

## 2021 MMLA Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Location: Hilton Milwaukee City Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Present in Person: Gaywyn Moore, Eloise Sureau, Sheila Liming, Michelle Medeiros, Dana Schumacher-Schmidt, and Jack Kerkering

Present via Zoom: Justin Hastings, Tisha Brooks, and Shanna Salinas

After brief introductions, the meeting began with approval of the minutes from the 2020 EC meeting and approval of the agenda for this year's meeting. Next occurred a review of various revenue reports prepared by the MMLA Subscription and Program Coordinator, including the "Summary of Revenue and Expenses 2020-21," the "Cash Flow Forecast Report 2021-22," and the "Report of Income and Subscriptions for *JMMLA*." The committee noted and discussed consistent and substantial increases in income arising from making the journal accessible online. The conversation then turned to the "Report on Membership," likewise prepared by the Subscription and Program Coordinator, which indicated lower numbers of graduate students among the membership. In response, EC members discussed the need to improve the association's advertising of existing MMLA graduate student travel grants.

After discussing these reports, the conversation then moved to the journal. EC members endorsed the call for submissions prepared by the special editor for the spring 2022 issue of the journal, they revised submission deadlines to address ongoing delays in publishing the journal, they assessed the benefits and liabilities of the recent shift to an online submission management system (Manuscript Manager), and they discussed potential revisions to several aspects of the journal's editorial structure (including the possibility of establishing an editorial board, the benefits of restructuring the responsibilities of the Editorial Committee, and the need to build support for publishing in languages other than English by securing the services of foreign language copyeditors and ensuring ongoing representation on the EC of foreign language scholars). Finally, EC members discussed strategies for increasing the number of book reviews submitted to the journal in order to increase the presence of book reviews in upcoming issues.

Having addressed matters related to the journal, the EC then shifted its attention to the convention, starting with the 2022 convention scheduled to occur at the Hyatt Regency in Minneapolis, Minnesota from November 16<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>. The incoming MMLA president proposed that the theme for the Minneapolis convention be "Post-Now," which was endorsed by the EC. The discussion then shifted to future conventions and the possibility, once existing contractual obligations with current hotel partners have been met, of holding future conventions in innovative ways, including using university buildings rather than hotels as meeting spaces, experimenting with different meeting formats such as virtual-only meetings, hybrid meetings, remote presenters at an otherwise in-person event, or having a two-track system of virtual and in-person sessions—with the possibility either that the two tracks could occur over the same weekend (e.g., with virtual sessions on Thursday and Friday and in-person sessions on Saturday and Sunday) or at different times of the year (e.g., with a virtual event in the fall and an in-person event in the spring). EC members agreed to revisit this discussion of future format changes in light of ongoing

developments in remote and hybrid meeting technologies, changes in the hotel market for conference event hosting in response to the ongoing pandemic, and post-pandemic shifts in university funding allocations for conference travel.

After a lunch break, the meeting resumed with an update on the status of the Undergraduate Symposium, which, while diminished in size this year, continues to be an important aspect of the convention; EC members affirmed that continuing to support an Undergraduate Symposium is consistent with the association's mission of fostering potential future scholars of language and literature. Next, the Executive Director reported on the progress of the association's ongoing racial equity initiative, listing several recent achievements: featuring the topics of race and representation in upcoming special issues of the journal, revising the convention conduct statement to be more explicit in its prohibition of racial discrimination, establishing a new permanent section on antiracism, and scheduling a plenary session at the 2021 convention on the topic of antiracist pedagogy. Remaining steps to be taken as part of this antiracism initiative include scheduling more convention events in the less-structured format of workshops so that participants may have more open discussions on the topic of antiracism, and emphasizing diversity in the recruitment of new members to the Executive Committee in order to retain and ideally expand the diversity of its members.

The Meeting ended with attention to personnel matters, including a discussion of the performance of current MMLA staff, a reminder of the procedures outlined in the association's bylaws for soliciting nominations for new EC members, and the election of a new Vice President. The meeting then adjourned.