

July 2014

Dear Colleague:

You have it in your power to make the convention a better experience, and I write to ask your help. Each year after the convention, I receive complaints about presenters who speak for more time than they should and presidors who fail to intervene when this happens. Several years ago, in addition to complaints, my office received some practical guidelines that convention participants can use to avoid difficulties, and the Program Committee asked me to remind session presidors of their responsibilities to do the following:

- begin and end sessions on time
- inform participants well in advance of the convention how long their presentations should be, factoring in an additional few minutes for introductions, transition between speakers, etc.
- warn participants when their time is nearly up and stop them when they exceed it
- ensure that there are at least fifteen minutes for discussion during each session

It would be difficult to overstate the disappointment and frustration people feel when participants go over their allotted time and leave little or no opportunity for discussion. Listeners rightly hold the presidor responsible. When the time allotted for your session is up, aides will clear the rooms. Please do not count on the half hour between sessions for discussion, be it formal or informal. If you have any questions, please let me know. I can be reached by telephone (646 576-5102) or by e-mail ([rfeal@mla.org](mailto:rfeal@mla.org)).

Sincerely,



Rosemary G. Feal  
Executive Director