departmental Reports.* Council members had no questions on the annual reports submitted by the MLA department heads, and the council accepted the reports with thanks.

12. *Report from the Working Group on K-16 Alliances.* The council received the working group's annual report, which detailed the enhancements to its public site on *MLA Commons* over the previous year and group members' discussions of how the MLA could contribute to cross-level partnerships aimed at the transition from high school to college-level reading, writing, and language study. The report acknowledged the change of the group's sunset date from February 2018 to June 2017 (see *PMLA*, vol. 132, no. 1, Jan. 2017, p. 210) and looked forward to the work of the new Committee on K-16 Alliances (see next item).

13. *Appointments to the Committee on K-16 Alliances.* The council made initial appointments to the Committee on K-16 Alliances (see *PMLA*, vol. 132, no. 1, Jan. 2017, p. 210). The names of the committee members and their terms will appear on the MLA Web site in July.

14. *Review of Standing Committees.* The three-person working group charged with drafting a proposal for a committee review process and with identifying the information needed for the review (see *PMLA*, vol. 132, no. 3, May 2017, p. 744) reported to the council. The group called on the staff to provide the following information on each committee: date of establishment and historical context; constitutional status, if any; current charge; annual budget; convention activities in the past five years; and significant projects undertaken in the last five to ten years. In response to a question about additional ways to gauge interest in a committee's work, the staff suggested looking at committee publications and reports as well as outreach activities in the wider profession. The group presented the draft of a questionnaire to be submitted to current committee members. The council revised the questionnaire and asked the staff to facilitate the collection of responses from committee members before the May council meeting. Finally, the council established a small subcommittee (Anne Gere, chair; Anglika Bammer; Brian Croxall; David Palumbo-Liu) to work with the staff on preparations for the council's next discussion in May.

15. *Purpose of and Nomination Process for the Honorary Fellow Category.* The council received the recommendations of the small council subcommittee charged with considering two issues raised by the Committee on Honors and Awards (CHA)—clarification of the purpose of the honorary fellow category and enhancing the coherence of the nomination process—and an additional question from the council—whether to establish a committee that would both vet and generate honorary fellow nominations (see *PMLA*, vol. 132, no. 1, Jan. 2017, p. 208–10). The

subcommittee found that the honorary fellow category fulfilled three purposes: to draw the attention of the MLA membership to creative artists, writers, and cultural producers of any nationality and bring them actively into the orbit of MLA activities through at least one event at an MLA convention; to help the MLA continue to expand and clarify its objects of study and the relation of its scholarly interests to those of creative artists, writers, and cultural producers; and to enrich the public image of the MLA and its work by highlighting the connections between scholarly and critical work and the work of creative artists, writers, and cultural producers. The subcommittee recommended sharing this clarification of the category's purpose with the CHA. The council accepted this recommendation and asked the staff to implement it.

To enhance the coherence of the nomination process, the subcommittee recommended the establishment of a committee that would actively generate an annual list of honorary fellow nominees. This committee would function in a manner similar to the MLA Award for Lifetime Scholarly Achievement Review Committee. That is, the committee—the Honorary Fellows Review Committee—would be charged with generating names of and dossiers for candidates for honorary fellowship, with reviewing suggestions from the membership, and with seeking additional information, if necessary, from outside nominators. The committee would forward a list of candidates to the CHA; the CHA would then recommend nominees to the council. The CHA would oversee the committee and appoint its members. The council also accepted this recommendation and authorized the CHA to make initial appointments to the Honorary Fellows Review Committee. The establishment of this review committee allowed the council to lift the moratorium on the nomination of honorary fellows that was imposed in May 2016.

16. *Request from the Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities (CAFPRR)*. At its October 2016 meeting, CAFPRR drafted the Statement on Resource Allocation and Academic Freedom. The committee forwarded the statement to the council with a request that the council adopt it as an MLA statement and authorize its publication on the committee's page at the MLA Web site. The council approved CAFPRR's request and encouraged the staff to publicize the statement widely. The statement, as posted on the MLA Web site, appears below.

In recent years, funding for humanities disciplines has become more limited, particularly at public universities. At the same time, university finances have become more complex, sometimes more opaque, and in many cases more responsive to nonacademic interests. CAFPRR believes that these changes are having a quietly negative impact on the scholarship, academic freedom, and professional rights of MLA members.

The MLA is on record expressing concern when external funding agencies intervene in academic processes. Aca-

dem freedom may also be affected by procedures that are internal to colleges and universities themselves. The association's concern extends to restrictions on freedom to teach, learn, and research that are imposed through internal resource allocation.

The Tool Kit on Academic Freedom notes the increasing prominence of financial factors in academic life. These go far beyond salary equity and related matters of individual financing that are more familiar to faculty members. For example, the Tool Kit states, "If teachers can be threatened with loss of employment because their research or teaching does not conform to private funding interests or because they publish or teach unpopular ideas, inquiry is not free."

Inquiry may be restricted through means that do not involve threats to employment. Funds supporting effective teaching or research may be reduced or withheld not on intellectual or professional grounds, but solely on financial grounds. These restrictions are particularly worrisome when they are not disclosed or discussed with faculty bodies through processes of shared governance. Under some circumstances, financial calculations may constitute discrimination against individuals, subdisciplines, or disciplines as a whole. If the calculations and their rationales are not shared with appropriate faculty members, the faculty cannot determine whether academic freedom has been affected or participate in the adjudication of conflicting claims.

Both the American Association of University Professors and the MLA define academic freedom as a "collective professional responsibility." Academic freedom rests on continuing processes of interpretation conducted by professional communities. Community members can only administer academic freedom to the extent that they have access to the materials being used to evaluate a particular case, while also holding a position of authority sufficient to enable participation in shared governance. Given the required access to information and related materials, faculty members have a concomitant responsibility to engage deeply with the materials so that they can function as equal and respected partners in shared governance processes. While faculty access is widely accepted for academic personnel materials—publication records, teaching evaluations—faculty members have not generally had access to the materials that inform administrative resource allocation. Administrators should share with faculty members the same financial information that they use in making budget allocation decisions. Faculty members have an obligation to educate themselves to the point where they can conduct fully informed analyses of and offer systematic responses to the information that they receive. This collaborative process is necessary because the financial management of teaching and research shapes the educational mission of the university, its place within the community, and the academic lives of scholars and students.

Therefore, the MLA calls on college and university administrations to acknowledge that academic freedom protections cover the financial management of the academic processes of teaching and research. Administrations must work with faculty senates and faculty members to ensure that financial data are available to faculty and to develop the financial competence that will allow faculty members to participate in the financial decisions that affect their academic units and shape patterns of research funding across disciplines.

17. Review of the Resolutions Approved by the 2017 Delegate Assembly. In accordance with article 7.B.3 of the MLA constitution, the council reviewed the two resolutions that the 2017 Delegate Assembly had approved (see *PMLA*, vol. 132, no. 3, May 2017, pp. 750–62) to determine whether to forward them to the membership for a ratification vote. Resolutions that (1) do not impede the council's ability to carry out its fiduciary responsibilities, (2) do not contain erroneous, tortious, or possibly libelous statements, (3) do not pose a threat to the association's continuing operation as a tax-exempt organization, and (4) are consistent with the provisions of articles 2 and 9.C.10 of the MLA constitution may be forwarded to the membership. Because of the subject treated in the first resolution, Rosemary Feal consulted with the association's lawyer about the applicability of the provisions of article 7.B.3 before the council meeting; she also consulted with the MLA parliamentarian about procedural questions raised by a group of members in a letter that the council considered during its review of the first resolution.

The first resolution called on the MLA to "refrain from endorsing the boycott" of Israeli academic institutions promoted by the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel. The second resolution called on the MLA to endorse a statement of the American Association of University Professors, "Higher Education after the 2016 Election," and urged members to disseminate the statement widely. The council determined that neither resolution posed constitutional, legal, or fiduciary problems. The council therefore authorized nonsubstantive copyediting changes to the wording of the resolutions and forwarded them to the membership for the required ratification vote. In addition, the council established the schedule for the resolution comment process and the date for determining members' eligibility to participate in the ratification vote.

18. Council Statement on Resolution Process. During its review of the first resolution approved by the 2017 Delegate Assembly (see previous item), the council decided to issue a statement about the resolution process. Three council members collaborated on a first draft, which the full council was asked to review on its electronic discussion list in early March. The council approved a revised version of the statement on the resolution process, which was posted on the council's *MLA Commons* blog on 15 March. The statement appears below.

This week, the comment period opens on two resolutions approved by the MLA Delegate Assembly at the association's 2017 annual convention. In keeping with its fiduciary responsibility and in accordance with the MLA constitution (art. 7.B.3), at its February 2017 meeting the Executive Council conducted a review of the constitutional, legal, and fiduciary issues posed by the language of each resolution approved by the Delegate Assembly. The council must answer the following four questions:

1. Does the resolution impede the council's ability to carry out its fiduciary responsibilities?
2. Does the resolution contain erroneous, tortious, or potentially libelous statements?
3. Does the resolution, by itself or taken with other resolutions, pose a threat to the organization's continuing operation as a tax-exempt organization?
4. Is the resolution consistent with the provisions of articles 2 and 9.C.10?*

Having applied these criteria to each resolution, the council voted to forward them to the membership for a vote. It took no position on the merits of their content, a practice consistent with all previous resolutions forwarded to the membership. At the same time, it has become increasingly clear to both the Executive Council and the Delegate Assembly Organizing Committee (DAOC), with whom the council confers on all matters pertaining to Delegate Assembly procedures, that the current resolution process has begun to take up far more than a reasonable share of the organization's resources, putting an undue burden on the MLA staff as well as on the members who volunteer their time to represent their colleagues on the Delegate Assembly, the DAOC, and the Executive Council.

The council has established an ad hoc committee charged with clarifying the resolution process and looking more broadly at the ways MLA members might ask the association to speak out on matters that concern them. This ad hoc committee will deliberate this year and propose to the Executive Council and the Delegate Assembly what it feels are the best ways for the association to engage in advocacy and express political sentiment. The Executive Council looks forward to the committee's proposals and is eager to see the membership reenergized by multiple avenues of advocacy. The times in which we are living call for collective efforts that are efficient and focused. We hope you will let us know your thoughts on how best we can do this work.

* Article 2 (Purpose): The object of the association shall be to promote study, criticism, and research in the more and less commonly taught modern languages and their literatures and to further the common interests of teachers of these subjects.

Article 9.C.10 (Delegate Assembly—Responsibilities): In accordance with article 11.C, to formulate and submit to the membership for ratification resolutions on matters of public and institutional policy affecting the

study and teaching of the humanities and the status of the language and literature professions represented by the association. Such matters may include proposed or enacted legislation, regulations, or other governmental and institutional policies, conditions of employment and publication, or additional matters that affect the association, its members in their professional capacities, or the dignity of members' work.

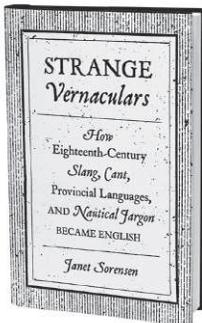
19. *Review of the Constitutional Amendments Approved by the 2017 Delegate Assembly.* As required by the MLA constitution (art. 13.D), the council reviewed the constitutional amendments approved by the 2017 Delegate Assembly and forwarded them to the membership for the required ratification vote.

20. *Election of a Council Member to the DAOC.* The council elected Eric Hayot to the DAOC for a two-year term (2017–Jan. 2019). [Note: Hayot found it necessary to resign from the committee in September 2017. David Pan replaced him through January 2018.]

21. *Appointments to MLA Committees.* The council made fifty-one appointments to the standing committees of the association and appointed eleven committee chairs or cochairs and two council advisers. The names of all new and continuing committee members, chairs, cochairs, and council advisers will appear at the MLA Web site in July.

22. *List of Potential Appointees to the Profession Editorial Collective.* At its October 2013 meeting, the council authorized the staff to appoint members to the *Profession Editorial Collective* from a list of potential appointees approved by the council (see *PMLA*, vol. 129, no. 3, May 2014, p. 588). At the present meeting, the staff reported that it had exhausted all the names on the initial list of potential appointees, from May 2014, and submitted a new list of potential appointees for the council's approval. After adding several names to the list, the council approved it.

23. *Contributing Membership in Scholars at Risk Network.* The council agreed to establish an MLA contributing membership in the Scholars at Risk Network.



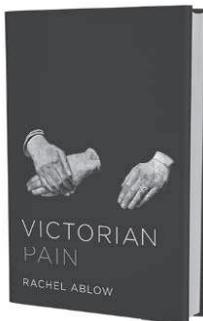
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Cloth \$39.95



Victorian Pain

Rachel Ablow

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—John Plotz, author of *Portable Property: Victorian Culture on the Move*

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