

MLA Committee on Honors and Awards

Annual Report, 2011–12

The Committee on Honors and Awards oversees the procedures that result in the nomination and determination of those receiving MLA honors and awards and also reviews proposals for new honorary members and fellows. The committee meets annually and examines, at least once every three years, its procedures and the procedures used by its subcommittees. It reports annually to the council indicating the recipients of all honors and awards. It also reports periodically to the council regarding significant changes in procedures or in the nature of honors and awards.

The CHA met at the MLA office on 30 March 2012. Those present were Wendy Allen, Sahar Amer, Santa Arias, Marshall Brown (acting chair), Rita Copeland, and Rubén Gallo as well as MLA staff members Annie Reiser, and Doug Steward. Committee chair Tom Conley was unable to attend, and MLA staff liaison Rosemary G. Feal was present via conference call for a portion of the meeting.

Overview of Prizes

The committee discussed new ways of publicizing the prize competitions, including involving the ADE and ADFL electronic discussion lists and asking the executive director to write a short editorial for the *MLA Newsletter* appealing for submissions. It discussed the low number of submissions for the MLA Prize for a Distinguished Bibliography and suggested changing the prize to incorporate digital works. The committee submitted a proposal for this change to the Executive Council, and the council approved it. The prize will now be called the MLA Prize for a Bibliography, Archive, or Digital Project. The committee discussed the appropriateness of edited collections for publication prizes and recommended that they continue to be eligible for the competitions.

Travel Grants

The committee agreed to a two-year trial period for allowing graduate students at any level, not just those who are ABD, to apply for a travel grant to attend the convention. It discussed the counterproductiveness of students attending the convention before it is necessary but agreed that graduate advisers are in the best position to monitor this and that the MLA should

encourage all types of students to attend. The committee will review the policy after two years to consider the impact of the change.

Honorable Mentions and Cowinners

The committee reviewed the history of honorable mentions and cowinners and the Executive Council's past directives. The committee's preference is not to limit selection committees to a fixed number of honorable mentions or cowinners for each prize. It would like selection committees to feel free to recognize and honor works regardless of the number of entries in a category. The committee recommended to the council the adoption of a policy stating that honorable mentions and cowinners not be avoided but considered very carefully by selection committees. At its May meeting, the council accepted the committee's recommendation against setting limits on the number of cowinners or honorable mentions.

Honorary Members and Fellows

The committee discussed the low number of nominations for honorary members and fellows received in recent years. It recommended paring down the nomination process and charged itself with making a small number of nominations each year. The Executive Council agreed to limit the material required for making a nomination.

New Prize in Native Literatures

The committee received authorization from the Executive Council to implement a new biennial prize in the study of Native American literature. The council also forwarded a draft prize description to the committee. After consulting with the coordinator of governance about some possible revisions to the council's draft description and prize title, the committee finalized the prize title and description. Prize committee members will be appointed in 2013, and the first competition will be held in 2014.

Appointments to Selection Committees

The committee appointed 8 members to 2012 committees and 17 members to 2013 committees. It appointed 14 current committee members to serve as chairs in 2013.

Date for Next Meeting

The date for next year's meeting is 1 March 2013.