In 2015, under the leadership of the Executive Council, the MLA began the major activities associated with Connected Academics, a multiyear project to rethink doctoral education and to provide leadership on careers beyond the college classroom. The twenty-third study of enrollments in languages other than English in United States institutions of higher education was released, and the beta version of Commons Open Repository Exchange was launched. The annual convention was held in Vancouver, the first time the MLA returned to Canada since 1997.

In the fiscal year 2014–15, a deficit of $843,360 in the unrestricted and restricted funds resulted from the deferral of publication of the eighth edition of the MLA Handbook, lower-than-expected revenue for the MLA International Bibliography, and expenses related to the relocation of the headquarters office from 26 Broadway to 85 Broad Street.

The first ten sections of this report discuss the activities of the MLA in 2015. The eleventh and last section lists the actions taken by the 2015 Delegate Assembly and indicates what has been done to implement those actions.

Special Projects in 2015

Connected Academics: Broadening the Career Horizons of PhDs

Supported by a generous grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, this project seeks to expand the career horizons customarily presented in language and literature doctoral programs. Broadening employment opportunities for PhDs is one aspect of a larger mission: to evaluate current approaches to graduate education and the doctoral dissertation and to recommend desirable shifts in academic preparation so that PhDs today receive adequate professional development opportunities for the variety of careers that humanists pursue.

The preparatory phase of the project, which began in late 2012 and continued through the middle of this year, was conducted by the American Historical Association and the MLA. The two organizations tailored the project to specific disciplinary cultures, employment markets, and intellectual orientations but shared research, ideas, and a general framework and on occasion convened jointly.

The primary phase of Connected Academics launched this year. The MLA is working with three institutional partners on projects that will help faculty members and students explore programmatic changes and a broad range of career opportunities. The partners—Arizona State University, Georgetown University, and the University of California Humanities Research Institute—are implementing recommendations of the MLA Task Force on Doctoral Study in Modern Language and Literature that support career diversity for language and literature doctoral students and graduates. We launched a public MLA Commons site, https://connect.commons.mla.org/, to report on grant activities and make materials available. The site features blog posts, career advice, resources, news, and a promotional video for Connected Academics.
Working locally to influence doctoral education, the MLA staff organized the first of three year-long proseminars for doctoral students, recent graduates, and PhD-holding adjuncts from universities in the New York City area. The proseminar focuses on career horizons for PhDs in modern languages and literatures, in and outside the academy; long- and short-term prospects for adjunct positions; and the versatility and reach of humanities research. Participants, who receive $2,000 stipends to support their involvement, attend workshops to develop skills and strategies for pursuing connected careers and conduct site visits and informational interviews at units in local academic institutions and in not-for-profit organizations, foundations, and other organizations that have a need for the skills acquired in PhD programs. Applications for the 2015–16 proseminar were solicited from New York City–area doctoral programs; from 245 applications we selected twenty doctoral students and recent PhDs from English, foreign language, and comparative literature programs at eleven universities. Participants were interviewed about their graduate program experience, career expectations, and career goals to establish a basis for comparison for the exit interviews that will be conducted at the end of the proseminar.

We have arranged two sessions for the 2016 MLA convention—A Showcase of PhD Career Diversity and Expanding Career Possibilities for PhDs—to highlight careers of PhD recipients who have put their advanced degrees in the humanities to work in a variety of rewarding occupations. Presenters will be available at individual stations for one-on-one discussions about their jobs and the career paths that led to them. Presenters include university employees in a variety of nonfaculty positions—including an associate director of principal gifts, a deputy director of a research initiative, and a director of career development—as well as a program officer at the National Endowment for the Humanities, a director of a university press, high school teachers in English and foreign languages, a content creator for Twitter, a freelance translator and novelist, a director of a learned society, an independent library consultant, a managing editor of online communications and director of information systems at a scholarly association, a director of grants at a state humanities organization, an archivist at a public policy think tank, an associate at a research institute serving the not-for-profit sector, an analyst at a publishing and media company, and a recent PhD recipient working in a for-profit design and development shop for digital media.

A job search workshop for graduate students and others interested in pursuing new career options beyond the classroom or the academy will be conducted at the 2016 MLA convention. Run by directors of career development at the Graduate Center, City University of New York, and at Claremont Graduate University, the workshop will focus on practical strategies for conducting such a job search—preparing application materials, networking, and negotiating an offer. At the convention, job seekers will also be able to meet with experienced department chairs, career counselors, or PhDs employed outside the academy for twenty-five-minute one-on-one sessions to discuss their job search and career options and to review their application materials.

Planning has also begun for the first Connected Academics institute, to be hosted by the University of California Humanities Research Institute in August 2016, which will bring representatives from the partner institutions together with outside experts to collaborate on concrete strategies for helping doctoral students broaden their career horizons and to develop resources to effect tangible, systemic change in doctoral education.

David Laurence and I serve as staff liaisons for this project. Stephen Olsen, Nicky Agate, and Stacy Hartman coordinate program activities.
The MLA Archive

In 2013 the Executive Council asked the staff to implement a work plan for an MLA archive. Under the direction of Barbara Chen, an archival consultant from the Brooklyn Historical Society and the Pratt Institute and a student archivist from St. John’s University have created an archiving plan and have been surveying and organizing the MLA’s books, documents, and other materials. The first phase of the archival project focused on organizing publications, reducing damage to poorly stored items, and enabling easy accessibility to the collections both physically and digitally. This phase is nearly complete. The archivist has physically organized many records, has placed fragile material in archival folders and boxes, and has used Omeka (a cataloging system used by many universities and museums) to create basic metadata for over 3,500 individual items and collections that will be included in an online database. She has digitized and labeled archival photographs of executive directors and presidents; artifacts relating to the founding history of the association, the World Wars, and the Great Depression; and correspondence with renowned writers. She supported intensive weeding of the archival collection and of documents held by all MLA departments in preparation for successful migration of the 132-year-old collection to the new office. She also created notes on future organization, conservation, and storage suggestions. The second phase of the project includes assessment of departmental collections, more digitization and metadata creation, sorting out stored materials in accordance with the MLA’s document-retention policy, and completion of the online catalog.

Language Consultancy

Begun in 2010 as a project overseen by a working group of the Executive Council, the Language Consultancy provides assistance to language departments that seek to implement recommendations from the 2007 report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages. Workshops held at the 2012 and 2013 conventions allowed the working group to identify the necessary components of a successful language consultancy service. The project took another step in 2012, when the council established the joint MLA-ADFL Steering Committee on New Structures for Languages in Higher Education (SCNSL), and charged it with developing a formal plan for a consultancy service that has been administered by the ADFL Executive Committee since 1 July 2014.

During the 2014–15 academic year, faculty experts, identified and trained by members of the SCNSL and the ADFL staff, served as consultants for the Departments of French and Italian at Dickinson College, the Department of Modern and Classical Languages at Allegheny College, the Department of International Languages at Nazareth College, the Department of International Languages at St. Mary’s College of Maryland, the Department of Modern Languages at Caldwell University, the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures at Slippery Rock University, and the Department of Modern Languages at Metropolitan State University of Denver. The consultancy is developing a series of online resources to showcase good work that departments are doing and to provide informational materials that departments may find useful for revising practices. We continue to project approximately one consultancy per month in 2015–16.

Office of Scholarly Communication

The Office of Scholarly Communication, recently reorganized following Judy Goulding’s retirement as director of MLA publishing operations, is responsible for the development of the association’s major print and electronic publications, including PMLA, book publications, material
for *MLA Commons*, and other scholarly communication initiatives. In addition, the editing of all association publications and communications is housed within the office. The office is directed by Kathleen Fitzpatrick, who serves as managing editor of MLA publications and as associate executive director.

**PMLA**

The 130th volume of *PMLA* is covered in detail in Simon Gikandi’s report (see Annex No. 14). The volume includes twenty-seven regular essays. The special features Criticism in Translation and Little-Known Documents are both represented in the volume and continue to draw many submissions from members. Shorter, commissioned essays appear in every issue under one or more of the rubrics Theories and Methodologies, The Changing Profession, and Correspondents at Large. The Forum section in the volume comprises four letters to the editor and two replies from authors.

Beginning with this volume, the convention program, formerly the November issue of *PMLA*, became the September issue and was published before the October issue. The print version of the convention program was mailed in mid-November; it became available on the MLA Web site on 23 September. The mobile version will be available in December.

**Book Publications**

The association’s book publications program continues to publish a diverse set of peer-reviewed books. To support teaching and scholarship in the modern languages and literatures, the MLA publishes reference works, collections of scholarly articles, guides to teaching, materials suitable for instruction in foreign languages and English composition, and classroom editions of familiar and lesser-known texts from around the world in their original language and in English translation. The association maintains a backlist of nearly 300 titles, and book sales remain an important source of revenue. The MLA expects to publish seven new titles in its established book series in 2015. New books in the Approaches to Teaching series address the work of Miguel de Cervantes, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Jack London. In the Options for Teaching series, new volumes focus on the Latin American Boom and on human rights in literary and cultural studies. One nonseries book, on service learning and literary studies in English, was published this year. The book program has begun active outreach to expand its list in rhetoric and composition and continues to pursue books on works in non-European languages, including Arabic, Chinese, Classical Persian, and Japanese. The staff is pursuing projects in Korean for the Texts and Translations series with the help of the editorial board appointed by the Publications Committee for a four-year term (2014–17). The book publications program continues to experiment with using *MLA Commons* as a venue for the open development of new titles while producing rigorously reviewed publications in print and digital formats.

This year’s new titles are as follows:

Brandt, Kenneth K., and Jeanne Campbell Reesman, eds. *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Jack London*

Brayman Hackel, Heidi, and Ian Frederick Moulton, eds. *Teaching Early Modern English Literature from the Archives*
Donovan, Leslie, ed. *Approaches to Teaching Tolkien’s The Lord of the Rings and Other Works*

Grobman, Laurie, and Roberta Rosenberg, eds. *Service Learning and Literary Studies in English*

Kerr, Lucille, and Alejandro Herrero-Olaizola, eds. *Teaching the Latin American Boom*

Moore, Alexandra Schultheis, and Elizabeth Swanson Goldberg, eds. *Teaching Human Rights in Literary and Cultural Studies*

Parr, James A., and Lisa Vollendorf, eds. *Approaches to Teaching Cervantes’s Don Quixote*. 2nd ed.

In addition to these titles, twelve titles are accepted and in preparation for publication; approximately eighty-five new projects are in development.

Staff members in the Office of Scholarly Communication continue their work developing and editing the eighth edition of the *MLA Handbook*, slated for publication in spring 2016. Preparations are also under way to create online resources to support the use of MLA style.

**MLA Commons**

*MLA Commons* has flourished since its launch at the 2013 convention in Boston. In the past year, *Commons* membership has increased by 17%, to almost a quarter of the total MLA membership. If we compare September 2015 to September 2014, we have seen a 21% increase in the total number of visitors, a 35% increase in the total number of visits, a 55% increase in the total number of page views, and a 49% increase in the average length of time a user spends on the *Commons*. *Commons* members are joining groups, participating in discussions, depositing and sharing their work, developing book projects, creating companion sites to accompany print publications, and generally helping shape the association’s future. MLA staff members are working on a more intuitive interface that immediately connects users with the information they need and are continuing to identify ways to improve and enhance the user experience.

The MLA is also making active use of the *Commons* as a publishing platform. In addition to hosting News from the MLA, the *Commons* features blogs that include regular updates from the Executive Council, the president, the executive director, the Office of Research, and the *MLA International Bibliography*. All committees are being actively encouraged to highlight their work and to use the specially designed sites available to them to provide resources and, where relevant, mentorship to their constituencies. *Profession* is now published on a rolling basis on the *Commons*. In addition, several prospective MLA books—including volumes on modernist women’s writing, anglophone South Asian women writers, and teaching space, place, and literature—are or will be using the *Commons* to foster their development. A new community magazine, the *Wire*, showcases how members are using the platform to promote convention sessions and publications, host reading groups, and showcase the public value of their work. In the coming months, the *Commons* will also host a site devoted to resources on MLA style and an interactive companion site for *PMLA*.
The book publications program continues to use *MLA Commons* as a platform for publishing books and is working on further iterations of the publicly available *Literary Studies in the Digital Age*, edited by Kenneth M. Price and Ray Siemens, as well as the open-access *Digital Pedagogies in the Humanities: A Reader and Toolkit*, edited by Matthew Gold, Rebecca Davis, Jentery Sayers, and Katherine Harris.

In early May 2015, the MLA released the beta version of *Commons Open Repository Exchange (CORE)*, a new social repository for members. *CORE* combines a library-quality repository for sharing, discovering, retrieving, and archiving scholarly work with the social networking capabilities of *MLA Commons*. Deposits so far number fifty-five articles, eighteen book chapters, seven essays, six conference papers, four dissertations, four presentations, four syllabi and a learning object, three books, three theses, two bibliographies, two white papers, and one set of conference proceedings. Every item has been shared with at least one MLA forum, and most have been shared with more than one group. Some items deposited during Open Access forum and in the initial days of the prototype’s release have been viewed over three hundred times and downloaded by more than seventy people. Development of *CORE* continues; we will seek additional grant aid to take it to the next stage.

The office has just announced a new project, *Humanities Commons*, funded by a generous grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. This collaboration between the MLA and three other scholarly societies—the College Art Association, the Association for Jewish Studies, and the Association for Slavic, Eastern European, and Eurasian Studies—is the pilot for a federated network of sites hosted by the MLA and designed to foster interdisciplinary communication.

**Editorial Activities**

The Office of Scholarly Communication edits the full range of association publications and communications, including membership and promotional materials, print books and e-books, *PMLA*, the *Literary Research Guide*, the *ADE Bulletin*, the *ADFL Bulletin, Profession*, the *Job Information List* and related reports, the *MLA Newsletter*, material for the MLA Web site and *MLA Commons*, and reports from the Office of Research and the Office of Programs—most notably, this year, the twenty-third study of enrollments in languages other than English in United States institutions of higher education.

**MLA International Bibliography**

Barbara Chen is editor of the *MLA International Bibliography* and director of Bibliographic Information Services. The *MLA International Bibliography* continues to be available as a subscription database through three vendors: EBSCO, ProQuest, and Cengage (Gale). Sales results for the fiscal year 2014–15 fell short of our expectations; we are analyzing sales patterns to determine the effects of consortial arrangements, delayed subscription renewals, and a strengthening American dollar. The *Bibliography* is also available through four discovery services: Worldcat Local (OCLC), EBSCO Discovery Service, Primo Central (ExLibris), and Summon (Serials Solution). Inclusion of the bibliography on these platforms provides greater exposure to *Bibliography* records, especially for undergraduates.

MLA staff members and 76 scholar-bibliographers from the field (21 distinguished bibliographers, 9 senior bibliographers, 44 bibliographers, and 2 assistant bibliographers) indexed
print and electronic publications for the 2014 file. In the past year, 11 new field bibliographers participated in an online training program to introduce them to Bibliography rules and procedures.

The 2014 Bibliography file closed with a total of 75,511 records. Changes in production for 2015 led to a significant decrease in processing time and therefore quicker access to material for customers. The first 2015 file was sent to vendors in early February; the file included more than 10,000 current citations. Another workflow modification took place in July 2015. Revisions to retrospective records are being sent to vendors with each update instead of semiannually. This change means faster availability of corrections, full text links, and abstracts.

With the April 2015 retrospective update, over 68,000 publisher-provided abstracts were made available to our electronic subscribers. The number of Bibliography records containing full-text links continues to grow; in April, they represented 14.6% of the total number of over 2.6 million citations. License agreements continue to allow for further expansion of the number of full-text links and abstracts in the database. Libraries that have the necessary subscriptions are able to give their users seamless access to full text. The Bibliography now includes over 355,000 digital object identifiers. In addition, there are now links to over 59,000 Project Muse articles, over 74,000 online dissertations deposited in ProQuest’s Dissertations and Theses database, and over 140,000 JSTOR articles.

MLA Biblink was introduced in June 2015 as a result of our partnership with ORCID, a not-for-profit organization that provides unique digital identifiers to researchers, who can then distinguish themselves from others with similar names. Scholars can easily search the MLA International Bibliography for their works, including those published under variant names, and, with one click, add them to their ORCID profiles. A tutorial, Building Your Scholarly Identity with the MLA International Bibliography and ORCID, was created to guide scholars on the process.

The Directory of Periodicals, available at the MLA Web site as a benefit of membership, includes 5,015 active titles (6,984 total), 542 of which are electronic journals. Members also have access to over 2,000 Web sites indexed in the Bibliography.

Since July 2013, when the first two online tutorials on searching the MLA Bibliography were introduced through the MLA Web site, the Bibliography’s Facebook page, and MLA Commons, the number of tutorials has grown. Twenty are now available to users on topics ranging from Scope: What’s in the MLA International Bibliography? And How to Be Included! and Researching Rhetoric and Composition in the MLA International Bibliography. What is the MLA International Bibliography? is currently being translated into eleven languages; to date Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian translations have been released. French and German translations are in production. We plan to create more tutorials in 2016.

The twelfth group of Bibliography fellows was appointed in April, and new fellows received online training during the summer. The 2011 class of fellows completed the fellowship requirements and were recognized during the awards ceremony at the 2015 MLA convention in Vancouver.
Office of Outreach

The Office of Outreach was created in 2015 to focus on increasing the MLA’s reach and impact. Siovahn Walker, the director of the new office, works in cooperation with other MLA offices and independently to promote and coordinate a unified communications and outreach strategy designed to increase membership, convention attendance, sales, and donations. The office comprises three units: convention programs, headed by Karin Bagnall; promotion and sales, headed by Kathleen Hansen; and communications, headed by Anna Chang.

MLA Convention

Karin Bagnall plans for and organizes the MLA’s annual convention and other association conferences. She reports that the final count of attendees at the 2015 convention in Vancouver was 5,710. Of this number, 1,354 (23.7%) were graduate students and 90 (1.6%) were emeritus members. The convention program broke down as follows: 269 special sessions, linked sessions, and plenaries organized by members (including the presidential plenary and its linked sessions); 277 division and discussion group sessions, 50 MLA committee sessions, 2 American Literature Section sessions, and 158 allied organization sessions (97 of these 487 sessions were nonguaranteed sessions that the Program Committee approved); and 29 special events (including creative conversations) and social events.

As of 20 October, 3,341 people had registered for the Austin convention. (Last year at this time, there were 383 more registrants.) General information about the convention is available at the MLA Web site, along with convention registration and housing reservation forms. Travel arrangements can also be made through the MLA Web site. To date, 96% of registrants have registered at the MLA Web site; 4% have chosen to mail in their forms. Approximately 67% of the registrants are regular members, 18% are student members, 5% are unemployed members or members employed part-time, 4% are members residing outside the United States and Canada, and 3% are emeritus members. The remaining registrants (3%) are nonmembers.

Members were given priority discounted access to convention registration through the MLA Web site. Many members took advantage of this service: 2,705 members (10% of the total membership) registered at the Web site during the early registration period (prior to 2 October). Thus far 97 exhibit booths have been sold, which is 1 fewer than last year at this time. The convention program was mailed in mid-November and became available at the MLA Web site on 23 September.

The 2017 MLA Annual Convention will be held from 5 through 8 January in Philadelphia. Members may submit 2017 calls for papers through the MLA Web site until 28 February 2016. The submission system posts calls for papers as members submit them online.

Honors and Awards

Each year at the convention, the association recognizes outstanding achievements in scholarship. The 2015 publication prizes that we plan to award at the January 2016 convention number fifteen, including the William Riley Parker Prize for an outstanding essay in PMLA. A total of 580 titles competed for publication prizes this year. Two hundred eight (35.9%) of these titles competed for either the James Russell Lowell Prize or the MLA Prize for a First Book. Seventy-one
(12.2%) competed for the Lois Roth Award for a translation of a literary work. The number of publications that competed for the remainder of the awards was 301 (51.9).

The awards ceremony at the January 2015 convention was the occasion for the presentation of the seventh MLA Award for Lifetime Scholarly Achievement to Rolena Adorno, Sterling Professor of Spanish at Yale University. Adorno was recognized for her scholarship on colonial Spanish American literary and cultural history. During the award presentation, Margaret Ferguson, the 2014–15 MLA president, noted that Adorno is widely credited with redefining and revitalizing the field of Latin American colonial studies, which she has examined in its fundamental relation to Spanish literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and in its foundational role in the development of the modern Latin American literary tradition.

Graduate Student Travel Grants are available each year for travel to the convention. The association allocated funds for up to 300 awards in 2015. We received 310 applications for the January 2015 convention; all of the applicants were eligible. (The number of eligible applicants for 2015 convention grants was up 6.5% from the previous year.) Of the eligible applicants, 251 attended the convention and received grants.

Travel Grants for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Members or Unemployed Members are also available; the association allocated funds for up to 70 awards in 2015. We received 88 applications for the January 2014 convention; 87 of the applicants were eligible. Since 19 applicants did not attend the convention, we awarded a total of 68 grants.

Regular and life members who reside outside the United States and Canada and who planned to attend the 2015 convention could apply for a third type of travel grant. We received 23 applications, and all applicants were eligible. Fifteen of the eligible applicants received grants; 8 did not attend the convention.

**Profession**

*Profession*, the association’s journal about professional issues related to the fields of modern languages and literatures, moved to an exclusively electronic format in 2013 and published articles on a rolling basis on MLA Commons in 2014. An e-book of the 2014 articles will be made available for downloading at no charge. The executive director serves as editor; Anna Chang is managing editor.

The 2014 volume was launched with pieces by Diane Ravitch, Gerald Graff, and Catharine R. Stimpson, who write about the new Common Core State Standards and their anticipated effect on primary and secondary education and, by extension, students’ preparation for college. Also included in the volume are essays from Marianne Hirsch’s 2014 Presidential Forum and its linked sessions, which focus on the theme Vulnerable Times. Examining events from recent and less recent history—and from across the globe—the forum participants (Ariella Azoulay, Judith Butler, David L. Eng, Rob Nixon, and Diana Taylor) reexamine the notion of vulnerability to assert the possibility for forms of resistance that can stem from it. Introduced by Susan Rubin Suleiman, the cluster “Trauma, Memory, Vulnerability” looks at how vulnerability can shed light on trauma and memory studies in a global context. It features essays by Andreas Huyssen, Ananya Jahanara Kabir, María José Contreras Lorenzini, and Michael Rothberg. In the cluster on the politics of language in vulnerable times, Suresh Canagarajah; Mary Louise Pratt; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak; and
Guadalupe Valdés, Luis Poza, and Maneka Deanna Brooks consider the vulnerability of languages—and of language itself—in an era of globalization. Finally, in essays from a session on the public humanities, Matti Bunzl, James Chandler, Julie Ellison, Farah Jasmine Griffin, Jean Howard, and Laura Wexler ask what the term public humanities means and consider how scholars can create a public face for the humanities in vulnerable times. The final essay of the volume is Per Urlaub’s “A New Brecht for LA: Public Scholarship through Technology in Project-Based Graduate Education,” which examines a graduate course in German at the University of Texas, Austin, in the context of efforts to reform doctoral studies.

In 2014 Profession received twenty unsolicited submissions. The Profession Editorial Collective reviews submissions and a staff editorial collective assists the editor in evaluating reviews and selecting articles for publication.

Promotion
Our continuing efforts to promote the MLA International Bibliography have included a more visible presence at librarians’ conferences. We exhibited at the Charleston Conference for reference librarians in November 2015, and we are planning to exhibit at the American Library Association convention in July 2016. We advertise the bibliography in publications and on Web sites targeted to librarians (including Choice, Against the Grain, and Library Journal). We regularly promote the tutorial videos we have produced in advertising and on the Bibliography’s YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter pages.

To promote our book publications, we mailed two catalogs in 2015: a members’ catalog and a catalog for bookstores and libraries. The members’ catalog is sent to thirty thousand addresses, and the bookstore catalog is sent to approximately fifteen thousand recipients. We advertise MLA books in over one hundred publications and Web sites annually. Additional efforts to stimulate book sales in 2015 included a special sale on Approaches to Teaching World Literature titles and e-mail campaigns to specific MLA forums. We work with authors on promotions of their titles and contract with Scholar’s Choice to exhibit MLA titles at targeted scholarly meetings throughout the year. We also send review copies of each title to scholarly journals and other publications.

Office of Information Systems
The newly created Office of Information Systems (IS) is headed by Micki Kaufman and comprises the information technology (IT) and production groups. The office is responsible for establishing the MLA’s technology strategy and vision, ensuring the successful and efficient technical operations of all association networks and systems, data management and analytics, software development and maintenance of new and existing online sites and products, and the production of our online and print publications. This year the office has focused on managing the technical aspects of the headquarters move to a new office facility and hosting provider; the upgrading and integration of telephone, videoconferencing, and server systems; the production of the new MLA.org Web site; the evaluation of a number of new technology platforms for the Bibliography and of customer relationship management and other software; and new or continuing...
development of the *Commons Open Repository Exchange (CORE)*, *MLA Commons*, and the *MLA International Bibliography*.

**The Move to 85 Broad Street**

The MLA’s move to 85 Broad Street involved extensive preparation. The physical move of printers, monitors, and PCs (including all MLA servers, Web sites, and workstations) was completed during the weekend of 12 July, and all systems were up and running for the start of business on Monday. We also installed new routers, switches, wireless networks, and videoconferencing and other technology infrastructure. Simultaneously, our server farm was moved to CoreSite, an off-site data center service provider located in Secaucus, NJ. This move allows the MLA to take advantage of superior data center infrastructure (environment control, fire suppression systems, redundant power source, around-the-clock physical security) while maintaining control over our servers. It has the added benefit of reducing the space, power, and cooling needs for the server room at the new office location, which is connected to CoreSite via a dedicated, point-to-point fiber-optic line. We also configured virtual private networks (VPNs) at 85 Broad Street and CoreSite that allow MLA staff members to connect to our network from anywhere.

**A New MLA Online Presence**

The development and design of and migration to a new platform for the MLA’s main Web site have been a major focus of the office. The redesigned MLA Web site was launched in late October; at the same time, new sites replaced the original ones at ade.org and adfl.org. Most old content is being migrated onto the new platform, with selected functionality remaining on a redesigned legacy platform during a transitional period expected to last through the end of the 2015–16 fiscal year. Some functions from the original Web site that are not yet migrated include convention registration, ballots, the online program, and the *JIL*. Important features migrated to the new platform include join/renew, MyMLA, the bookstore, and the ADE and ADFL bulletins.

**Work on the Bibliography**

In collaboration with Bibliographic Information Services and the production unit, the IT staff has implemented a host of new innovations to enhance the *MLA Bibliography*. We have introduced a new search mechanism to enable scholars to use the *Bibliography* to search for works they have authored and add their ORCID identifiers. The work is then saved in the ORCID record, and the ORCID identifier is saved in the *Bibliography* record. Approximately 4,500 unique ORCID identifiers have been saved in *Bibliography* records since the system went live in June 2015. In addition, users can view their ORCID information on *MLA Commons*. The bibliography system has also been upgraded to provide data imports and exports in RIS file format, a standardized tag format for expressing bibliographic citations. This upgrade allows MLA staff indexers to download EBSCO’s metadata in RIS format into our citations database. With minor revision, the same scripts and setup can be reused to process other publishers’ RIS data.

**Production**

The production staff worked on the eight books scheduled for publication in print and e-book formats in 2015 and on thirteen other book projects that are in various stages of production, including two online publications on *MLA Commons: Digital Pedagogy* and *Literary Studies in the Digital Age*. 
Office of Research

David Laurence oversees the Office of Research, which administers the *Job Information List (JIL)* and supports the association’s data-collection projects, including the annual tabulation and analysis of the number of ads departments posted to the list and the number of jobs JIL ads announced. The office maintains a blog on *MLA Commons* called *The Trend*, which provides a platform for brief reports on the office’s data-analysis projects and for commentary from members. Longer reports, such as the annual report on the *JIL*, are published on the MLA Web site.

The report on jobs in the 2014–15 *JIL* is in preparation. After modest increases in 2010–11 and 2011–12, the number of jobs advertised declined for the third year in a row. The *JIL*’s English edition announced 1,015 jobs, 31 (3.0%) fewer than in 2013–14; the foreign language edition announced 949 jobs, 78 (7.6%) fewer than in 2013–14. The 2014–15 totals are 811 (44.4%) below and 731 (43.5%) below the 2007–08 prerecession peaks of 1,826 jobs for the English edition and 1,680 jobs for the foreign language edition, respectively.

In September 2013, access to search the *JIL* database became free of charge to all users. A new, unified search interface, also introduced in 2013, allows job seekers to retrieve listings from both editions of the *JIL* (previously, the English edition and the foreign language edition had separate search interfaces). MLA members use their member log-in credentials to reach the search interface; nonmembers create free accounts.

This past year marked the third in which both MLA members and nonmembers can sign up for free Interfolio Dossier accounts when they apply to positions from ads placed in the *JIL*. The agreement also provides departments that place ads the option to adopt Interfolio’s ByCommittee platform to manage their job searches. Within the *JIL*–Interfolio Dossier and ByCommittee system, all candidate materials—letters of application, dossiers and letters of recommendation, and writing samples—move freely from candidates’ dossier accounts to departments’ ByCommittee accounts, which makes applying for positions from ads in the *JIL* cost-free for candidates.

Complicating this arrangement is the widespread adoption by institutions of applicant tracking systems (ATS) like PeopleAdmin and PeopleSoft, which require candidates to transmit application materials to a Web portal administered by an institutional office of human resources. Essentially, an ATS-based application system requires candidates to build a new dossier at every institution where they apply instead of transmitting a dossier from a central service like Interfolio. This past year 57.8% of the ads placed in the *JIL* required candidates to apply through an institutional ATS. ByCommittee was called for in 21.8% of ads. The remaining ads asked candidates to transmit applications to a departmental e-mail address (15.7%) or to send them by surface mail (4.7%).

The Office of Research annually develops information from the United States government’s Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) about trends in the number of doctoral degree recipients in English and other modern languages and trends in time-to-degree and graduates’ postgraduation plans across the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. The office also tracks information from the degree completions and human resources components of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) to analyze trends in bachelor’s degrees and the distribution and changing balance of full- and part-time, tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure-track faculty...
appointments in United States postsecondary institutions. The most recent IPEDS completions and human resources data cover the academic year 2012–13.

The MLA also conducts its own survey research, notably the periodic surveys of doctoral student placement (the most recent in the series covered graduates who received degrees in 2009–10), of foreign language enrollments, and of departmental staffing. In February, the report on fall 2013 language enrollments was published on the MLA Web site. The survey achieved better than a 98% response rate and can be regarded as a census of fall 2013 enrollments in language courses in United States postsecondary education. The fall 2013 enrollment data were added to the online historical database containing data from the twenty-two surveys conducted between 1958 and 2009. Between 1 January and 25 September 2015, 3,163 visitors performed more than 8,200 searches on the MLA’s Language Enrollment Database.

In spring 2015 the office fielded a staffing survey to 4,714 departments in 2,912 separate institutions; 737 departments in 583 institutions responded. In addition to asking for department-level head counts of faculty members in different tenure and employment statuses, the staffing survey tracks where in the curriculum these different categories of faculty members teach and seeks information about the average annual salary of full-time non-tenure-track faculty members and the average per-course salary for part-time faculty members paid by the course.

This past year the office also canvassed departments about their hiring plans and processes, how videoconferencing and teleconferencing technologies are changing their use of the MLA convention for screening interviews, and how they see the role of the convention in the job search. Results were brought to the ADE and ADFL summer seminars for discussion.

With support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the office collaborated on developing 2015 MLA convention and 2015 ADE and ADFL summer seminar programming aimed at broadening the career horizons of doctoral students and encouraging doctoral programs to give increased attention to career planning and placement for current students and recent graduates (see the section on special projects, above). As part of this project, the office developed findings from its research on the current employment of 2,500 graduates of modern language doctoral programs who received degrees between 1996 and 2011. The 2,500 were randomly selected from Dissertation Abstracts records in the MLA International Bibliography. In February a report on this research was posted on The Trend under the title “Where Are They Now? Occupations of 1996–2011 PhDs in 2013.” In collaboration with the American Historical Association (AHA), we plan to survey PhDs in our fields to learn more about their career paths and progress since leaving graduate school, with a special focus on the subset of graduates who have established careers outside of postsecondary teaching.

In 2014–15 the office was represented at the annual meetings of the National Council of Teachers of English, the Conference on College Composition and Communication, and the AHA. For the AHA annual meeting the office organized a panel on student writing and issues surrounding creating assignments and reading and commenting on the papers students submit.
Office of Programs

The Office of Programs, directed by Dennis Looney, oversees activities in the fields of English and foreign languages and the projects of the ADE and the ADFL.

The office curates the MLA Language Map and the MLA Language Map Data Center, which continue to serve many visitors. Between 1 January and 25 September 2015, tracking software recorded 11,629 visitors to the map and 10,886 visitors to the data center. The average visitor to the Language Map called up 4.02 maps. The most frequently sought maps displayed the distribution of speakers of Spanish, English, German, Chinese, all languages other than English combined, French, Italian, and Arabic. The state maps most frequently requested were for California, Washington, Texas, Pennsylvania, and New York. In all, 46,767 maps were requested. Visitors to the Language Map Data Center performed over 61,637 searches. The Language Map also displays the locations of and enrollments in college and university programs in the languages the user is researching by using data from the fall 2013 enrollment survey, which were added to the map following the publication of the 2013 survey report.

The office makes available at no cost two brochures in PDF format that can be downloaded from the MLA Web site: Why Learn Another Language? Knowing Other Languages Brings Opportunities, designed primarily for secondary schools, and Foreign Language Study in the Age of Globalization: The College-Level Experience.

Staff members represented the MLA at meetings of the Midwest MLA, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, the Foreign Language Standards Collaborative Board, the Joint National Committee for Languages, the American Association of Italian Studies, the College Language Association, and the American Studies Association.

ADE and ADFL

In the year ending August 2015, the ADE, directed by David Laurence, had 663 member departments (compared with 684 in 2013–14 and 719 in 2012–13); the ADFL, directed by Dennis Looney, had 813 member departments (compared with 853 in 2013–14 and 868 in 2012–13). The ADE and the ADFL now have a common dues structure and schedule, with dues based on the size of departments’ faculties. Since it allows multiple departments to renew their ADE and ADFL memberships together, the common dues structure encourages departmental collaboration and institution-wide participation in the ADE and the ADFL while preserving the individual department as the unit of membership in each organization. ADE and ADFL membership provides communal support for graduate students’ and other job seekers’ free access to search the MLA Job Information List. Membership in the ADE or the ADFL, however, is no longer required for a department to provide JIL access to its own faculty members and students.

The ADE and the ADFL sponsor sessions at the MLA Annual Convention to aid job candidates and hiring committees. Neal Lester received the ADE Francis Andrew March Award and Olga Kagan received the ADFL Award for Distinguished Service to the Profession at the convention in Vancouver.

The ADE and ADFL summer seminars provide opportunities for department chairs, directors of graduate studies, and others with departmental administrative responsibilities to
exchange information, form networks for professional support, gain wider perspective on issues confronting their departments’ graduate and undergraduate programs, and participate in professional development workshops for departmental administrators. In 2015, the ADE and the ADFL held a joint summer seminar in Arlington, Virginia. It was hosted by George Mason University and the University of Maryland and attracted 136 participants. ADE Seminar South, cohosted in Kansas City, Missouri, by the English departments at Kansas State University and the University of Missouri, attracted 87 participants. ADFL Seminar West was hosted jointly by San José State University and Santa Clara University and attracted 55 participants. Each of the three meetings featured a preseminar workshop for new chairs. The seminar in Arlington also featured a workshop for department reviewers that focused on strategic planning. Preseminar workshops for directors of graduate and undergraduate studies in English were held at the ADE seminar in Kansas City. A preseminar workshop on teaching language through literature was offered at the ADFL seminar in San José.

Several sessions at the 2015 joint ADE-ADFL seminar in Arlington provided opportunities for the department chairs, directors of graduate studies, and other departmental representatives who attended to discuss pressing curricular issues that affect undergraduate enrollments. For a discussion break-out session on recruiting majors in English and languages other than English, over seventy faculty members were in attendance. Plenary sessions addressed trends in undergraduate education, issues of advocacy and policy in the humanities and international education, accommodations for students and faculty members with disabilities, and undergraduate literary study today. A plenary roundtable explored what external reviewers learn about undergraduate programs in English and other modern languages and literatures.

Sessions at the ADFL seminar in San José addressed the reconfiguration of language departments in the national context; the department chair as manager; effective ways of redesigning the undergraduate curriculum, including options in the digital humanities; and best practices for collaborative work. A plenary session organized and run by MLA staff members examined trends in enrollments in languages other than English and explored effective uses of national, institutional, and departmental data in advocating for the language department. A plenary roundtable featuring three deans discussed effective ways for chairs to measure and for faculty members to take part in service. Languages for the professions and heritage language learning were the topics that experts in the field presented and debated at two keynote sessions.

Sessions at the ADE seminar in Kansas City addressed the structure of English bachelor’s degree programs; recruiting students to the English major; learning from external reviews; preparing graduates at the bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degree levels for professional careers; negotiating issues of gender, race, class, and sexual orientation in the work of chairing; understanding disability and reasonable accommodation as legal and regulatory concepts in working with faculty members who have disabilities; learning the budget and how to work with it; and processes and protocols for job searches. A plenary panel featured three upper administrators who shared perspectives on the situation of the humanities in the university today.

The ADE and ADFL bulletins are now e-journals; their Web sites offer faculty members and students in member departments the full text of articles from current and back issues. Tables of contents and bibliographic information for all issues are openly available. Library subscriptions to
the bulletins are available; libraries receive the *JIL* and the ADE and ADFL bulletins at specified IP address ranges.

Discussion on the ADE chairs’ discussion list addressed the following issues:
- procedures and guidelines for awarding professor emeritus status
- scheduling graduate student teaching
- resources for encouraging faculty members to become research productive
- finding journal acceptance rates (*MLA Directory of Periodicals*)
- workload policies and how to calculate doctoral dissertation supervision and dissertation committee membership within the normal workload
- promotion-and-tenure guidelines for small English departments
- how to run a successful department retreat
- minimum enrollments for courses
- voting rights of non-tenure-track lecturers
- how departments make hiring decisions: What role does the chair have? What role do faculty members not on the search committee have? What strategies have been effective for engaging the full faculty?
- how to structure a search for a tenure-track hire who would also direct a first-year writing program
- doctoral stipends
- trends in English majors and strategies for retaining students in the major
- administering MFA programs
- the reputability and peer-review processes of on-demand presses
- ways of separating developmental and evaluative functions of teaching observations
- course fees for service courses
- administering department reorganization
- strategies for evaluating administrative work

Discussion on the ADFL chairs’ discussion list addressed the following issues:
- accommodations for visible and invisible disabilities
- requirements for majors and minors
- graduate admission policies for international students
- offering upper-division and lower-division online language courses
- policies for posttenure review
- salary inequities among faculty members teaching different languages
- external reviews of departments
- enrollment caps for language courses
- foreign language requirements vs. global awareness requirements
- satisfying the language requirement and waivers or credits for heritage speakers
- language proficiency tests
- completing the lower-division writing requirement in the foreign language classroom
- online language labs and online language courses
- capstone courses
- mentoring new faculty members
- workforce demand for language competency
• consolidating different languages into a single degree
• establishing a major in Chinese
• trends in languages

Association Governance

As executive director, I oversee MLA governance and serve ex officio on all committees, working groups, and task forces. Carol Zuses, coordinator of governance, has responsibility for creating and maintaining all related administrative functions.

Committees

Hundreds of MLA members help carry on the work of the association through their service on association committees. The governance of the association is in the hands of the eighteen-member Executive Council, the 278 members of the Delegate Assembly, and the thirty members of four other governance committees. The convention is the focus of the twelve-member Program Committee and the members who fill the 685 seats on nearly 150 forum executive committees. Publications-related work is carried out by eight committees with a total of ninety-eight members. Eight committees covering a range of professional issues have a total of fifty-seven members. Finally, the seven members of the Committee on Honors and Awards and the seventy-eight members of the twenty-four prize selection committees help the association recognize the outstanding scholarly work done by association members and scholars in our fields of study.

Ballots

The association’s annual elections for the second vice president, the Executive Council, the Delegate Assembly, and the convention executive committees are held in the fall. Balloting normally begins during the third week of October and ends on 10 December. In 2014, there were 26,134 eligible voters in these elections. The number of ballots returned was 2,881, which represents participation by 11.0% of the membership.

Actions of the Delegate Assembly that require ratification by the membership are placed on a ratification ballot that members receive in either the spring or the fall following the January assembly meeting. The ratification ballot covering 2014 Delegate Assembly actions was distributed in the spring. Of the 23,904 eligible voters, 2,718 (11.4%) returned ballots.

Advocacy Efforts and National Coalitions

The MLA Executive Council and the Committee on Contingent Labor in the Profession initiated a project called MLA Action for Allies, which invites all members to show support for adjunct faculty members. The Commons site for the project houses resources for starting discussions in departments about the use of contingent faculty members. In the first action, proposed in conjunction with National Adjunct Walkout Day, members were asked to respond to series of questions aimed at evaluating the use of contingent faculty members in their departments. Respondents were asked to discuss the answers to the questions with colleagues and report back about this conversation to help others.
The following statements were issued by the MLA Executive Council in 2015. Council statements are posted at http://www.mla.org/executive_council_ac.

MLA Condemns Violence against Teachers and Students in Mexico

In its 2009 Statement on Academic Freedom, the Modern Language Association recognized that “despite a long history of the defense of academic freedom, each generation of scholars faces new challenges to its protection.” The recent murders and disappearances of students and teachers in Mexico, and the threats against others in the fields of education, have created an environment in which learning and critical thinking are deemed dangerous activities. In keeping with its commitment to supporting academic freedom, the MLA condemns the violence against students and teachers in Mexico.

MLA Condemns Censorship and Suppression of Controversial Works and Writers

The Modern Language Association condemns both the censorship of work treating controversial religious subjects and physical threats directed at the authors of such work. Recent instances include the harassment of the University of Chicago Indologist Wendy Doniger and the Tamil novelist Perumal Murugan. In its 2009 Statement on Academic Freedom, the MLA reiterates its long-standing commitments to academic freedom and freedom of speech. The MLA urges its members to support scholars and writers like Doniger and Murugan whose freedoms have been threatened or denied.

The council also added the MLA’s endorsement to a statement defending tenure and academic freedom in Wisconsin, which was drafted by the American Historical Association and endorsed by nineteen other members of the American Council of Learned Societies. The joint statement is available at http://www.mla.org/joint_statement_defend.

On 14 January, in Washington, DC, I participated in a panel, The Emergence of the “Precariat”: What Does the Loss of Stable, Well-Compensated Employment Mean for Education?, along with Barbara Ehrenreich, Andrew Ross, and Jennie Shanker. The panel, sponsored by the Albert Shanker Institute and the American Federation of Teachers, discussed the impact on the lives of teachers and students, on the economy, and on higher education of the shift from tenure-track faculty positions to adjunct positions.

On issues affecting the humanities, the MLA works with colleagues in the National Humanities Alliance (NHA). I currently serve on the NHA’s board of directors and executive committee and act as the MLA’s voting representative at the alliance’s annual meeting.

The NHA is the leading advocate for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The NHA also provides congressional testimony as needed, helps organize events on Capitol Hill that promote an understanding of the importance and vitality of the humanities, confers the Sidney R. Yates Award for Distinguished Public Service to the Humanities, and keeps its members informed about the status of the appropriations process. The NHA also has a 501(c)(3) supporting foundation. The NHA Foundation advances the humanities by conducting and supporting research on the humanities and communicating the value of the humanities to a variety of audiences,
including elected officials and the general public. Additional information about the NHA’s work is available at the NHA Web site (www.nhalliance.org).

On issues affecting languages and international studies, the MLA works with colleagues in the Joint National Committee for Languages (JNCL) and the Coalition for International Education (CIE). The JNCL represents more than three hundred thousand professionals and has over sixty members, including national, regional, and state organizations encompassing most areas of the K–16 language field. The JNCL holds its annual Delegate Assembly meeting in Washington, DC, where members promote public awareness of language issues. Dennis Looney represented the MLA at the JNCL Delegate Assembly meeting this year.

The CIE is made up of more than thirty national higher education organizations. It informs policy makers, education and private sector officials, and the media about national needs in international and foreign language education and focuses on promoting and supporting Fulbright-Hays grants and programs authorized under Title VI of the Higher Education Act.

In February 2015, the MLA signed on to the CIE’s letter to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions requesting funding for the K–12 Foreign Language Assistance Program, which was omitted from the draft bill for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The MLA also signed on to the CIE’s April 2015 letter to the Senate and House Appropriations Committees and their Subcommittees on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) requesting funding for international education and foreign language studies programs funded through the Higher Education Act. And in July 2015, the MLA cosigned the CIE’s letter of appreciation to the House Appropriations Committee and its LHHS subcommittee for maintaining 2015 funding for international education and foreign language studies programs in the 2016 House appropriations bill. The letter also urged the House committee to keep the 2015 funding levels in place during negotiations with the Senate. In addition, Dennis Looney and I participated in CIE teleconferences concerning the president’s 2016 budget proposal for international education programs and funding for other Department of Education programs.

On 21 September 2015, the CIE held a briefing on Capitol Hill to discuss Title VI of the Higher Education Act and Fulbright-Hays international education programs. More than eighty people attended the briefing, which underlined the importance of the programs and their role in helping to advance the nation. During the briefing the CIE urged Congress to continue funding Title VI programs and made recommendations for changing several unfunded programs into two new programs (International Research and Innovation and Professional and Technical Competitiveness). In October 2015, the CIE followed up on the briefing with a letter to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce and the House Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training that made the CIE’s funding request and program recommendations official. The MLA signed on to the letter. Miriam Kazanjian, CIE consultant, organized the briefing; she represents the MLA as a lobbyist on international education issues.

The NEH receives funding through the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. The Department of Education is funded through the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. Department of Education programs of interest to the language community include Title VI programs for international education and foreign language studies in higher education, the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary
Education (FIPSE), and English Language Acquisition State Grants (formerly Bilingual and Immigrant Education).

This year’s budget process began in February, when President Obama released his budget for 2016, which proposed funding the NEH at $147.9 million. This amounted to a small increase of $1.9 million over the NEH’s appropriation in the 2015 fiscal year. On 18 June, the House appropriations subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies released a draft bill that proposed the same funding for the NEH as in the 2015 fiscal year, $146 million. On 23 June, the Senate appropriations subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies released its draft bill, which also provided the NEH with level funding.

President Obama’s detailed budget for the 2016 fiscal year included $76.2 million for Title VI programs, while the Senate requested $47 million. The Senate’s proposal represents a significant decrease from the $72.2 million appropriated in 2015. Programs authorized under Title VI of the Higher Education Act include Centers for International Business Education, Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowships, the Institute for International Public Policy, language resource centers, and Fulbright-Hays training grants and seminars abroad. A number of Title VI and Fulbright-Hays programs remain canceled for the 2016 fiscal year (e.g., Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language Program, American Overseas Research Centers, International Research and Studies Program).

The president’s proposal for FIPSE funding was $200 million, $132 million more than in 2015. The funding would support the third year of the First in the World Fund, “a competitive grant program, modeled after Investing in Innovation (i3), designed to identify innovative solutions to persistent and widespread challenges to completion in postsecondary education, particularly those that affect adult learners, working students, part-time students, students from low-income backgrounds, students of color, and first-generation students.” Up to 30% of the $200 million allocated under FIPSE would be used for projects at minority-serving institutions. The Senate did not include funds for FIPSE in its budget proposal.

The president proposed $773 million for the English Language Acquisition State Grants program, while the Senate requested $712 million. The president’s proposal represents a $30 million increase over the 2015 appropriation, while the Senate’s decreases funding by $26 million.

The entire appropriations process stalled before Congress’s August recess due to amendments and counteramendments concerning whether to allow the display and sale of the Confederate battle flag on federal property (including cemeteries). In September, with the end of the fiscal year quickly approaching, lawmakers turned their attention to a stopgap funding bill. On 30 September, the House passed a continuing resolution (CR) to fund the government through 11 December with no increases in funding over 2015 appropriations except to address emergencies. The Senate then passed the same bill, and President Obama signed it into law, thereby preventing the government from shutting down on 1 October. With the government funded for the near term, Congress turned its attention to electing House leadership and to addressing the public debt limit, which the Department of the Treasury estimated would be reached on 5 November. The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, which the president signed into law on 2 November, provided for increasing the debt limit to accommodate budget obligations issued through 15 March 2017. Congress did not address the matter of appropriations for the 2016 fiscal year until after the Thanksgiving holiday.
This year the MLA once again cosponsored Humanities Advocacy Day, an annual event coordinated by the NHA. The purpose of the event is to promote federal support for scholarly research, education, public programs, and preservation in the humanities. It provides the MLA and other national organizations with a crucial opportunity to deliver to Congress and the administration a unified message on funding needs and priorities for the NEH and other federal agencies, including the Department of Education, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services. On 16 and 17 March, Kathleen Fitzpatrick attended the NHA’s 2015 annual meeting and Humanities Advocacy Day in Washington, DC. Over the two-day period, one hundred fourteen advocates participated in a range of activities, including advocacy training, an NEH grants workshop, a humanities grants overview session, panel presentations, a keynote luncheon, policy briefings, a Capitol Hill reception, and visits to congressional offices.

The MLA is a founding member of the Coalition on the Academic Workforce (CAW), an informal coalition with no headquarters or staff. CAW’s purpose is to discourage the excessive use of part- and full-time non-tenure-track faculty members in higher education and to help ensure that they receive fair treatment. Representatives of the twenty-eight member associations participate in meetings and activities. CAW’s Web site (www.academicworkforce.org) links to the home pages of its member associations; to data, reports, and surveys from them; and to statements they issue on the use of contingent academic labor. The MLA continues to maintain this Web site.

The MLA is a member of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS). The principal administrator from each of the constituent learned societies serves as a member of the Conference of Administrative Officers (CAO). The CAO functions as the primary vehicle for maintaining and enhancing relations among the constituent learned societies and between the societies and the ACLS. The CAO meets twice a year to discuss substantive issues in the humanities as well as practical and organizational aspects of society management. The ACLS offers a leadership seminar each fall for the incoming chief elected officers and chief administrative officers of member societies. I attended the 2015 Learned Society Leadership Seminar with First Vice President Anthony Appiah.

MLA Membership and Association Administration

Relocation of the Headquarters Office
In July 2015, the MLA relocated from 26 Broadway to 85 Broad Street, where the association had negotiated a 20-year lease on 30,325 square feet of space. The landlord assumed the cost of design and construction of the space. The MLA incurred a one-time moving expense as well as furniture and equipment costs that will be depreciated over the next ten years. Most MLA servers were moved to a remote hosting facility, and some paper records are now being stored off-site. Headquarters telephone numbers and e-mail addresses are unchanged.

Membership Trends
Terrence Callaghan, director of administration and finance, reports that MLA membership enrollment decreased by 5.6% in 2015. The 2015 membership enrollment period closed on 30 November 2015. The total number of MLA members as of 18 September 2015 was 24,722 (it was 26,200 on 18 September 2014), of whom 15,816 (64%) are regular members,
4,777 (19.3%) are student members, and 4,129 (16.7%) are life members. A total of 1,665 members (6.8%) paid dues at income levels above $100,000 in 2015, up from 6.1% in 2014.

Student member renewals decreased in 2015; 46.7% of 2014 student members paid student dues in 2015, whereas 48.8% of 2013 student members paid student dues in 2014. The movement of student members into regular dues categories increased slightly in 2015; 14.8% of 2014 student members renewed in nonstudent dues categories in 2015, whereas 14.5% of 2013 student members renewed in nonstudent dues categories in 2014. The number of 2014 student members who did not renew their membership in 2015 was 2,179 (38.8%); the number of 2013 student members who did not renew their membership in 2014 was 2,255 (36.6%).

**Contributions**

The MLA has a number of restricted funds that support particular activities. Contributions to the various funds totaled $107,971 in the 2015 membership year. This represents a decrease of 2.7% from 2014 giving. The number of individuals making contributions was 2,317, a decrease of 6.5% from 2014, when we had 2,478 contributors.


Contributions to the Professional Education Assistance Fund for Graduate Students increased by 5.8% in 2015. Contributions totaled $35,469 in 2014 and $37,523 in 2015. The number of individuals contributing to this fund decreased by 6.7%. The Professional Education Assistance Fund for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Members and Unemployed Members received $20,573 in contributions in 2015, an increase of 1.1% over 2014. The number of individuals contributing to this fund decreased by only 0.5%.

The Fund for the Promotion of the Profession received $7,288 in contributions in 2015, a decrease of 11.7% from 2014. The number of contributors to this fund increased by 6.7%. The fund that supports the Phyllis Franklin Award for Public Advocacy of the Humanities received $7,581 in contributions in 2015, a decrease of 7.8% from the previous year. The number of contributors to this fund decreased by 11.5%. Contributions to the Good Neighbor Fund totaled $7,243 in 2015, an increase of 1.5% over 2014; the number of contributors to this fund decreased by 3.9%.

Those individuals who generously donate $200 or more to the various MLA funds are listed at the MLA Web site on the Leading Contributors page. Individuals who contribute $500 or more are given special recognition on the Leading Contributors Web page. Contributions of over $500 amounted to $28,785 in 2015, 4.0% less than in 2014. Contributions of $200 to $499 totaled $23,495, a 4.1% increase over 2014. Leading Contributor contributions totaled $52,280 in 2015, 0.5% less than in 2014.
Implementation of Delegate Assembly Actions

Constitutional Amendments
The 2015 Delegate Assembly approved seven amendments to the MLA constitution. The first two amendments allow the implementation of the new convention forum structure; the next four amendments eliminate references to printed matter from the constitution; the last amendment eliminates a limiting gender reference. In February 2015, the Executive Council reviewed the amendments, as required by the MLA constitution (art. 13.D). The council determined that the amendments posed no fiduciary problems and so forwarded the amendments to the membership for the required ratification vote. The membership ratification vote was completed on 15 May. All 2015 members as of 7 April were eligible to vote. Of the 22,425 eligible voters, 1,626 (7.3%) returned ballots. The vote on the first two amendments was 1,488 yes and 81 no; the vote on the next four amendments was 1,542 yes and 50 no; the vote on the last amendment was 1,527 yes and 92 no. The outcome of the ratification vote was reported in the Fall 2015 issue of the MLA Newsletter and at the MLA Web site. All seven amendments have been incorporated into the text of the constitution at the Web site (www.mla.org/mla_constitution).

Elections Committee Recommendations
The Elections Committee reported to the Delegate Assembly on the effects that the new convention forum structure would have on the size of the Delegate Assembly and presented several recommendations to the assembly. The committee recommended (1) the gradual addition over a three-year period of new forum representatives, (2) the election of forum delegates by the forums’ membership, (3) a reduction in the number of regional delegates, (4) the elimination of proportional representation in the regions, and (5) the redefinition of special-interest delegates as professional-issues delegates. The assembly approved the committee’s recommendations and agreed to propose the constitutional amendments that the implementation of the second through the fifth recommendations required. The first recommendation was implemented by the Elections Committee, which drew lots to determine when each of the 59 new forums would be asked to elect a delegate. The amendment proposals were forwarded to the Committee on Amendments to the Constitution in late spring. The committee completed its work on the proposals in the summer, and the required notice of the amendments was published at the MLA Web site in September. The committee has forwarded the amendments to the 2016 Delegate Assembly for action. If approved by the assembly, the amendments will be submitted to the membership of the association in 2016 for ratification.

Additional Option for the Submission of Supporting Signatures
The 2015 assembly authorized the implementation of an additional option for the submission of signatures in support of a resolution or a petition. The new option supplements those stipulated in Delegate Assembly Bylaw 7; it eliminates the requirement for an original signature if a member indicates his or her support for a particular resolution or petition by sending an e-mail message from the address that is recorded in the member’s MLA membership record. This option will remain in place until a Web page where members can deposit their signature after logging in at the MLA Web site is made available.

Special Rule
The 2015 assembly approved a special rule proposed by the Delegate Assembly Organizing Committee as part of the agreement the committee reached with the members who had submitted
conflicting resolutions on the issue of academic boycotts. The rule enjoins the Delegate Assembly from considering “motions or resolutions on academic or institutional boycotts of Israel or on matters related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict until the January 2017 meeting.” The rule has not come into play, since no motions or resolutions have as yet been submitted for consideration by the 2016 assembly.

**Motions**

The Delegate Assembly approved two motions at its 2015 meeting. The first was transmitted to the Executive Council as a recommendation. The MLA constitution (art. 7.B.2) requires the council to “act on the recommendations of the Delegate Assembly and to inform it of actions taken. Such actions may include implementation, modification, referral to an appropriate committee of the association (including the Organizing Committee of the Delegate Assembly), and return to the Delegate Assembly for reconsideration.”

The motion called for increasing the representation of part-time faculty members in MLA governance roles and on MLA committees. Council members agreed that they could not make decisions on the implementation of the motion until the meaning of part-time is clarified. The council has therefore returned the motion to the 2016 Delegate Assembly with a request for clarification. In the meantime, the MLA staff will look more closely at the membership data already collected to try to generate additional information on the nine percent of MLA members who teach part-time. The staff will also transmit to the Committee on Contingent Labor in the Profession the council’s request that the committee generate a list of part-time faculty members who might be appointed to any of the MLA’s standing committees.

The second motion, which initiated a constitutional amendment “to create a dedicated slot on the Executive Council” for a part-time faculty member, was transmitted to the Committee on Amendments to the Constitution. The committee determined that it could not formulate the requested amendment without additional information from the assembly. The committee has forwarded a request for information to the 2016 Delegate Assembly.