

## Report on the 2006–07 MLA Job Information List

Positions advertised in the *MLA Job Information List (JIL)* in 2006–07 increased by 16.9% in foreign languages and 6.3% in English over 2005–06. In 2006–07 the *JIL*'s English edition published 1,573 listings announcing 1,793 positions, 106 more than the 1,687 positions announced in 2005–06 and 54 more than the 1,739 announced in 2004–05. The 2006–07 foreign language edition published 1,436 listings announcing 1,591 positions, over 230 more than the 1,361 and 1,369 positions announced in 2005–06 and 2004–05, respectively. In both English and foreign languages the number of jobs was the best showing since 2000–01, when the English edition advertised 1,828 positions and the foreign language edition 1,482. The increase in foreign languages was especially strong, with the number of jobs exceeding the 1,500 benchmark level for the first time in seventeen years. However, this past year's numbers remain 13.6% (English edition) and 15.1% (foreign language edition) below the historical highs, attained in 1988–89, when the *JIL*'s English edition announced 2,075 positions and the foreign language edition announced 1,873.

Of the 1,573 ads that appeared in the English edition in 2006–07, 1,221 (77.6%) were categorized as tenure-track and

1,004 (63.8%) were indexed for the rank of assistant professor (and only that rank). An additional 248 ads (15.8%) included assistant professor as one of several index terms for rank that the department selected. Of the 1,436 ads in the 2006–07 foreign language edition, 860 (59.9%) were tenure-track and 790 (55.0%) advertised appointments at the rank of assistant professor (and only that rank). An additional 194 ads in the foreign language edition (13.5%) included assistant professor as one of several index terms for rank that the department selected. Ads for which departments used both "tenure-track" and "assistant professor" as the sole index terms totaled 883 (56.1%) of all 1,573 ads in the English list and 641 (44.6%) of all 1,436 ads in the foreign language list.

Figure 1 shows the number of positions announced in the English and foreign language editions of the *JIL* across the thirty-two-year span 1975–76 to 2006–07. The trend lines point toward an index of structural demand centered on 1,500 positions annually, increasing or decreasing by 300 to 500 as economic conditions and opportunities for full-time academic employment either improve or worsen. Increases and declines in the number of positions announced in the *JIL* provide an indicator of improvement and decline in full-time academic employment opportunities in four-year colleges and universities. The *JIL* does not represent a complete count of available positions, however, since not all departments in four-year institutions and very few departments in two-year institutions advertise

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You may now register at [www.mla.org](http://www.mla.org) for the 2007 convention in Chicago. See pages 2, 8, and 9–13 for more information about the convention.

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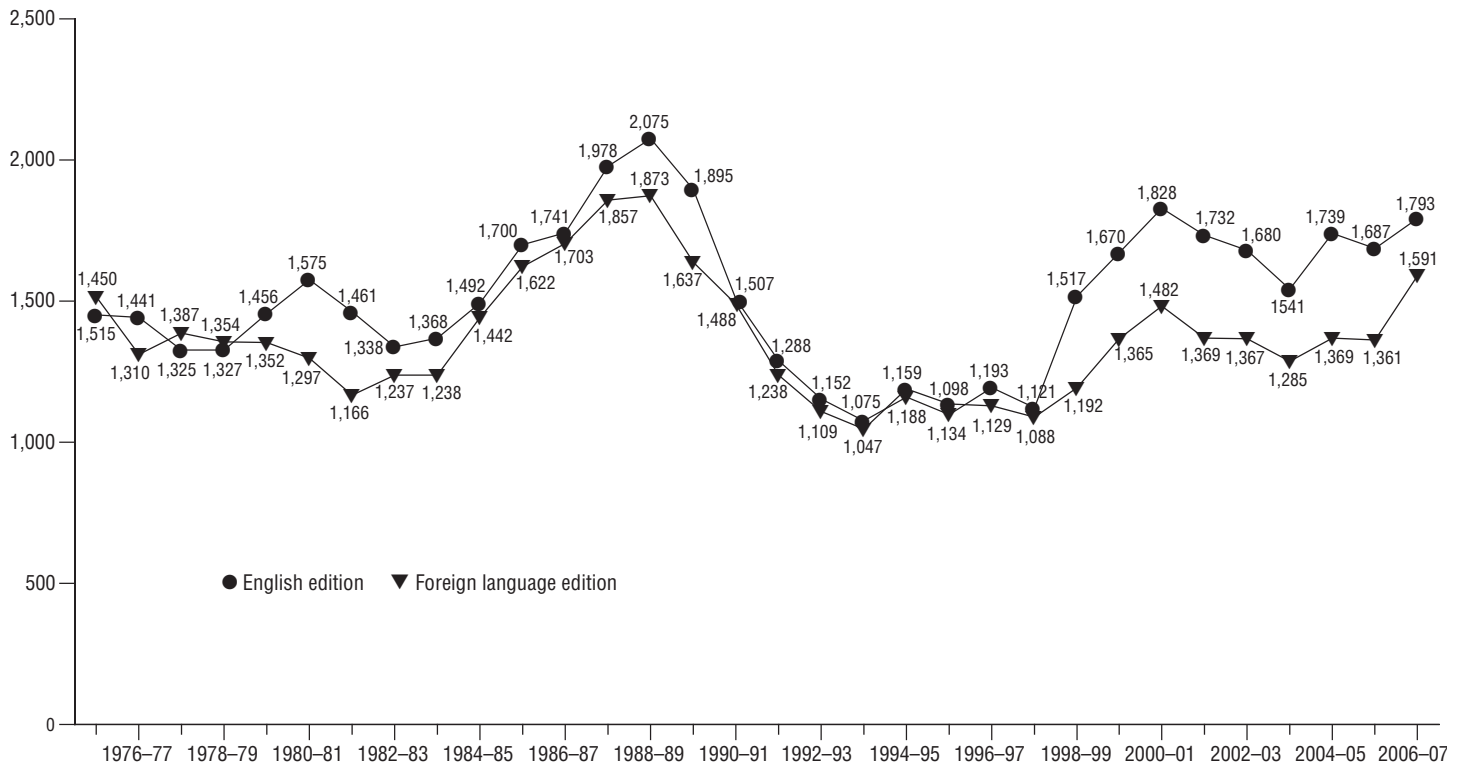
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in the *JIL*. Virtually all positions advertised in the *JIL* are full-time; the annual count advertised in the *JIL* thus provides no insight into part-time hiring, which claims a substantial share of faculty appointments in postsecondary English and foreign language departments.

A longer report, including tables comparing numbers of advertisements and departments' use of index terms across the six years 2000–01 to 2006–07, may be accessed at the *JIL*'s page on the MLA Web site. Printed reports will appear in forthcoming issues of the ADE and ADFL bulletins.

David Laurence

**Fig. 1**  
**Total Number of Positions Advertised in the MLA Job Information List, 1975–76 to 2006–07**



GOVERNANCE

**2007 Election Ballot to Be Mailed**

The 2007 ballot covering the elections for second vice president, Executive Council, Delegate Assembly, and division executive committees will be mailed early in October to all 2007 MLA members. Ballots must be received at the MLA office on or before 10 December to be counted. The ballot sheet contains instructions for retrieving candidate information from the members-only area of the MLA Web site.

To enter this area, you will need to log in with your current member number or user name and your password. If you do not remember your current log-in information, you can retrieve it by visiting [www.mla.org](http://www.mla.org) and selecting Change Your User Name and Password or by contacting the MLA membership department (646 576-5151; [membership@mla.org](mailto:membership@mla.org)). Members who do not have access to the Web or who do not wish to retrieve documents from the Web should request a printout of the candidate information from the coordinator of governance before 10 November (MLA, 26 Broadway, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10004-1789; fax: 646 576-5107; [governance@mla.org](mailto:governance@mla.org)).

If you are eligible to vote and do not receive your ballot by 24 October, please write or call Carol Zuses, coordinator of governance, at the MLA office (646 576-5103; [governance@mla.org](mailto:governance@mla.org)). □

WEB SITE NEWS

**2007 Convention Registration**

As of 4 September 2007, online convention registration is open for the MLA Annual Convention at [www.mla.org](http://www.mla.org). MLA members receive priority registration as well as reduced rates. A searchable list of all convention sessions will be available to members beginning in November.

**Member Discussion Forums**

Also this fall, members can access the new interactive forums for MLA divisions and discussion groups. The association invites all members to participate in these forums, which are designed to encourage discussion on the study and teaching of language and literature. □

## “The Brain Is Just the Weight of God”: Another Argument for the Importance of Language Study

Arguing for the importance of language study in the United States has always been an uphill battle. The problem has a long history. Social critics such as Richard Hofstadter and Todd Gitlin have shown that anti-intellectualism in American life (the title of Hofstadter's classic 1963 book) is older than the emergence of the United States as a nation. The humanities in general have long been held suspect, no area more so than knowledge of modern foreign languages. Until, that is, their usefulness emerged during crises such as the cold war or the recent invasion of Iraq. The need to understand the enemy gives rise to the concept of critical languages, and funds are diverted to crash programs in, say, Russian or Arabic. And, as Rosemary Feal makes clear in her column for this newsletter, there have been a number of encouraging signs of increased government support for foreign languages.

But programs such as Title VI—grateful as we must be to have them—nevertheless conceive of language training as secondary to aims felt to be of more immediate urgency. It is important as well that we keep reminding our friends outside (and inside) the academy that language has claims to importance in its own right. With this in mind, thoughtful citizens have fought over the years for more rational and sustainable support for language training. Their arguments have usually fallen into one or another of three justifications. We need to teach languages because (1) Americans will become more cosmopolitan, (2) it's good for business, and (3) language study generally makes people smarter. Historically, this third argument was usually tied to the study of a specific, “higher” language—for example, classical languages, because, it was said, the uniquely rational grammars of Greek and Latin shaped the mind to see connections that brains trained to think only in “lesser” languages would miss.

I believe concentration on languages (including, of course, our native tongue) does in fact help us think better in the sense of negotiating complex relations more successfully. To make this argument in 2007, however, we need to recast the old emphasis on particular languages. Linguists long ago abandoned the idea of higher and lower languages, and recent neuroscience increasingly demonstrates the virtues of *any* protracted language learning activity. What this means is that we might concentrate not only on the cognitive value of studying specific languages. That is just a tactical move. At a more strategic level, we might emphasize the benefits to be had from all language learning.

If we did so, it would be useful to remember that the MLA has “Language” as its—our—middle name. As an eponym, it always appears with its initial letter capitalized. This is fitting,

because what we have in common is not merely a devotion to individual languages (in my case English, French, and Russian). In addition to our local allegiances, in our work we share a commitment to Language with a capital *L*, the deep stratum shared by all languages and without which translation between any of them would be impossible. As with other names we go by, we probably do not spend a lot of time pondering the meaning of “Language” in our MLA name. For most of us, the question of what “Language” means seems to lack a certain, how shall I say—urgency. As teachers of English, French, or Russian, we tend to take for granted the English, French, or Russian language that constitutes our subject. We—quite understandably—do not often meditate the relation these bear to Language itself. As a result, most of us use the word *language* as if we were all talking about the same thing.

Clearly, we need to find some common ground in current debates about language. A modest suggestion might be to step back a bit and think less about differences among languages and more about what they have in common. One thing that connects even the most diverse languages is the relation each has to Language, the element shared by all languages. Instead of being hopelessly idealistic or uselessly abstract, the concept of Language—the fact of language itself—may provide a potential center from which to engage particular instances.

But where might we begin to search for a definition of Language that could serve as such a center? A default answer might well be Ferdinand de Saussure, who specified the question, “What is language?” more specifically as “What is it that linguists study?” He spent his life meditating this problem without arriving at a definitive answer. Or, rather, without arriving at a single answer. The fatal division between *langue* and *parole*—a distinction that now trips easily off the tongues of undergraduates—never ceased to be a problem for Saussure himself.<sup>1</sup> His problem was to define something that was primordially a paradox: a primitive that was *more than one*, an irreducible form that had rupture at its heart. Since at least the pre-Socratics, Western thought has conceived the same-different distinction in terms of variables and invariables. But the primary element was always one, defined precisely by its ineluctable singularity; anything less unified was not primary. It was this tradition Saussure fought to overcome in trying to think through Language's essence as irreducibly plural: both system and articulation combined in a way that made it impossible for the one to exist without the other. The general, systemic pole of language that coexists with the pole of uniquely instanced expression—the “dual essence of Language”<sup>2</sup> that so troubled Saussure—has devolved into a cliché.

We might well think again about why this duality should have caused Saussure such distress. Were we to do so, we, too, would have to confront the mystery of a particularly complex simultaneity. Language's divided nature comprises two poles: it is recognized as the completely other over which we as individual persons have no dominion (in a real sense, then, all languages are foreign, including our own); at the same time, Language has been perceived at least since Condillac and Humboldt as the very stuff of our innermost thought, the means by which we think of ourselves as individuals (the opposite pole of the other).

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Linguists have elaborated a number of schemes for conjoining these two aspects of language, some of which are vertical, such as Noam Chomsky's distinction between I level and E level.<sup>3</sup> Others have drawn a horizontal distinction in semantics, such as Sergej Karcevskij's recognition of synonymic and antonymic poles in a single sign, or Harald Weinrich's distinction between lexical and textual definitions of the same word. The main point of such learned commentary on same-but-different is perhaps best expressed in F. Scott Fitzgerald's famous pronouncement (from *The Crack-Up*): "The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function" (69).

Simultaneity has attracted the interest not only of linguists and novelists, however. It occupies an increasingly large chunk of research on the brain. Neuroscientists are potentially some of our strongest allies. Much of their work begins by assuming the importance of communication systems that work at all levels of the human, from genome through neuron to expressed speech, as I learned through years of teaching a science and literature seminar jointly with an eminent professor of molecular biophysics and biochemistry. With the use of such techniques as PET/fMRI, EEG, and MEG, a virtual revolution has occurred in brain study in recent decades. Recognizing the potential value of neuroscience for our cause does not mean we should unironically fall into an awestruck positivism. If in what follows I cherry-pick research done by neuroscientists, it is not to suggest that they have all the answers. They clearly do not—nor would they make that claim. But recent research on relations between mind and brain does offer new perspective on the Humboldtian insistence on an intimacy between language and thought, a perspective we might incorporate in debates about the utility of language.

What Saussure called the "dual essence" of language is akin to the role of simultaneity in thought, the still poorly understood relation between mind and brain. Researchers have explored this connection since at least Wilder Penfield and Theodore Rasmussen's research in the 1930s showing that the material basis of work in the mind comes about through the dynamic interaction of neuronal groupings. One thing seems clear: at the level of what anatomists so inelegantly call "wet work," brain function depends on communication among neurons as interaction organizes them into communities. That is, brain activity comes about through communication among aggregations of neurons that distinguish themselves by working together to accomplish specific tasks. These groupings are frequently called neuronal maps: as it turns out, the map is indeed the territory, if in ways Alfred Korzybski did not intend.

Two principles of what could legitimately be called neuronal syntax have emerged: neurons that fire together wire together, and neurons that fire apart wire apart. By following these rules, the unthinkable large number of neurons avoids chaos. This ordering function is extremely important if you consider that scientists estimate the human brain is composed of something like 100 billion neurons. The cortex alone has 30 billion neurons, and the number of their possible combinations is staggering: something like a million billion connections. Gerald Edelman and Giulio Tononi have written, "If we considered the number of possible neural circuits, we would be dealing with hyper-astronomical numbers: 10 followed by at least a million zeros" (38).

While researchers have known about brain maps for decades, it is only recently that some of the more revolutionary consequences of how they work together have emerged. To

understand such consequences, it was necessary to overturn one of the oldest and best-entrenched ideas about the nature of the brain. For centuries, the anatomy of the brain was felt to be fixed, changing only when elements of its permanent structure died or declined with age. Even after evidence of neuronal maps emerged, it was still felt that they participated in the static nature of the brain. Within the last twenty years, however, a radical new vision of the brain has emerged: it is now seen as not only capable of change but actually requiring change, a condition increasingly referred to as neuroplasticity.<sup>4</sup>

If you accept that mind and brain are intimately tied to each other and that the brain changes, it is a very short step to searching for ways to create change in the structure of neuronal maps and thus to change behavior. As a result, there are many new therapies out there, each of which seeks to direct reorganization of neuronal maps. By creating fresh communities of neurons that fire together (and thus ultimately stay together), such therapies aim at nothing less than the creation of new mind patterns. The prospect of being able to effect such profound change is breathtaking and holds out the prospect for new horizons in the clinical treatment of several brain and personality disorders (but also, of course, new vistas of ill-informed quackery). I lack the knowledge required to assess the various claims now being advertised for such still controversial programs as NLP (neuro-linguistic programming) or CBT (cognitive behavioral therapy). Out of several conflicting clinical claims, however, one tendency seems already to have established for itself at least a preliminary validity, and that is the important role language plays in such therapies.

There has been a growing alliance between linguistics and brain science since at least the nineteenth-century study of aphasia. In the 1970s and 1980s, Roman Jakobson (who did major work in aphasic studies) and Karl Pribram sought closer connections between linguistics and brain science, concentrating on the problem of how physical sound as perceived by the ear was transformed into meaning in the mind. It is perhaps not unexpected, then, that an otolaryngologist has made some of the most important recent strides in advancing research on brain and language. He is Michael Merzenich, a professor at the University of California, San Francisco, who among other achievements played a significant role in developing the cochlear implant that has been such an important (and controversial) tool for the deaf. In the late nineties, Merzenich and his colleagues turned their attention to children who were having difficulty learning to read. As someone who failed first grade primarily because I could not learn to read, I was particularly struck by this turn. Instead of inventing a new instrument for the disabled, as he had done for the deaf, Merzenich developed a training program based on intense language exercises aimed at students with severe learning disabilities. The program, called Fast ForWord, was designed to exercise every basic brain function involved in language, from the physical act of decoding sounds to comprehension of meaning. As Norman Doidge says, it is "a kind of cerebral cross-training" (70).

Since 1996, many studies have been reported in prestigious, refereed journals that show students who worked with Fast ForWord have made dramatic improvement. In a study that followed five hundred children at thirty-five sites, not only did impaired children's ability to understand language normalize after eight weeks, but in some cases it rose above normal (Doidge 72). Positive results have also been attested in populations of the elderly and those suffering from autism.

Without wishing to make too much of this research, in closing I would like to return to my original point: we need to do some educating among those powerful constituencies who do not rec-

ognize the existence of, much less the power of, Language and who conceive our work as confined to teaching individual languages. That is of course a very important and honorable part of what we do. But in performing that task, we are simultaneously, always already creating deep change in the minds of our students, change that is possible only because of the fated intimacy of brain and language. At a practical level, the MLA might do more to reach out to our colleagues in the Linguistic Society of America. And we humanities professors might individually be bolder in reaching out to potential allies in brain science.

Long before neuroplasticity was proposed by scientists, our poets knew of this link, and in one of her great 1862 meditations, Emily Dickinson celebrated it:

The Brain—is wider than the Sky—  
For—put them side by side—  
The one the other will contain  
With ease—and You—beside—

The Brain is deeper than the sea—  
For—hold them—Blue to Blue—  
The one the other will absorb—  
As Sponges—Buckets—do—

The Brain is just the weight of God—  
For—Heft them—Pound for Pound—  
And they will differ—if they do—  
As Syllable from Sound— (312–13)

Michael Holquist

## NOTES

1. This is especially apparent after the 1996 discovery of his notes made over many years—twenty years before Saussure taught the courses on which his students based their invention of the *Cours* in 1916.
2. This is the working title of the magnum opus Saussure never completed.
3. Various places in later Chomsky, but perhaps most clearly in his *Lectures*.
4. For an accessible primer on recent research in neuroplasticity, see Doidge.

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# E D I T O R ' S C O L U M N

## Responding to "Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World"

In May I sent an e-mail message to all MLA members to call attention to the release of an important report by the Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages ([www.mla.org/flreport](http://www.mla.org/flreport)). (If you didn't receive the message, it is because you have not authorized the MLA to communicate with you electronically.) I urged them, regardless of the fields in which they specialize, to read the findings of this distinguished committee, chaired by past president Mary Louise Pratt. Most of the findings of the report apply as much to departments of English and other neighboring disciplines as they do to programs in languages other than English. We also distributed the report to other organizations, and we will publish it in *Profession 2007*. Members of the ad hoc committee compiled the "Forum on Language Policy and the Politics of Language," based on the presentations they gave at the 2005 MLA convention. There were over one hundred responses to my May e-mail message, which tells me the report evoked strong reactions from members. In this column, I summarize the responses to the report and outline some directions worth pursuing as we continue to study and implement the recommendations of the ad hoc committee.

We heard from members residing abroad who contrasted the perspective of the educational systems in the countries where they reside with the fundamental indifference of the American system toward second language acquisition. We heard from teaching assistants in the United States who were eager to receive training that would prepare them for the kinds of jobs most prevalent in the academy today. We heard from worried

department members who saw the number of language majors drop while enrollments in first- and second-year language courses increased. And we heard from those who wonder why the MLA persists in calling languages other than English "foreign" (which is how our founding charter identifies them) instead of saying, simply, "languages" or using the applied linguistics terms "L1" (first language) and "L2" (second language).

Happily, many members wrote to say that some of the innovations and reforms discussed in the report were already a reality on their campuses. Those who are affiliated with small colleges noted that virtually all tenure-line faculty members teach courses that span the full range of offerings, from basic language courses to specialized courses intended for majors. They described how language learning should connect to the study of culture, literature, linguistics, and other areas, and they decried the common artificial distinction between "languages courses" and "content courses." Though the ad hoc committee's report advocates teaching approaches that promote integrating language and cultural content in all courses at all levels, this recommendation does not mean that all faculty members must teach beginning or intermediate language classes. Yet it is clear that some of those who wrote feel that the involvement of all faculty members at all levels of instruction is a necessary counterbalance to the skewed system under which many programs currently operate.

We received many testimonies about successful approaches to language teaching that involve directions charted in the report:

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team teaching, language teachers conducting courses in English translation for those who lack knowledge of the original language, study-abroad programs coordinated with on-campus offerings, collaborations in curricular planning among tenure- and non-tenure-track faculty members, workshops for first-year students that focus on how to read a literary text from another culture and that feature conversations with the authors. We also received requests for more information on how to undertake curricular and programmatic revisions along the lines specified in the report. There is much work to be done here, and one of the outcomes of the ad hoc committee's findings must be the creation of a resource bank to help members of the profession. Several avenues seem obvious. The MLA could gather and make available relevant information such as syllabi, guides to teaching, and descriptions of program-building efforts. (The *ADFL Bulletin* and *Profession* regularly contain articles that may be helpful in these matters.) We could investigate ways to establish connections among institutions that wish to change how their language departments are structured. Summer institutes on teaching languages for translingual and transcultural competence could be staged with help from granting agencies or from cooperating colleges and universities. New publications in book, journal, and Web formats could assist instructors and administrators in their efforts to devise language programs best suited to the needs of today's students.

Some of those who responded to the ad hoc committee report had ideas for establishing new partnerships and performing specific kinds of outreach. Since the report stresses the importance of language study at all levels (the "language pipeline"), more work needs to be done to link the K-12 system with college language study and to encourage college students to reach toward higher levels of proficiency in the languages they are learning. According to one professor currently teaching abroad, the MLA should be part of a wider initiative to promote language learning starting in the early grades, which is the norm for most countries other than the United States. Others noted that, although the report underscores the importance of languages in a post-9/11 world, not enough emphasis is placed on the less commonly taught languages (among which we find several of the so-called critical languages, such as Arabic and Chinese). Promoting the study of languages and cultures other than the traditionally taught European repertoire strikes many members as an important step to take while at the same time maintaining interest in the most frequently taught languages and their literatures and cultures.

Members may be interested to know that federal legislation signed by President Bush in August bears on these issues as they relate to critical languages (which, for the purpose of the legislation, are those that the secretary of education designates as critical to the nation's interests; the list changes as needs do). The America COMPETES (Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science) Act provides funds for developing and implementing courses of study in foreign languages, including master's programs aimed at enhancing teachers' content knowledge and classroom skills. The act also authorizes the secretary of education to award grants to enable educational agencies to carry out activities designed to increase the number of qualified teachers serving high-needs (low-income or rural) schools who are teaching advanced placement or international baccalaureate courses in critical foreign languages, among other subjects. Finally, funding will also be available to foster partnerships to establish pro-

grams of study in critical foreign languages; the goal of these partnerships is to help students advance successfully from elementary school through postsecondary education and achieve higher levels of proficiency in the languages they study.

Another legislative process should interest all MLA members: the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA), which includes funding for Title VI programs. In July the Senate passed the Higher Education Amendments and the Second Higher Education Extension Act, which extends programs under the HEA through the end of October. The House Education and Labor Committee is expected to consider a related bill in the fall. The bill passed by the Senate strengthens international and foreign language education in Titles I, II, VI, and VII-FIPSE. Two improvements to Title VI are of special interest: Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowships would be reinstated for undergraduates, and the Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language program would allow a portion of grants to be used for study abroad. Title VI is critical for the less commonly taught languages: centers that operate with support from this program contribute greatly to the teaching of and research in these languages. Title VI centers are also responsible for a significant proportion of enrollments in the less commonly taught languages, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, and the centers "help sustain the capacity to teach a wide variety of languages, far beyond those deemed critical at a given moment" (Natl. Research Council 149).

The roles of K-12 language education and of less commonly taught languages deserve sustained attention, and we were glad to hear from members on these points. What didn't come through clearly in the responses to the ad hoc committee report were the voices of those who teach (or study) at large research institutions, from which only a few faculty members and graduate students wrote. This worries me, because large doctorate-granting institutions enroll significant numbers of students (including graduate student assistants) and have sizable faculties (including instructors off the tenure track). If the major recommendations of the report are to create real change, then the large research universities must take action, hard as it is to alter complex systems that have worked for decades. If most PhD recipients take jobs in language programs where they will be expected to teach a wide range of courses well beyond their area of specialization for the dissertation, who will prepare them? It is clear to me from the messages we received that our profession boasts an amazing number of flexible, smart autodidacts who have acquired the knowledge and skills they need to serve their students and institutions in the best ways possible. Yet shouldn't they find training and encouragement *during* their doctoral studies for the kind of teaching they will eventually do?

As for the two-tier system that the ad hoc committee sees as the major area in need of reform, research universities constitute the primary users of adjunct and graduate-student labor. It is therefore incumbent on these institutions to find ways to integrate all instructors into curricular planning and to accord all members of the teaching corps dignified working conditions, including a meaningful wage. I realize how easy it is to say this and how few incentives there are for institutions to change their practices. Yet I must agree with the ad hoc committee's conclusion: if we as a profession do not face these issues head on, we will cease to be significant players in what becomes of language teaching in the universities of the not so distant future. What is most inspiring about the committee's proposals is the idea of a unified curriculum in which all participants see themselves as working together to produce specific outcomes: undergraduate majors who have a high level of linguistic competence and a

genuinely significant grasp of a cultural, literary, and historical archive and PhD students who have training and skills that can also be used to educate the next generation of translingual and transcultural specialists. There will always be divisions of labor particular to each campus, and the point is not to imagine that solutions lie exclusively in redistributing teaching responsibilities. Rather, the point is to rethink department structures so that all members are working toward outcomes on which they have agreed, outcomes that in turn would produce a sense of pride and responsibility.

Much of what I hear when I discuss the report in different academic communities fills me with optimism. The MLA needs to continue to put thinking and resources into helping our

members do what they love best: study, teach, and do research on questions of language, literature, linguistics, film, history, architecture, philosophy, and on and on. After all, the MLA at its best is each of its members joining forces with one another to make the profession stronger.

Rosemary G. Feal

#### WORKS CITED

- "Forum on Language Policy and the Politics of Language." *ADFL Bulletin* 38.1-2 (2006-2007): 56-65.
- National Research Council. *International Education and Foreign Languages: Keys to Securing America's Future*. Washington: Natl. Acads. P, 2007.

#### GOVERNANCE

### Executive Council Meeting Highlights

The Executive Council held its winter meeting on 23-24 February 2007 at the MLA office in New York. A complete report of this meeting appears in the October 2007 issue of *PMLA*; the following actions may be of special interest to members.

*Administration and Finance.* The council received the independent auditor's report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2006. It also received the Finance Committee's report, which reviewed the budget for the 2006-07 fiscal year and discussed the preparation of a budget for the 2007-08 fiscal year. The council authorized the staff to prepare a balanced budget for 2007-08.

*Response to Report Issued by Spellings Commission.* The council reviewed a draft response to the report issued in September 2006 by the Commission on the Future of Higher Education, which had been appointed a year earlier by Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings. The draft response was prepared by Gerald Graff in collaboration with other council members. The council asked Graff to make a number of revisions to the draft response both during the council meeting and, using the council's electronic discussion list, over the three weeks following the meeting. The council then approved the final draft by means of a unanimous vote on its electronic discussion list. The council's response is available at the MLA Web site ([www.mla.org/comments\\_spellingsreport](http://www.mla.org/comments_spellingsreport)).

*Letter to the British Library.* Responding to requests from MLA members to comment on proposed cuts in the budget for the British Library, the council decided to send a letter to the library's chief executive emphasizing the importance of the British Library's holdings to scholars worldwide and stating the council's concern about possible budget cuts.

*Recommendations from the Ad Hoc Committee on the Structure of the Annual Convention.* The Ad Hoc Committee on the Structure of the Annual Convention reported to the council that the 2006 Delegate Assembly had endorsed two recommendations from the ad hoc committee: to change the dates of the annual convention, so that the first day of the convention would be the first Thursday following 2 January each year, and to eliminate two late-evening paper-reading time slots. The ad hoc committee therefore asked the council to approve the recommendations, and the council did so. The ad hoc committee also noted that the MLA constitution would have to be amended before the change in dates could be implemented. The council agreed to propose the necessary constitutional amendments.

*Delegate Assembly Recommendations.* The council considered two recommendations from the 2006 Delegate Assembly. First, the assembly approved a motion calling on the Executive Council "to actively pursue the city of New Orleans as the site of its

next open conference venue." The council stated its intention to follow the recommendation embodied in the motion. Council members noted that the MLA staff had already begun to investigate the situation and had learned that New Orleans will not be available before 2012. The council hopes to schedule the convention in New Orleans in 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter. Second, the assembly approved a motion of thanks to the Executive Council for subscribing to the Informed Meetings Exchange. The council accepted the assembly's thanks.

*Review of Resolutions Approved by the 2006 Delegate Assembly.* As required by the MLA constitution (art. 7.B.3), the council reviewed the resolutions that the 2006 Delegate Assembly had approved (see the article on p. 8). After lengthy discussion of the language of each resolution and the requirements of the constitution, the council authorized nonsubstantive copyediting changes to the wording of the resolutions and forwarded them to the membership for the required ratification vote. The council made two additional decisions relating to the resolution process. First, with regard to the solicitation of members' comments on resolutions before the ratification vote takes place, the council instructed the staff to notify the membership by e-mail of the opening of the comment process at the Web site. Second, the council endorsed the idea of creating guidelines on the writing of resolutions and disseminating the guidelines to the membership before and after the convention.

*Approval of Two Committee Documents.* At the request of the Committee on the Literatures of People of Color in the United States and Canada (CLPC), the council adopted the "Statement on Indigenous Languages of the World in the College and University Curriculum," which had been prepared by a group of MLA members and revised slightly by the CLPC, as an MLA statement. The council authorized the publication of the statement at the MLA Web site.

The Committee on Disability Issues in the Profession (CDI) requested the council's authorization to publish "Disability and Hiring: Guidelines for Departmental Search Committees," a document that the CDI had prepared, on the committee's page at the MLA Web site and in the section of the Web site related to the job search. The council gave the requested authorization.

*Election of a Council Member to the Delegate Assembly Organizing Committee.* The council elected Mary N. Layoun to the Organizing Committee for a two-year term (2007-08).

*Appointments to MLA Committees.* The council made fifty-six appointments to the standing committees of the association and appointed seven committee chairs or cochairs. Lists of all new and continuing committee members can be found in the September 2007 (Directory) issue of *PMLA* and at the MLA Web site. □

GOVERNANCE

## Request for Comments on Delegate Assembly Resolutions

At its meeting on 29 December 2006 in Philadelphia, the Delegate Assembly approved the following resolutions, which are subject to ratification by the MLA membership. MLA members are asked to comment on the resolutions before the ratification vote is conducted.

The resolution comment process will be conducted in the members-only area of the Web site ([www.mla.org](http://www.mla.org)). The text of the resolutions will be posted at the Web site on 1 October, and members may enter signed comments at the Web site from 1 October to 1 November. Members who wish to comment but who do not have Web access may forward comments to Carol Zuses for posting at the Web site. The Delegate Assembly Organizing Committee, which proposed the use of the Web site for the comment process, encourages members to be brief, to limit comments to the issues addressed in the resolutions, and to observe common rules of Internet etiquette. Members' comments will not be subject to a word limit, nor will there be a limit on the number of comments that an individual may post.

During the balloting period, from 1 November through 10 December, additional comments will not be accepted but comments already posted will remain available for review. Members who do not have Web access may request hard copies of the posted comments from Carol Zuses.

To enter the members-only area of the Web site, you will need to log in with your current member number or user name and your password. If you do not remember your current log-in information, you can retrieve it by visiting [www.mla.org](http://www.mla.org) and selecting Change Your User Name and Password or by contacting the MLA membership department (646 576-5151; [membership@mla.org](mailto:membership@mla.org)).

The resolutions that are subject to ratification are printed below. Members may reach Carol Zuses by mail (MLA, 26 Broadway, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10004-1789), e-mail ([governance@mla.org](mailto:governance@mla.org)), and fax (646 576-5107).

### Resolution 2006-1

Whereas undocumented workers, through their labor, contribute greatly to the economy of the United States; and

Whereas they are shamefully deprived of most legal rights other workers enjoy; and

Whereas they are superexploited as a result; and

Whereas the MLA is appropriately concerned about the use of language and about access to higher education;

Be it resolved that the MLA urge that the phrase "undocumented workers" be used in place of the abusive term "illegal aliens" and that every state guarantee undocumented workers who live there in-state tuition.

### Resolution 2006-2

Whereas in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, city, state, and federal governments have taken apart the New Orleans public school system, reconstituted it as a melange of chiefly charter schools, greatly reduced democratic control of K-12 schooling, laid off all teachers and thus eliminated their union, and widened the gap of racial inequality in education; and

Whereas conservative groups and the Bush administration have in this context pressed for voucher schemes;

Be it resolved that the MLA condemn the dismantling of the New Orleans public school system after Katrina and the wider privatizing movement that has fed on this disaster. □

CONVENTION

## Program Available for Members with Visual Impairments

Members with visual impairments who would like to receive a copy of the November 2007 (Program) issue of *PMLA* in a usable format should write or call June Hicks in the executive director's office (646 576-5102; [jhicks@mla.org](mailto:jhicks@mla.org)). □

GOVERNANCE

## Nominations for 2008 Division Executive Committee Elections

One new member is elected annually to each division executive committee. The elections are held in the fall, when the other major association elections (for second vice president, Executive Council, and Delegate Assembly) take place. Division executive committees arrange the contests in accordance with the "Policies for Divisions, Discussion Groups, and Allied and Affiliate Organizations" (Sept. 2007 *PMLA* 936-40; [www.mla.org](http://www.mla.org)). Because the policies require that an executive committee choose one nominee from among the MLA members "suggested by the division membership at large," executive committee members strongly encourage such suggestions.

To suggest someone for nomination in 2008, use the designated space at the bottom of this year's MLA election ballot or send a letter of nomination to the coordinator of governance at the MLA office. Please provide the person's name and affiliation and indicate the appropriate division. All suggestions received by 10 December 2007 (the deadline for receipt of election ballots) will be considered by the division executive committees during their meetings at the 2007 annual convention. Nominees selected by the executive committees will be invited in the spring of 2008 to accept the nomination. Anyone proposed by ten division members must be included by the executive committee on the slate of candidates (provided the person agrees to stand for election). □



CONVENTION

## MLA to Meet in Chicago for Its 123rd Annual Convention

In 2007 the MLA returns to Chicago, a city known for its architecture, its ethnic diversity, and its universities. Rich in history, Chicago has nearly fifty museums, including the world-famous Art Institute, which will have two special exhibits on display during the MLA convention (*Splendor and Intimacy: Mughal and Rajput Courtly Life* and *Jasper Johns: Gray*), the Shedd Aquarium, the Museum of Science and Industry, and the Adler Planetarium. The city is also known for its blues and jazz clubs and for its restaurants, which offer an array of cuisines in every price range. Two major airports, O'Hare and Midway, make Chicago easy to reach by air, and a modern rapid-transit system, buses, and taxis make Chicago easy to navigate. Members can choose from a variety of hotels, all offering rooms at substantial discounts for the convention.

This is the first MLA convention to be held in Chicago since 1999; come and join friends and colleagues in returning to this great city.

### Transportation to and in Chicago

MLA convention hotels are located in the North Michigan Avenue area.

*By plane:* Chicago is served by O'Hare International Airport and Midway Airport.

*O'Hare:* Cab fares from O'Hare to the various hotels range from \$30 to \$35. The Shared-Ride program allows visitors to be charged a flat rate of \$19 per person. Chicago Transit Authority's (CTA) rapid transit train between O'Hare and downtown costs \$2.00 (or \$1.75 if you pay with the Chicago Card). For more information, visit [www.transitchicago.com](http://www.transitchicago.com) or call 888 968-7282. From 5:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m., trains run every five to ten minutes; from 1:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m., trains depart every thirty minutes. Continental Airport Express provides van service between O'Hare and all downtown hotels. Ticket counters are located across from the baggage claim areas. Vans depart approximately every fifteen minutes, and tickets cost \$25 one-way or \$46 round-trip. For more information and reservations, visit [www.airportexpress.com](http://www.airportexpress.com) or call 888 284-3826. Check with your hotel concierge for hotel departure times.

*Midway:* Taxi service from Midway Airport to downtown costs \$25–\$30. The Shared-Ride program allows visitors to be charged a flat rate of \$14 per person. CTA's rapid transit train between the airport and downtown Chicago takes approximately thirty minutes and costs \$2.00 (or \$1.75 with the Chicago Card). Trains leave from a station connected to the east side of the airport. Continental Airport Express, located across from the Southwest Airlines ticket counter, offers van service to downtown hotels. Tickets cost \$20 one-way or \$36 round-trip, and vans depart every twenty minutes. For more information and reservations, visit [www.airportexpress.com](http://www.airportexpress.com) or call 888 284-3826.

*By train:* Chicago is served by Amtrak (800 USA-RAIL; [www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com)). Over forty trains a day enter and leave Chicago's Union Station.

### Airline Discounts

- Up to 15% off the available fare in a number of applicable classes of service on United for tickets purchased more than thirty days before the convention.
- 5% off the available fare in a number of applicable classes of service for tickets on American Airlines purchased before the convention.
- ATC will also search for the lowest available fare on any airline.
- The above discounts are valid for travel from 24 December 2007 to 2 January 2008. Some other restrictions may apply.

American Airlines 800 433-1790

Meeting ID: A37D7AA

United Airlines 800 521-4041

Meeting ID: 510CK

ATC will send electronic ticket receipts and itineraries for your airline tickets to your e-mail address if you book through the Web site or to your e-mail address or by regular mail if you book over the phone. There is a service fee of \$29 per airline ticket issued for telephone reservations and a \$12 per airline ticket issued for reservations made through the MLA Web site (where housing reservations can also be made). ATC can be reached at 800 458-9383 Monday through Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Eastern time. Reservations can be made for air travel only on the MLA Web site at any time. □

GOVERNANCE

## Proposed Amendments to the MLA Constitution

This year, the Committee on Amendments to the Constitution received two general proposals for constitutional amendments. The first proposal, to amend the constitution to allow for electronic voting, resulted in a single amendment. The second proposal, to amend the constitution to allow for a change in the dates of the annual convention from late December to early January, led to the formulation of two sets of amendments. One set addresses various constitutional requirements for meetings; the other set addresses the terms of those elected to specific association offices. As required by the MLA constitution (art. 13.B), the amendments were published in the September issue of *PMLA* (pp. 949–51).

The committee will present the amendments to the Delegate Assembly at the assembly's meeting on 29 December in Chi-

cago. If approved by the assembly, the amendments will be submitted to the members of the association in 2008 for ratification by mail ballot.

Members who wish to comment on the proposed amendments may do so at either the open hearing of the Delegate Assembly (28 Dec., 1:45 p.m., Columbus Hall G, Hyatt Regency) or the assembly meeting itself (29 Dec., 1:00 p.m., Grand Ballroom E and F, Hyatt Regency). Written comments are also welcome, but they must be received at the MLA office by 15 December so that the Delegate Assembly Organizing Committee can review them during its meeting at the convention. Comments can be addressed to the coordinator of governance at the MLA office or sent by fax (646 576-5107) or e-mail ([governance@mla.org](mailto:governance@mla.org)). □

CONVENTION

## Travel Grant for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Members and for the Unemployed

The MLA is offering \$200 travel grants to non-tenure-track faculty members and those without employment to attend the 2007 convention in Chicago. To qualify for a grant, applicants must have been members of the MLA in 2006 and must be nonstudent members of the MLA for 2007. They must teach less than full time, be non-tenure-track faculty members, or be unemployed. Their income must place them in the lowest or second-lowest income range in the dues schedule. As part of the application process, members must request matching funds from their departments or institutions using a letter provided by the MLA (available for downloading at [www.mla.org/assist\\_nontenure](http://www.mla.org/assist_nontenure)). The Executive Council wants to make institutions aware of the importance of supporting all instructional staff members in their professional development activities. The institution's response to the MLA letter must be submitted, even if no matching funds are granted. The response should be presented when grant recipients pick up their checks at the convention. To apply for a grant, members should send their contact information, along with a brief statement stipulating that they are part-time or non-tenure-track faculty members or are unemployed, to MLA headquarters by 1 November 2007. Applications should be addressed to Travel Assistance Program, MLA, 26 Broadway, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10004-1789. Fax transmissions to 646 835-4067 may be used to meet the deadline, but they must be followed by signed applications. Applications by e-mail will not be accepted. For additional information or details on how to apply, please contact Annie Reiser (646 576-5141; [areiser@mla.org](mailto:areiser@mla.org)). □

CONVENTION

## Meeting Times for Allied Organizations

For allied organizations sponsoring two meetings, one meeting will take place on 27 December in the 3:30 p.m. time slot or on 30 December in the 1:45 p.m. time slot. Please keep this in mind when making travel arrangements. □

CONVENTION

## Accommodations and Services for Persons with Disabilities

The MLA is committed to making arrangements that allow all members of the association to participate in the convention. Karin Bagnall in the MLA convention office handles arrangements for persons with disabilities ([kbagnall@mla.org](mailto:kbagnall@mla.org)). Meeting rooms in the headquarters hotels are accessible by elevator, and the doors are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs. There will be desks in the convention registration and information areas at the Hyatt Regency (Gold level, East Tower), the Sheraton Chicago (Lobby level), and the Fairmont (International Ballroom Lobby, level 2), staffed by personnel who can provide assistance to convention attendees with disabilities. To reserve hotel rooms that are specifically equipped for persons with permanent or temporary disabilities, write or call Karin Bagnall by 15 November 2007. The convention housing form also includes a space for attendees to request particular equipment or accommodations.

*Shuttle Bus.* A complimentary transportation service for persons with disabilities will be available throughout convention meeting hours to transport attendees with disabilities. Arrangements should be made at the desk for persons with disabilities in the Hyatt Regency (Gold level, East Tower), the Sheraton Chicago (Lobby level), and the Fairmont (International Ballroom Lobby, level 2) as well as at the satellite desks located in the lobbies of the Hyatt Regency and the Fairmont. Further details and phone numbers will be posted in the headquarters hotel lobbies.

*Sessions.* Speakers are asked to bring five copies of their papers, even draft copies, for the use of members who wish to follow the written text. Speakers who use handouts should prepare some copies in a large-print format (fourteen- to sixteen-point). Speakers should indicate whether they want their papers and handouts returned. Sign language interpreters are available on request. To arrange for an interpreter, write or call Karin Bagnall by 15 November.

Please report any problems on-site to the MLA staff members in the headquarters offices at the Hyatt Regency (Wrigley, Bronze level, West Tower) or the Sheraton Chicago (Parlor A, Lobby level), and they will do their best to assist you. Hotel staff members may not be able to respond. □

CONVENTION

## Child Care Arrangements

KiddieCorp will provide child care during the annual convention in Chicago. The KiddieCorp staff's professional child care specialists have designed a program for convention groups that includes age-appropriate crafts projects, toys, games, and entertainment. KiddieCorp stresses carefully selected staff; sturdy, safe equipment; and close supervision of play and rest.

Parents are urged to preregister by Wednesday, 5 December, since only a limited number of on-site registrations may be available, depending on space, insurance, and staffing. To secure a reservation, you can download a copy of the form from the MLA Web site ([www.mla.org](http://www.mla.org)). You can also write the convention office ([convention@mla.org](mailto:convention@mla.org)) and request a registration form. Please return the completed form to the convention office by Wednesday, 5 December, along with the registration fee: \$45 a day for the first child and \$15 a day for each additional child; for graduate students, \$25 a day for the first child and \$15 a day for each additional child. The preregistration process will ensure the appropriate child-to-caregiver ratio. The registration fee may be paid by credit card or by check made payable to the Modern Language Association of America.

KiddieCorp has the right to refuse child care to children who are seriously ill and to refuse on-site child care registrations if accepting additional children would adversely affect the quality of child care. A morning snack and an afternoon snack will be provided. Lunch will also be provided for children who are in child care at lunchtime. Parents must indicate each morning whether their children will need lunch, so that the staff can order the appropriate amount of food. Parents should inform the staff of any special dietary needs. □

## CONVENTION

**2007 Convention Invitation**

The invitation to the 2007 MLA Annual Convention in Chicago was mailed to members in early September; it includes complete information about convention hotels, travel arrangements, and preregistering at member rates. A priority mailing of the convention preregistration packet was sent in mid-August to chairs whose departments were members of ADE or ADFL by 30 June 2007. Once the mailing has gone out to the entire membership in September, suites will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. Members can register for the convention and make hotel and airline travel arrangements through the MLA's Web site ([www.mla.org](http://www.mla.org)) as of 4 September. □

## CONVENTION

**ADE- and ADFL-Sponsored Sessions for Job Candidates and Interviewers**

ADE and ADFL will sponsor several sessions at the MLA convention to help job candidates and interviewers with interview protocols and job search procedures. ADE and ADFL also provide an individual job counseling service in the interview area of the Job Information Center. Department chairs will offer their experience and expertise in 25-minute one-on-one counseling sessions on 28 and 29 December. Job candidates who take advantage of the counseling service should bring a copy of an application letter and CV.

*ADE-sponsored convention sessions for job candidates.* "A Preconvention Workshop for Job Seekers: The Job Search in English" will provide job candidates an opportunity to hear experienced department chairs from three types of institutions describe how their departments approach interviewing and reaching decisions about who should receive the offer of a faculty position. Speaking are Donna Akiba Sullivan Harper (Spelman Coll.), Valerie B. Lee (Ohio State Univ., Columbus), and Lawrence H. Schwartz (Montclair State Univ.). "Career Opportunities in Two-Year Colleges" will provide information about the needs of and job opportunities at two-year colleges. Speaking are Bonnie Tymorski August (New York City Coll. of Tech., City Univ. of New York), Pamela Sue Hardman (Cuyahoga Community Coll., Western Campus, OH), and Bette G. Hirsch (Cabrillo Coll., CA). At "The Job I Got: The Job Search and the Pathway from Graduate Student to Faculty Member," speakers include Anna Karen Nardo (Louisiana State Univ., Baton Rouge), Maria Assif (Harry S. Truman Coll.), Brannon W. Costello (Louisiana State Univ., Baton Rouge), and Christopher A. Hager (Northwestern Univ.).

*ADFL-sponsored convention sessions for job candidates.* "A Preconvention Workshop for Job Seekers: The Job Search in Foreign Languages" will offer job candidates and interviewers opportunities to participate in a roundtable discussion of interviewing and hiring practices led by experienced department chairs who serve on the ADFL Executive Committee. Participating will be Nelly Furman (MLA), Thomas Blair (City Coll. of San Francisco), Annette Kym (Hunter Coll., City Univ. of New York), and Randolph Pope (Univ. of Virginia). In a second session, "Mock Interviews for Job Seekers in Foreign Languages," recently successful candidates will be publicly interviewed by department chairs; discussion will focus on what went right and wrong, what the interviewers were expecting or looking for, and how the interviewee might improve his or her performance. Participating will be Kathleen Vera Kish (San Diego State Univ.) and Mary Wildner-Bassett (Univ. of Arizona, Tucson).

ADE and ADFL jointly sponsor "A Preconvention Workshop for Members of Search Committees," which will give members of departmental search committees an opportunity to discuss the hiring process, including writing advertisements, reading vitae and dossiers, interviewing at the MLA convention and on campus, and negotiating job offers. Discussion leaders will be Downing A. Thomas (Univ. of Iowa), Diane M. Borden (Univ. of the Pacific), and Robert Crossley (Univ. of Massachusetts, Boston). □

## CONVENTION

**Travel Assistance for Advanced Graduate Students**

The Executive Council has voted to allot funds to provide partial travel reimbursements of \$200 to advanced graduate students who are members of the MLA by 30 June 2007 and who will travel to the 2007 convention in order to attend preconvention workshops, sessions in their areas of scholarly interest, meetings with job counselors, or interviews. The council is particularly concerned with helping students who have no support for convention attendance from their institutions or other sources and who incur substantial costs for travel to and from the convention. Funds are available to cover awards for up to 200 students; if more apply, recipients will be selected in a random manner.

Letters of application must reach the MLA by 1 November 2007, by mail to the MLA Travel Assistance Program, 26 Broadway, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10004-1789, or by fax to 646 835-4067. Further information is available at the MLA Web site ([www.mla.org](http://www.mla.org)). Fax transmissions may be used to meet the deadline, but they must be followed by signed letters. (Applications by e-mail will not be accepted.) Each letter should include a brief statement by the student stipulating that he or she has no external support for travel to the convention and be accompanied by a statement on university letterhead signed by the student's dissertation director or department chair confirming that the student is enrolled in a doctoral program at the signer's institution and has met all the requirements for the PhD except the dissertation.

Since 1997, the Executive Council has invited MLA members to donate money to a professional education assistance fund that will provide ongoing support for these travel reimbursements. A space on the membership renewal form allows members to indicate that they have added to their dues payments a tax-deductible contribution to the fund; contributions may also be made on the MLA Web site. Advanced graduate students who have paid dues for the 2008 calendar year will be eligible to apply for travel reimbursements in 2008. □

## Using the MLA Job Information Center

The Job Information Center will be located in the Fairmont Chicago Hotel (International Ballroom, second level). The center includes a sign-in and interview information area, an interview area, and a message center.

All candidates, departmental representatives, and interviewers who wish to use the facilities of the Job Information Center must be registered for the convention.

The center, which is designed to assist job candidates and interviewers in both English and foreign languages, will provide the following services:

**1. Sign-In Desk.** The MLA will maintain a database of information about the location of interviews that departments have scheduled. Departmental representatives who plan to hold job interviews during the convention, whether in their hotel rooms or in the interview area of the Job Information Center, should sign in so that candidates with whom they have set up interviews will be able to locate them. Although an interviewer's name may appear in "Who's Where," for security reasons hotel switchboards will not give out guests' room numbers—and are in any case extremely busy. A brief stop at the sign-in desk by a thoughtful interviewer can save much confusion and worry for candidates.

The sign-in desk will be open on 27 December from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., on 28 December from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., on 29 December from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and on 30 December from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

Interviewers should give, and candidates should ask for, as many specifics as possible at the time when an interview is being arranged. Candidates should be informed

- whether the interview will take place in the interview area or a hotel room
- what hotel the room will be in
- what name the room will be registered under
- the day, date, and hour when the interview will take place

Interviewers need to remember that a hotel switchboard will be able to connect candidates with them only if the person the candidate asks to be connected with is the person in whose name the hotel room is registered. Candidates may be unable to locate an interviewer if told no more than, for instance, "We'll be in the Hyatt."

The interview committee should let candidates know whether it will be checking in with the Job Information Center or whether candidates should call the switchboard of the committee's hotel to find out its room number. Unless a committee checks in with the Job Information Center, the center will not know where it is interviewing.

The center opens at 12:00 noon on 27 December to provide candidates information on interview locations; it will not be able to give location information to candidates for any interviews scheduled before that time.

**2. Interview Area.** For the convenience of departmental representatives and candidates, the Job Information Center includes an interview area for both English and foreign languages. Departments that wish to use the interview area should schedule interviews with candidates before the convention whenever possible.

Interviews may be scheduled on-site by leaving messages at the message center, although departments should be aware that communication during the convention can be difficult. Tables in the interview area will be assigned to departmental representatives on a first-come, first-served basis. The hours for the interview area are from 12:00 noon to 8:00 p.m. on 27 December, from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on 28 December, from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on 29 December, and from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on 30 December. Interview committees using the interview area should not arrange interviews outside the scheduled hours. Candidates who know that their interviews will take place in the interview area can go there directly to find the right table number without stopping at the interview location desk. Staff members will be on duty in the area to assist interviewers and candidates.

Interviewers and candidates who use the area must be registered for the convention and display a registration badge to enter.

**3. Counseling Service.** The Job Information Center counseling service affords job seekers the opportunity to discuss individual employment problems with experienced departmental administrators. While counselors cannot help candidates obtain interviews, they can offer concrete advice on such matters as the appropriate content and presentation of vitae and letters of application, the kinds of institutions to which candidates might most profitably apply, and realistic approaches to job interviews. Counselors will be on hand to speak with interested candidates during selected hours from 10:15 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. on 28 and 29 December. Appointments can be arranged through the staff member on duty. Each counselee should bring a sample cover letter and vita.

**4. Vacancy Notices.** A list of openings received too late to be included in the print version of the December *Job Information List* will be posted in the center. Detailed descriptions of any last-minute vacancies may be submitted to the MLA staff in the center for posting. On request, the MLA staff will collect vitae for departments that plan to conduct interviews at the convention for such positions.

**5. Message Center.** Open from 12:00 noon to 8:00 p.m. on 27 December, from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on 28 December, from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on 29 December, and from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on 30 December, the message center will help candidates and interviewers who have corresponded before the convention arrange specific interview times and places. The message center will not be useful to those who leave messages at random for persons with whom they have had no earlier contact and who may not even be at the convention. Such messages are rarely picked up.

While every effort will be made to assist participants at the Job Information Center, it should be stressed that the MLA does not have the facilities to introduce candidates and interviewers who have not corresponded before the convention. Job candidates who do not have prearranged interviews should not attend for the sole purpose of seeking employment.

Before attending the convention, candidates and interviewers should review the guidelines for job seekers and hiring departments in the *JIL* section of the MLA's Web site. □

## CONVENTION

## Chicago Convention to Feature a Workshop on Effective Lecturing

At this year's MLA convention, Sander Gilman (Emory Univ.) and Marina Gilman (Emory Univ.) will conduct a workshop on voice and presentation skills for academics who speak to large classes and present public lectures. The workshop, open to all convention participants, will focus first on vocal production and vocal health and then on presentation skills. The double focus will provide lecturers with the tools they need to use their voices wisely and to understand the techniques of effective academic presentation.

Many members know Sander Gilman, a past president of the MLA, as a scholar with decades of experience as a dynamic speaker. Marina Gilman is a performer, a voice and speech teacher, and a speech pathologist working exclusively with vocal disorders at the Emory Voice Center. Their presentation, "Successful Lecturing with a Healthy Voice: A Workshop," will take place Thursday, 27 December, from 5:15 to 7:30 p.m. in Crystal Ballroom C, Hyatt Regency. □

### Deadline for Audiovisual Requests

All requests for audiovisual equipment must be made by the chair of the session by **1 April**. Requests must be received by mail or by fax by 5:00 p.m. on this date. Because the need for audiovisual equipment is a major factor in the scheduling of meetings (and because the movement of equipment is both costly and hazardous), the deadline is firm. Participants should indicate their audiovisual needs when they respond to a call for papers and should check with the chair of the session or with the MLA convention office to be sure that the necessary equipment has been ordered by 1 April.

## CONVENTION

## Calls for Papers for 2008 Convention in San Francisco

The 2008 convention will be held in San Francisco. Members should familiarize themselves with the guidelines for the MLA convention, which appear in the September 2007 *PMLA* (pp. 930–35), before writing to the organizers listed below. If not provided, organizers' addresses are available on the MLA Web site to MLA members and listed in the September 2007 *PMLA*. All participants in convention sessions must be MLA members by 7 April 2008. Organizers are responsible for responding to all inquiries. A member may participate as speaker or respondent only twice (e.g., by organizing and chairing a meeting, reading a paper, or serving as a speaker, panelist, or respondent in one or two sessions) at a single convention.

Calls for papers are limited to thirty-five words, including the session title but not the name or address of the organizer.

Groups that announce two or more calls for papers with the same contact person list the contact person only once.

### Divisions

#### *Interdisciplinary Approaches*

#### CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

**Children's Literature and War.** Representations of war in children's literature from any period. Possible texts include fiction, nonfiction, poetry, film, and picture books. 350–500-word abstracts by 1 Mar.; Karin Westman (westmank@ksu.edu).

**Princess Culture Industry.** Princesses are enormously popular in contemporary children's culture. Why? Papers might address literary sources, popular culture, marketing, changes to princess definitions, politics and ramifications of princess mania, etc. 250-word abstracts by 15 Mar.; June Cummins (jcummins@mail.sdsu.edu) and Catherine Tosenberger (ctosen@ufl.edu).

**Return to Prince Edward Island: *Anne of Green Gables* at 100.** The past place, present importance, and possible future status of Montgomery's classic. 1–2-page abstracts or 8-page papers by 1 Mar.; Michelle Ann Abate (mabate@hollins.edu).

#### *Special Sessions*

**The Audiobook.** Papers addressing any aspect of audio recordings of literature: close listening, sound technologies, voice actors, etc. Abstracts by 1 Mar.; Matthew Rubery (m.rubery@leeds.ac.uk).

**Encounters between Science and the Avant-Garde (1900–30).** Investigations of the intersection of avant-garde literature/art and sciences such as biology, evolution theory, and medicine. Half-page abstracts to both addresses by 15 Mar.; Christine Kanz and Arndt Niebisch (christinekanz1@mac.com) and (arndt\_niebisch@hotmail.com).

**Fatherhood and the Comedia.** Papers that focus on fathers, fatherhood, paternity, or masculinity in the theater of the Spanish Golden Age. 250-word abstracts by 10 Mar.; Michael W. Joy (mjoy@nmu.edu).

**Reproduction Technologies and Contemporary Culture.** Intersections between contemporary culture (e.g., texts by Mulisch or Houellebecq or films such as *Matrix* or *Existenz*), and current reproduction technologies. 1-page abstracts by 1 Mar.; Christine Kanz (christinekanz1@mac.com).

#### *Allied and Affiliate Organizations*

#### CHILDREN'S LITERATURE ASSOCIATION

**Children's Literature and the Legal System.** Intersection of children's books or media and legal systems: authors' portrayals of law; legal cases involving children's books; children's works intended to influence legal systems. 500-word abstracts by 15 Mar.; Ramona Caponegro (caponegro@english.ufl.edu).

**Representations of Disability.** Critical and theoretical approaches that examine disability as it is represented in children's and young-adult literature. 1–2-page abstracts by 1 Mar.; Jennifer Miskec (Jennifer.miskec@cnu.edu) and Keith Dorwick (kdorwick@yahoo.com).

#### MARLOWE SOCIETY OF AMERICA

**Two Sessions.** Papers on any aspect of Marlowe studies or of other Renaissance dramatists (excluding Shakespeare) of the 1580s and 1590s. Detailed abstracts or 15-min. papers by 1 Mar.; Roslyn L. Knutson, English, Univ. of Arkansas, 823 North Midland, Little Rock 72205 (rlknutson@ualr.edu).

#### MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE DRAMA SOCIETY

**Performance and Medieval Colonialisms. Renaissance Medievalisms in Performance.** Renaissance performance often constructed or reimagined the Middle Ages. Where can we find evidence of such medievalism in play texts or other aspects of the theatrical enterprise? 1-page abstracts by 15 Mar.; (coulsongrigsbyc@centenarycollege.edu).

#### EZRA POUND SOCIETY

**Pound and the Chicago Renaissance. Pound and the Modernist as Decadent.** 500–1,000-word abstracts by 7 Mar.; Burton Hatlen (Hatlen@maine.edu). □

## Competition Open for MLA Book Awards

The MLA Committee on Honors and Awards invites authors and editors to compete for the association's publication prizes. Five prizes that are awarded only in even-numbered years will be presented at the 2008 convention: the Fenia and Yaakov Leviant Memorial Prize in Yiddish Studies, the MLA Prize for a Distinguished Bibliography, the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for Studies in Germanic Languages and Literatures, the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for a Translation of a Literary Work, and the Howard R. Marraro Prize.

Prizes awarded annually by the MLA are the James Russell Lowell Prize for an outstanding book by a member of the association; the MLA Prize for a First Book; the MLA Prize for Independent Scholars, awarded for a distinguished scholarly book on language or literature; the Kenneth W. Mildener Prize for an outstanding work in the fields of language, culture, literacy, or literature with strong application to the teaching of languages other than English; the Mina P. Shaughnessy Prize for an outstanding work in the fields of language, culture, literacy, or literature with strong application to the teaching of English; the Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize for an outstanding book published in English in the field of Latin American and Spanish literatures and cultures; the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for Comparative Literary Studies; the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for French and Francophone Studies; the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Publication Award for a Manuscript in Italian Literary Studies; the William Sanders Scarborough Prize for an outstanding scholarly study of black American literature or culture; and the MLA Prize in United States Latina and Latino and Chicana and Chicano Literary and Cultural Studies. A work published in 2007 may compete for one of the annual prizes that will be presented in 2008 if it meets the specific eligibility requirements for the prize.

The deadline for entries for the 2007 James Russell Lowell Prize is 1 March 2008; for the First Book Prize and Scaglione Prize for a Translation of a Literary Work it is 1 April; for the Scaglione Publication Award it is 1 August; for all other awards it is 1 May.

Six prizes that are awarded only in odd-numbered years will be presented at the 2009 convention: the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for Studies in Slavic Languages and Literatures, the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for Italian Studies, the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for a Translation of a Scholarly Study of Literature, the Morton N. Cohen Award for a Distinguished Edition of Letters, the MLA Prize for a Distinguished Scholarly Edition, and the Lois Roth Award for a Translation of a Literary Work. Biennial prizes are open to books or editions published in either of the two calendar years preceding the year in which the prize is presented, except for the prizes for Italian studies (the Scaglione Prize for Italian Studies and the Howard R. Marraro Prize) and the prizes for literary translation (the Scaglione Prize for a Translation of a Literary Work and the Lois Roth Award), for which works must have been published in the year prior to the year in which they are presented.

Only members of the association may compete for the MLA Prize for a First Book; the Lowell prize; the Marraro prize; the MLA Prize in United States Latina and Latino and Chicana and Chicano Literary and Cultural Studies; and the Scaglione prizes for comparative literary studies, French and Francophone studies, Italian studies, studies in Germanic languages and literatures; and the Scaglione Publication Award for a Manuscript in Italian Literary Studies. Authors who are not members may compete if they join the association before the deadline. For detailed information about eligibility and the number of copies required to compete for any MLA prize, please call or write the Programs Office (646 576-5141; awards@mla.org). □

### BOOK NEWS

## Four New MLA Titles Published

Available now, *Approaches to Teaching Marguerite de Navarre's Heptameron* was edited by Colette H. Winn. Marguerite de Navarre—writer, reformer, patron—was a key figure of the French Renaissance. Her works, however, were critically reassessed by scholars only in the twentieth century. Today her *Heptameron* is widely anthologized and frequently taught in undergraduate and graduate classrooms. But teaching this collection of novellas presents challenges: the work is in Middle French, its construction is complex, and it is far-reaching in its use of historical context. This ninety-fifth volume in the *Approaches to Teaching World Literature* series aims to show teachers how to unravel the intricacies of the *Heptameron* for students.

The first part, "Materials," reviews editions and translations, surveys sources that are useful in the classroom, and considers audiovisual and technological resources available to instructors. The second part, "Approaches," features twenty-seven essays that explore the *Heptameron* and its cultural and historical contexts, the religious and political ideas and the literary genres that influenced it, its publishing history, and its relation to other works by Marguerite. Experienced instructors share insights about how to teach this work in foreign language and survey courses, how to incorporate film and visual art in the classroom, and how to approach the subject of gender in discussing

Marguerite's writing. The volume costs \$37.50 (MLA members \$30.00) in cloth and \$19.75 (MLA members \$15.80) in paperback.

Isabelle de Charrière's *Three Women* is set for release in October. Translated by Emma Rooksby and also available in the original French (*Trois Femmes*), the book is the twenty-first in the MLA Texts and Translations series. In the aftermath of the French Revolution, three women who have fled France—the straitlaced aristocrat Emilie, her lighthearted maid Joséphine, and the worldly Constance—try to make new lives for themselves in Altendorf, Germany. Their experiences, difficulties, and choices address the philosophical question, Are moral theories adequate guides to good conduct?

In her introduction to this late-eighteenth-century novel by Charrière, Emma Rooksby discusses the sentimental tradition, Enlightenment ideas, epistolary fiction, Charrière's career, and the difficult situation of women and women writers in postrevolutionary France. Both the English translation and the French text will be available in paperback and cost \$9.95 (MLA members \$7.96).

Also set for October release is *Approaches to Teaching Milton's Shorter Poetry and Prose*, edited by Peter C. Herman. Milton's shorter poetry and prose can be challenging to teach, but they reward instructors and students many times over: they introduce in compact, accessible form the themes and difficult syntax of *Paradise Lost*, expand and comment on the epic and on one another, and provide

students ideal training in close reading. The essays in this volume constitute a road map for exploring the most frequently taught of Milton's shorter works—"Lycidas," the Nativity Ode, *Comus*, *Samson Agonistes*, *Areopagitica*, and *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*—as well as the sonnets, *Paradise Regained*, *The Reason of Church Government*, and *The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth*, among others. The contributors demonstrate ways of incorporating Milton's shorter works into a range of classrooms, from survey courses to Milton seminars; list specific tools to make the works' relevance and aesthetic pleasures available to a wide variety of student populations; and offer a wealth of techniques for helping students navigate Milton's demanding style and complicated historical context.

Like all volumes in the Approaches series, this collection includes a convenient survey of original and supplementary materials and a comprehensive array of classroom tactics. Three sections of essays provide general approaches to the poetry and prose, through biography, genre, literary and political history, and other methodologies. The fourth section addresses the teaching of individual poems, and the final section articulates ways into specific prose works. The volume will cost \$37.50 (MLA members \$30.00) in cloth and \$19.75 (MLA members \$15.80) in paperback.

Due in November, *An Anthology of Spanish American Modernismo* was edited by Kelly Washbourne, who also translated the Spanish text with Sergio Waisman. This single volume in the MLA Texts and Translations series contains both the English translation and the Spanish text. The poetic movement that was Spanish American modernismo ran from the early 1880s to 1916: it expressed the desire both to join universal literature—aesthetic modernity—and to break colonial ties with Spanish belles lettres. The new translations in this bilingual anthology, many of them first translations, present eighteen modernista poets from Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, and Uruguay. This volume is designed to provide the student of Spanish American literature with work not easily accessible in Spanish and English and to introduce modernismo, an often misunderstood movement, to a wider audience. The book will be available in paperback for \$10.95 (MLA members \$8.76).

To purchase these or other MLA publications, please call customer services (646 576-5161), fax your order (646 576-5160), or place your order through the MLA Web site at [www.mla.org](http://www.mla.org). The MLA accepts Visa, MasterCard, and American Express. □

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

### MLA International Bibliography Fellowships

In 2003, the Executive Council approved a request by the Advisory Committee on the *MLA International Bibliography* for the creation of *MLA Bibliography* fellowships. These fellowships recognize the efforts of scholars who index materials on behalf of the *MLA International Bibliography*. Earlier this year, the fourth group of recipients for this award were announced. The 2007 recipients are

- Jacob D. Blakesley**, PhD candidate, University of Chicago (twentieth-century Italian literature)
- Lisbeth Chapin**, assistant professor of English, Gwynedd-Mercy College (British Romantic studies)
- Natalie E. Dear**, PhD candidate, University of Alberta (medieval, early modern women writers)
- Erik Grayson**, PhD candidate, Binghamton University (English literature)
- Fernando Gomez Herrero**, Bard High School Early College (Spanish-Latin literature)
- Diane Louise Johnson**, assistant professor, Western Washington University (modern Greek)
- David D. Kim**, PhD candidate, Harvard University (Germanic studies)
- Sarah Ponichtera**, PhD candidate, Columbia University (Yiddish studies)
- Sathyaraj Venkatesan**, PhD candidate, Indian Institute of Technology (African American literature)
- Kostas Yiavis**, lecturer, Cornell University (classics, Renaissance studies, modern Greek)

Applications for the 2008 field bibliography fellowships are due 1 April 2008. Fellowships are for a three-year period, beginning 1 July 2008 and ending 30 June 2011. The MLA seeks scholars of any level of seniority interested in training as field bibliography fellows and able to deliver at least one hundred citations each year. This opportunity is open to potential as well as existing field bibliographers. The MLA will provide materials and training meetings at the annual convention. Fellows attending training sessions will have their conference registration fees waived. On completion of the fellowship, they will receive a stipend of \$500 and a certificate at the awards ceremony during the Presidential Address at the MLA convention. It is hoped that recipients of these fellowships will continue submitting citations throughout their careers.

The basic criteria for application are MLA membership, a master's or PhD in a relevant field, and access to scholarly material for indexing. Please submit a letter of request, including qualifications and reasons for applying for the fellowship, and a current résumé or CV to the attention of Helen Slavin, *MLA International Bibliography*, 26 Broadway, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10004-1789 ([hslavin@mla.org](mailto:hslavin@mla.org)). □

#### BOOK NEWS

### Call for Essay Proposals for *Teaching Laboring-Class British Literature of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*

For the MLA's Options for Teaching series, the Publications Committee has approved development of the volume *Teaching Laboring-Class British Literature of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, edited by Kevin Binfield and Tim Burke. The volume will serve as a resource on issues, materials, and methods for teaching literature by laboring-class writers in a variety of genres. As currently planned, the volume will comprise eight sections: (1) Materials, (2) Defining the Field, (3) Teaching Forms of Laboring-Class Literature, (4) Teaching Themes in Laboring-Class Literature, (5) Representation and Self-Representation, (6) Organizing the Field, (7) Teaching Contexts and Course Designs, and (8) Teaching Individual Writers. If you are interested in contributing to the volume, please e-mail a one- or two-page proposal to Kevin Binfield ([kevin.binfield@murraystate.edu](mailto:kevin.binfield@murraystate.edu)) or Tim Burke ([timsiob@gmail.com](mailto:timsiob@gmail.com)) by 1 December 2007. You may also mail proposals to Kevin Binfield, Dept. of English and Philosophy, Faculty Hall 7C, Murray State Univ., Murray, KY 42071. □

## Updated MLA Recommendations on Salaries for Entry-Level, Full-Time, and Part-Time Faculty Members

At its 19–20 April 2007 meeting the MLA Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities updated MLA salary recommendations, as charged by the Executive Council. The minimum salary range for full-time appointments at the entry level should be at least \$41,000 to \$44,600 or better for instructors and \$51,900 to \$56,100 or better for beginning assistant professors. Health care benefits and shared contributions to a portable retirement plan should also be provided.

Part-time faculty members perform a valuable role in institutions, giving employers flexibility in scheduling and providing a high level of expertise without a substantial long-term commitment from the institution. These faculty members should be compensated not only for their expertise but also for the flexibility and convenience they offer. The Modern Language Association therefore recommends a salary range of \$6,200 to \$8,800 per course section, with fringe benefits and cost-of-living increases, as reasonable minimum compensation for part-time faculty members. □

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### BOOK NEWS

## New Editions of Volumes in Approaches Series

The Publications Committee has approved development of the following new editions of previously published volumes in the Approaches to Teaching World Literature series.

*Approaches to Teaching Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, second edition, edited by Peter W. Travis and Frank Grady

*Approaches to Teaching Cervantes's Don Quixote*, second edition, edited by James A. Parr and Lisa Vollendorf

*Approaches to Teaching Milton's Paradise Lost*, second edition, edited by Peter C. Herman

If you wish to contribute to any of these volumes, please visit [www.mla.org/approaches](http://www.mla.org/approaches) by 1 November 2007 and follow the link to the relevant title.

These new editions are the first in a series of planned updates of Approaches volumes. The new editions will be available in both print and electronic form. The electronic versions will become part of the projected MLA Approaches to Teaching World Literature Electronic Collection, a database composed of the more than one hundred volumes in the popular book series Approaches to Teaching World Literature (1980–) as well as updates that will be gradually undertaken. The electronic collection will not only give online access to individual published volumes and individual essays in the volumes but also permit the updating on a regular basis of each volume's materials section, the addition of new essays to reflect new approaches and topics, and the ability for users to search electronically across the entire collection of volumes or in smaller clusters. In planning the collection, the MLA expects to take advantage of new technologies that allow for live linking to other electronic resources. □

### COMMITTEES

## MLA Committee Meetings, October 2007–June 2008

The following schedule of MLA committee meetings is current as of 31 July 2007. Members wishing to bring issues to the attention of a committee may write to the committee chair listed in the September 2007 PMLA (pp. 915–21) or address letters to the executive director's office.

#### OCTOBER

- 4–5 Committee on Community Colleges
- 4–5 PMLA Editorial Board
- 11–12 ADFL Executive Committee
- 15–16 Ad Hoc Committee on the Structure of the Annual Convention
- 18–19 Committee on Information Technology
- 18–19 Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession
- 24–25 Delegate Assembly Organizing Committee
- 26–27 Executive Council

#### NOVEMBER

- 8–9 Advisory Committee on the *MLA International Bibliography*

#### DECEMBER

- 14 Radio Committee

#### JANUARY

- 25 Committee on the New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare
- 25 Elections Committee
- 31 PMLA Editorial Board

#### FEBRUARY

- 1 PMLA Editorial Board
- 8 Nominating Committee
- 14–15 Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities
- 22–23 Executive Council
- 28–29 Committee on the Literatures of People of Color in the United States and Canada
- 29 Texts and Translations Series Editorial Board

#### MARCH

- 6–7 ADE Executive Committee
- 6–7 ADFL Executive Committee
- 13–14 Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession
- 27–28 Committee on Information Technology
- 28 Committee on Honors and Awards

#### APRIL

- 3–4 Ad Hoc Committee on the Structure of the Annual Convention
- 17–18 Publications Committee

#### MAY

- 1–2 PMLA Editorial Board
- 1–2 Program Committee
- 20–21 Executive Council

#### JUNE

- 2 Radio Committee

## PMLA Special Topic: Literary Criticism for the Twenty-First Century

What kinds of literary criticism can we imagine for the twenty-first century? The twentieth century saw a variety of exciting literary-critical approaches, including New Critical analyses of works as ironic, elegantly constructed organic wholes; structuralist analyses of how works relate to the generic or discursive systems that produce them; deconstructive readings of how works undo the ideological frameworks that support them; historicist readings of works as symptoms of or interventions in a sociopolitical context; ethnic, feminist, Marxist, psychoanalytic, race-critical, and queer readings of works in relation to philosophical, political, and socioeconomic conditions. What is next?

*PMLA* asks for essays that seek to remobilize the field of literary criticism. Over the last few decades, theory has taught us a great deal about effective critique, but we may have entered a moment of reconstruction or regeneration in which we seek other forms of literary-theoretical knowledge. Does the twenty-first century call for changed paradigms and fresh imaginings of how we study and write about literature? Are there current approaches that have not yet been fully developed, that would richly repay attention? Do new media demand the creation of innovative literary-critical forms? How have local, national, and global changes transformed the way we see literature? What challenging approaches does literary criticism for the twenty-first century require? While imagining new forms of criticism will doubtless require a critique of the old, *PMLA* discourages contributions that describe what is wrong with current critical approaches without setting out new alternatives and urges contributors to illustrate how the approaches they propose might work in practice.

The coordinators of the special topic are Cathy Caruth (Emory Univ.) and Jonathan Culler (Cornell Univ.). The deadline for submissions is 3 November 2008. Manuscripts should be submitted to the Managing Editor, *PMLA*, Modern Language Association, 26 Broadway, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10004-1789. Submissions to *PMLA* must meet the requirements given in the statement of editorial policy, available online and printed in the January, March, May, and October issues of *PMLA*. □

## C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

The *MLA Newsletter* welcomes correspondence from members of the association concerning items in previous issues or matters of professional interest. Writers are asked to limit letters to five hundred words; the editor reserves the right to edit letters that exceed five hundred words.

### To the editor:

Undergraduate foreign language learning is in crisis, with too few students, too few languages, and inadequate linguistic and cultural competence. The Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) is addressing this situation, which we all deplore, in its new Network for Effective Language Learning (NELL). In Michael Holquist's Summer 2007 "President's Column," he argues that NELL is likely to make matters worse because CIC's partner, Drake University, teaches only "Berlitz-like" conversational skills. Unfortunately Holquist has not informed himself about NELL or the Drake program (DULAP) and consequently misrepresents both.

Here are the facts: CIC's NELL initiative introduces the proven DULAP method to teams of faculty and staff members from other colleges. Contrary to Holquist's speculation, every institution that has expressed interest in participating in NELL wants to *increase* foreign language enrollments, not eliminate them. Every one has chosen a team that relies on currently employed foreign language faculty members to adapt the NELL approach to local conditions. Not one of these colleges has said that it wishes to fire faculty members, despite Holquist's incorrect belief that firings are essential to NELL's success.

The DULAP approach relies on intensive on-campus study that departs from the traditional classroom format. Students work with a teaching and coaching team made up of language faculty members, linguists, and native speakers. Substantive course materials are drawn from literature, art, film, historical and political documents, newspapers, and television shows from other countries that are often accessible online. Cultural competency is at the very heart of DULAP but is not limited to literature.

Holquist, who now serves as the MLA's president, fails to acknowledge that the NELL approach is highly compatible with the recommendations of the MLA's Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages ("Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World," [www.mla.org/flreport](http://www.mla.org/flreport)). The MLA committee recognizes that prevailing pedagogies need to change, and I hope its members can persuade their colleagues.

Holquist recalls the period at Drake seven years ago when an ineffective language program with minuscule enrollments was eliminated following extensive review and a vote of the faculty senate. But DULAP, which filled the vacuum, has proven its value over the past six years: language enrollments beyond first-year study are much higher, and more languages are now being learned than before. DULAP brings students to reasonable facility faster than traditional programs do by aligning the learning process with students' actual reasons for learning a language—which are more often instrumental than literary. Holquist also mistakenly refers to NELL as the "Network for Effective Language *Teaching*," rather than its actual name, the Network for Effective Language *Learning*—a mistake that is not trivial because both DULAP and NELL are learner-centered and place at the fore the student's motivation and success.

Only a fraction of the approximately 620 liberal arts colleges in the United States have robust programs in foreign languages. The colleges cited by Holquist are (with one exception) among a minority that are able to offer a full course sequence from introductory to advanced levels in the staples of French, German, and Spanish. For the vast majority of United States colleges, severe attrition after the introductory course means that even fewer courses and languages are offered. As a result, few students ever reach the competency needed to read the literature that Holquist prizes. Most colleges also utilize online resources, seek cost-effective ways to mount study-abroad programs, and appeal to the actual postgraduate aspirations of students, in business and other fields. Of particular interest are the languages and cultures of countries that are likely to play major economic and strategic roles in the future—Chinese, Japanese, and Arabic.

No reasonable person would argue today that a college, unless it can sustain programs in foreign languages that are based mainly on literary study, shouldn't teach languages at all, but Holquist's rhetoric encourages that inference. Today, when two-

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thirds of all United States high school graduates enroll in college, language study should be available to more students than the small number enrolled at colleges with the resources for advanced literary studies. NELL offers a real future for language learners at a wide range of colleges and universities.

Richard Ekman  
President, Council of Independent Colleges

*Reply:*

Richard Ekman feels the good work his organization is doing to encourage language learning in United States colleges and universities has been disparaged by sentiments that were expressed by me in my last "President's Column." His letter essentially makes two complaints. The first is that I get the facts of the case wrong; the second is that my "rhetoric," "speculation," and "inference" are in support of an elitist ideology that seeks to suppress language learning at schools where instruction is not "based mainly on literary study."

The only fact that I got wrong was in rendering the acronym NELL as "Network for Effective Language Teaching" instead of "Network for Effective Language Learning." Ekman makes some heavy weather of this error because in his view it plays down the "learner-centered focus" of the CIC initiative that places "at the fore the student's motivation and success." I, of course, admit the error but dispute its gravity and utterly reject the sinister importance attributed to it by Ekman. In any case, when has *teacher* become a term with negative overtones?

I suspect what really has riled Ekman is the concern I voiced about the provenance of his organization's initiative. NELL is based on and, as far as one can determine from the CIC Web site, administered by representatives from Drake University of Des Moines, Iowa, a particular school in his organization. NELL is the offspring of DULAP, Drake University Language Acquisition Program. As I indicated in my column, DULAP, in turn, has its origin in events going back to the 2001 wholesale firing of the foreign language department at Drake. Apparently turning what must have been a painful experience (to say the least) for all concerned into an opportunity, Drake's Web site today boasts that "[i]nstead of a lone professor at the front of a classroom, DULAP provides a mentorship collective including faculty who are professional language acquisition specialists, native-speaker language partners and research assistants, as well as specialists in language and culture."

So let us assume Ekman's description of what happened at Drake in 2001 is accurate. It is nevertheless the case that in the current description (2007) of DULAP, "specialists in language and culture" are a posterior addition added "as well" to a compendium of "professional language acquisition specialists, native-speaker language partners and research assistants." This is a "mentorship collective" that on the face of it would seem to include few people with the kind of in-depth knowledge of culture to which most parents hope their children will have access when they send them off to college. In any case, as I made clear in the column, "Nothing in the description of the CIC project leads me to believe it endorses the Drake precedent of doing away with language departments in the pursuit of better language teaching."

Ekman and I agree that undergraduate foreign language programs are in a crisis (when were they not?) and that they must evolve to survive. Despite his charge to the contrary, I suggested

there are "several existing programs—many in the CIC—that have pioneered new paths in language instruction."

The whole thrust of my column was to suggest that under current pressures from within and without the academy to speed up and instrumentalize language learning, we must remember that institutions of tertiary education are not trade schools. The title of the essay was "Between Jephthah and Bertoltz." It is the preposition to which I would draw Ekman's attention. We must all seek ways to evolve that do not fall into either of the extremes that lurk in the polarized nature of language itself as it ceaselessly ebbs and flows between extremes of the general and the particular. It is all too easy to conceive communication only as a tool on the one hand or to think of it as the sacred vessel of a unique culture on the other. As several existing programs make clear—and as others are learning—the most successful and sustainable language programs are those that find a way to mediate between the two.

Michael Holquist

*To the editor:*

Michael Holquist's plea for reintegration of language and literature (*MLA Newsletter*, Spring 2007) is well made and indeed might be extended beyond foreign languages and literatures to include English language and literary studies. It is past time for us to progress beyond the attitude of at least one large American doctoral program, whose faculty could not recently agree as to whether the recipient of a BA in English should know the difference between a noun and a verb (*PMLA* 115 [2000]: 2073). J. R. R. Tolkien said it best in his "Valedictory Address to the University of Oxford" (*The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays* by J. R. R. Tolkien, 224–40): "I was born in [South Africa]. . . . But I have the hatred of *apartheid* in my bones; and most of all I detest the segregation or separation of Language and Literature. I do not care which of them you think White."

James I. McNelis III

*To the editor:*

Rosemary Feal's Spring 2006 "Editor's Column" on foreign language requirements and the English PhD cited a report confirming that about half the 118 English PhD programs recently surveyed still require competence in two foreign languages, while about another 45% require competence in one. Writing in the Spring 2007 *MLA Newsletter*, Nina Garrett suggests that much more could be done "[t]o make a foreign language requirement really useful to PhD students in English," and she identifies a number of issues of concern (30–31).

To this discussion I would like to add the following practical suggestion: as long as graduate programs in English continue to require at least some level of reading competence in foreign languages, PhD students ought to be advised to include their specific language skills in the CV. Judging from a recent sample of job applicants from a wide range of PhD-granting departments in a variety of areas of English, I have concluded that PhD students are no longer routinely receiving this advice, which is unfortunate. Listing one or more foreign languages that a scholar can read with some competence and perhaps speak conveys important information about a candidate's intellectual formation and qualifications that many hiring departments and granting agencies continue to value.

R. James Goldstein

## Honorary Members and Fellows

Members are invited to submit nominations for honorary members and fellows of the association. Honorary members are distinguished foreign scholars, and honorary fellows are distinguished men and women of letters of any nationality. The current rosters of honorary members and fellows can be found on pages 983–84 of the September 2007 (Directory) issue of *PMLA*.

Members who would like to recommend honorary members and fellows should refer to the instructions in the September *PMLA* (pp. 978–79) or at the MLA Web site under MLA Prizes and Awards. □

## D E A D L I N E S

### Fellowships and Grants

*The following list includes fellowships and grants that have deadlines between 2 November and 31 December. More specific information, such as eligibility, description of grants, number of grants awarded, and sources for further details, can be found in the September 2007 PMLA, pages 1283–314. The arrangement is chronological, and each date is followed by the major title under which information is listed in the September issue.*

#### NOVEMBER

- 14 American Council of Learned Societies
- 15 American Association of University Women Educational Foundation
- 15 Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, University of Pennsylvania
- 15 Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies of the City University of New York
- 15 Institute for Advanced Study, School of Historical Studies
- 15 Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship at Wesleyan University's Center for the Humanities
- 30 Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies
- 30 University of Michigan Center for Afro-American and African Studies

#### DECEMBER

- early Oregon State University Center for the Humanities
- 1 American Classical League
- 1 American Philosophical Society
- 1 American Printing History Association
- 1 Bibliographical Society of America
- 1 Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies, Princeton University
- 1 Dictionary Society of North America
- 1 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowships
- 1 Romance Writers of America
- 1 Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the New York Public Library
- 1 Sex, Race, and Globalization Project at the University of Arizona
- 1 University of Utah Tanner Humanities Center
- 3 Stanford Humanities Fellows
- 7 Andrew W. Mellon Fellowships in Humanistic Studies
- 12 American Council of Learned Societies
- 15 American Association of University Women Educational Foundation
- 15 Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
- 15 Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation Grants for Venetian Research
- 15 Harvard University's Kathryn W. and Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies
- 15 Huntington Library
- 15 Kosciuszko Foundation
- 15 William Morris Society in the United States
- 19 Andrew W. Mellon Fellowships in Humanistic Studies
- 20 American Association of University Women Educational Foundation
- 31 American Institute for Yemeni Studies
- 31 Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism

### Classified Advertisements

Address all advertisements to MLA Newsletter, MLA, 26 Broadway, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10004-1789. Checks should be made payable to the Modern Language Association. The rate for advertisements is \$3 a word, with a ten-word minimum. Ads must be prepaid. Content and appearance of advertisements are subject to publisher's approval. The publisher does not solicit the items and cannot vouch for their reliability. Members should exercise reasonable judgment in responding to them.

ARTFUL SENTENCES: SYNTAX AS STYLE Virginia Tufte. 308 pages. \$16 postpaid in U.S. Graphics Press LLC. 800 822-2454 or [www.tufte.com](http://www.tufte.com)

Dissertation, article, or book manuscript stalled? Need help reorganizing, editing, proofreading? Experienced editor. [Jsv922@yahoo.it](mailto:Jsv922@yahoo.it) for more details.

Deadline for a \$2000 Kafka Society Prize: October 15, 2007 for the best essay submitted by an emerging scholar on topic "Kafka Now." See [www.kafkasocietyofamerica.org](http://www.kafkasocietyofamerica.org)

#### BOOK NEWS

### Call for Contributions to Approaches Series

For the series *Approaches to Teaching World Literature*, the Publications Committee has approved development of two new titles, *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*, edited by Caroline McCracken-Flesher, and *Approaches to Teaching Coetzee's Disgrace and Other Works*, edited by Elleke Boehmer, Jayne Poyner, and Laura Wright.

If you wish to contribute to either of these volumes, please visit [www.mla.org/approaches](http://www.mla.org/approaches) by 1 November 2007 and follow the link to the relevant title. □

U P C O M I N G M L A D E A D L I N E S

**OCTOBER**

- 1 Deadline for receipt of resolutions to be considered and voted on at the 2007 Delegate Assembly meeting (see MLA constitution, articles 9.C.10 and 11.C.3–5); deadline for receipt of motions to be placed on the agenda of the 2007 Delegate Assembly meeting
- 12 Deadline for receipt of departmental administrators' job listings for the December 2007 *Job Information List*

**NOVEMBER**

- 1 Deadline for applications from advanced graduate students for partial reimbursement for travel to the 2007 convention
- 1 Deadline for applications from non-tenure-track faculty members or unemployed members for partial reimbursement for travel to the 2007 convention
- 1 Deadline for submission of manuscripts for the *PMLA* special topic War

**DECEMBER**

- 1 Preregistration deadline for the 2007 convention
- 9 Deadline for receipt of 2007 convention addresses for "Who's Where"

- 10 Deadline for receipt of MLA election ballots (covering contests for second vice president, Executive Council, Delegate Assembly, and division executive committees)

**JANUARY**

- 5 Deadline for receipt of convention calls for papers for Spring 2008 *Newsletter*
- 11 Deadline for receipt of departmental administrators' job listings for the February 2008 *Job Information List*
- 31 Deadline for receipt of proposals for honorary members and fellows

**MARCH**

- 1 Deadline for submission of books competing for the 2008 James Russell Lowell Prize
- 7 Deadline for receipt of departmental administrators' job listings for the April 2008 *Job Information List*
- 15 Deadline for receipt of forum proposals for the 2008 convention
- 17 Postmark deadline for submissions to *Profession 2008*

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