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CANDIDATE INFORMATION
2017 MLA Elections

Note: To be counted, online ballots must be submitted by midnight EST on 10 December 2017 and paper ballots must be received at the MLA office no later than 10 December 2017.

Notes on Association Governance

- Two elected bodies play a role in association governance. The Executive Council is a fiduciary body and has responsibility for managing the business of the association. It has seventeen voting members (the three officers and fourteen members) and one nonvoting member (the executive director). The Delegate Assembly, which has just over three hundred voting members, recommends actions to the council regarding the conduct of association business and the association’s directions, goals, and structure.

- The MLA constitution (see www.mla.org/About-Us/Governance/MLA-Constitution) outlines the specific duties of the officers, the council, and the assembly in articles 5, 7, and 9, respectively.

Elections for Second Vice President, Executive Council, Delegate Assembly

- MLA elections are held annually in the fall to elect a second vice president of the association and to fill vacancies on the Executive Council and in the Delegate Assembly. Nominations for the second vice president and Executive Council elections have been made by the Nominating Committee, whose members are elected by the Delegate Assembly. Nominations for professional-issues and regional seats in the Delegate Assembly have been made by the Elections Committee, whose members are also elected by the Delegate Assembly. Nominations for forum seats in the assembly have been made by the membership and the executive committees of the forums that are holding elections this year.

- Nominees to these elected positions in the association are asked to submit biographical summaries and are invited to submit statements on matters of professional concern. This document contains summaries and statements submitted by this year’s nominees, and it is intended for use by those members who request paper ballots for the 2017 elections. Candidate information appears in the same order as the nominees’ names appear on the paper ballot, and, for the Delegate Assembly elections, the number preceding each nominee’s name corresponds to the number assigned to the nominee on the ballot. Specific details about each of the election categories precede the candidate information for that category.

- The candidate information in this document is also included in the online ballot system that all voting members of the association have been invited to use to cast their votes in the 2017 elections. In the online system, the names of the candidates for second vice president, the Executive Council, and the Delegate Assembly are links. Clicking on a candidate’s name will open a window containing the candidate’s biographical summary and election statement.

Elections for Forum Executive Committees

- Elections are held each fall to replace outgoing members of the executive committees. Nominations are made by the membership and by the executive committees.
Eligibility to vote in these elections is determined by voters’ primary forum affiliations, as recorded in their membership profiles. Changes to primary forum affiliations are not allowed while voting is under way.

Voters using the online system will be asked to vote in the executive committee contests for the forums with which they have primary affiliations. Voters using the paper ballot will need to follow the instructions for voting that appear on the paper ballot sheet.

Making Suggestions for the 2018 Executive Committee Elections

At the bottom of the paper ballot is a space that members can use to suggest nominees for the 2018 executive committee elections. Names written in on the ballot will be forwarded to the appropriate executive committees, which must select at least one nominee each year from the names suggested by the membership.

It is also possible to suggest nominees through the MLA Web site. When exiting the online ballot system, members will be given the opportunity to use the online suggestion form. The form can also be accessed directly from the Committees page.

Abbreviations Used in Biographical Summaries

- AAAS Association for Asian American Studies
- AATF American Association of Teachers of French
- AATG American Association of Teachers of German
- AATI American Association of Teachers of Italian
- AATSEEL American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages
- AATSP American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese
- AAUP American Association of University Professors
- AAUW American Association of University Women
- ACLA American Comparative Literature Association
- ACLS American Council of Learned Societies
- ACTFL American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
- ADE Association of Departments of English
- ADFL Association of Departments of Foreign Languages
- ASA American Studies Association
- ASECS American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies
- AWP Association of Writers and Writing Programs
- CCCC Conference on College Composition and Communication
- CEA College English Association
- CIES Council for International Exchange of Scholars
- CLA College Language Association
- DAAD Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (German Academic Exchange Service)
- ETS Educational Testing Service
- FIPSE Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education
- FLAS Foreign Language and Area Studies (fellowship prog. in the US Dept. of Educ.)
- HASTAC Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory
- ICLA International Comparative Literature Association
Part I: Voting for Second Vice President

The person elected second vice president will serve in that office from 8 January 2018 through the close of the January 2019 convention and will automatically become first vice president in 2019, serving in that office through the close of the January 2020 convention, and president of the MLA in 2020, serving in that office through the close of the January 2021 convention. This year all nominees are from the field of English or American language and literature; the MLA constitution (article 6.D) stipulates that the second vice president shall be elected from the field of English or American only in alternate years. (From 8 Jan. 2018 through 6 Jan. 2019, the first vice president will be Simon E. Gikandi, African, Princeton Univ., and the president will be Anne Ruggles Gere, English, Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor.)

The Hare voting method will be used in the election of second vice president. (Using this voting method will, except in the case of a tie, eliminate the need for a separate runoff election in the spring.) Members are asked to rank the candidates listed below in order of preference. On the ballot sheet, members should write “1” next to the name of their first choice, “2” next to the name of their second choice, and “3” next to the name of their third choice. Please note that voting for only one candidate means casting no vote in the subsequent rounds of balloting that the Hare voting method incorporates.

*Rank these candidates in order of preference.*
Michael F. Bernard-Donals. Nancy Hoefs Prof. of English and affiliate member, Mosse/Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison.


Statement

Our profession and higher education are changing drastically. That change has resulted in fewer tenure-track jobs and more contingent workers and a shift of attention away from the liberal arts and toward “workforce development.” But we have an opportunity, in the midst of fewer resources and a shift in the public’s understanding of the value of the humanities, to build a better case for the relation among language, literature, and public responsibility and for our role in the transformation of the material circumstances in which we live and work.

I am a longtime and engaged member of the MLA who as a faculty member at my university has served as program director, department chair, and vice provost. These roles have given me a clear idea of the current landscape for our profession and a better sense of how to respond. Responding will involve building partnerships with other national organizations, listening in order to forge solidarities with members of the field who are sometimes rarely heard, fearlessly speaking out on controversial matters facing the organization and its members, and actively seeking change to transform the profession and our part of it to create something better.
I intend to help open the MLA to new voices, ensure its convention provides opportunity to all members and to nonmembers who share the organization’s aims, and ensure that the MLA and the fields it represents have an active and expansive role in reshaping the profession as critical to intellectual diversity, participatory democracy, and academic freedom.

Peter Brooks. Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Scholar, Univ. Center for Human Values and Dept. of Comparative Lit., Princeton Univ.


Statement

Never have we felt so menaced as we do today, and never has our task been more important. The teaching of languages and literatures, including writing, seem to me the key to an intelligent resistance to a dominant know-nothingism. We not only need to continue doing what we do so well, we must try to gain greater recognition that the study of languages and literatures, reading and writing, are central and crucial to the mission of the university—and to citizenship in society. When participating in various MLA activities—including the PMLA Editorial Board, the Executive Council, and the Nominating Committee—I have appreciated the diversity of the MLA and the reach of what it can do. It is and must remain a big tent, concerned both with the promotion of scholarship and with professional issues, including the alarming numbers of adjunct and part-time faculty members in too many institutions. What we do within our colleges and universities and what we represent outside them are closely related, and the MLA needs to continue to press for recognition of our crucial function in academia—from academic administrators, for instance—as well as our vital contribution to public life. These are issues that have concerned me for over fifty years in the profession, and I would wish to continue to pursue them in the strong context of the MLA.

Judith Butler. Maxine Elliot Prof. of Comparative Lit., Univ. of California, Berkeley.


Statement

I have been a member of the MLA for many years, served on the Executive Council, and recently chaired the Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities. I have taught in the Department of Comparative Literature at Berkeley for over twenty years. I am most interested in defending the value of the humanities, especially the teaching of literature and languages, during a time when the NEH and NEA are threatened with defunding and universities are too often closing or merging language and literature departments in the name of cost efficiency and financial models of rationality, regardless of the
educational consequences. I hope to develop a clear public platform to defend the value of our vocation, including research, teaching, and service. I am committed to supporting the study of languages, including lesser-known languages, translation, and comparative and global approaches to the study of literature. I would defend academic freedom, underscoring the public imperative to safeguard critical thought and socially engaged viewpoints within the university and to oppose forms of censorship. I am especially concerned to support the rights of contingent faculty members and to support the improvement of faculty work conditions.

I have sought to support the humanities throughout my career. The metrics that fail to grasp the value of the humanities must be understood and countered by a strong debate on the financial models affecting higher education and a renewed discourse within a global frame that clarifies and promotes the public value of the humanities.

Part II: Voting for At-Large Members of the Executive Council

Three persons will be elected for four-year terms that will begin 8 January 2018 and run through the close of the January 2022 convention. The MLA constitution (article 8.A.5) stipulates that the at-large membership of the council must include at least one and no more than six representatives from each of the following fields: English or American, French, German, Spanish, and other (e.g., other languages and literatures, comparative literature, folklore, linguistics). Since all these fields will continue to be represented on the council in 2018, candidates from any field may be elected this year. In addition, because no designated field is represented by more than three council members, all three persons elected this year may be from the same field.

The MLA constitution (art. 8) also states that the at-large membership of the council “shall also include at least one representative, but no more than eight, from each of the eligible membership levels (i.e., regular, graduate student, and life), except that the number of regular members on the council shall always be in proportion to the regular membership of the association.” Because regular members compose 62.9% of the membership, they are constitutionally entitled to eight of the twelve at-large council seats. Since seven of the nine at-large members of the council with continuing terms in 2018 are regular members (see the listing below, in which student members are marked with an *), one and only one regular member must be elected. Since none of the continuing council members is a life member and since there are no student-member candidates, the other persons elected this year will be life members. (Note: The names of the nominees who are life members are preceded by a §.)

David Tse-chien Pan, German, Univ. of California, Irvine (2016–12 Jan. 2020)
*Rafael A. Ramirez Mendoza, Spanish, Univ. of California, Los Angeles (2016–12 Jan. 2020)

Vote for any three nominees.
**Douglas M. Armato.** Dir., Univ. of Minnesota Press.


Publications include articles in *Against the Grain*, *AAUP Exchange*, *Library Journal*.

**Statement**

In being considered for election to the MLA Executive Council, I hope to bring to that body the benefit of my forty years’ experience in scholarly publishing, which have been centered throughout in humanities research and advocacy. I have been a leader in the university press community, serving two terms on the board of directors and one term as president of our national association and representing our profession to library groups, learned societies, academic leaders, foundations, and the media. But I have increasingly found that many of the most valuable perspectives on scholarly publishing and communication come from discussions with faculty members and graduate students, and I worry that those voices are often unheard in the negotiations that are restructuring how knowledge will be evaluated, accessed, preserved, and brought to the public. As an Executive Council member, I want to play a strong role in amplifying scholars’ voices in those critical discussions.

Though my responsibilities at the University of Minnesota Press are primarily administrative, I also act as editor in digital culture, among other areas, and as such closely monitor and engage both the promise and peril of the emerging environment for scholarship, culture, and public engagement. Thus, much of my attention over the past decade has gone to exploring innovative modes and formats of publication—including the Mellon Foundation–funded Manifold project for networked, media-rich monographs and the Forerunners series of ideas in progress—that nevertheless maintain the values of humanities authorship, free inquiry, and rigorous critique.

§Thadious M. Davis. Geraldine R. Segal Prof. of Amer. Social Thought and prof. English, Univ. of Pennsylvania.


Statement

During these times when teachers and the humanities are under attack and when reasonable attitudes toward the importance of education become denigrated, it is harder to imagine how the MLA should keep moving forward with thoughtful, effective ways to communicate and enact the significance of our organization and our profession. It is harder but not impossible. Looking back, I remember being part of the MLA Committee on the Literatures and Languages of America’s efforts to foster diverse panels from
underrepresented fields and working to add new MLA divisions to reflect the diversity within our teaching and scholarship. Today, while the MLA has continued to evolve, it still faces challenges in meeting the needs of our constituents and our profession. I am thinking, for instance, of how drastic changes in hiring practices, including interview procedures, have impacted the annual convention and how with collective effort we might revitalize it into a more vibrant and engaging public face of the MLA. Over the years, the MLA has addressed necessary change, including accessibility platforms for wider segments of the teaching profession and attaining a living wage, pay equity, and benefits for all members of our profession. While these pressing issues require our continued attention and a concerted effort to be relevant, aware, and supportive of our membership, we must also address the larger discourses and policies confronting the teaching of literature and languages. Some forty years after first becoming a member, I look forward to contributing to this ongoing and future work.

§Gail E. Finney. Prof. comparative lit. and German, Univ. of California, Davis.


Statement

Because the welfare of the profession will, to a considerable degree, be determined by our current and future graduate students, this segment of the academy warrants our careful attention. Having conducted several searches in both German and comparative literature, I have come to believe that a single-minded dedication to language and literature will perhaps not best serve students on the job market today, though it
should drive their course of study. As the administrative body of the MLA, the Executive Council is well positioned to serve as a vehicle for consciousness-raising. If elected to the council, I would pursue the dissemination of the awareness that students should be encouraged early in their graduate careers to think along interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary lines, to do coursework in or even pursue graduate minors in areas such as critical theory, cinema and media studies, digital humanities, second language acquisition, feminist theory and research, medical humanities, and performance studies. Similarly, they should embrace opportunities to participate in topical, multidisciplinary conferences where their expertise in literature and language might enrich and be enriched by exposure to the work of colleagues in the social or natural sciences. Breaking down the silo mentality can benefit all of us.

§Jean Elizabeth Howard. George Delacorte Prof. in the Humanities, Columbia Univ.


Statement

Four professional issues especially concern me: declining government support for higher education, the lack of labor protections and fair salaries for many contingent faculty members, the state of graduate education in relation to the job market, and the need for greater inclusiveness in every aspect of higher education. I would welcome the chance to work on these problems as part of the Executive Council. Solutions are not easy, but it is important to continue to join with other learned societies to lobby in support of higher education at the federal and state levels, just as it is important to continue to work to establish norms for the fair treatment of contingent faculty members in regard to wages and working conditions, including long-term contracts, transparent review processes, and a place in faculty governance. In regard to graduate education, the MLA needs to lead the way in exploring ways to adjust the size of graduate cohorts in relation to demand and vigorously to expand preparation for job opportunities beyond full-time tenure-track positions. We should consider whether graduate programs should change the requirements for the PhD to further speed time to completion, encourage broad training over narrow, and encompass internships and apprenticeships in fields like the digital humanities, the public humanities, publishing, and big data. A remaining challenge is not only to further increase diversity in student and faculty bodies but also to change institutional practices to take account of the new strengths, needs, and perspectives such students and faculty bring.

Elizabeth Mathews Losh. Assoc. prof. English, Coll. of William and Mary.


Statement

These are exciting times for our community. More people on the planet are speaking English (generally as a second language rather than as a first), and more people are reading and writing digital texts. However, these are also obviously challenging times. As a longtime MLA member who is completing her
term in the Delegate Assembly representing issues of distance and online education and as an author who has published books about higher education, I am uniquely qualified to coordinate efforts to grow our professional association in key areas—such as writing studies, media studies, electronic literature, the digital humanities, and the teaching of language—while also representing members who might feel increasingly contingent and precarious. I am an experienced collaborator and administrator: I have worked in leadership positions with many different kinds of feminist collectives, and I have held appointments in many types of departments (including communication, composition, gender studies, film studies, and art) as an affiliated faculty member. As a rhetorician who specializes in organizational communication, I am interested in better integrating research, teaching, and service as professional responsibilities and connecting theory to practice whenever possible. In addition to being a scholar of literature, I have directed writing programs, experiential learning programs, and programs to enhance digital literacy and interdisciplinary exploration, which requires negotiating conflicts and articulating core values. Given my enthusiasm for continuing to improve how the MLA serves its members, I would bring many relevant skills and experiences to service on the Executive Council.

§Steven Mailloux. Prof. English and President’s Prof. of Rhetoric, Loyola Marymount Univ.


Statement

The MLA remains strongly committed to ongoing advocacy for the humanities, especially for the study of modern languages and literatures. The MLA should continue to build on its past initiatives developing critical, historical, and theoretical conversations across the fields it represents while intensifying its participation in the collective efforts of the National Humanities Alliance and the Coalition for International Education. As our organization works to support the humanities among larger publics, we also need to pay special attention to the material needs of the various constituencies making up our membership, joining other humanities disciplines in projects to restore and protect tenure-track positions and improve benefits and job security for contingent faculty members. In accomplishing these goals, the MLA should practice a democratic rhetoric of cultural engagement and continue its conferences and online presence as sites for free discussion of the wide-ranging challenges we face as scholars and teachers.

§Ramon Saldívar. Prof. English and comparative lit. and Hoagland Family Prof. of Humanities and Sciences, Stanford Univ.


Statement

In the postwar period, the Modern Language Association helped open the academy to new people, ideas, and cultural forms. Through its sponsored publications, meetings, and institutes, the MLA fostered conditions for cross-cultural and transnational exchange by stressing the vitality of the language arts in all their forms. New institutional issues now press for our attention—the nature of undergraduate education, the professional training of graduate students, and even the very viability of the humanities and arts as elements of a project for developing the global public good. While extending its commitment to these matters, the MLA must continue to encourage the comparative inquiries that have been the hallmarks of new developments in modern language and cultural study and promote conversations not only within its domains but also across disciplinary borders and with all segments of contemporary society.

I am especially concerned with addressing the role that race and ethnicity play in determining social and political life. Important questions remain about how to further understanding of the roles of race and ethnicity in contemporary life. Posing questions of race and ethnicity in terms of the global public good allows us to consider the larger sociopolitical process of cultural production itself, the makeup of literary culture, and the role of popular culture in its various manifestations in the achievement of the public good. Through its annual meeting, sponsored symposia, and publications, the MLA is the appropriate body to conduct the investigation of issues of this nature.

Part III: Voting for Professional-Issues Delegates

Eighteen persons will be elected to professional-issues seats in the assembly. The term of office will be from 8 January 2018 through the close of the January 2021 convention. The numbers preceding the nominees’ names correspond to the numbers assigned to the nominees on the paper ballot sheet.

The names of the professional-issues delegates with continuing terms in 2018 appear at the MLA Web site (www.mla.org/del_assembly_members).

Vote for one nominee in any or all of the eighteen professional-issues contests.

I. Graduate Students (2 contests)

10. Andrew Bingham. Grad. student English, Queen’s Univ.


Publications include articles in *Compara(i)son, Inter(tidal, SFU Institute for the Humanities Journal, Modern Horizons.*

**Statement**

The inner strength and diversity of the MLA are essential to the health of the humanities in North America, and graduate students are essential to the continuing vitality of the MLA. Both as a graduate student and as copresident of Queen’s Graduate Student Association, I have had good and interesting experiences working through various concerns facing graduate students. These range from one’s relationships with intellectual mentors to one’s sometimes fraught entry into the world of humanities scholarship to the ethical and aesthetic responsibilities involved in one’s academic vocation. With these concerns in mind, if elected to the MLA Delegate Assembly I will work hard to listen to, think about, and address matters at the center of contemporary graduate studies in ways that will help improve the felt usefulness of the MLA annual conference, graduate student interest in and dedication to the matters of the *PMLA*, and the role of graduate students in the public presence of the humanities in general. The humanities are in rough shape all over the English-speaking world in our time. But we must strive to revitalize our disciplines now and for the future, and that revitalization begins with graduate students and their cultivated ability to read carefully, think at length, and write and converse in a way that makes sense and moves the common reader and interlocutor. The MLA’s (potential) role in this cultivation is immense and something for which it is worth fighting.

11. No candidate

12. **Adwoa Opoku-Agyemang.** Grad. student comparative lit., Univ. of Toronto.


**Statement**

It is a great honor to be nominated to this position. I have spent the past three years in Canada as a PhD student and candidate, but I have also been fortunate enough that my experiences as a student of the humanities have taken place on three continents. I have gained a sense of the difficulties we face but also of the advantages our field presents to us in academia and beyond. These include our unique capacity to meet today’s challenges with critical thinking skills as well as open-mindedness. They are undoubtedly part of the reason so many of us join and remain faithful to the humanities despite any crises.

The MLA provides a remarkable opportunity for sharing input with other scholars. Teaching both languages and literature has allowed me a wider and truer perspective of both sides of the learning process. This is vital to me as a graduate student and course instructor who will eventually be on the job market. Though I couldn’t claim the greatest expertise, I look forward to learning all I can in this position, while drawing on my experience and that of my colleagues to fill this role to the best of my abilities.

13. No candidate
II. Independent Scholars (1 contest)


**Statement**

For sixteen years, I have worked at the intersections of classroom instruction, education administration, and student support. I began these efforts as a public high school teacher, a position in which I primarily taught disabled and immigrant student populations. While pursuing my doctorate, I worked as an adjunct professor at the Alexandria campus of Northern Virginia Community College. During my time there, I grappled with questions about the connections between the humanities and the economic and political realities of American life. Many of my students were not United States citizens, and they had diverse professional histories— aspiring auto mechanics, enlisted Army soldiers, and working parents. Today, I am an administrator in a disability service office at a four-year university where I continue to teach composition to adult students as an adjunct professor.

I offer this background to emphasize that even though my primary appointment is an administrative one, I have never left the classroom. Moreover, my professional position is bifurcated—it is tenuously connected to academic culture but is in large part not academic. As a result, my professional existence is one where I attempt to balance publishing expectations with the demands of a full-time job that does value, or support, scholarly research. I believe that these pressures are faced by a sizeable chunk of the MLA membership, and I hope to use my position in the Delegate Assembly to advocate for new conceptualizations of the value of nontraditional academic labor within traditional academic professions.

15. **James C. Raymond.** Prof. emer., Univ. of Alabama, Tuscaloosa; pres., Intl. Inst. for Legal Writing and Reasoning.


**Statement**

Stephen Hawking has described the philosophy of language as “a comedown from the great tradition of philosophy from Aristotle to Kant” (*The Theory of Everything*, p 166).

With respect for Professor Hawking, to suggest that the philosophy of language is a trivial pursuit is to be blind to an alternate universe, not in some remote corner of space or buried among the interstices of subatomic particles but close at hand, inhabited by signifiers and figments of language that are protean, contradictory, elusive as quarks, plagued with indeterminacy, and so much a part of us that we have trouble seeing their strangeness and recognizing that they are fundamentally different from the material world that science is equipped to investigate.

Within this universe we construct every academic discipline, including ethics, esthetics, politics, metaphysics, and jurisprudence—all of which require figments of language and modes of predication and soft logic that are methodologically excluded from science. Science itself is a figment of language.
I would advocate development of courses in critical thinking that would examine the methodology of the major disciplines, the degree of certitude and precision they are capable of achieving, and the role of rhetoric as the art of dealing with issues that cannot be resolved by science or irrefutable formal logic. Courses of this sort could be a foundation for a core curriculum as well as an antidote to what are perhaps the most lethal intellectual diseases of our time: illusions of certitude and fundamentalism in all its forms.

III. Retired Scholars (1 contest)

16. **Deanne Bogdan.** Prof. emer. social justice educ., Univ. of Toronto.


**Statement**

My interdisciplinary background (BA in music, MA in English, and PhD in educational theory) and teaching and scholarship in the philosophy of literature and literature education, aesthetics, and women’s
studies would lend a broad perspective to the crisis of the humanities in our increasingly diverse and technocratic milieu. Ever since my doctoral dissertation addressed Northrop Frye’s exploration of the social value of a literary education, I have given courses and published on the poetics, politics, and pedagogy of literary and aesthetic engagement. As professor emerita in a school of education, I have witnessed literature and literary theory morph from their central place in a department once defined by its cognate disciplines in the humanities to that of social justice education. Living in one of the most culturally diverse cities in the world, I would welcome participation in the MLA’s mandate to meet the twin goals of literature to “instruct and delight” for the common good without literature becoming either a decorative art or sociological document.

Personally and professionally, I have had the ongoing privilege of shared office space in a thriving, vibrant community of retired colleagues from across the University of Toronto’s Faculty of Arts and Science as a fellow of our Senior College, members of which enjoy their own dedicated space on campus, governing structure, and weekly lecture series throughout the academic year on a wide array of topics. If elected, I would look forward to sharing my retired colleagues’ concerns and interests with other assembly members.

17. **Clark Hulse.** Prof. emer. English and art history, Univ. of Illinois, Chicago.


**Statement**

What does retired mean anyway these days? We’ve moved on from our primary academic position and made way, hopefully, for a younger scholar. But we continue to teach and write on academic subjects or have turned to related interests that did not fit into the daily grind of the profession.

I have found in retirement the freedom to be involved deeply in the public humanities and to write in new and different ways for nonacademic audiences as well as continue academic scholarship. Since retiring, I have headed up cultural nonprofits, raised funds for the humanities, blogged for a nationally prominent theater company, and started work on a book completely outside my area of expertise.

As a member of the MLA Delegate Assembly, I will make common cause with independent scholars and those pursuing alternative careers as well as with non-tenure-track faculty members on issues of library
access for research, representation within institutions, and professional opportunities outside of higher education. Above all, I will look for ways in which our years of wisdom and experience can contribute to an understanding of the critical importance of the humanities to our world.

**IV. Careers outside the Classroom (1 contest)**

18. **Arthur Calvano.** Court interpreter, Massachusetts Trial Court.


**Statement**

As a self-made professional interpreter (not translator), I seek to bring a unique voice to the Delegate Assembly that will hopefully demonstrate the potential career satisfaction manifest in a most misunderstood profession—that of the interpreter. Students of language and its beauty and complexity may find the challenges of two different disciplines, interpretation and translation, without equal or tantamount to being in the classroom. As a nonnative speaker of Spanish who interprets in court on a daily basis, moreover, I feel empowered by my broad academic achievement that serves as a foundation for the eclectic sources from which I must draw to perform with success. As we know, language is dynamic, and its breadth is humbling. At the same time, it is awesome!

19. No candidate

**V. Full-Time Contingent Faculty Members (1 contest)**


Publications include articles in *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, *Configurations*, *Common-Place: The Journal of Early American Life*.

**Statement**

I have been a contingent faculty member since 2010, teaching technical/professional communication, composition, and literature at four different institutions in three states. I am acutely familiar with the professional, financial, and social precariousness associated with non-tenure-track academic positions. I believe that the expertise and experiences of contingent faculty members need to continue to be recognized, listened to, and engaged with by academic administrators as well as by tenure-track faculty members, academic staff members, and students. If elected, I would be committed to expanding collaborative dialogue and enhancing initiatives within the MLA (and with other professional organizations in the humanities) that advocate for the unique professional and quality-of-life challenges that contingent faculty members regularly confront. These challenges include job security, meaningful inclusion in departmental/institutional decision-making, and increasing the availability of and access to professional resources that support traditional and nontraditional academic careers.

21. **Elena Valdez.** Lecturer Spanish, Christopher Newport Univ.

PhD, Rutgers Univ. Fellowship, Corsi Internazionali di Lingua e Cultura Italiana (Univ. of Milan), summer 2002; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain fellowship (Univ. of Barcelona), fall 2002; NEMLA summer fellowship, 2011, 2017; Columbia Univ. Libraries Research Award, summer 2016. LASA.

**Statement**

As a seven-year member of the MLA and a frequent participant in MLA annual conventions, I support the MLA’s long-standing commitment to and advocacy for the humanities and its ongoing support of people in the profession. I have been educated at a large research-intensive university and have taught in a range of positions at private and four-year institutions that place greater emphasis on teaching. This experience has familiarized me with the shared concerns among permanent and temporary faculty members about the stability of programs and positions, the decrease in enrollments, and the increasing reliance on the adjunct and contingent workforce. If elected to serve in the Delegate Assembly, I will advocate strongly for ensuring appropriate working conditions for contingent faculty members (job security, better salaries, access to benefits, equitable distribution of academic workload and of teaching, research, and service obligations) and for more explicit recognition of their valuable contributions to the university and the broader academic community. These urgent concerns must be continuously discussed at the MLA. As a member of the Delegate Assembly, I will work toward promoting the MLA’s support of all the various constituencies of our profession as researchers, teachers, and public intellectuals of languages, literatures, and cultures. The MLA continues to be an important and influential public voice in these debates and policy decisions, and I would welcome the chance to be part of that effort to the full extent of my capabilities.

**VI. Scholars Residing outside the United States and Canada (1 contest)**

22. **Tahia Abdel Nasser.** Asst. prof. English and comparative lit., American Univ. in Cairo.


**Statement**

As a comparative literature scholar residing outside the United States and Canada, I am interested in representing the concerns of members of this special-interest group in the MLA Delegate Assembly. Over the past few years, the concerns of these scholars have included education in the humanities, pedagogy, academic freedom, and new modes of comparatism in scholarship. I am committed to promoting transcultural dialogue and working with MLA members to address the state of the humanities. Other concerns include collaboration between institutions and among scholars, challenges of access to knowledge, and the study of literature within a global comparative framework. If elected, I would contribute to the growing conversation about the importance and value of the humanities across cultural borders and the vulnerability and relevance of the humanities in current global contexts and work to promote dialogue and scholarship that continue to renew the study of comparative literature on a global scale.
23. **Cristina Featherston.** Prof. English, Universidad Nacional de la Plata.

PhD, Univ. Nacional de la Plata.


**Statement**

Teaching literature in Argentina has been my profession since the eighties, both undergraduate and postgraduate teaching. Also research and research groups. Many years ago I became a member of the MLA. I have learned a lot from its publications, and I have seen a way or many ways of thinking about the humanities at MLA conventions. But even in sessions on Latino-American literature I have always felt that the MLA’s scope is an American academic one. As a scholar residing outside the United States and Canada I would like to strengthen international professional networks and improve the connections between North American professionals and their counterparts residing, teaching, and doing research in other latitudes. New ways of relating would improve the efforts made by the MLA to address current challenges to the humanities all around the world.

**VII. Disability in the Profession (1 contest)**

24. **Jose Alaniz.** Assoc. prof. Slavic langs., Univ. of Washington, Seattle.


**Statement**

As director of the Disability Studies Program at the University of Washington, my interdisciplinary research is motivated by the ongoing struggle of disabled people for full equality in and outside the academy. In particular I examine the representation of people with disabilities in popular culture (especially comics and cinema) in the United States and Eastern/Central Europe. I would bring an overriding concern for international perspectives and traditionally marginalized forms of expression to my work in the Delegate Assembly.
25. **Sari Altschuler.** Asst. prof. English, Northeastern Univ.

PhD, Graduate Center, City Univ. of New York. Assoc. dir., Northeastern Humanities Center, 2017– .

Publications include guest coed., *Early American Literature* (2017); articles in *Early American Studies, Early American Literature, Nineteenth-Century Literature, Disability Studies Quarterly, American Literature, American Literary History, PMLA, Lancet*.

**Statement**

Especially in these times, we have a duty to serve the institutions that make our work possible; it is as vital to be well represented as it is to give back. Having served as a regional delegate, I know how important the assembly’s work is; it would be a privilege to serve again.

I am honored to have been nominated to represent disability in the profession. If elected, I would look forward to working with the Delegate Assembly on issues of equity and access. As a disability studies scholar, I know that our scholarly pursuits are dependent on the conditions that make that work possible. Michael Bérubé drew the MLA’s attention to this with his 2012 Avenues of Access presidential theme—emphasizing that access is an issue cutting across every aspect of academic life, from scholarship and publications to classrooms and conference design—and it would be a privilege to continue this work. We are better each year at making publications, talks, and professional gatherings accessible, but we are not yet doing well enough. As your delegate, I would work to make disability-related issues more apparent, to make access always a key consideration, to include disabled voices, and to be an advocate for the ever-developing insights of disability studies. I would address access in its many forms while also representing the interests of the ever-expanding field to the profession. Finally, I would work with scholars committed to equity and diversity in race, gender, sexuality, and class to develop intersectional solutions.

**VIII. Race and Ethnicity in the Profession (1 contest)**

26. **Michelle Martin-Baron.** Asst. prof. women’s studies, Hobart and William Smith Colls.

PhD, Univ. of California, Berkeley.

Publications include contrib., *Queer Necropolitics* (2014); article in *Quarterly Horse*; reviews in *Journal of Feminist Politics, E-misférica, Performing Ethos*.

27. **Cristina Perez Jimenez.** Asst. prof. English, Manhattan Coll.


Publications include articles in *CENTRO: Journal of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Diálogo: An Interdisciplinary Studies Journal, American Quarterly*; review in *NACLA Report on the Americas*.

**Statement**

My research explores the construction of Latino/a identities during the first half of the twentieth century through sociopolitical and cultural activism. Anchored in comparative ethnic and critical race methodologies, my work challenges views of latindad as a relatively recent phenomenon and lends historical depth to diasporic Caribbean and Latino/a cultural expressions. It also underlines the internal diversity constitutive of Latino/a communities as well as their overlaps with other ethnic groups.

My commitment to broadening knowledge production by and about racialized groups and marginalized communities is integral not only to my scholarship but also to my teaching and outreach and
would guide my advocacy as an MLA delegate. Specifically, I believe universities need to transform their rhetoric of diversity and inclusion into more robust and concrete institutional support for widened curricula in race and ethnicity studies, the hiring and retention of more faculty members of color, and the establishment and expansion of centers and programs for the study of race and ethnicity. I consider these issues to be central to the MLA’s mission, as, in my view, a frontal engagement with race and ethnic issues is indispensable to the ongoing relevance of the humanities. Indeed, in our current political climate, which has bolstered xenophobia and seen mounting racial tensions on campuses and in society at large, the narratives stemming from race- and ethnicity-centered approaches and the voices of faculty members who engage with these issues are of pressing national relevance, crucial for a more informed and nuanced public discourse.

**IX. LGBTQ in the Profession (1 contest)**

28. **GerShun Avilez.** Assoc. prof. English, Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.


**Statement**

My research and teaching focus on the art and experiences of African American and Black diasporic LGBTQ people and on how ideas about gender and sexuality inform the cultural and political realms. In recent years, I have dedicated much of my professional time to thinking carefully about how to institutionalize the study of sexuality and create sound zones of safety and intellectual inquiry as the director of my university’s Program in Sexuality Studies. Given my research and administrative roles, I would really be interested in representing the concerns of LGBTQ faculty members, students, and independent scholars in the profession from all over the country. I would also take the opportunity to think through the specific challenges faced by those of us who teach and study in regions and locations that provide less support, less community, and fewer professional and social protections to LGBTQ scholars. The MLA can and should serve as an important resource for these members of our community and should be a model for all sectors of academia in terms of its policies and recommendations about best practices. I will bring these perspectives to the Delegate Assembly.


**Statement**

As a postcolonialist and a member of the LGBTQ community, I have held a career-long interest in the issues and challenges facing nonheteronormative individuals in the global South. My new book-length project devotes significant time to this topic, and in the classroom I teach a well-received graduate seminar entitled Postcolonial Sexuality Studies.
As a candidate for the MLA assembly, I am interested in intersections of race, gender, and sexuality within the climate of contemporary academia—one in which we witness two trajectories occurring simultaneously. On the one hand, student interest and involvement in LGBTQ issues continues to rise, witnessed by both burgeoning enrollment in related courses and in on-campus activism. On the other, we are also unfortunately still in an era in which significant reactionary movements and measures continue to threaten the safety and liberty of these still-underrepresented, underserved populations. As a national organization, the MLA must endeavor to make sure that we publicly continue to support students from all backgrounds and identity positions, that we provide and promote education designed to increase awareness and foster tolerance, that we continue to advance awareness of LGBTQ histories and literatures in our curricula, and that we provide a national voice for students, instructors, administrators, and higher education communities as a whole. Again, my particular concerns reflect specific attention to those marginalized by multiple dominant communities, but I remain committed to representing all groups along gender/sexuality continua, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation. Thank you for your consideration.

X. Distance and Online Education (1 contest)

30. Joseph A. Dimuro. Continuing lecturer Amer. lit. and cultural studies, Univ. of California, Los Angeles.


Statement

I have been an active member of the MLA for over thirty years and have taught English courses at a variety of institutions, including community colleges, private liberal arts colleges (Haverford), private research universities (Univ. of Pennsylvania, Univ. of Chicago), and large state research universities (UCLA). My teaching and research career has always been joined to student advising in a number of administrative capacities, and I have recently become involved in publishing student guides to literary study in collaboration with the Gale Researcher e-Books project. Having taught and advised a vast range of diverse students over the last thirty years, I believe I have developed an astute grasp of learning styles, educational needs, and the economic challenges of completing the undergraduate degree. While I see the enormous potential of online courses and distance learning for educating a large number of nontraditional students, I am committed to solidifying the MLA’s role in establishing and maintaining the highest standards in the development of course content, delivery, and the criteria of evaluation. I believe the astonishing innovations of digital technology can be tapped to improve these kinds of learning programs. My goal as a delegate will be to ensure such experiences meet the highest expectations of the best classroom teaching.

31. Sushil K. Oswal. Assoc. prof. culture, arts, and communication, Univ. of Washington, Tacoma; affiliate assoc. prof., Univ. of Washington, Seattle.


**Statement**

I am honored to have been nominated for the MLA Delegate Assembly. My research and teaching intersect the fields of postcolonial theory, accessible design, and disability studies. My active engagement with online instruction goes back to 2007, when I was appointed to the Online Writing Instruction (OWI) Committee of the CCCC. I served on this committee for nine years; it produced a 35-page document, *Effective Practices for Online Writing Instruction*, which has been widely employed by writing programs with online course offerings. Through this document a national organization of academics for the first time recognized accessibility as a foundational principle. I have been described as the architect of accessibility in this document. In 2015, this CCCC committee published the first collection on OWI that encompasses accessibility in all aspects of online writing instruction work. Besides contributing the primary chapter on accessible course design for students with disabilities, I also served as an accessibility consultant on the other chapters in this collection.

As a member of the MLA Delegate Assembly, I would like to lead a comprehensive effort at organizing the work of teaching online instruction in language and literature fields and produce a living policy document that would regularize our online courses, offer much-needed guidance on the use of contingent faculty members in teaching canned online courses, and take up the question of ownership of courses and related intellectual property issues to formulate an MLA position that would guide language and literature programs on these matters.

**XI. Composition, Rhetoric, and Writing Programs (1 contest)**


Publications include articles in *Libraries and Culture, Raymond Carver Review, Shakespearean Criticism*.

**Statement**

Many first-year writing students at community colleges come from high schools and homes in which there are no books, let alone computers; they have little common reading experience and even less writing experience. In addition, they have only an attenuated connection to the communities in which they live. As a result, their compositional needs are often significantly different from the needs of their peers at four-year colleges. However, because of the greater influence of four-year colleges and universities in such large, umbrella organizations as the MLA, too often this difference is overlooked. Also overlooked are the needs of
the contingent faculty members at community colleges who, in increasing proportion, teach first-year writing students. It is imperative that they be included fully in shared governance, entitled to academic freedom, and given opportunities for professional development. To this end, the MLA might work more closely with the AAUP and other professional organizations to ensure equity for contingent faculty members, who are often the majority of instructors in rhetoric and composition programs.

As a union and governance leader at my college, I have fought successfully for a robust, inclusive academic freedom statement in our senate bylaws and in our union contract as well as for the promotion and sustainability of shared governance on campus. I have also served on several university-wide governance committees and have presented papers on shared governance and academic freedom. If elected, I will bring expertise and evidenced commitment to shared governance to the Delegate Assembly.


Statement

Many areas of scholarship have impacted the field of composition and rhetoric in recent decades, and we must continue to work to include these threads—for instance, diversity, intercultural communication, service learning, study abroad, visual rhetoric and multimodal composing, assessment, adult learning, educational costs, workplace or technical communication, course management systems, academic integrity and intellectual property, contingent faculty rights, promotion and tenure with nontraditional experiences, writing across the curriculum, and online or hybrid writing instruction. The traditional concept of the rhetorical triangle has expanded. In addition to reader, writer, and text, we must examine ways in which location and modality impact writing and the teaching of writing. I work to connect writing, literature, film, and technical communication. This is the work I’ve been doing at Texas Tech University, as a coeditor of the
XII. Language Programs (1 contest)


Statement

Much has changed since I began teaching at the university level. My state university has been greatly impacted by the local government, which, without revenue from a state income tax, cannot adequately fund higher education. Despite having a long history of teaching Asian languages, the bread and butter for graduate programs in Asian studies, there is precious little to financially support graduate students. Proximity to Asia, the continuing interest in Asian popular culture, and a dramatic increase in international, mostly Asian, students brings students to our classrooms, but the administration is still hard pressed to make graduate student funding a priority. To add insult to injury, under our current national government, Title VI centers, vital for language support, face threatening cuts.

As a delegate I plan to advocate for languages and literature in the humanities, particularly Asian languages and literatures. Despite occupying forty percent of the world and including some of the world’s largest populations, Asia figures too little in the humanities in North America. The MLA amply represents the West and must pay more than lip service to the rest. Born and raised in Asia and involved in teaching about Northeast Asia for over twenty years, I take seriously the MLA’s mission to advocate for in-depth language study beyond English. Such study is vital in our increasingly globalized world.

35. Dominique Mary Licops. Assoc. prof. of instruction in French, Northwestern Univ.


Publications include contrib., Reading Communities: A Dialogical Approach to Classical and Contemporary Works (2016); articles in Nouvelles études francophones, Women in French Studies.

Statement

I have been a member of the non-tenure-eligible (NTE) faculty since 2002, first as an adjunct lecturer, then as a full-time lecturer, and now as an associate professor of instruction in the Department of French and Italian at Northwestern University. I’ve also been directing the French Language Program since 2012 and organize the training of graduate teaching assistants for language instruction. My main interest is in promoting and strengthening foreign language teaching at a time when enrollments are declining and when students increasingly choose shorter study-abroad programs. Yet foreign language learning is essential to our students’ development as global citizens. I am interested in improving working conditions for foreign
language faculty members, in particular NTE faculty members, who paradoxically have heavy teaching loads and little or no support or time for research and yet are expected to constantly be on the cutting edge of language instruction and innovate in their courses.

XIII. Community Colleges (2 contests)

36. **Tim Arnold.** Asst. prof. English, Blue Ridge Community Coll., VA.
   
   PhD, Univ. of Kentucky. Adjunct Instructor of the Year, Blue Ridge Community Coll., 2015.
   
   Publications include contrib., *St. James Encyclopedia of Popular Culture* (1999); articles in *Virginia Quarterly Review, Border States*.
   
   **Statement**
   
   I wish to serve for two main reasons: first, the preservation of the humanities and critical thinking in a culture where they are often devalued. As an assistant professor at a community college, I am in a position to teach my students (many of whom are in two-year noncurricular, vocational programs and are taking freshman-level composition) the importance of literature and the values it teaches. Second, with community college education becoming an increasingly viable option, it’s important to advocate for what is unique in community colleges—lower cost, quality of instruction, transferability and portability of courses. Community colleges are not merely miniature four-year institutions. Government and business entities that complain about low graduation rates at community colleges are loud and wrong regarding the mission of community colleges.

37. **Douglas L. Howard.** Prof. English, Suffolk Community Coll., Ammerman Campus, State Univ. of New York.
   
   
   
   **Statement**
   
   I am honored to be nominated for this position and would, if elected, do my best to represent the interests of two-year colleges in the Delegate Assembly. I certainly would support the MLA’s ongoing efforts to deal with the attack on the humanities and the marginalization of the liberal arts. As colleges increasingly refocus to keep pace with advances in the STEM fields and restructure curricula to offer more specialized training, humanities programs find themselves in a reduced role, mattering less to students and meaning less on our campuses.
   
   At the two-year level, this reduction and these changing attitudes may very well be the gateway to increased teaching loads, larger class sizes, fewer course offerings, and a loss of full-time faculty lines, if not the end of some departments altogether. (At a number of community colleges, these things are a reality already.) More important, these changes will prevent our students from developing the creative problem-solving and critical-thinking skills that will help them to be successful, whether they go on for advanced undergraduate study or out into the workforce.
   
   While I would, as a member of this assembly, be interested in discussing other proposed responses to this issue, I would like to see us cultivate more intradisciplinary partnerships among faculty members at all
levels, from public school to graduate school, and explore more interdisciplinary initiatives, by working collaboratively with professional organizations and scholarly communities in the STEM areas.

☼

38. **Angeles Donoso Macaya.** Assoc. prof. modern langs., Borough of Manhattan Community Coll., City Univ. of New York (CUNY).


   **Statement**

   It would be an honor to serve in the MLA Delegate Assembly as a representative for community colleges.

   The large majority of students who attend community colleges come from economically underprivileged backgrounds or are immigrants and/or racial minorities. Precisely because community colleges are truly inclusive institutions, open to anyone who wants to learn, regardless of their background and academic experiences, we need to make sure that our students receive the best education possible. Community colleges are often described as powerful engines of social mobility. But this powerful engine can’t function properly if it relies on overworked full-timers and overworked and underpaid part-timers.

   Indeed, the profession has dramatically changed in the past few decades. Besides teaching the same number of courses previous generations have taught, full-time faculty members in tenure-track positions at community colleges are now also expected to do much more scholarly work, including applying for (and hopefully being awarded) highly competitive national grants, without all the necessary support to do so. Meanwhile, and perhaps more worrisome, colleges have seen a dramatic increase in adjunct positions and a correlated decrease in full-time positions.

   If elected, I would advocate for workload parity between senior colleges and community colleges, pay parity, and overall better working conditions for adjunct instructors.

39. **Fleur Prade.** Asst. prof. French, Central Oregon Community Coll.

   PhD, Ecole Supérieure Robert de Sorbon. Previous appointments: Tulane Univ., Penn State Univ.

   **Statement**

   As a long standing member, I have a good sense of the work of the MLA as an influential professional forum for the study of languages and literatures and a vital guardian of the humanities. This has never been more important than in the current academic climate that favors STEM classes. I am keenly aware of the challenges the MLA faces: how to make languages central to our diverse culture, improve working conditions for teachers of languages and literatures, and help lawmakers understand the crucial importance of languages and literatures.

   The MLA should engage in vigorous debates on the major issues of our time, especially those that deal with our expertise in languages and literatures. To do so the organization must welcome innovations in the field of language learning, expand its areas of focus, and embrace new venues for language and literature. This includes helping raise the reputation of community colleges, which are still seen as less important than four-year institutions. Too often young scholars are told that community colleges are not prestigious enough, that the only option they have is to go to four-year institutions. Sadly, this traditional philosophy is leaving many new PhD recipients without jobs.
If elected, using my experience of teaching in both four-year institutions and a community college, I would push for an expansion of the role of community colleges in the fields of languages and literatures, listen to the concerns of those whose voices are not always heard, and push for intellectual diversity.

XIV. Academic Freedom (1 contest)

40. Claudio Fogu. Assoc. prof. Italian studies, Univ. of California, Santa Barbara.


Statement

I have not been a member of the MLA for long and come from a background that is more militant in faculty associations and the AAUP than in professional organizations, but the latest debates and votes in the association (i.e., BDS) and the current political situation in this country have reminded me that academic freedom and freedom of speech are as integral to the mission of any organization having to do with language and writing as any discussion about the professional concerns of literature scholars or about the future of literary theory and criticism in our increasingly digitalized culture. I want to fight for cultivating in the association an awareness of the power relations inherent in the acts of speaking and writing and therefore also to take into consideration the many levels of more or less subtle suppression that subaltern languages or people suffer in a world in which 50% of the existing languages are said to be at risk of disappearing over the next one hundred years.

41. Elaine Freedgood. Prof. English, New York Univ.


Statement

Academic freedom is enjoyed, conditionally and contingently, by a relative handful of intellectuals in the world. From the apartheid experienced by students in Palestine and incarcerated people in the United States, to academics in Turkey who have lost their jobs by the thousands, to tenure cases in which racism,
sexism, and homophobia lead to failure, the mission of the MLA should be to take strong stands on the right of access to education and employment and on the speech it can generate. Our conversations have been limited by elitism and national or “Western” provincialisms, although the scholarship that would help us to reconfigure ourselves as thinkers has long been circulating—widely in some cases, obscurely in others. Scholarship also needs its freedom, whether or not it is published by major presses in major places. Indeed, an inquiry into the gatekeeping performed by large presses—both university and trade—could well be a part of my mission, if I am elected. As the largest organization in the humanities in the world, it is our responsibility as MLA members to guarantee the literal and figurative movement of the freest possible minds.

**XV. Academic Labor (1 contest)**

42. **Christopher John Newfield.** Prof. English, Univ. of California, Santa Barbara.


43. **Robert Samuels.** Lecturer writing, Univ. of California, Santa Barbara.


Statement

For the last twenty years, I have been a leader in promoting the rights of and employment protections for non-tenure-track faculty members. As president of UC-AFT, a union representing over five thousand lecturers in the University of California system, I have helped to negotiate and maintain one of the best contracts in the country for contingent faculty members. I have also been a leader in the free public college movement and have written on academic labor issues for a variety of media outlets.

I would like to help the MLA be more proactive in addressing issues regarding academic labor. As a professional organization, we have to defend the profession and promote better working conditions for all faculty members.

XVI. Libraries and Archives (1 contest)

44. Brian Croxall. Asst. research prof. digital humanities, Brigham Young Univ., UT.


Statement

During graduate school, I had a fellowship in the Emory Libraries. There, I gained a new perspective on the institution that had enabled my research as well as fed my childhood appetite for reading. Later, I built on this experience with a CLIR postdoctoral fellowship, which placed me in a full-time library position. Academic libraries have been my home for seven years now, and I hope to work closely with them for the rest of my career. For this reason, I am honored to be nominated to represent Libraries and Archives in the Delegate Assembly. Given the foundational importance of these institutions for teaching and scholarship, I believe it is critical for librarians and archivists to be present and to be heard at the MLA.

I have amplified those voices for the last four years as a member of the MLA’s Executive Council. In that capacity, I have worked to advocate for net neutrality and for the MLA making more of its data open and available to researchers. As the council created the MLA’s strategic plan, my colleagues and I called for the organization to expand its commitment to career diversity. Such diversity means graduate preparation for non-tenure-track employment—librarians, archivists, K–12 and two-year-college teachers, nonprofit work, corporate work, and more—and the inclusion of those professionals in the governing bodies of the MLA. I look forward to continuing to help the MLA and its members show how the study of languages and literatures prepares one for many careers.
PhD, Michigan State Univ.; MLS, Univ. of Maryland. Rare Book Cataloging Roundtable Comm.,  
Amer. Assn. of Law Libraries, 2014—.  
Publications include contrib. (of trans.), *Critical Essays on Gustave Flaubert* (1986); articles in  
*Legal Miscellanea*, *Excavatio*, *Annual of Foreign Films and Literatures*, *Nineteenth-Century French Studies*;  
reviews in *SHARP News*, *Legal Miscellanea*, *Nineteenth-Century French Studies*, *L’Esprit Créateur*.  

**Statement**  
My alternative career trajectory gives me insight into the issues faced by many in our profession in  
an era of shrinking budgets and generally diminishing support for the arts and humanities. I am currently a  
cataloging librarian in an academic law library after a long career teaching French language and literature in  
a variety of settings, having reinvented myself several times after a tenure-track position at a liberal arts  
university was eliminated in a departmental reorganization. My current responsibilities as a cataloger include  
analyzing and providing access to Romance language materials published from the 16th century to the  
present and allow me to extend my original grounding in language and literary history to interdisciplinary  
studies in law and literature and the history of the book. Cataloging often involves original research that  
leads to knowledge organized in a collaboratively maintained network rather than in a traditional critical text,  
perhaps providing a possible alternative model for the humanist endeavor. Outside the academy, my stint as a  
freelance journalist writing about LGBTQ culture from a queer theory perspective helped me find a voice as  
a local public intellectual, perhaps not the worse use of my humanist training. As a delegate, I would hope to  
provide leadership in advocating for the profession, applying humanist insights to current issues both inside  
and outside the academy, and in promoting innovative ways to apply expertise in literary and language  
studies within a rapidly shifting technological, cultural, and political environment.

**Part IV: Voting for Regional Delegates**

Twenty-one persons will be elected to regional seats in the assembly. The term of office will be  
from 8 January 2018 through the close of the January 2021 convention. The numbers preceding the  
nominees’ names correspond to the numbers assigned to the nominees on the paper ballot sheet.  
The names of the regional delegates with continuing terms in 2018 appear at the MLA Web  
site (www.mla.org/del_assembly_members).

*Vote in only one region but in any or all of the contests within that one region.*

**I. New England and Eastern Canada (3 contests)**

*Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont; New Brunswick, Newfoundland and  
  Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Québec*

100. **Taiwo Adetunji Osinubi.** Assoc. prof. English, Univ. of Western Ontario.  
PhD, Univ. of British Columbia. Previous appointment: Université de Montréal, 2006–12. SSHRC  
Publications include guest coed., *Research in African Literatures* (2016); contrib., *Literature of  
Travel and Exploration: An Encyclopedia* (2003), *Bridges across Chasms: Towards a Transcultural Future  
in Caribbean Literature* (2004); articles in *College Literature: A Journal of Critical Literary Studies*,  
*Research in African Literatures*, University of Toronto Quarterly, Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial  
Literary Inquiry, Eastern African Literary and Cultural Studies, Journal of Postcolonial Writing,  
Culture, and Society, Comparative Studies of South Asian, Africa, and the Middle East, Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature.

Statement

I consider the nomination to stand for election as a regional delegate an opportunity to serve the MLA. I teach postcolonial literatures with an emphasis on the intersections between Africa and the Americas. When I served as a member of the African literatures division executive committee, I realized the service offered an opportunity for face-to-face discussions about the issues affecting the profession, the universities in which we work, and the lives of academics. My objective in my previous division work was to bring to the fore issues overlooked in African literatures. I consider the 2009 panel on African LGBTQ representations a highlight of my service. As an academic in Canada, I will bring professional experience from universities in Quebec and Ontario to discussions at the MLA. I am deeply invested in bringing Canadian perspectives to the pedagogy of postcolonial literatures of the African diaspora and to current debates about transformations in the university system globally. Such cross-border approaches and exchanges are essential to teaching literatures about experiences of marginalized populations, to creating international university cultures, and to fostering graduate student experiences that respond to the interdependence between our respective regionalisms and an increasingly globalized university culture.


Statement

My research engages in an interdisciplinary and multilingual approach to postcolonial literature alongside theories of space and environment. More recently, it has also focused on contemporary dystopian fiction and neoliberal spatial imagination, suggesting that contemporary Anglophone fiction is itself, in one way or another, postcolonial because it bears traces of colonial history and its discursive legacies.

My preference for transnational and multilingual approaches to scholarly study reflects, no doubt, my personal experiences and academic training, which involve multiple cultural contexts: a native of Belgrade, Serbia, I have subsequently lived, worked, and studied in a few different countries and am particularly attentive to narratives of displacement and cultural negotiation.

My current book project explores the psychological impact of physical space on its users’ imagination and is provisionally titled The Psychogeography of Lost Minds: Literary and Cinematic Representations of Distorted Space. This study will focus on 20th- and 21st-century novels and films that redefine space and environment as tangible expressions of the protagonists’ social and economic marginalization in the contemporary neoliberal world. In this respect, my second project expands the core ideas from my first monograph, Locating the Destitute: Space and Identity in Caribbean Fiction (U of Virginia P, 2014), where I was concerned with the narratives of postcolonial spatial dispossession as a way of interrogating the contemporary legacies of colonial history.


Publications include Life on the Tenure Track: Lessons from the First Year (2005), On Course: A Week-by-Week Guide to Your First Semester of College Teaching (2008), Cheating Lessons: Learning from
Candidate Information – 37


Statement

Both the humanities in general and the profession of literary studies in particular remain under continued pressure to demonstrate the value of our work in the public sphere. The most effective venues we have to make our case are the classrooms in which MLA members work every day to help students improve their writing and thinking skills, recognize the power of the word to shape the world, and promote the pleasures and challenges of literature and the arts. The MLA can and should play a more substantive role in supporting that work and acknowledging the centrality of teaching and learning to its membership. Historically the MLA has done an excellent job of maintaining and promoting the enterprise of literary scholarship but has not worked quite so effectively to promote and support excellence in teaching and learning. The vast majority of faculty members in higher education work at teaching-focused institutions and would benefit from a greater emphasis on how we can sustain and improve the work of literary studies through excellence in undergraduate education. The MLA would also benefit from such an emphasis, as it would help draw new members to the convention and new contributors to the MLA’s publishing program, both as authors and readers. My focus as a regional delegate will be on promoting this perspective both within the MLA and more broadly to the profession of higher education as a whole.


Statement

I am honored to be nominated to represent the region of New England and Eastern Canada. I support the MLA’s public advocacy for the humanities. I am also excited to see that one of the MLA’s strategic priorities is to continue the internationalization initiative. This is the right thing to do. An effort to expand the MLA’s global reach, however, should not be directed merely by practical benefits alone but should be informed by a deeper understanding about the humanities’ place in the world. I firmly believe that humanists who are sensitively and skillfully attuned to multilingualism and regional/local differences have a particularly significant role to play in shaping the future of the world. Let us not be discouraged to think otherwise. If elected, I will advocate for a concrete and reflective assessment about the opportunities as well as the challenges brought by globalization to the humanities. I will also support the endeavor to develop innovative methods to engage the public in diverse perspectives, cultures, and languages by drawing on the rich materials of world humanities. To this important job I bring my teaching experience and my scholarship on Chinese fiction and film, my broad research interests in world literature and cinema, my administrative experience as the chair of a modern languages and literatures department, and my active involvement in the MLA as a panelist, a roundtable organizer, a forum committee member, and a PMLA Advisory Committee member.

Statement

As the daughter of a retired French high-school English teacher and a worker from Côte d’Ivoire (Ivory Coast), I have always felt myself in the middle of different worlds. I grew up on the outskirts of France’s third largest city, Lyon, in an ethnically diverse neighborhood. Today I regard the place where I was raised as a striking example of France’s failure to integrate all its citizens. Dreams of social and ethnic harmony and diversity have long since disappeared, and my childhood neighborhood now feels like an urban ghetto, where socially disadvantaged immigrants from North and sub-Saharan Africa are isolated by the not so egalitarian French system. From a young age, I have asked myself what it takes to make an outcast of the Other. What are the complex processes that simultaneously assert the power of one group and drive others to the margins of society?

During the course of my studies, I was drawn to literature that deals with marginalization, self-identification, and racism, themes that resonated with my experiences and those of my family. After my BA in French and English studies, I received a master’s in history and literature from Columbia University. Now a doctoral student at McGill University, I explore how the identities of the jeunes de banlieue (the young residents of French housing projects) are shaped in the francophone contemporary novel. In my view, the MLA should extend initiatives to really connect researchers from the five continents and, as such, become a bridge between different nations.


Statement

Graduate students and contingent faculty members face unprecedented challenges today between, on the one hand, the devaluation of humanities scholarship and, on the other, balancing the demands of traditional graduate study with preparation for alternatives to academia, digital humanities work, and public scholarship. As a graduate student representative, I would aim to further the conversation about how the MLA can best defend the interests of graduate students and contingent faculty members while these evolutions are under way. This could mean developing more resources to help students protect their identities and their intellectual labor as they engage with and create digital resources, helping departments consider best practices, or offering more tools to enhance the viability of currently less represented work, such as teaching literature in prisons or in therapeutic contexts. I believe these are exciting, if transitional, times to be doing literary and cultural work and would consider it an honor to work on behalf of my peers on these pressing issues.

II. New York State (3 contests)

106. Hilda Chacón. Prof. Spanish and Latin Amer. lit., Nazareth Coll.


Publications include contrib. (essays), One Wound for Another / Una herida por otra (2005), Speaking desde las heridas: Ciertestimonios Transfronterizos/Transborder (2008), Mexico Reading the United States (2009), How the Films of Pedro Almodovar Draw Upon and Influence Spanish Society (2012), Poesía y poéticas digitales/electrónicas/tecos/new-media en América Latina: Definiciones y exploraciones (2016); contrib. (short stories), Ellas también cuentan (2003), Anthology of Memories of Hispanic
Grandmothers as Remembered by Their Grandchildren (2012); articles in Letras hispanas, Revista de literatura mexicana contemporánea, Explicación de textos literarios, Istmo, Letras femeninas, DataGramaZero (Brazil), CiberLetras; creative writing in Letras femeninas, Ámbitos feministas, Diálogo, Revista Ostara (Mexico).

Statement
I am a professor of Spanish and Latin American culture and literature who has worked for eighteen years at a liberal arts institution in Rochester, New York. As many of us, I struggle on a daily basis to balance scholarship, teaching, committee duties, service-learning projects, and service to the profession, while making a conscious effort as a world citizen to donate my expertise in ways that advocate for human rights.

After receiving my BA in journalism in college, I worked as a journalist for over a decade, writing investigative reports for newspapers, news agencies, radio, and TV. I also served as a media anchorperson in my native Costa Rica. Thus, my scholarship has been permeated by academic discussions of mass media and citizens’ empowerment and, more recently, by the cultural shift posed by cyberspace.

If elected, I will be honored to bring the concerns of colleagues in the state of New York to the MLA assembly. I am an active member in different national and regional organizations, which would give me the opportunity to contact colleagues across the state.

Personally, I am deeply worried about the current political climate and its impact on higher education; as long as education remains a privilege and not a civil right, we are destroying the future of the nation. As a modern language professor, I also see with great concern the lack of opportunities for many in our society to become informed global citizens who have cultural fluency about the rest of the world.

107. Kathryn Anne Everly. Prof. Spanish, Syracuse Univ.

PhD, Univ. of Texas, Austin. Research grant (2009) and event grant (2011), Prog. for Cultural Cooperation between Spain’s Ministry of Culture and United States Univs.; speakers’ grants, Central New York Humanities Corridor, 2012–. Florence Howe Award (for outstanding feminist scholarship), WCML, 2009; Award for Excellence in Master’s Level Teaching, Coll. of Arts and Sciences, Syracuse Univ., 2013. Ed. board, Symposium: A Quarterly Journal in Modern Literature, 2002–.


Statement
I consider the Delegate Assembly of the MLA a site of power and influence at regional, national, and international levels. If elected to the Delegate Assembly, I will make it a priority to reach out to colleagues at all levels of experience and employment and listen to what they have to say. I will then take the pressing issues to the MLA for discussion. As members of the MLA we are poised to contribute to and influence the national and international conversations about the necessity of cultural exchange, language studies, and humanities studies. We must make our voices strong and encourage these debates. I will bring my experience as an interdisciplinary scholar and as a recent chair of the Humanities Council at Syracuse University to the role of assembly delegate.
108. **Carole Kennedy Harris.** Assoc. prof. English, New York City Coll. of Technology, City Univ. of New York (CUNY).


**Statement**

I teach writing and literature at New York City College of Technology, part of the City University of New York. With its variety of career-focused associate’s and bachelor’s degree programs, City Tech gives many of its students, often the first in their families to go to college, just the leg up they need to achieve a financially secure future. Giving my students permission to see themselves as part of a large, creative, and intellectual world is at the heart of my teaching. However, while many of our students succeed, many struggle with huge financial deficits. I, meanwhile, like many faculty members, precariously juggle time-intensive competing commitments to both my students and my research. It’s clear that the humanities urgently need better funding. As a union activist with the Professional Staff Congress, I have fought successfully for better investment in CUNY as well as course load equity on my campus.

The considerable negotiation skills I’ve learned in my union work will be invaluable in the MLA Delegate Assembly as we work toward a better future for our profession. I received my PhD in 1993; in the thirteen years it took to secure a tenure-track job in a difficult job market, I taught short-term at a variety of campuses, both public and private. My years as a professional itinerant have given me a wide-lens perspective on how different academic institutions operate and on how the MLA can better serve its most vulnerable members, especially adjunct faculty members and graduate students.

109. **Vincent Odamtten.** Prof. lit., Hamilton Coll.


**Statement**

I have been teaching in the United States of America for more than thirty years and have focused much of my energy and passion on teaching undergraduates and pursuing my scholarship. My initial introduction to the MLA was as an arena for job hunting, and I honestly did not then fully appreciate its value. Nevertheless, its size ensured that it always remained in my mind. To that end, over the years its function as a champion of the humanities and the diverse activities that its members and nonmembers do in and outside of the academy have become increasingly apparent. More particularly, in this age of economic
privation, a virulent anti-intellectualism, and a xenophobic paranoia born from an unwillingness to critically engage the world of facts and imaginatively seek solutions for the betterment of all, I see the MLA as a forum in which new, well-reasoned ideas may flourish. Should I be fortunate to be elected a member of the Delegate Assembly for New York, I will do all in my power and ability to advance the struggle against the seeming tide of global and local intolerance.

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110. Conall Cash. Grad. student French, Cornell Univ.


Statement

I am eager to become an active member of the MLA Delegate Assembly as a graduate student representing the New York State region. I wish to use this position to advance the best of what the study of literature, language, and culture entails, namely a commitment to social justice, academic freedom, and the values of empathy and critical understanding.

111. Felipe Hugueno. Grad. student Spanish, Univ. at Buffalo, State Univ. of New York.


Publications include creative work in Al norte de la cordillera: Antologia de voces andinas in los Estados Unidos (2016), Antología de poemas de lujo: Primer certamen de poesía (2016).

Statement

As a graduate student who is becoming more involved in the humanities, I can attest to the growing concern among colleagues regarding the job market. Especially nowadays, the humanities are a target for reduced or even discontinued funding from the state and federal governments. As a delegate, I would want to speak for those who feel the same and who are worried about the future of our field of study. These matters are significant not only to us, who wish to make a difference in the teaching and research spheres, but also to our students, who invest their time and money for a meaningful learning experience. As a student who is on the path to becoming an educator, I feel the responsibility to make a difference because I still believe education is the best way to transform our society.
III. Middle Atlantic (3 contests)

Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, West Virginia


    PhD, Univ. of California, Davis. Doctoral fellowship, Univ. of California Inst. for Mexico and the United States / Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnologia, 2005–10; Tinker Foundation Field Research Award (for research at the Centro de Estudios Martianos, Havana), Hemispheric Inst. on the Americas, Univ. of California, Davis, 2009; research fellowship, Cuban Heritage Collection, Univ. of Miami, 2010; Profs. for the Future fellowship, Univ. of California, Davis, 2010–11; Marilyn Yarborough Dissertation and Teaching Fellowship, Kenyon Coll., 2011–12; NEH summer inst. fellowship, 2014; Amer. Antiquarian Soc. short-term fellowship, 2015. Site comm., Latina/o Studies Assn., 2016–18; Amer. Lit. Assn.


    Statement

    I joined the English and comparative literature faculty at the University of Maryland (UMD) in fall 2012, soon after completing my dissertation at the University of California, Davis. Since then, I have served as an affiliate faculty member in the Department of American Studies, the U.S. Latina/o Studies Program, the Asian American Studies Program, and the Latin American Studies Center. In the past five years, I have also contributed to my community by serving on advisory boards for a number of programs within my institution, committees looking at salary parity and compression, and committees guiding graduate students through the academic job market.

    However, as a scholar of American multiethnic literature in an increasingly hostile political climate, felt acutely at UMD with the recent murder of Richard Collins III, my commitment to the university and the profession has been intertwined with my sense of obligation to the wider community. I bring to the Delegate Assembly my dedication not only to addressing issues as diverse as protecting academic freedom and attending to the declining number of undergraduate majors but also to ensuring that colleges and universities continue to serve as sites where better and well-informed citizens are created. In the face of national education and immigration policies that are limiting the funding and resources allocated to students and to colleges and universities, UMD’s location bordering the seat of American government provides me with a unique opportunity to advocate for the protection and expansion of the privileges academics hold dear.


    Publications include coed., The Lure of Whitehead (2014); articles in American Literature, American Literary History, New Literary History, Studies in American Fiction, Cabinet.

    Statement

    I would like to join the MLA Delegate Assembly to address the rise of adjunct labor within higher education and to work toward articulating a strong vision for the humanities in the face of shrinking budgets. I see these tasks as related, not only in the straightforward economic way but also in the sense that our account of what we do and why it matters should counteract the bottom-line thinking that has driven the increase in contingent labor. I think the MLA and its members should lead by example in establishing practices of fair treatment for our students and our colleagues. This will involve assessing the state of graduate education and the way it remains out of sync with the job market. As our most important body for collective action and advocacy, I think that the MLA must take a leading role in these efforts.
I have trained and worked in a variety of institutions and hope to use this experience to ensure that the Delegate Assembly draws on and addresses the range of positions and situations represented by its members.

114. **David A. Pettersen.** Assoc. prof. French, Univ. of Pittsburgh.

PhD, Univ. of California, Berkeley. Accueil Pro fellowship, Coopération et Mobilité Internationales Rhône-Alpes, fall 2015.


**Statement**

The MLA Delegate Assembly offers a key forum where we can discuss the issues confronting our profession, foster institutional change at a national and international level, and most crucially develop tool kits of information and strategies for members to use in their advocacy for change at their local institutions.

I am concerned by the diminished place of language, literature, and culture departments within academic institutions and by negative public perceptions of our field. The continuing rise in the use of contingent labor, the marginalization of foreign language requirements and study abroad in student curricula, and the inadequate funding of humanities graduate students all signal a shift in the cultural value attributed to our field. Indeed, I am dismayed when colleagues in other departments, parents, and even some students tell me that there’s no need to study languages because one can get by in English everywhere.

Through my administrative role as associate director of the Film Studies Program, I have sought to create dialogue between departments that operate in English and those that operate in other languages. I have also developed faculty exchanges, study abroad programs, and scholarly collaborations with academic institutions in France that work in and across different languages. I hope to bring that spirit of cooperation and exchange to the Delegate Assembly.

I believe that the MLA can play a crucial role in ongoing efforts to readjust public perceptions of and institutional priorities around our field, and I would be honored to be a part of them.

115. **Shuang Shen.** Assoc. prof. comparative lit. and Asian studies, Penn State Univ., University Park.


Statement

As an international student who came to the United States from China in pursuit of a graduate education, I have been keenly aware of the rewards and challenges of venturing beyond the boundaries of one’s native language, a national literature, or a familiar disciplinary field. I have done work in multiple fields and areas, including Asian American and Asian diaspora literatures, global anglophone literature, comparative literature, and Chinese and Asian literature, always seeking to find intersections among these fields. The Modern Language Association has always provided me with an accessible and friendly means to find an intellectual cohort with similar multi- and interdisciplinary interests. With this experience in mind, I believe that the MLA should

a. Continue to foster collaboration, dialogue, and comparative studies among humanistic fields focused on different geographical areas, not just between the non-West and the West but also within the non-West and the Global South.

b. Further expand the study of non-Anglophone literatures and cultures from comparative and global perspectives.

c. Consider holding the MLA convention occasionally outside the United States or organizing a different version of the MLA convention for locations outside North America, for instance, in Asia, Africa, or Latin America.

d. Make the scholarship by scholars situated outside North America more visible by devoting special issues of PMLA or other MLA publications to a global exchange of ideas.

116. **Tim Bruno.** Grad. student English, Univ. of Maryland, College Park.


Publications include article in *Journal of American Studies.*

Statement

I am honored to be nominated to the assembly. If elected, I will work with the MLA to rebuild academic worker power by advocating for improved labor conditions for the most vulnerable members of the profession and for a reinvigorated union culture. My fellow graduate students and adjuncts need living wages, benefits, and a path to better jobs. I also echo the recent AAUP election statement asserting unionization as a last, best defense for academic freedom. As a major professional organization, the MLA must publicly endorse and enable efforts for better conditions and unionization. Forging collective power from the bottom up is a feasible way to check the professional crises we all face—defunding the humanities, institutional austerity measures, adjunctification, curtailed academic freedom, rising racist violence on campuses. We can empower the entire profession by protecting our most vulnerable members and organizing ourselves, cutting across differences of region, rank, and institution.

I learned this commitment to the shared good of higher education largely from attending state universities: taking classes alongside other first-generation college students, I witnessed what language and literature bring to the public. Now I am fortunate enough to testify to my own students about our work. But my approach to the profession is influenced by my social justice activism and my commitment to accessible education. Throughout my graduate career, I have engaged in living-wage organizing and prison education work, centering marginalized publics in an effort to make higher education more just for all.
117. **Hao Jun Tam.** Grad. student English, Univ. of Pennsylvania.


Publications include review in *Journal of Vietnamese Studies*.

**Statement**

In addition to representing the interests and needs of scholars in the Middle Atlantic region, as a Delegate Assembly member I will seek to increase support for job-seeking graduate students, especially those who have been on the market multiple times. This stage is the most crucial for each PhD’s career, but too often they receive little support from anyone other than their committee and institution—and this support may not be adequate at all. As the MLA provides the opportunity for these candidates and their prospective employers to meet, the organization can try to ease the difficult process and make each candidate feel truly valued as an MLA member. The MLA should strengthen its commitment to their success.

My second goal as a delegate is to make sure that the MLA does not trivialize but confronts two current charges leveled at university members in the wake of Donald Trump’s election, namely that the “cultural elite” is out of touch with the general population and that free speech is being threatened on college campuses. As scholars and writers, I believe we can do more to promote public accountability, democracy in institutions, heterodoxy of thoughts and ideas, and open access to knowledge. Being an important representative body for the arts and humanities, the MLA should step up alongside universities to challenge openly those two charges, not only in words but also in deeds.

**IV. Great Lakes (3 contests)**

**Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin**

118. **Christopher J. Lukasik.** Assoc. prof. English, Purdue Univ., West Lafayette.


**Statement**

I welcome the opportunity to work with my colleagues in the MLA Delegate Assembly to establish priorities, devise policy, and take action on a number of critical issues currently facing the profession. As a delegate, I would encourage the MLA to focus on two issues in particular. The first is the integrity and equity of labor practices within the field. I would encourage the MLA to continue to find ways to promote diversity in the workforce, communicate the value of academic freedom and tenure, monitor hiring and promotion practices, and facilitate the interests and organization of adjunct and graduate labor. The second issue is the relation of our discipline to other disciplines (both within the humanities and across the STEM areas) and to the public at large. The MLA should consider how we might better communicate our organization’s purpose and the value of our work to the public.

119. No candidate


**Statement**

I am honored to be nominated to the Delegate Assembly. The many challenges facing the members of our organization are daunting and well known: modern language programs face cuts; graduate programs are closing; English and modern language departments run on contingent labor; non-STEM fields are de-emphasized; the humanities face an uncertain future. This well-worn narrative, however, misses the fact that the same federal budget that recently proposed eliminating the NEH and the NEA also proposed massive cuts for the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, and other agencies funding science research. In this context of reduced resources, fields are often pitted against one another. I believe that the most intransigent problems the members of our organization face cannot be properly addressed without approaching them from the perspective of interconnectivity. Every discipline is facing cuts, and every discipline is facing the external pressures of economic instrumentalization. As a delegate, I will encourage the MLA to pursue coalition building with major professional organizations outside English and the modern languages through the drafting of joint statements on a range of issues: from research funding and objectives for K–12 education to contingent labor and defending small but necessary programs in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. I believe another component of addressing these long-term problems is connecting organization members to one another’s work and that work to the public. I will encourage the MLA to increase and improve its use of *MLA Commons* to enhance public engagement.

121. No candidate
122. **Andisheh Ghaderi.** Grad. student French, Univ. of Kansas (Michigan State Univ. at time of nomination).


Publications include articles in *Plume, Review of Social Studies, Law, and Psychology.*

123. **Kathryn Mara.** Grad. student African cultural studies, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison.


Publications include reviews in *Research in African Literatures, African Studies Review.*

**Statement**

I feel privileged to have been given the opportunity to serve as a graduate student representative in the Delegate Assembly, particularly in such challenging times as these. Indeed, 2017 has been a difficult, if not frightening, year for the humanities, but we would be hard-pressed to find a time that has not been rough for us, when our value has not been questioned and our budgets have not faced attack. Now, this is not to belittle the very real and visceral threat that the current administration poses but only to say that we have persevered thus far. We craft inspired memes. We organize successful protests. More important, we continue to produce insightful and significant scholarship, perhaps the greatest protest of all. I am most interested in pursuing initiatives focused on area studies as well as outreach and inclusion efforts for those not represented in the university more broadly. With or without a successful bid to be your representative, I will continue to fight for the humanities.

**V. South (3 contests)**

*Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virgin Islands, Virginia*


PhD, Univ. of Pittsburgh.

Publications include article in *Revista iberoamericana.*

125. **Dierdra Reber.** Asst. prof. Spanish, Univ. of Kentucky.


Precarity has increasingly become naturalized within the fabric of our profession, affecting both individuals coping with the casualization of labor and the decline of the tenure track and institutions facing arts and humanities funding cuts and persistent threats to those same disciplines at the level of institutional structure. I have always viewed professional service as intellectually and ethically inseparable from scholarship and pedagogy; the mounting crisis at hand has only increased the urgency of the call that I have always felt to contribute to our profession’s health and stability. As a graduate student leader, I fought for stipend increases, health care packages, support for graduate parents, and professionalization; as a faculty member, I have fought for transparency of institutional communication and decision-making, increased faculty governance, and the preservation of humanities departments and programs. My service history runs the gamut from undergraduate and graduate curricular redesign to graduate and faculty grant selection to college governance, university senate, and sitting on a committee to select a university president. These experiences have given me a sense of institutional and professional structures and logic and bearings for how to advocate most powerfully within them on behalf of our students, faculty members, departments, and disciplines and our profession itself. Our times call for an energetic fortification and evolution of the humanities. We need safe space to think, teach, imagine, investigate, and create with dynamism and rigor. I am dedicated to opening avenues that grow and safeguard the work and equity of our professional membership.

126. Jeanne Gillespie, Prof. Spanish and Amer. Indian studies, Univ. of Southern Mississippi.


I am concerned with the role of the humanities in our national conversation and in our communities and regions. The practice of the humanities, especially the study of languages and literatures, is vital to preserving civil discourse; to promoting diversity, tolerance, and justice; and to training our students to analyze and interpret materials that frame our present and shape our future. In my work with the South Central Modern Language Association, I see that we have incredible potential to sustain our work if we choose a collaborative, inclusive approach as advocates for the power of humanities research and learning. I also see that the regional associations bring a grassroots access that could and should be more effectively mobilized to support the practice of the humanities and to seek ways to connect our research and teaching with local, regional, and national issues. As a delegate for the South, I would work to strengthen the connections between the national organization and the regional organizations. I would also work across disciplines to facilitate collaborative and cross-disciplinary approaches promoting humanities research and learning in our institutions, communities, and regions.
127. **Mary A. Watt.** Assoc. prof. Italian studies, Univ. of Florida.


**Statement**

One of the greatest challenges facing the academy right now is the need for greater diversity and inclusion across university and college campuses. Throughout the country and beyond, institutions of higher learning are struggling to determine, articulate, and implement best practices for the recruitment and retention of underrepresented minority faculty members. At the same time, we are rethinking how we can effectively respond to students’ concerns about their learning environment and opportunities for success.

Increasingly, these conversations involve questions of course offerings and pedagogy that are connected with the research that informs and often drives our teaching and curriculum design. My own experience as an associate dean tasked with overseeing my college’s efforts to become more diverse and inclusive has led me to rethink much of what I do on a daily basis. It has particularly sparked my imagination as an educator and scholar, causing me to reimagine my research as well as the classroom experience that I create and through which I engage my students. In that same vein, I see this as an auspicious time for the MLA and a tremendous opportunity for all of us. The MLA has historically been extraordinarily conscious of the crucial role that education plays in social and academic transformation. Now, perhaps more than ever, we must continue to be an eloquent voice and effective force in shaping the academy’s response to the urgent call for change. I welcome the opportunity to be part of both.

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128. **Haley L. Osborn.** Grad. student Spanish, Univ. of Tennessee, Knoxville.


Statement

As a fourth-year doctoral student and GTA involved in strengthening the modern foreign languages and literatures community at the University of Tennessee, my professional concerns include ensuring the success of graduate students in the humanities as they complete their studies, develop teaching skills at the university level, and enter the job market for the first time. Because new graduate students face the unique challenges of balancing work, study, professional development, personal health, mental well-being, and surviving on scarce compensation for the sake of pursuing their passions, I believe that graduate programs should prioritize mentorship.

For example, as MA students begin their programs, they often do so with expectations of succeeding academically, involving themselves actively in their departments and campus communities, and bettering themselves intellectually through completion of a master’s thesis. Yet many students do not know how, in practical terms, to realize these expectations. Due to their overwhelming workloads and lack of guidance, they frequently abandon these goals. Meanwhile, some faculty members expect new graduate students to be able to successfully adapt to this lifestyle. But graduate students are not yet experts. On the contrary, they seek out such programs in order to be inspired, encouraged, and challenged and to become expert scholars in their fields. I believe that new graduate students need both engaged and empathetic departmental advisers and graduate student mentors—students who have already overcome the shock of beginning a new program. Additionally, for further support, departments should offer workshops on thesis writing, publication, and professionalization.

129. Brittany Sulzener. Grad. student English, Univ. of Kentucky.


Statement

With the proposed shutdown of the National Endowment for the Humanities and funding cuts to universities more broadly, the future of the humanities and those currently working toward attaining a degree in the humanities is ever more tenuous. As an educator, I am interested in pursuing strategies for instilling an understanding of the importance of the humanities in the current generation of college students. I would also like to explore ways the MLA might promote activism and self-advocacy for those who feel their futures in the humanities to be threatened by these budget cuts and the general, federally-sanctioned, devaluation of the humanities.

VI. Central and Rocky Mountain (3 contests)
Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Wyoming


Publications include ed., La Estrella de Sevilla (2008); contrib., Women in the Discourse of Early Modern Spain (2003), Hacia la tragedia áurea: Lecturas para un nuevo milenio (2008), Approaches to Teaching Lazarillo de Tormes and the Picaresque Tradition (2009), Ovid in the Age of Cervantes (2010);
Statement

Blah, blah, blah. It’s sad to say, but that is what far too many of our political and business leaders hear when we talk about the humanities being in crisis. They don’t care, and sometimes they are even happy about it. Make no mistake, the fields of study represented by the MLA face threats from every possible quarter: national and state governments, corporate America, and even our own administrations and colleagues. We all know what the issues are: the increasing reliance on contingent faculty positions, the reduction in university degree requirements in the humanities, and the growth in dual-credit coursework, among many others. There are no easy answers, but if we are going to proclaim the importance of language study, cultural literacy, and human empathy, we must engage in a real conversation rather than simply advocate for our fields. I do not claim to have all of the answers. However, if elected to the Delegate Assembly, I am committed to working with my colleagues on what this conversation needs to be about and the people we need to invite to the table. Some questions include: What is the value of a liberal education? How can it prepare men and women to be successful in an ever-changing world? And why does any of this matter? The answers have profound implications not just for the humanities but also for our nation and the intellectual formation of our future leaders.

131. **Brian Yothers.** Frances Spatz Leighton Endowed Prof. in English, Univ. of Texas, El Paso.


Statement

I have served in my institution as a vigorous advocate for the liberal arts in general and English studies in particular. We need to be able to communicate clearly and passionately the value of our work in the humanities to our students, our faculty and administration colleagues, our surrounding communities, and our elected representatives. This means being able to tell a story about how the humanities contribute to human flourishing, to citizenship, to an appreciation for diversity in its many varieties, and to our students’ prospects in the wider world. All of my work, from my teaching (which has been honored by the UT system with its UT Regents Outstanding Teaching Award) to my print scholarship to my digital humanities work to my service and administrative work at my institution to my outreach to the El Paso community through organizing reading groups and continuing education classes has built on my conviction that the humanities need able and eloquent advocates. I would be delighted to work with my colleagues in the MLA Delegate Assembly to think through how we can both defend and advance humanistic scholarship and teaching in the twenty-first century. I have also come to feel a great deal of affection for and rootedness in the Rocky
Mountain region, so it would be a privilege for me to give voice to the particular challenges and
opportunities we face in the Mountain West and, for many of us, in the vicinity of the U.S./Mexico border.

132. **Ryan Hackenbracht.** Asst. prof. English, Texas Tech Univ.

    PhD, Penn State Univ. Assoc. dir. of grad. studies, Dept. of English, Texas Tech Univ., 2016– .
    Seminar grant, Folger Shakespeare Library, 2011; grad. research fellowship, Inst. for the Arts and
    Humanities, Penn State Univ., 2011; William A. Ringler Fellowship, Huntington Library, 2014. Best
    Conference Paper of the Year Award, Comm. on Early Modern Studies, Penn State Univ., 2012; Albert C.
    Labriola Award (for distinguished article on Milton by a grad. student), Milton Soc. of America, 2011;
    Natalie Zemon Davis Award (for best article), Renaissance and Reformation, 2012.

    Publications include contrib., *Identities in Early Modern English Writing: Religion, Gender, Nation*
    (2014), *Milton, Materialism, and Embodiment: One First Matter All* (2017); articles in *Milton Studies,
    Philological Quarterly, Renaissance and Reformation, Studies in Philology*; review in *Papers of the
    Bibliographical Society of Canada.*

    **Statement**

    As an assistant professor of English who takes an interdisciplinary approach to studying
    Shakespeare, Milton, and their afterlives in popular culture, I work with diverse media—including print, art,
    and film—and across diverse areas of specialization, including cultural studies, religion and literature, book
    history, and political philosophy. The MLA has a long history of celebrating diversity, and the range of my
    research subjects is both a product of that diversity and an attempt to bridge gaps between disciplines and
    fields and between academic and popular cultures.

    Moreover, as someone recently on the job hunt, I represent a younger generation of scholars facing a
    job market crisis unlike any seen before. These scholars are struggling in a profession with increasingly
    fewer tenure-track positions. As the associate director of graduate studies at my institution, I run our
    Professional Development Curriculum, which meets weekly to equip students with the tools they need to
    thrive in these conditions. I am committed to helping young professionals succeed in their scholarly and
    career (academic and alt-ac) aspirations, and my actions in the Delegate Assembly would mirror that
    devotion. I believe that training junior scholars in professionalism goes hand in hand with the MLA’s larger
    campaign of enlarging the place of the humanities in American society. I wish to serve in the Delegate
    Assembly so that I, too, might contribute to that important endeavor and—in a university environment
    gravitating toward the STEM fields—lend my voice on behalf of what the humanities have to offer.

133. **Priscilla Solis Ybarra.** Assoc. prof. English, Univ. of North Texas.

    PhD, Rice Univ. Aldo and Estella Leopold Mi Casita Writing Residency, 2016. Scholar’s Award,
    Office of the State Historian of New Mexico, 2008.

    Publications include *Writing the Goodlife: Mexican American Literature and the Environment* (2016);
    contrib., *New Perspectives on Environmental Justice: Gender, Sexuality, and Activism* (2004),
    *Teaching North American Environmental Literature* (2008), *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and
    and the Environment* (2012); article in *MELUS.*

134. **Kenna Neitch.** Grad. student English, Texas Tech Univ.

    MA, Texas Tech Univ. (TTU). Institutional service (TTU): codir., Comparative Lit. Symposium,
    2016–17; asst. to dir. of grad. studies, Dept. of English, 2017– . Pulla Maha-Nanda Akkaraju Scholarship,
    Dept. of English, TTU, 2015–16; William Bryan Gates Grad. Award in English, TTU, 2016–17; Warren
    Walker Award for Critical Writing, Dept. of English, TTU, 2016–17. Conference presentations:
    Southwestern Psychological Assn., 2014; Texas Tech Univ. Comparative Lit. Symposium, 2015, 2016,

Statement
As a PhD student, teacher, scholar, and activist, I believe that the ability to research—to know the standards of credible information and have access to that information—is of paramount importance in our academic and sociopolitical communities. Having taught first-year composition, I have found that this ability is one of the most valuable tools we can give our students, whether they are nonmajors who are only with us briefly or future colleagues in the study of literature, culture, and language. I work in comparative literature and feminist theory to encourage critical engagement with voices deemed peripheral in the canon and, far too often, in the institutions of literary study. My experience has been that our students want (and our broader society needs) to encounter texts and perspectives that challenge national, racial, and gendered hierarchies. The work of the MLA, an organization that works across disciplinary and cultural borders, involves maintaining and innovating ways to transmit the skills of our field in the face of increased American anti-intellectualism and disinterest in the humanities. As a delegate, I would be committed to serving the MLA’s mission of advocating for both humanities education and workplace equity and would focus in particular on greater mentorship of and representation for graduate students, emerging scholars, and underrepresented voices. If elected, I will work to create opportunities for dialogue across the many disciplines and communities this organization brings together.

135. No candidate

VII. Western United States and Western Canada (3 contests)

Alaska, California, Guam, Hawai‘i, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Washington; Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan


Statement
I share the national concern with the expansion of the contingent faculty, both term and part-time. As a department chair, I have found this concern deepening. Students gain by working with faculty members who are committed to the institution, teachers whose advice matters or whose courses taken at different stages of students’ careers can shape students’ future direction. Institutions gain by presenting an image of stability, of a place dedicated to fostering student growth. The current situation depends too heavily on the work of an undercompensated group with little opportunity for advancement and no ability to plan beyond a semester or year. Repercussions ensue as graduate students, drawn to a field with a sense of vocation, often believe themselves prepared for a working life of contingency. I believe as well that the humanities must find inspired methods of attracting students to its various fields and demonstrating to them the value of immersion in the world of ideas. The great thinkers, writers, artists, and composers hold enduring relevance and rewards for our students, but nationwide decline in such study indicates that we professors must explore with vigor new means of inviting them into the humanities. Overuse of contingent faculty members and declining undergraduate interest in the humanities—I seek fresh approaches to addressing these issues with the larger hope of altering the current trajectory.
137. **Jorge Galindo.** Assoc. prof. Spanish and Latin Amer. studies, Univ. of Nevada, Las Vegas. PhD, Univ. of Kansas. Publications include *El cine mexicano en la novela mexicana reciente (1967–1900)* (2003); article in *Chasqui: Revista de literature latinoamericana.*


**Statement**

I have been an MLA member since 1989 and served previously as a delegate. In my view, two major issues bear on the future of our profession: the defunding of public higher education and threats to academic freedom posed by racist state policies (old and new). The defunding of higher education has produced a culture of austerity and a focus on intellectual property and corporate partnerships that potentially sound the death knell for the humanities (and particularly for humanities research) in the academy. Faculty members need to organize *across all ranks* (tenured and non-tenure-line) to oppose this race to the bottom for academic labor conditions. The MLA can and should take a leading role in this movement. State policy in the draconian form of threatened travel bans and deportation of undocumented people as well as in the more mundane form of fraught and restrictive processes for visas and work permits imperils access to the United States academy for foreign faculty members and students (particularly from majority-Muslim nations) and for undocumented students within the United States. These policies pose a direct threat to the free exchange of ideas and the idea of the global university. The MLA can and should join with other academic and civil-society organizations in opposing them. In this regard, I am deeply disappointed in the recent affirmative vote on Resolution 2017-1, designed to shut down debate about the impact of Israeli state policies that vitiate the academic freedom of Palestinian faculty members and students.

Statement

I am honored to be nominated to represent the western United States and western Canada. Having lived and worked in California, Oregon, and Idaho, I am deeply committed to working on the issues relevant to the region as well as to the profession. During my last eighteen years in Idaho, I have become very aware of the variety of challenges faced by colleges and universities in the region: we have not only experienced dramatic budget cuts and decreasing enrollments but have also seen our students and their educational goals change. While these changes have at times made our work as educators more difficult, they have also encouraged us to be more creative in our programs, more committed to the importance of the humanities, and more attentive to the needs of our students. If elected to the Delegate Assembly, I would actively support innovations in teaching and research, promote the value of the humanities to both internal and external audiences, and advocate for improved conditions for all faculty members doing this important work to enhance and enrich the lives of our communities. The MLA provides an excellent forum for discussing issues of importance in our discipline and for communicating these ideas to our larger society, and it would be my pleasure to represent my colleagues by serving in the Delegate Assembly.

140. Corinne Bancroft. Grad. student English, Univ. of California, Santa Barbara.


Publications include contrib., Digressions in European Literature: From Cervantes to Sebald (2011); articles in Style, Journal of Cognitive Semiotics.

Statement

Surviving whatever crisis or siege threatens the humanities necessarily involves celebrating the work literature can do, both in our research and our classrooms. As a graduate student at UCSB, I helped to convene the Critical Pedagogy Initiative, which brought professors and graduate students together to discuss the praxis of teaching at a large research university. I hope that, in addition to this commitment to pedagogy, my experience as a graduate student and my service as the chair of the Committee of Graduate Students in the Department of English will bring an important perspective to the Delegate Assembly.

141. Lauren Dembowitz. Grad. student English, Univ. of California, Los Angeles.


Statement

I feel honored to be nominated as a graduate student representative in the MLA Delegate Assembly. If elected, I will draw from my institutional-service experience as president of the English Graduate Union at UCLA to represent the interests of graduate students and contingent faculty members in the western region. I will advocate in particular for underrepresented students whose professional aspirations and personal well-being are most threatened by the policies of the new administration, including undocumented students, LGBTQ students, women, students of color, students with disabilities, and students with dependents. As a graduate student and mother of two young children, I am keenly sensitive to the need for access to a living wage, essential benefits like affordable child care, and professional support at all stages of graduate study.
The MLA is an invaluable organization with an astounding reach. As a member of the assembly, I would work to increase the visibility of the MLA’s underutilized professional and community-oriented resources. I would also strive to facilitate greater engagement with the MLA’s diverse committees and governing bodies to ensure that all students and contingent faculty members are informed about and invested in shaping the organization’s future direction. I have been incredibly fortunate to pursue graduate study in a department marked by its collegial community and its excellent pedagogical training and support. My aim as an elected representative would be to help ensure that other graduate students have access to the kinds of support they need to be innovative scholars and passionate teachers.

Part V: Voting for Forum Delegates

Only the forums listed below are holding delegate elections this year. Eligibility to vote in these elections is determined by voters’ primary forum affiliations, as recorded in their membership profiles.

The term of office of those elected will be from 8 January 2018 through the close of the January 2021 convention. The numbers preceding the nominees’ names correspond to the numbers assigned to the nominees on the paper ballot sheet.

Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies
- Medieval
- Renaissance and Early Modern
- Romantic and 19th-Century
- 20th- and 21st-Century
- Arthurian
- European Regions
- Global Arab and Arab American
- Global Hispanophone
- Mediterranean

Genre Studies

Travel Writing

Languages, Literatures, and Cultures
- African since 1990
- 19th-Century American
- Late-19th- and Early-20th-Century American
- African American
- Asian American
- Southern United States
- Arabic
- West Asian
- Modern and Contemporary Chinese
- Old English
- Middle English
- 16th-Century English
- Restoration and Early-18th-Century English
- Victorian and Early-20th-Century English
- 20th- and 21st-Century English and Anglophone

20th- and 21st-Century French
- Francophone
- Galician
- German to 1700
- 19th- and Early-20th-Century German
- Hungarian
- Medieval and Renaissance Italian
- Japanese since 1900
- 20th- and 21st-Century Latin American
- Occitan
- Scottish
- Slavic and East European
- 18th- and 19th-Century Spanish and Iberian

Language Studies and Linguistics
- Language and Society
- Media Studies
- Screen Arts and Culture
- Rhetoric, Composition, and Writing Studies
- History and Theory of Rhetoric
- Literacy Studies
- Transdisciplinary Connections
- Age Studies
- Cognitive and Affect Studies
- Disability Studies
- Marxism, Literature, and Society
If you have established a primary affiliation with any of the forums listed above, find the relevant contest(s) below and vote for one nominee.

**CLCS Medieval**

600. **Nadia R. Altschul.** Senior lecturer Hispanic studies, Univ. of Glasgow.


**Statement**

Having recently moved to the United Kingdom after fifteen years in United States academia, I will bring to the assembly a comparative knowledge of trends in the neoliberalization of universities that pressure United States institutions yet are further under way in the United Kingdom. After spending many years in non-tenure-track positions, I am aware of some of the burdens faced by the new generation of academics and interested in revisiting the expense of attending the MLA convention, which is especially costly considering the median income of our constituency. As a scholar of the history and effects of the idea of “the medieval” in the world, and at a time that many outside the humanities and outside academia have called “neofeudal” and “a new middle ages,” I will also advocate for the ways in which our profession and subject matter have always been enmeshed in policy making and broader social constructions across the world.

601. **Nhora Lucia Serrano.** Visiting asst. prof. comparative lit., Hamilton Coll.


Statement

As a long-standing member of the MLA and a comparative medievalist and visual studies scholar by training, I have been recently involved with the forum on comics and graphic narratives. My biggest concern is that medieval studies, as a humanities discipline and an interdisciplinary field, continues to be at the table of the sociopolitical discussions and debates confronting the MLA. Ranging widely across periods and geographies, this rich and dynamic medieval period is not only a powerful resource for creative expression and scholarly work in fields such as art, literature, and digital media today; it can also be a crucial cultural lens that the global modern world requires in order to change and progress. If elected to the Delegate Assembly as the representative for CLCS Medieval, I would listen carefully, advocate on behalf of those less empowered, and push continuously for intellectual diversity. It would be my pleasure to ensure that the MLA assembly continues to address the academic job market, especially for non-tenure-track positions; multimodal/distance education; the future of area-specific programs; equitable hiring practices; support for the digital humanities; and trends in online publishing. I am excited by the prospect of serving as a member of the Delegate Assembly, and I hope to solicit feedback from, and represent, members working in the field of medieval comparative literary and cultural studies. Ultimately, I hope to contribute to the MLA’s ongoing efforts to highlight the importance of the humanities in cultivating politically informed citizens.

CLCS Renaissance and Early Modern

602. **Lynn Enterline.** Nancy Perot Mulford. Prof. of English, Vanderbilt Univ.


Statement

After thirty years of membership in the MLA, I find I have three major concerns: developing best practices for mentoring those just entering our profession; promoting advanced comparative language studies among American undergraduates; and finding ways to demonstrate how important the study of earlier literary traditions and periods remains for thinking through issues of contemporary social and cultural concern.
603. **Ayesha Ramachandran.** Asst. prof. comparative lit., Yale Univ.


**Statement**

As a scholar of literary and intellectual histories across nations, languages, and cultures, I have a deep commitment to intellectual boundary-crossing and thinking at both the local and global levels. My path through different countries and academic settings, including public and private institutions, has paralleled my scholarly interest in diversity, expansiveness, and engagement across disciplinary frontiers—an approach I hope to bring to my work in the MLA. As a scholar of humanism, it seems clear to me that the defense of our scholarly and pedagogical mission in the public and political spheres is paramount, as is the defense of our ever-vulnerable labor force. I see the MLA as a powerful and crucial advocate for the values and intellectual rigor that define the humanities and a liberal arts education. I am committed to exploring new ways to expand the MLA’s role in public and policy debates, to promote sustainable changes to the academic labor structure, and to emphasize the continuing importance of humanistic and historical understanding.

**CLCS Romantic and 19th-Century**


PhD, Univ. of California, Berkeley. Charles Bernheimer Prize (for best dissertation), ACLA, 2011.

Publications include *Watchwords: Romanticism and the Poetics of Attention* (2016); articles in *Studies in Romanticism, European Romantic Review*.

**Statement**

Thank you for considering me as a candidate for the Delegate Assembly. In my years as a graduate student and assistant professor, I have had the opportunity to teach at both large public universities and small liberal arts colleges across the United States in English and comparative literature departments, from which I have gained a sense of our shared commitments and concerns. As a member of the Delegate Assembly, I hope to help the MLA insist on the importance and relevance of the humanities to public life and to advocate for marginalized members of our own community.

605. **Susan Zieger.** Assoc. prof. English, Univ. of California, Riverside.


Statement

I received my PhD in English from the University of California, Berkeley, with Cathy Gallagher, and an MSc in the history of science, medicine, and technology from Imperial College, United Kingdom, with Roy Porter. I have published on the politics of consumption, gender, sexuality, and race in literature and culture; my first book was about addiction, and my second, forthcoming in 2018, is on print media, affect, and consumerism. My work puts literary form and genre into dialogue with historical media studies and the history of psychology. My institutional interests include graduate student mentorship, having recently served my department as placement director and director of graduate studies. I am on the faculty of the Dickens Universe and serve as executive secretary of NAVSA and on the editorial board of the *Journal of Victorian Culture*.

If elected, I would encourage exploration of the recent return to formal literary issues; the new interest in historical media studies and its intersection with digital technologies; the Anthropocene, animal studies, and other environmentalist concerns; and the broadening of Romantic and nineteenth-century studies to account for global and diasporic cultural materials. In addition to supporting research, I would seek to foster discussions of pedagogy and to support graduate students seeking academic and nonacademic careers. Having said all of this, I am also a good listener. If elected, I would reach out to learn your concerns, so that I may better represent them. Thanks for your consideration!

**CLCS 20th- and 21st-Century**

606. **Michael Allan.** Assoc. prof. comparative lit., Univ. of Oregon.


Statement

I am grateful for the nomination to the Delegate Assembly as a delegate for the forum CLCS 20th- and 21st-Century. Comparative literature has historically been understood to encompass a classical humanistic canon structured around literary traditions in Greek, Latin, French, English, Italian and German. I am committed to a vision of our discipline—and of the humanities more generally—that embraces and also extends this classical model to take seriously the rigorous linguistic, historical and cultural study of non-Western literatures, texts and traditions. I appreciate that the MLA has increasingly reflected this expanded scope with the addition of new committees and initiatives, and I would be eager to advocate for continued resources to serve the concerns we share as scholars working across various languages and media. As our fields develop in new directions, I would hope to serve an MLA that is both responsive to and nurturing of critical developments in the humanities.


**Statement**

I support strongly the MLA’s commitment to research and teaching excellence in modern languages and literatures. As a trained comparatist working at the nexus of postcolonial studies, 20th- and 21st-century literatures, and queer studies, my work encompasses the analysis of a broad range of literary/cultural texts from the fin de siècle through the contemporary, including francophone texts, texts written in German, and texts from southern and north Africa and the wider African diaspora. I will advocate strongly for multilingual and multimodal literacies and for informed dialogue across cultures. Reading texts and, indeed, the world relationally, bringing together ideas in different languages, and queering translation as a disruptive space for the homogenization of linguistic differences are at the heart of comparative work. I have served as a twice-elected chair of the ICLA Committee on Comparative Gender Studies; during my tenure, the committee became a permanent committee of the ICLA and a major presence at both the ICLA and ACLA meetings, with worldwide membership for advancing the study of comparative gender and sexuality studies. We supported graduate students and early-career academics producing innovative scholarship by encouraging them to give papers in our seminars and publishing their work. I will advocate for increased financial support for comparative literature programs, for new approaches to what it means to compare, and for the academic and public importance of comparative literature study, which enables us to see the world through the positions of others and against rising tides of nationalism and heightened xenophobia.

**CLCS Arthurian**

608. **Jean Blacker.** Prof. emerita French, Kenyon Coll.


Statement

In recent years, the MLA has broadened its focus as a professional organization primarily serving the university-level professoriat to become a key advocate for the humanities on the national stage. The MLA has recognized its responsibility to inform the membership of developments that affect the education and literary and artistic expression of students of all ages, from the primary level through adults returning to complete secondary or higher education. On issues of inclusion, diversity, and workplace equity, the MLA provides invaluable leadership in the face of ever-changing financial and political challenges to humanities-based education.

If elected to the Delegate Assembly, I would be honored to address issues important to the forum and to serve the MLA and academic communities at large through advocacy in several areas: expanding teaching modes to reach all students, regardless of learning differences; mentoring of junior and contingent faculty members; achieving diversity at all levels; and reversing, if not eliminating, the growing trend toward the substantial reduction in institutional library access to electronic and book resources for retired faculty members, a circumstance that segregates a significant portion of the academic community based solely on age. As part of its ongoing campaigns to improve the quality of the academic experience, the MLA must work both to remedy this inequity, which seriously restricts retired faculty members’ active engagement in research, and to facilitate, for example, the creation of venues where retired faculty members can apply their lifelong advising skills to mentoring programs and engage with alternative learning communities.

609. Lisa Graham Robeson. Prof. English, Ohio Northern Univ.


Statement

Thank you for considering my candidacy for the Delegate Assembly. I believe that, as scholars and teachers of a legend that continues to live 1,400 years after its birth, Arthurian scholars have a unique opportunity to demonstrate to those in the profession—but perhaps more important, to those outside the profession—that the humanities are relevant. My focus as the representative of CLCS Arthurian would be on demonstrating to our professional colleagues the vitality of Arthurian scholarship today and promoting both the innovative and the traditional scholarly forms we are engaged in (e.g., digital humanities, medievalism, interdisciplinary work). I have published on and advocated for innovative teaching strategies that draw on similar strategies (film, popular culture, high-impact project-based learning) and that involve interdisciplinary teaching (I have cooperated with a computer scientist on bringing Arthurian stories to life) to connect Arthurian legend with the larger world. As someone who has evenly divided her professional life among teaching, scholarship, and administration, I have also come to believe that ensuring the future of
Arthurian studies requires a focus on work that extends the critical insight of scholars to a general-education audience within our universities and to popular audiences outside the academy. I believe that we need to articulate the way in which our teaching and scholarship in Arthurian legend enrich the human experience. The continued popularity of the legend and the support of a major organization such as the MLA will enable us to do so.

**CLCS European Regions**

610. **Thomas Oliver Beebee.** Edwin Erle Sparks Prof. of Comparative Lit. and German, Penn State Univ., University Park.


**Statement**

I have been an MLA member for more than thirty years, and for about half that time I have served my departments at Penn State (German and comparative literature) in preparing students for a difficult job market. If elected, I will devote my energies to the two core missions of the MLA: the facilitation and recognition (as in MLA book prizes, etc.) of language and literature research and teaching and the defense and promotion of the language and literature profession in the university and in the larger society. Nearly every week of the year sees another effort on the part of a central higher-education administration to eliminate or severely downgrade a language or literature unit, while a more insidious, acidic drip-drip of economic pressure erodes tenure, other forms of job security, and compensation. Trump’s proposal to eliminate the NEH is the last straw. The MLA’s most valuable ongoing work lies in its Academic Workforce Advocacy Kit, Academic Workforce Data Center, and similar initiatives and in its recommendations on minimum compensation and starting salaries. I look forward to becoming part of a team that maintains and develops these resources, invents other ways to assist graduate students and those entering the job market, and reaches out to other humanities organizations and initiatives so as to weave networks of mutual support.

611. **Sara Kippur.** Charles A. Dana Research Assoc. Prof. of Lang. and Culture Studies, Trinity Coll., CT.


**Statement**

My research and teaching aim to situate the place and study of French literature in a wider context, both within Europe and more broadly transnationally. I currently serve as a member of the CLCS European
Regions executive committee and, as a delegate, I would be committed to thinking through the shifting place of Europe and European studies in the academy. My experience teaching in a liberal arts college has made me increasingly attentive to the ways in which language departments need to think creatively to ensure that their scholarly mission can maintain relevance with undergraduate students. As language departments across the country are shrinking and morphing into new configurations, it is imperative for us as scholars and teachers to articulate points of contact across our various regions and languages. I would look forward to taking up these and other issues with the members of the Delegate Assembly, if elected.

**CLCS Global Arab and Arab American**

612. **Hoda El Shakry.** Asst. prof. comparative lit., Penn State Univ., University Park.


**Statement**

The recent formation of the Global Arab and Arab American forum was part of a broader initiative, led by the executive committee of the Division on Arabic Literature and Culture, to increase representation of the diverse populations, cultures, and languages that compose the Arab world and its diaspora. It also addresses an institutional and disciplinary lacuna within the broader study of Arab(ic) literatures, in which nonarabophone cultural production of the region is undertheorized. As a comparatist who works on both arabophone and francophone literature, criticism, and visual culture from North Africa, this is a reality I am all too familiar with. During my tenure on the LLC Arabic executive committee, I have organized panels that reflect the polyvalent and polylingual cultures of the Middle East and North Africa and their diasporic communities.

In the midst of a fraught political climate in which Muslims, Arabs, Arab Americans, and (im)migrants are targets of governmental and populist discrimination, fostering critical awareness of these populations is of the utmost importance. Though we have begun to address the underrepresentation of cultural production from these communities across scholarly, pedagogical, and institutional contexts, there remains much work to be done. In addition to diversifying the bodies that represent the study of literature outside of European or hemispheric contexts, it is also imperative that we deprovincialize these less-commonly-taught languages within the MLA. This entails thinking beyond questions of inclusivity and critically reframing these institutional structures outside of the ubiquitous world-systems-theory language of center and periphery.

613. **Karim Mattar.** Asst. prof. English, Univ. of Colorado, Boulder.


Statement

As representative for CLCS Global Arab and Arab American in the Delegate Assembly, I believe it would be my responsibility to represent the interests of the forum as fully and accurately as possible. As such, I intend to consult with the forum’s executive committee on all matters brought to ballot in the Delegate Assembly and to elicit feedback and, if necessary, votes from the membership at large on matters of particular interest or sensitivity to the forum. Transparency and communication are necessary for our investment in MLA governance, which is increasingly important given the conditions of institutional austerity and corporatization, shrinking job markets, declining enrollments, and contingency which the humanities now face. By adhering to these principles during my tenure as a member of the Delegate Assembly, I hope to further promote such investment among the forum’s members.

CLCS Global Hispanophone


Statement

As a member of CLCS Global Hispanophone, I am constantly reminded of the need to continue giving voice to minorities in our scholarly work, our curricula, and our teaching practices. My work in postcolonial studies has made me keenly aware that distorted representation is the cornerstone of marginalization. At present, our work as academics is as vital as ever to counter the flood of negative characterizations of minority communities at home and abroad.

The higher education market is changing rapidly, and this requires us to be ready not only to embrace new challenges but also to pursue new opportunities. Literary and cultural studies should provide our students with a solid critique of economic and political realities that result in oppression. They should also empower our students to excel in today’s competitive job market with the conviction that cross-cultural understanding is not a skill of choice but rather a professional requirement for those who seek to find their place in our global economy. Humanistic wisdom should go hand in hand with curricula that promote the development of technical skills in the languages we teach.


Statement

I am deeply honored to be nominated as the Global Hispanophone representative to the Delegate Assembly. My research and teaching focus primarily on contemporary Spanish literature and film and the related fields of gender studies and migration studies. My work is informed by my personal experiences as a black woman and a first-generation American citizen. As a delegate representing CLCS Global Hispanophone, a field devoted to the study of language and culture across diverse global regions and
traditions, I will support cutting-edge research that takes into account diverse perspectives and seeks insights beyond established disciplinary borders. In addition to cultivating diversity as a tool of cultural analysis and organizational enrichment, I will embrace the MLA’s call for advocacy by advancing policies that advance women faculty members, faculty members of color, and LGBTQI faculty members. To me, the clear entanglements of humanistic inquiry and equity in our disciplines reflect the important notion that the gate to justice is study. As humanists, we must champion not only scholarship that invites us to question and reformulate how we interpret the world but also practices that create more equitable, inclusive, and just environments, including our own workplaces. If elected to the Delegate Assembly, I look forward to dialoguing across the disciplines and working to build academic communities that further these principles.

**CLCS Mediterranean**

616. **Hassan Melehy.** Prof. French, Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.


**Statement**

Almost every current MLA member is at least somewhat aware of the urgent issues of the moment. Rather than stating the concern for them that anyone running for MLA office should have, I’ll offer my perception of the need for the organization to extend the efforts that members, delegates, and officers have made to respond to the circumstances of all those who live and work as literary scholars. As a member for more than twenty-five years, I’ve seen the organization shift from being mainly a set of forums for scholars secure in their careers to a network that takes account of the insecure positions of most of its membership and potential membership. In the framework of the former model, it may be fairly easy (though incorrect) to say that the focus of our professional association is primarily scholarship and that political questions are extraneous. However, when current working conditions require reflection on the very possibility of scholarly expression, discussions in the MLA can’t avoid the question of academic freedom and hence the broader one of free expression. Given the international scope of most literary scholarship and the corollary of international exchange, the political ramifications of these questions should be at the center of MLA attention. If I’m elected to the Delegate Assembly, this idea will guide the way I carry out my duties.

617. **Zahi A. Zalloua.** Prof. French and interdisciplinary studies, Whitman Coll.


**Statement**

In my research and teaching, I am committed to exploring ways of combating the ever-increasing commodification of knowledge in the university. What we do in the classroom is being more and more influenced by a neoliberal set of values. How do we respond to these market forces? What does it mean to be critical today? It often means resisting the ideological ways problems are thematized or formulated and the solutions they suggest. The university must remain a space for intellectual contestations, an irritant to the status quo. It must continue to foster a climate of imaginative thinking. My formative training in literary studies and my interdisciplinary work in gender studies and race and ethnicity studies have helped me cultivate an eye for ideology and a skeptical ethos about the ways one talks about difference, belonging, community, and values. I believe that such a critical perspective on these matters is required more than ever in higher education.

**GS Travel Writing**

618. **Lauren Coats.** Assoc. prof. English, Louisiana State Univ., Baton Rouge.


**Statement**

I teach and study travel literature for how it shows the movements of and encounters among bodies, ideas, and texts. The aesthetics and politics of mobility mirror some of the tensions in our profession and the academy at this moment. I am interested in joining the MLA’s work on a range of issues that pose problems as well as possibilities. These include exploring avenues and forms for scholarship, publication, and scholarly communication; expanding careers available to graduates inside and outside the academy; addressing the status of and continued reliance on adjuncts; sustaining vulnerable faculty members and students; supporting pedagogical initiatives driven by faculty members; and advocating for robust academic freedom. I am honored to be considered for a position in the Delegate Assembly representing the travel literature forum and am eager to work with colleagues to support the work of humanists and the value of the humanities. Such advocacy is central to the MLA’s mission, and I am interested in how the MLA—in
concert with other humanities professional organizations—can build on its ongoing advocacy within as well as outside the academy.

619. **David Farley.** Assoc. prof. English, St. John’s Univ., Jamaica.


**Statement**

I am particularly interested in the political aspect of motion and mobility and would, as the delegate for GS Travel Writing, be an advocate for all MLA initiatives that seek to understand these politics and foster this mobility. Whether it would be promoting awareness of the impact of the logistics of the national convention on the disability community; assuring that adjunct and contingent faculty members, who more and more fuel our discipline, have better control over where and under what conditions they work; or ensuring that international scholars have the ability to travel in the face of the draconian restrictions of the Trump administration, the politics of mobility are a critical concern now more than ever. In addition, in these times of virulent and hateful attacks on academics—such as those recently on Keeanga Yamahatta-Taylor, Johnny Eric Williams, Sarah Bond, Tommy Curry, and George Ciccariello-Maher, a list that will no doubt grow—it is important to formulate a response to the free speech canard that is fueling this hate, promote solidarity among our members, discuss ways of communicating these concerns with the public, and continue to work with our institutions to ensure the protection and relevance of our discipline.

**LLC African since 1990**


621. **Rosemary J. Jolly.** Weiss Ch. of the Humanities in Lit. and Human Rights, Penn State Univ., University Park.


**Statement**

In a world of increasing globalization and health and income disparities, I am particularly committed to a number of activities the MLA facilitates and encourages, especially as the value of the humanities is increasingly not supported by appropriate national funding in the United States. I believe we can learn much from our fellow artists, colleagues, and readers on the African continent in terms of persisting in these conditions. Contemporary African literatures and cultures are at the nexus of global colonialist capitalist advancements and retreats: they demonstrate some of the devastating effects of what the Warwick Research Collective has theorized as “combined and uneven development”; but they also manifest resiliencies and opportunities in the face of this phenomenon that we, located in a center of the colonialist-capitalist culture, either have difficulty in conceiving or cannot conceive of (or both). My goals are: to use every opportunity to ensure the increased participation of Africanists from the continent in MLA proceedings; to foster a robust generation of future Africanist scholars of all languages with the appropriate field research credentials and access to the archives they need, no matter where they originate and study; and to ensure lively MLA sessions that represent input from established and emerging scholars.

Current, heated debates on race, anthropocentrism, slavery, tyranny, and democracy are crucially informed by the cultural wealth of Africa; but this process can only be appropriately recognized if African knowledges and languages are expertly debated in MLA settings.

**LLC 19th-Century American**

622. **Beth Piatote.** Assoc. prof. Amer. and Native Amer. studies, Univ. of California, Berkeley.


**Statement**

I am grateful for the opportunity to stand for election to the Delegate Assembly as the representative for LLC 19th-Century American. In the context of the Delegate Assembly’s role of setting policy and guidelines for the profession, I would continue to support the MLA’s goals and visions for a more equitable workplace, especially addressing the problems of gender, race, LGBTQ, and disability bias. I also support policies that illuminate and challenge the corporatization of the university and the erosion of tenure-track positions as intellectual and material hazards. From a scholarly standpoint, I would advocate for teaching and scholarly approaches that emphasize a broad conceptualization of 19th-century print culture, comparative
study of literature across fields, and the innovative use of digital archives and nonconventional texts. In furtherance of the Delegate Assembly’s role as a voice in contemporary American society, I would work to defend the humanities at a time when their unique ability to reflect the human condition, engage uncomfortable contradictions, articulate complex histories, provide beauty, and illuminate the social world is most in need.


Publications include articles in American Literary Realism, Mississippi Quarterly, Callaloo: A Journal of African Diaspora Arts and Letters, African American Review.

Statement
I am delighted to be nominated to the Delegate Assembly. I can think of no greater honor than representing the interests of my colleagues in the LLC 19th-Century American forum.

In my forthcoming book, African American Realisms and the Romances of Race: Rethinking 19th-Century Literary History (LSU Press), I contest the widely held belief that African Americans did not write American literary realism and the attending misconception that white realists did not write African American literature. In making such a provocative claim, I aim to challenge facile generalizations about what constitutes a “black text,” how we define the project of literary realism, and problematic assumptions about literary history. For the sake of greater complexity, I argue that we need a new paradigm for thinking about race in literary studies. My sense is that we need to move beyond notions of racial authenticity toward a definition of African American literature that is animated by black writers and their meditations on blackness but is also porous enough to include nonblack writers and their representations of race and their engagements with black rhetorical forms so that we might theorize, in more complex and sophisticated ways, the larger social order that constitutes race in America.

If elected to the forum, I’d like to advocate for these kinds of provocative approaches toward canon formation and literary history. I believe that such approaches create a richer and more textured account of race, aesthetics, and politics in 19th-century African American and American literary studies.

LLC Late-19th- and Early-20th-Century American


Statement
With both higher education generally and the humanities in particular facing budget cuts, declining enrollments, and other changes on the horizon, I affirm the MLA’s mission statement and will work to ensure
that the organization continues to be a forum for vigorous debates about the major issues of our time, especially where these issues intersect with our expertise in languages and literatures. I embrace changes and innovations that the MLA has already undertaken to expand opportunities for scholarly communication, such as *MLA Commons*. The MLA must continue to expand its areas of focus by developing partnerships with other national organizations in the emerging global commons. Given its mandate to support the intellectual and professional lives of its members, the MLA should avoid sectarian disputes about which members disagree. I am committed to preserving intellectual diversity even as the MLA strives to advocate for the study of languages and literatures and of the humanities.

625. **Dana Seitler.** Assoc. prof. English, Univ. of Toronto.


**LLC African American**

626. **Michelle Commander.** Assoc. Prof. English, Univ. of Tennessee, Knoxville.


**Statement**

It is a great honor to be nominated for the Delegate Assembly. My scholarly and teaching interests lie in twentieth- and twenty-first-century African American cultural production, diaspora studies, and speculative fiction. Given the transnational and interdisciplinary qualities of my research and my commitment to intentional advocacy, I would have two immediate goals: to promote more collaborations between United States–based and international scholars within and outside our forum and to (re)open a discussion with our forum members about establishing a mentoring network for interested graduate students and faculty members who would appreciate reliable guidance on a variety of discipline-related issues.

In the Delegate Assembly, I would be interested in strategizing actively against the current onslaught of attacks on the humanities, especially the persistent political threats to defund the very ethnic studies programs in which many of us have joint appointments or with which we feel an affinity. I would be eager to share the many lessons that I have learned at a university campus in east Tennessee, where there has been unusual and significant legislative overreach about diversity matters. Across the nation, we have seen a marked rise in hostility toward those of us who teach and speak openly about issues at the intersections of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, class, nationality, and other forms of identity.

If elected, I will advocate vigorously on behalf of the members of LLC African American and support the MLA in upholding its mission to encourage the advancement of humanities scholarship.

627. **Wanda Raiford.** Instructor English, Florida Intl. Univ.

Publications include contrib., *New Boundaries in Political Science Fiction* (2008); article in *South: A Scholarly Journal*.

**Statement**

Issues of racial, ethnic, and gendered justice, perhaps now more than ever, shape our daily thinking about what it means to be a citizen in a participatory democracy. I have long believed that in our testimony about lived experience and in our imaginative lives, African Americans provide a singular and critical contribution toward helping the people who live in this country—and those who don’t—to make sense of the American national predicament in the United States. As a member of the Delegate Assembly for LLC African American, my focus will be on questions of epistemic justice. As both a path follower and a trailblazer, I hope to direct and foster discussion not only of the creative and aesthetic achievements of black writers but also of the societal value of these writers' works as reliable expert-witness testimony that brings theoretical and practical knowledge to the fore that our country has no other avenue for accessing.

**LLC Asian American**

628. **Lynn Itagaki.** Assoc. prof. English, Ohio State Univ., Columbus.


**Statement**

I welcome the opportunity to help shape how our professional organization serves as a critical public voice for the humanities and higher education. This organization’s national and international reach influences generations of students and teachers and the flourishing of the humanities. I would be honored to represent LLC Asian American in the Delegate Assembly and to advocate for members invested in Asian American literary studies and ethnic studies.

I have attended and taught at a range of United States institutions and have done research, teaching, and service in Asian American studies, comparative race studies, and intersectional feminism. I have organized faculty members, staff members, students, and community members to address issues of inequality, and I have significant experience on campus and in academic associations with coordinating Asian American studies, developing workshops for undergraduate and graduate students of color, and mentoring junior faculty members. In prioritizing mentorship opportunities and improved working conditions in which these campus constituencies can thrive, my main concern is to create communities in our departments, schools, and professional organizations that can better address the needs of contingent faculty members, graduate student employees, and workers vulnerable to shifting labor conditions, privatization, and budget cuts at universities. Our membership must amplify the interest from students at all levels in how critical skills in the humanities generally and literary and cultural analyses specifically might increase the profession’s visibility now and provide blueprints for action for those working within, benefiting from, and making decisions about higher education.

629. **Marguerite B. Nguyen.** Asst. prof. English, Wesleyan Univ.


Statement

It is an honor to be nominated for the MLA Delegate Assembly. I hope to advance conversations about current issues as well as possible future directions for the study of Asian American literature. Some questions that have been resurfacing at recent conferences relate to issues of pedagogy, interdisciplinary work, and the field’s relation to critical race studies more broadly. I would be deeply committed to examining these and any other concerns. I currently teach courses related to Asian American literature, Vietnam War culture, and literary genre at Wesleyan University. My first book offers a formalist and historicist analysis of representations of Vietnam in American literature, enlisting a *longue durée* approach that considers American, Vietnamese, and Vietnamese American perspectives. My next project theorizes what I call a refugee aesthetics of protraction by examining Southeast Asian refugee narratives based in New Orleans. I also coedited a special issue of *MELUS* with Catherine Fung titled *Refugee Cultures: Forty Years after the Vietnam War*. My interests thus span local, national, and transnational frames and invest in understudied aspects of Asian American literature and criticism, including multilingual sources, untapped archives, and underexamined sites. I have not yet served on an MLA committee, but I would be dedicated to understanding what colleagues hope and envision for Asian American literary studies.

**LLC Southern United States**

630. **Benjamin Mangrum.** Asst. prof. English, Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor.


Statement

Among the many challenges facing our profession, the crisis of employment that’s undermining instructional labor in United States higher education is the one that motivates my candidacy. I’ve held positions as a visiting faculty member at Davidson College and currently hold a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Michigan. I entered my first graduate program a few months before the great recession; then, in 2014–15, I first went on the job market during what the MLA’s 2015 study of its job list identified as a six-year-long trough. This sustained precarity has shaped my experience with graduate education. Therefore, while I’m committed to responding to the many challenges facing higher education, I am especially concerned with advocating for the interests of early career scholars who are attempting to navigate an atrophied job market.

The MLA Delegate Assembly can’t create tenure-track jobs, but the MLA has in recent years undertaken efforts to discourage the casualization of instructional labor in higher education. If given the privilege of serving as a delegate, I’d like to be a vocal supporter of this work.

In addition, I’m a native of the Deep South and am well acquainted with the social and institutional forces at work in the region. I’ve been associated with several types of schools in the region, including Mississippi College and UNC-CH, and my scholarship and teaching regularly include Southern studies. I’d be honored to represent the forum and believe my personal and scholarly experiences would make me an effective delegate.
631. **Monica Miller.** Asst. prof. English, Middle Georgia State Univ.


**Statement**

As an early career scholar who was very recently on the job market, I bring to the Delegate Assembly an acute awareness of the realities of the academy’s changing landscape and the evolving relationship between the humanities and the larger world. At a time when austerity, precarity, and insecurity have become the norm, the MLA must find new ways to support its most precarious members and respond to these unprecedented times. One such strategy should be to address the divide between the humanities and STEM. While STEM and STEAM attract headlines and funding, those of us with foundations in the humanities realize how such disciplinary divisions can often be counterproductive. Rather, we should show how the humanities writ large are a necessary foundation for learning and innovation across all disciplines. Drawing on my interdisciplinary background in literature, cultural studies, and multimodal composition, I’d like to work to support the increasingly important public humanities. Having served for six years on the executive board of the Women’s Caucus for the Modern Languages as well as the founding executive board of the Society for the Study of Southern Literature’s Emerging Scholars Organization, I look forward to having the opportunity to serve in the MLA’s Delegate Assembly.

**LLC Arabic**

632. **Samer Mahdy Ali.** Assoc. prof. Arabic and Islamic culture, Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor.


**Statement**

My prime long-term focus centers on our academic freedom. I see that freedom, and our independence in pursuing knowledge, eroding with the decline in per-student public funding of higher education, the encroachment of corporate money into the university to fill the void, and the swell of ultranationalism, Islamophobia, and white supremacy in mainstream United States discourse and politics.
The consequences have been damaging in our workplace: the proliferation of corporate models of putative value, higher tuition and debt for students, increasing student-faculty ratios and vulnerable contingent labor (coupled with the decline of tenure), and an ever more punitive system of compliance with economic and political “realities.” Note for example the conservative’s attack on Title VI programs that fund Middle Eastern studies and the rise of blacklists like CampusWatch.org and Canary Mission, which all began on the fringes of culture but now translate into intimidation of thought and activism often sanctioned by our own institutions. In response to these pernicious trends, the MLA has played a leading role in defending academic freedom and making the case for teaching global languages, not only those related to supposed security but also the languages of the world as a public good unto itself. For the past fourteen years, I have stepped into several service roles to support the MLA’s efforts to globalize our outlook with expertise representing the regions and cultures of the world. I ask for your support again to continue that project.


Statement

I am keen to work with the MLA in the aim of fulfilling its mission to “[facilitate] scholarly inquiry in and across periods, geographic sites, genres, languages, and disciplines in higher education” (The MLA’s Mission). From a standpoint between Arabic studies and world literature, I seek to bring scholarship on Arabic literature and language into conversation with scholarship in other fields and locales by promoting Arabic language study, initiating scholarly cooperation and exchange, and encouraging the translation of literary works from Arabic. I also believe that as an institution devoted to understanding culture, the MLA has a duty to support the cultures it studies by standing in solidarity with scholars the world over who endure persecution.

LLC West Asian


PhD, Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Mary I. and David D. Hunting Grad. Student Fellow, Inst. for the Humanities, Univ. of Michigan, 2012–13; EUME (Europe in the Middle East–The Middle East in Europe) fellow, Forum Transregionale Studien (Berlin), 2014–15.

Publications include article in Journal of Turkish Literature.

Statement

My PhD is in comparative literature. My work interrogates how Turkish and Spanish literature from the second half of the twentieth century respond to state violence. Currently, I am assistant professor of world literature in the English department at Appalachian State University. My recent transition into an English department and into teaching world literature in English has made me keenly aware of the persistence of East-West binaries in pedagogies of literature. Especially when the topic is Middle Eastern literatures, it seems that current curricula tempt students to rely on such binaries and clichés, making (world) literature pedagogies overlap in insidious ways with current political realities. This would be one of the
topics of conversations I would want to initiate as the Delegate Assembly representative for LLC West Asian. I see this theoretical and pedagogical conversation as part of a broader discussion of the role of the humanities in the Trump era and of MLA’s role in challenging political violence and repression, within and outside of the United States.

I am honored to be nominated as the LLC West Asian representative and, if elected, look forward to carrying out the responsibilities Delegate Assembly membership.


Statement

It is an honor to be nominated to represent my colleagues in the MLA. If my academic career at this stage can be characterized by one thing, it is an interest in decentering; the reconceptualization of what constitutes a humanities canon away from a model that situates the West as center is the primary mission of my current position at Yale-NUS in Singapore. It is this focus on the need to shift the terms of our literary engagement to become more inclusive of the languages and literatures that we have historically placed on the periphery that will define my work as forum delegate.

From my earliest graduate school membership in the MLA, I have watched its gradual transformation from a professional space that offered few opportunities for those specializing in non-European languages and literatures to a venue of active participation for those of us working in literatures that would once have been considered marginal to the organization. The progress the MLA has made here is immediately apparent in the growing inclusivity of its annual convention. As a literary scholar who works primarily in Arabic, I recognize the potential—and responsibility—the MLA holds to fully integrate non-European languages into the organization’s mainstream, to provide these languages and literatures an equal seat at the table so to speak. While the MLA’s progress in recent years has been significant, I am committed to pushing the organization to be the truly global community it needs to become if it is to remain relevant.

LLC Modern and Contemporary Chinese

636. Christopher M. Lupke. Prof. Chinese cultural studies, Univ. of Alberta.


Statement

These are difficult times for the humanities. As someone at the forefront of expanding the reach of the MLA to include Asian languages, I view the recent reorganization of the MLA into forums as a major structural improvement; however, my worry is, was it too late? We find ourselves under siege, politically and economically. What do we do? We cannot sit idly by. There are no easy answers, but the work of such scholars as Chris Newfield provides a partial blueprint toward repositioning ourselves. As a delegate, I intend to continue to advocate for more space for non-Western languages in the convention program and on standing committees. Broadening the MLA is not solely a way to create a more equitable distribution of space within the association for the benefit of all; it is absolutely vital to the well-being of the association itself and to the profession at large. One component of the survival and future resurgence of the humanities in North America resides in a redrawing of the boundaries of viable subject matter in the academy. Asian and African languages should be available not only to the privileged few at Ivy League universities, top public universities, and a few small colleges. They should be available everywhere. As the largest academic organization representing the humanities in the world, the MLA has to be making that argument forcefully and repeatedly. Additionally, the MLA must reflect it in its own representational apparatus.

637. Sijia Yao. Asst. prof. of practice Chinese, Univ. of Nebraska, Lincoln.

PhD, Purdue Univ. Purdue Research Foundation grant, 2015; Promise Award, Purdue Univ., 2016. Online Innovation Award, Purdue Univ., 2014–15; Excellence in Teaching Award, School of Langs. and Cultures, Purdue Univ., 2015; Parents’ Recognition Teaching Award, Univ. of Nebraska, Lincoln, 2017.

Publications include contrib., Handbook of Research on Foreign Language Education in the Digital Age (2016); articles in Forum for World Literature Studies, Movie Review.

Statement

The humanities in higher education are experiencing a time of significant changes and challenges. I strongly support the core mission of the MLA and advocate for promoting research and teaching in the interests of all instructors of literatures and languages to bolster academic freedom and autonomy. If elected to the Delegate Assembly, I will raise the following concerns in meetings: academic collaboration across borders and disciplines, literary translation that is currently undervalued and discouraged, skepticism about the value of less-taught-language education, budget shortages, declining enrollments in languages and literatures, and the erosion of tenure due to the increase of part-time faculty positions. I believe that the MLA, given its expansive and significant influence, should voice an indispensable response to the ongoing crisis in higher education. To implement our shared ideals and beliefs in the real world, instructors and scholars need to extend their attention beyond academia and defend the value of the humanities.
LLC Old English


Statement

My research engages with issues of place and space, translation, and, most recently, wonder and curiosity in early medieval England. Old English studies is a vital field with practitioners at all levels and all kinds of institutions. The members of our forum think through past and present in creative and productive ways, engaging our own and our students’ wonder and curiosity. I hope to bring our voices to the Delegate Assembly as we consider how the MLA should adapt to contemporary circumstances while staying true to its basic missions. I hope to further the MLA’s work of becoming more inclusive and reaching out to more scholars, teachers, and learners while we sustain studies of languages and literatures in a hostile atmosphere. I would like to assist the MLA in helping institutions to value newer kinds of scholarship and models less used in some areas of the humanities, including digital and collaborative work. The MLA must speak up particularly for graduate students, contingent faculty members, independent scholars, and academics in areas of economic or political vulnerability.

639. Mary F. Dockray-Miller. Prof. English, Lesley Univ.


Statement

The MLA needs to focus on protecting and advocating for the study of language and literature in the age of the corporate university.

LLC Middle English

640. Christine Nuhad Chism. Prof. English, Univ. of California, Los Angeles.

Statement

My research, teaching, and professional service aim to broaden the conception of the medieval period and globalize treatments of its culture and literature by encompassing Mediterranean, Asian, and African circuits of encounter, violence, and transmission. Trained in the literature, drama, and culture of British Middle Ages, ten years ago I received a Mellon grant to study Arabic and the broader history of premodern Islamic cultures to which it opens doors. My work contests the polarization of these cultural traditions, investigating questions of transculturation and periodization in order to question how Western so-called Western society has ever been. I joined the faculty of UCLA in 2009, after holding positions at Rutgers University and Allegheny College. Since completing my first book, Alliterative Revivals, I have been working on several projects. Mortal Friends: The Politics of Friendship in Medieval England, forthcoming from Penn, explores the social force of friendship in a range of late medieval texts. A second project, Strange Knowledge: Translation and Cultural Transmission in the Arabic and English Middle Ages, draws on the skills amassed while working on a Mellon New Directions fellowship between 2003 and 2005. I have also been working on medieval Arabic and European travel narratives and the Middle English and Arabic Alexander romances. I am currently editing the second volume (medieval) of the five-volume Wiley Blackwell Companion to World Literature, ed. Ken Seigneurie, and have served for four years on the executive committee of the University of California Mediterranean Seminar.

641. Ruth Evans. Dorothy McBride Orthwein Prof. of English, St. Louis Univ.


Statement
The major issues that the MLA currently faces within the profession are the decline of tenure, the expansion of the contingent faculty, the decline of language study, and the defunding of the humanities, exemplified by Trump’s recent budget proposal to end support for the NEH and NEA. These should be the MLA’s priorities. I strongly support the MLA’s advocacy in these areas and would be keen to push the MLA to do even more, especially to counter the widespread public disparagement of the humanities. I served on the executive committee for LLC Middle English from 2013 through 2017, helping to set the agenda for intellectual work within our discipline and to engage nonmedievalists in this agenda (through, for example, panels on New Materialisms and the End of Critique and Transgender). If elected to represent LLC Middle English in the Delegate Assembly, I would advocate for retaining the current configuration of MLA medieval forums, and I would also speak up on behalf of a currently underrepresented group within my discipline, namely medievalists of color. As executive director of the New Chaucer Society (2012–18), I have gained considerable experience in academic leadership and in responding to the needs of a large and varied constituency. On the MLA’s involvement in politics more widely, I very much support the MLA’s protests against assaults on the academy around the world and not just in the United States, such as Erdogan’s 2016 attack on higher education in Turkey.

LLC 16th-Century English


Publications include Literature and Architecture in Early Modern England (2013); contrib., Catholic Culture in Early Modern England (2007), The Intellectual Culture of the British Country House, 1500–1700 (2015); articles in English Literary Renaissance, ELH.
Statement

My greatest professional concern is the current training of graduate students. While I believe strongly in the acquisition of certain traditional skills in research and critical investigation, I am skeptical that the usual model for dissertations (imagined as monographs in progress) reflects the present realities of either the academic publishing market or the types of jobs many of our students will be taking. This concern is distinct from the idea of presenting graduate students with alternatives to an academic career. That is, I think we need to ask what an academic career usually looks like now (and not just for students who are trained and hired at elite institutions) and how we can best prepare our students for its demands while still instilling intellectual growth and academic rigor.

Another area of professional concern is the erosion of belief in the value of historical literary study. We need not overtly relate every discussion of Chaucer, Shakespeare, or Burney to the current political climate in order for it to be relevant. Active belief in the study of other times and places, as well as in education for its own sake, is already a form of political resistance. For me, it is not that we need to show that Chaucer is in conversation with Trump’s America. Rather, we need to believe in the importance of what we are already doing as a means of remembering what other conversations and values are possible—and make sure that they persist.

LLC Restoration and Early-18th-Century English


Statement

Working at an urban public research university in Texas has taught me that much of the labor undertaken by students and faculty members goes unacknowledged and unsupported. Students experience a lot of hardship to earn their degrees, while faculty members often lack sufficient resources to do their jobs. At institutions like mine, faculty research and teaching roles need to be thoughtfully integrated, if everyone is to survive the forces of attrition that we all face. These forces confront not just students but also TAs, adjuncts, and non-tenure-track faculty members. These were the kinds of pedagogical, organizational, and governance issues I addressed in my own teaching, departmental, and faculty senate work and ultimately in the university teaching center I helped establish and direct. If elected, I would push the MLA to use its unique organizational role to model an inclusive approach to English that would encourage departments to take advantage of the multiple fields (e.g., literature, creative writing, rhetoric and composition, linguistics) that often share the same students. I would also encourage the MLA to recognize how historically-constituted fields of literary study (like my own, 18th-century British literature) have been changing over the past few decades to take in new students, new topics, and new research possibilities and to make possible less-stratified models of research and teaching. These new models are the basis for stronger arguments for the humanities as a public good and will help public universities win broader and deeper support for their singular mission.


Statement

I am interested in establishing stronger connections between the robust work of the American Society for 18th-Century Studies and the MLA. How do we bring a wider contingent of scholars and professors working in eighteenth-century studies into the MLA? Where are the points of overlap between the two professional societies, and how can participation in both societies be mutually enriching? While a focus on teaching characterizes both the MLA and ASECS, new scholarly trends in eighteenth-century studies foreground the special challenges that we all face in an age of diminishing resources. The turn in eighteenth-century studies to postcolonial and diasporic studies, gender studies, history of science, environmental criticism, animal studies, and new materialisms all suggest that instructors are eager to highlight the ways in which “the eighteenth century isn’t over” and to make the case for the ongoing relevance of our field. Established practices at ASECS, such as the teaching awards for innovative curricula, further highlight the commitment of ASECS members to the humanities classroom. Yet this commitment might become the subject of conversation with those facing similar pressure to justify the importance of their subjects. While ASECS has traditionally defined its historical period as liberally as possible (for some, from 1660 to 1830), its distinct mission can only be enhanced by fruitful collaboration with wider trends in English. ASECS has long had some presence at the MLA convention, but this is the time to enhance that presence and to promote a more dynamic relationship with the MLA.

LLC Victorian and Early-20th-Century English


Statement

I am honored to be nominated as a candidate for the MLA Delegate Assembly. I have come to love the MLA conference as a meeting of friends, old and new, with remarkable interests and ideas. We are a wonderful community. But I think the MLA could more effectively engage the public on our behalf.

I would encourage the MLA to better promote its mission by providing departments and members standards and advice to leverage arguments for full-time hiring; to uphold and strengthen language and literature requirements; and, most important, to market the profession at the grassroots level—not only in
freshman classrooms, where students are most open to choosing a major, but also in high schools and at
dinner tables and at businesses. We know the immense political, personal, social, and practical value of what
we study and teach, but clearly the public often does not. Members would feel more invested in the MLA if it
were inspiring interest in the study of languages and literatures much more visibly outside of academia and
among other disciplines.

647. **Mario Ortiz-Robles.** Prof. English and Mellon-Morgridge Prof., Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison.
PhD, Columbia Univ. Fellow, Inst. for Research in the Humanities, Univ. of Wisconsin, 2010–11;
Vilas Associates research fellowship, Univ. of Wisconsin, 2013–14; Romnes Faculty Fellowship, Wisconsin
Humanities, Univ. of Wisconsin, 2011–13. Distinguished Honors Faculty Award, Coll. of Letters and

Publications include *The Novel as Event* (2010), *Literature and Animal Studies* (2016); coed.,
*Narrative Middles: Navigating the Nineteenth-Century British Novel* (2011); contrib., *The Encyclopedia of
articles in *BRANCH: Britain, Representation, and Nineteenth-Century History*, *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*,
*eHumanista Cervantes*, *European Journal of English Studies*, *1616: Anuario de literatura comparada*, *ELH*,
*Textual Practice*, *Comparative Literature*.

**Statement**

I believe the MLA should play a strong advocacy role in promoting two areas of activity at the heart
of its constituency’s many endeavors: research and teaching. The research mission of the profession is under
mounting political pressure to justify its cultural legitimacy, and, as a result, the already meager funding
sources necessary for its growth and sustainability are being scrutinized at institutional, state, and federal
levels. At the same time, decreasing enrollments in humanities courses across the institutional spectrum have
made this justification a matter of some urgency, especially in the context of a precarious academic labor
market that both undergrads and perpetuates the view that teaching in the humanities is exceptional and
unrelated to broader social trends. Advanced research and cutting-edge teaching will thus face considerable
challenges in the coming years but also opportunities, including finding new ways of nurturing core
disciplines while fostering creative configurations of transdisciplinary research. As a scholar whose work is
situated at the intersection of nineteenth-century literature, literary theory, and animal studies, I am well
positioned to address these challenges and to help develop new research and teaching pathways. I would
welcome the chance to contribute to the efforts of the MLA Delegate Assembly.

**LLC 20th- and 21st-Century English and Anglophone**

648. **Emily Hyde.** Asst. prof. English, Rowan Univ.
PhD, Princeton Univ. Princeton Inst. for Intl. and Regional Studies fellowship, 2011–12; Modernist
Studies Assn. travel grant, spring 2016; stipend, Frances R. Lax Fund for Faculty Development, Rowan

1945: Literature, Citizenship, Rights* (2016); articles in *PMLA*, *Public Books*, *Post45: Contemporaries*.

**Statement**

LLC 20th- and 21st-Century English and Anglophone casts a wide net, and I would be honored to
serve as an MLA delegate for scholars in this lively and capacious field. My scholarly interests include
comparative modernisms, postcolonial literature and theory, theories of world literature, and the intersection
of visual art and narrative form. I teach at a large regional state university, and I am also interested in
participating in MLA discussions about the importance of the humanities in higher education,
interdisciplinarity and innovative pedagogy, faculty diversity and social justice, college access and
affordability, and professional support for emerging scholars, adjuncts, and everyone on the job market.
PhD, Univ. of Pennsylvania. Research fellowship, Harry Ransom Center, Univ. of Texas, Austin, 2015–16; First Book Fellowship, Center for the Humanities, Washington Univ. in St. Louis (WUSTL), 2016. Outstanding Faculty Mentor Award, WUSTL, 2015.

**Statement**
As an early career scholar, I am honored to be nominated for the MLA Delegate Assembly. There are many matters of professional concern facing us today, but, to my mind, the most pressing challenge for the current MLA is the issue of contingent and otherwise precarious academic labor. I have taught at both public and private universities, and I strongly believe that MLA members should support ongoing unionization efforts by graduate students and non-tenure-track faculty members. This support takes many forms and operates on many levels: local, regional, national, global. I don’t pretend to know how to fix our profession. But I can at least pledge to cast whatever votes come my way in support of the undercommons. And as a delegate representing those working in the field of 20th- and 21st-century English and Anglophone literature, I will work to resist the stratification of scholarship along lines of academic class and to increase opportunities for collaboration within and across our field.

**LLC 20th- and 21st-Century French**


**Statement**
I am honored by the nomination to the Delegate Assembly. In the current political and economic context, I believe that it is critically important to uphold the fundamental value of foreign languages and cultures while working actively to demonstrate and defend their vital social role. My commitments to the profession are anchored in my experience as a scholar of postcolonial francophone literature, director of graduate studies in French/francophone studies at IUB, and long-time member and recently elected vice president of the Conseil International d’Études Francophones. I have worked to respond to the challenges that language programs in general and especially French and francophone studies have had to face in recent
years, such as institutional shifts away from the humanities, budget cuts, reduced numbers of applicants to foreign language graduate programs, and the need to reshape the graduate curriculum and refocus our professional efforts to prepare students for a changing career landscape. Yet, through my research and, most recently, through my service as Organizing Committee coordinator for the 2017 International Colloquium for 20th- and 21st-Century French and Francophone Studies, I have also been able to witness and participate in the positive changes that our discipline has undergone during and despite this period of crisis: the reconsideration of intellectual and institutional boundaries between fields of study previously separated, the emergence and expansion of new topics and approaches, and a renewed commitment in French and francophone studies to defining and strengthening the place of language, literature, and culture in today’s world.


Publications include *Original Copies in Georges Perec and Andy Warhol* (2017); article in *MLN*; translation in *Art in Translation*.

**Statement**

I earned my PhD at Columbia University, where I stayed on as a lecturer in the Department of French and Romance Philology and director of the *Maison française* for three years before joining the faculty at Adelphi University a decade ago. This experience has given me a valuable perspective on nonacademic careers and on institutions of various sorts, and it equips me well to serve as a forum delegate for LLC 20th- and 21st-Century French. Having been asked to serve in this capacity two years ago, I have gained a greater appreciation of the opportunities and challenges we face as a profession. My goal is to keep learning about the needs of my peers in order to better advocate for them. I often tell my students that merely knowing that the French word for *tree* is *arbre* is not enough. Once you realize that there are people in this world who climb trees, who plant trees, and who may even be tree experts but who do not use the word *tree*, then you have made a critical leap in your learning. This message, that we must endeavor to see things from other perspectives in addition to our own, is one I strive to impart to my students. I would be honored to continue on in this position, bringing this philosophy to my role as a delegate as I do to my teaching every day.

**LLC Francophone**

652. Lia Brozgal. Assoc. prof. French, Univ. of California, Los Angeles.


**Statement**

As a member of a French and francophone studies department in a large research institution, I have been committed to both undergraduate education and the training of graduate students for ten years. I am keenly interested in the intellectual and pedagogical questions that animate both the small, specialized
seminar and the large, general-education lecture. I am also especially invested in thinking through questions related to the PhD in French (and in literatures more broadly). Are we able to identify a “gold standard” of graduate education? What are the essential components of graduate training, and how are these elements evaluated? How do we respond to the shifting demands that our PhDs confront once they enter the “real world”? What are our responsibilities as educators in the face of a contracting job market? As departmental models and structures morph in response to various pressures, transinstitutional dialogue will become increasingly important; the MLA provides a particularly privileged space for this type of conversation among confrères, and I would be honored, as a member of the Delegate Assembly, to take an active part therein.


Statement

As a member of the Delegate Assembly representing LLC Francophone, I will be an engaged participant in annual meetings and focus on making progress in three principal areas: advocating for further expansion of preprofessional training and mentorship for graduate students, especially in non- or alt-academic fields; pursuing the rethinking of graduate education and the dissertation in the light of changes in and beyond the profession; and, closer to the concerns of LLC Francophone members, supporting initiatives and structures that connect francophone literary and cultural studies to interdisciplinary or thematic fields (postcolonial studies, of course, but also environmental humanities, gender/queer studies, textual and digital humanities, etc.), whether this be in conference programming or in the ways in which fields are defined in the Job Information List.

LLC Galician

Danny Barreto. Asst. prof. LGBTQ studies, Colgate Univ.


Statement

Matters of inclusivity, diversity, and interdisciplinarity are among my primary curricular and professional concerns. I have shown dedication not only to the promotion of Galician literature and culture within our profession and the MLA but also to increasing the visibility of writers who, because of their gender or sexuality, have been marginalized within the field of Galician studies. I support those initiatives that stress the importance of second-language learning, especially lesser-taught languages, as central to a liberal arts education. As the MLA continues to confront the financial and cultural obstacles that the arts and humanities face, recognizing the particular threat these pose for languages and literatures like Galician,
which historically have not had the same institutional support, I welcome the opportunity to represent the recently formed LLC Galician forum in the Delegate Assembly.

655. **Germán Labrador Méndez.** Assoc. prof. Spanish, Princeton Univ.


**LLC German to 1700**

656. **Stephen Mark Carey.** Assoc. prof. German, Univ. of Minnesota, Morris.


657. **Claire Taylor Jones.** Asst. prof. German, Univ. of Notre Dame.


**Statement**

With ever fewer tenure-track positions for premodern Germanists, we need to find ways to make continued participation in our field both affordable and attractive for those who follow other career paths. As a member of the Delegate Assembly, I will take particular interest in two issues: uses of digital technology and alt-ac training and opportunities for graduate students.

Online availability of multiple manuscripts allows easy comparison of textual variants, and digitized incunables and prints facilitate analysis of typeface, paratext, layout, and image. Yet when we can access our primary materials from the comfort of our living rooms, our scholarly isolation may increase. As a member of the Delegate Assembly, I will work to expand initiatives such as *Humanities Commons* to encourage networking through writing groups, live conferencing, collaborative digital exhibits, and the like. I will also push to continue digitizing the job application and interview process to increase accessibility and reduce costs for applicants.

This point leads to my second area of interest: alt-ac careers and graduate student professionalization. The MLA is taking steps in this direction with the Connected Academics program, and at Notre Dame I am well positioned to watch the 5+1 initiative unfold. I will encourage the MLA to pursue...
action on two fronts: developing joint PhD programs with professional degrees such as the MLIS and further including academics with nontraditional paths in the association, not just through representation but also by developing forums and programs that benefit academics outside the classroom.

**LLC 19th- and Early-20th-Century German**


PhD, Univ. of Pennsylvania. Fulbright teaching fellowship (Germany), 1999–2000; Deutsche Gesellschaft für Sprache / Linguistic Soc. of America summer fellowship, 2002; Stiftung Weimarer Klassik und Kunstsammlungen research fellowship, 2006; Max Kade Foundation dissertation fellowship, 2006–07; participant, Fulbright Commission Seminar for Amer. Faculty in German and German Studies, 2011; German Script Course Award, Quadrangle Historical Research Foundation, 2016. Vice pres. (2009–11) and pres. (2011–13), Iowa chapter, AATG; Comm. on Minority Concerns, Associated Colls. of the Midwest, 2010–13; nominating comm., Goethe Soc. of North America, 2015.


**Statement**

I would be honored to represent German studies scholars in the MLA Delegate Assembly. If elected, I would support proposals to improve labor conditions and preserve instruction in foreign languages. I commend the MLA’s call for a living wage, improved job security, health care, and a political voice for all employees at colleges and universities. At a time when the defunding and disregard of higher education threaten the ethical and intellectual core of society, the MLA needs to strengthen its outreach to higher education administrators and elected government officials. Furthermore, our campuses should become more diverse. To this end, I will continue the work of the MLA to stand up for students, staff members, and faculty members of all abilities and social classes as well as for those from LGBTQ communities and first-generation backgrounds. I am especially invested in diversifying the professoriat and its leadership. We should encourage the study of foreign languages and literatures by people of color at the undergraduate level. The organization should cultivate mentorship networks, which provide avenues for intellectual growth and professional development for these members of our community at all stages of their careers. The MLA must continue its dedication to ending discriminatory recruitment, hiring, and promotion practices. Finally, it is a worrying trend that foreign language instruction is increasingly being eliminated from our campuses and as a requirement for study-abroad programs. The MLA should promote foreign languages and literatures and their importance in a global world.

659. Ashley A. Passmore. Asst. prof. German and intl. studies, Texas A&M Univ., College Station.


**Statement**

I am very honored to have been nominated to represent this forum. For many years, I was an instructional faculty member, and I deeply value language teaching as an integral part of the scholarly presence of German in higher education. In my departmental service roles, I have explored methods to better demonstrate the profound impacts of language and culture study on scholarship and on undergraduates’ intellectual achievement. My passion for this topic comes from my desire to elevate the status of languages and the humanities in the higher education landscape and to make the case for expanding these fields, especially in public education and in underserved communities. I am also interested in finding ways to elevate the professional status of contingent faculty members. For this reason, if elected, I will work to support and strengthen the assembly’s efforts to communicate and advocate for increasing our value and our visibility in all levels of education.

Now, as a research faculty member, I have focused on the composition of the New Germany and its enmeshments in the Middle East dating back into the 19th century. We all know that globalization is nothing new, and I look forward to the scholarship in our field that will continue to uncover the networks, migrations, and surprising encounters that have characterized German-speaking communities around the globe for the past few centuries. It is a very exciting time to be part of this field, and I want to bring our dynamic perspective to the assembly.

**LLC Hungarian**

660. **Lilla Balint.** Visiting asst. prof. German studies, Hamilton Coll.


**Statement**

As a member of the executive committee of LLC Hungarian, I have been involved with the programming of the forum’s sessions for the last two annual conventions, devising topics of interest and initiating collaborations with other forums. The latter speaks to one of my central professional convictions: as a comparatist, I am committed to inquiries that cross national boundaries and make sense of literary, cultural, and media phenomena in a comparative fashion, while at the same time remaining attentive to local specificities. Given the marginal position of Hungarian and several other less commonly taught languages, I am dedicated to initiatives that help preserve them in the academy and that enhance their status within the paradigm of world literature.

Since I still keenly remember my graduate school experience, one of my pivotal concerns is the state of graduate education in languages and the humanities more broadly. The MLA has ongoing initiatives that address the changing structure of the academic job market and the influx of PhDs into nonacademic positions; these should not only be sustained but need to be expanded. A corollary to the state of graduate education is the growing number of non-tenure-track and adjunct positions, many of which are filled with recent graduates. As one of the largest professional organizations in the humanities, the MLA needs to address the exploitation of contingent labor in the academy and dedicate itself to regulatory efforts.
661. **Zsuzsanna Varga.** Lecturer Hungarian, Univ. of Glasgow.


**Statement**

I am deeply honored to be nominated for the assembly. As a scholar of English, Scottish, and central European (CEU) comparative literature based in the United Kingdom, I share my North American colleagues’ concern with the precariousness of tenured faculty positions and of modern language programs. Using my transatlantic experience, I would support the MLA’s advocacy for the protection of such programs and the introduction of innovative pedagogical methods that help ensure their survival.

As a CEU scholar with research interests in publishing, intellectual history, and popular culture, I have amply collaborated with historians and film scholars. I am strongly committed to the teaching of lesser-taught languages; I am keen to develop, promote, and evaluate learning resources, and would actively lobby for surveying best practices in lesser-taught-language instruction and for promoting expanded language study. As editor of several comparative cultural studies volumes and the *Slavonica* journal, I have intended to help generate a multiplicity of paradigms as a means to integrating CEU literary studies into broader comparative literature. As a Delegate Assembly member, I propose to create more effective networking opportunities for CEU scholars in order to broaden publishing opportunities in high-ranking journals. As a trained librarian and digital humanities scholar, I would like to advocate the establishment of a special-interest group for CEU digital humanities. I am offering commitment and professionalism.

**LLC Medieval and Renaissance Italian**

662. **Gerry Milligan.** Assoc. prof. Italian, Coll. of Staten Island, City Univ. of New York.

PhD, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison. Interim dean, Div. of Humanities and Social Sciences, Coll. of Staten Island, 2017–. I Tatti Fellowship, Harvard Univ. Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, 2007–08.


**Statement**

Over the past four years, I have been chair of the Department of World Languages and Literatures at a public institution and have witnessed firsthand the potential that administrative bodies have in shaping institutions. In my own experience, MLA reports on retention rates and earning potential for foreign language speakers have significantly influenced college policies. With credible and evidence-based information, scholars of Italian and foreign languages more generally can counter both the cultural trend of emphasizing professional programs and the academic trend of dismissing the premodern era. The MLA is the best platform for such work, and the association can be particularly influential in the field of Italian studies. Thoughtful intervention can boost a field whose enrollment numbers are declining as well as address the needs of scholars of the medieval and Renaissance periods. Those of us who conduct research on medieval and Renaissance texts face particular challenges—necessary travel to Italian archives and libraries, difficulty
in securing publication venues as presses discontinue their series in premodern fields. The MLA has a unique prominence and can help ensure the flourishing of Italian medieval and Renaissance studies. What is needed is the promotion of grant funding for research on premodern topics as well as strategic intervention with academic presses to encourage the publication of works on the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

663. **Sherry Roush.** Prof. Italian, Penn State Univ., University Park.


   **Statement**

   I am honored to be considered to serve in the Delegate Assembly representing the interests of Medieval and Renaissance Italian. A member of the MLA since 1998, I continue to advocate for the recognition of all aspects of early Italian culture and its appreciation, including literary and interdisciplinary scholarship, language, translation, commentary, and paleography, and their pedagogical applications in the twenty-first century.

**LLC Japanese since 1900**

664. **Christopher Laing Hill.** Asst. prof. Japanese lit., Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor.


   **Statement**

   I have been concerned for many years that the study of Japanese literature in North America is cut off from the study of other literatures not only by language but also by methodology. As a scholar of comparative literature and intellectual history, I have tried to show by example that studies of Japanese literature and thought can contribute to larger disciplinary discussions. In the last several years, the forums related to East Asian literatures have made great progress gaining institutional recognition from the MLA.
The increase in forum-organized sessions is invaluable. One objective of the forum’s representative in the Delegate Assembly is to protect and expand the institutional space for Japanese literature at the MLA. I believe the next essential step for the forum is to encourage participation of scholars of Japanese literature in special sessions, both through panels organized by members of the forum and through panels organized by scholars in other fields. Thus, the forum’s representative in the assembly should also work to ensure that a wide range of special sessions are receptive to the inclusion of scholars of Japanese and other East Asian literatures.


Statement

One of the recent trends in higher education is the decreasing emphasis on the teaching of foreign languages and cultures. Even at liberal arts colleges, the visibility of and resources given to foreign language and culture programs have been diminishing in relation to the physical, information, and social sciences. This trend threatens not only teaching and research in Japan studies and studies of other languages and cultures but also historically popular programs such as French and German. Ironically, such retrenchment is taking place in the post-9/11 world, a time when understanding different traditions and people through studies of language and culture have even more pressing urgency. Also, the interdependence that characterizes the contemporary world and the interactions and mutual (though admittedly asymmetrical) influences among different cultures require us to reconfigure the ways we study and teach foreign languages and cultural productions. As someone trained in both language pedagogy and literature who has also directed the Asian Studies Program and the East Asian languages and literatures department at my home institution, my goal as a delegate would be to improve communication among the various aspects of teaching and scholarship in Japanese and other languages and cultures and to strengthen the pipeline between K–12 teachers and instructors at the college level. If elected, I would like to work toward helping Japanese language and culture programs and departments gain a voice at the MLA.

LLC 20th- and 21st-Century Latin American


PhD, Duke Univ. Honorable mention (for Posthegemony), Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize, MLA, 2010.


667. **Silvia Spitta.** Robert E. Maxwell 1923 Prof. of Arts and Sciences and prof. Spanish and comparative lit., Dartmouth Coll.


**Statement**

The current concerted and unprecedented attacks in the United States and across Latin America on institutions of higher learning take aim at the possibility of holding the kind of measured and informed public discussion that is intrinsic to any democracy anywhere. These attacks have heightened the importance of the mission of the MLA in the United States like never before. The role of Latin American studies has also never been more central—not only in terms of grounding the MLA in its hemispheric American context but also in terms of contesting the virulent stereotypes of Latinxs currently being wielded to divide communities across the country. From the murders of the forty-two students at Ayotzinapa to the threat of suspending DACA to the mass deportation of undocumented minorities, we need to focus on the intertwined, interconnected cultures and histories that have shaped the hemisphere north and south for centuries.

**LLC Occitan**

668. **Courtney Wells.** Asst. prof. French and francophone studies, Hobart and William Smith Colls.


Publications include article in Tenso: Bulletin of the Société Guilhem IX.

**Statement**

It is more important now than ever to promote the study of foreign languages, cultures, and literatures in the university. As programs are cut or defunded, it is essential that we articulate the benefit of these studies within the curricula of universities for fostering relationships both at home and abroad and for teaching different perspectives on subjects that include history, literature, politics, philosophy, and science. As a specialist, teacher, and researcher of Occitan language, culture, and literature in France, Catalonia, and Italy, I will advocate not just for the study of major world languages, such as French, but also for the study of what are often called the minor cultures of France and of Europe, such as Occitan and Catalan. As the current
debate in Spain about Catalonia’s right to hold a referendum on its independence shows, the role and status of diverse cultures within modern nation states needs to be reevaluated and rearticulated. I would be honored to represent the interests of Occitan Studies (and those who teach them) both within our institutions and the MLA as the delegate representing LLC Occitan in the MLA Delegate Assembly.


   Publications include articles in *New Medieval Literatures, French Studies, Modern Philology, Viator, MLN, Études rabelaisiennes*.

   **Statement**

   Especially at the present moment, the MLA serves an indispensable role in the public sphere. I am running for a seat in the Delegate Assembly because I fully support its mission and would like to continue to be involved in its operations (I previously served a term on the executive committee of the Occitan forum in its earlier guise—the Discussion Group on Provençal Language and Literature—from 2010 to 2015). I am especially interested in ensuring that the ever-growing body of non-tenure-track faculty members gain proportional representation in governing bodies, both within universities and within the MLA. I am also committed to making sure that the MLA Annual Convention remains as accessible as possible to all participants.

**LLC Scottish**

670. **John Corbett.** Intl. fellow lit., Univ. of São Paulo.


Statement
Since I joined the MLA in 2005, I have sought a higher profile for Scottish literature in the North American academy and a greater awareness of the MLA outside North America, particularly in the Scottish literary community. To this end, I have worked on initiatives such as the establishment of the Scottish Writing Exhibition at the MLA convention (a partnership with Creative Scotland and the Association for Scottish Literary Studies, of which I am currently a vice president). The Scottish Writing Exhibition has grown over the past twelve years from a small book display on a tartan tablecloth to one of the liveliest stalls in the book exhibit. I have promoted the attendance of contemporary writers from Scotland at a number of MLA conventions and remain convinced of the value of interactions between scholars and contemporary writers. I have also worked with many others in proposing special sessions and joint panels on a wide range of Scottish literary topics, involving academics from outside and within North America. As a member of the MLA who is based outside North America, I understand the value of relationships with cognate bodies such as the International Association for the Study of Scottish Literatures and the European Society for the Study of English. In today’s interconnected world, there are ever-increasing opportunities for the MLA and other bodies to participate in joint ventures and international collaborative scholarly projects at individual and institutional levels.


Statement
Although I have belonged to the MLA for several years, this is my first opportunity to serve in a formal capacity. I am honored to be nominated to represent LLC Scottish, and I believe strongly in the value of understanding literature from particular national, cultural, as well as historical locations. I received my PhD from Indiana in 2007. Since then, I have worked as an assistant professor at urban and rural public universities. I have seen both institutions move toward measuring disciplinary value in terms of career outcomes. As a result, I am particularly committed to the MLA’s mission to raise the profile of the humanities and make visible our disciplines’ contributions to society and the workforce. Finding ways to get qualitative and quantitative data into the hands of not just department chairs but also the junior and untenured members of our profession who teach the bulk of our introductory courses would be one way of doing this. I have also been a member of two different faculty unions. I support the MLA’s commitment to inclusiveness and to fostering optimal working conditions for all of its members, not just those in tenure-track or tenured positions. Finally, since becoming an associate professor, I have also directed my university’s Women and
Gender Studies Program. This has provided me with additional insight into the ways the humanities are perceived by those outside of our disciplines. These are the concerns and experiences that would inform my positions as a delegate.

**LLC Slavic and East European**

672. **Rebecca Jane Stanton.** Adjunct asst. prof. Slavic langs., Columbia Univ.


**Statement**

Our professional scholarly organizations are the public face of the humanities. They are at the forefront of the increasingly resonant efforts to reaffirm the centrality of scholarly inquiry, debate questions of the relevance and identity of our fields, and establish the public presence of our subjects. It has been my pleasure and privilege to serve several professional organizations over the past decade. I am a member of the AATSEEL Program Committee and, since 2014, the committee chair. I sit on the AATSEEL Executive Council and work with its leadership to mount the national annual conference and shape the future of the organization. I have also been a member of the executive committee of LLC Slavic and East European and worked to organize numerous Slavic and comparative panels. At my own institution, I’m a member of a five-person humanities initiative tasked with revitalizing student interest in the humanities and founding a Humanities Center.

These pursuits all reflect my strong desire to connect my interests and field with a broader audience. I believe that it is essential to situate academia within the conversations about society, politics, and justice that are central to the life of our communities. In this context, I strive to promote critical thinking and informed discussion. As a member of the Delegate Assembly, I would work to ensure that the MLA continues its leading role in this mission and serves as a crucial ally in spreading the practices and values we prize.
LLC 18th- and 19th-Century Spanish and Iberian


Statement

I am deeply concerned about the defunding of the humanities in public education, particularly in minority-serving institutions. Public institutions must coordinate efforts to demonstrate the importance of the humanities in higher education for minority students. My personal belief is that Spanish is not a foreign language but a second language in the United States. I realize this issue is deeply political not only at the national level but also at the department level within a given university. Nevertheless, arguing in favor of a second or a third official language for this country (any surviving native American language should also be official) will broaden United States citizens’ multicultural understanding of their history and traditions.


Statement
As a representative for LLC 18th- and 19th-Century Spanish and Iberian, I will advocate for maintaining the continued relevance and visibility of these areas of Iberian studies within the MLA and the academy as a whole. I am especially committed to expanding the network of young scholars in the field through active mentoring and targeted efforts to encourage their participation in MLA-sponsored events. Given these challenging times in the academy and the nation at large, the MLA can play a significant role in helping to secure job security and fair labor practices for contingent faculty members and in advocating for the inclusion and representation of the many diverse communities, including women, people of color, GLBTQ communities, religious minorities, and disabled persons, in all areas of the profession. The organization, I believe, can provide additional infrastructural support—such as professional workshops and funding for travel to the convention—not only for graduate students and junior faculty members at institutions with limited resources but also for the growing number of contingent faculty members in the profession. Finally, as humanists, we need to join forces to combat attempts by university administrations to reduce the number of tenure-track positions and to dismantle or otherwise “restructure” our programs, particularly those in non-English languages and literatures (including Hispanic studies programs, which have become a recent target)—trends that will gradually undermine academic freedom and diversity.

**LSL Language and Society**

676. **Andrea Adolph.** Assoc. prof. English and women’s studies, Penn State Univ., New Kensington.

**Statement**
As a delegate, I will encourage collaboration and dialogue across the boundaries of disciplines and subfields. LSL Language and Society incorporates interests in writing, rhetoric, linguistics, and other forms of communication as they shape and manifest themselves in public, social practices. At this time in the life of the humanities, we have a unique opportunity to understand the importance of how language not only impacts a generalized society but also frames the work of the academy, so that its importance is clarified for a wider population. Collaboration within our membership is increasingly relevant in an age when coalition building is critical to how we move forward as a profession.

677. **Jerry Lee.** Asst. prof. English, Univ. of California, Irvine.
    PhD, Univ. of Arizona.
**MS Screen Arts and Culture**

678. **Christina Gerhardt.** Assoc. prof. German, Univ. of Hawai‘i, Mānoa.


**Statement**

As a long-term member of the MLA (twenty-year anniversary this year), I have served the organization in a variety of capacities. Currently, I serve on the PMLA Advisory Committee and on the executive committee for MS Screen Arts and Culture. And I have regularly organized, moderated, and presented on panels. I enjoy working with and for the MLA because I firmly believe that the MLA is a key professional organization for engaging with and promoting the humanities. The humanities continue to face enormous challenges. Yet the work of all languages and literatures has never been more vital to ensuring and promoting a polyvocal democracy. I consistently work to further these goals by advocating for a range of voices, including a full range of languages and literatures and younger scholars, promoting alt-ac career paths, and strengthening the working conditions of precarious adjunct faculty members. If elected, I would continue this work through the Delegate Assembly’s vital conversations on these and other pivotal topics. These conversations have not always been easy, but I believe open debate is vital. If elected, I would work to listen and include the range of voices that constitute the MLA.

679. **Rebecca A. Wanzo.** Assoc. prof. women, gender, and sexuality studies, Washington Univ. in St. Louis (WUSTL).


RCWS History and Theory of Rhetoric


Statement
As a forum member, I am eager to represent my colleagues in rhetoric and writing studies on matters regarding the uneven distribution of resources in both the workplace and the classroom. My background in studying deliberation amid uncertainty, precarious rhetorics, and institutional flux prepares me for this role.

**RCWS Literacy Studies**

682. **Megan Fahey.** Grad. student English, West Virginia Univ., Morgantown.


Statement
While I am a fiction writer by trade, my work as a research assistant at West Virginia University was underpinned by notions of scholarly workflow, inclusivity, and access. As a junior writing program administrator, I reviewed programmatic and curricular matters—like grade appeals, transfer equivalencies, and updates to the first-year writing textbooks—in addition to fulfilling my responsibilities as a mentor, organizing professional development seminars, and conducting peer observations to ensure that each of our students received an active learning experience in the first-year writing classroom. I hold degrees in English education, writing and rhetoric, and creative writing, and my primary concern as a delegate would be to foster transdisciplinary conversation and interdepartmental cooperation.

683. **Laura Lisabeth.** Grad. student English, St. John’s Univ., Jamaica.


Publications include contrib., *Web Writing: Why and How for Liberal Arts Teaching and Learning* (2015), *Bad Ideas about Writing* (2017); article in *In Progress.*

Statement
Never has there been a more important time to advocate for the importance of humanities education. The MLA takes a leadership role in this advocacy by organizing and educating its members and by speaking publicly about threats to humanities funding. But congruent with this sense of urgency about the future of the humanities is the need to challenge the wider academy’s history of insularity from engaging in public discourse around important issues. This challenge comes from two distinct fields of work already in progress that could be taken up more vigorously by the MLA.
First, more attention should be paid to fluid boundaries between higher education and public and political discourse so that the values promoted by humanities education can make a broader impact on the larger culture. I will work to promote a more complex understanding of academic literacy as a potential discourse of wider influence as well as a place for more robust attention to cultural and linguistic inclusivity.

Second, within the fields of rhetoric and composition and writing studies there is an ongoing commitment to antiracist pedagogies and assessment, a movement in which the MLA might play a more visible role. How literacy is acquired and theorized, how writing and rhetoric are framed in departments and classrooms—these are some of the sites and spaces for antiracist work. If I am elected, I will work to bring a more detailed awareness of these important pedagogical theories and practices to the assembly.

TC Age Studies


Statement
I am honored by this nomination to represent TC Age Studies in the Delegate Assembly. As a life member of the MLA, I have always avidly followed the MLA’s policies, plans, and programs and, whenever possible, implemented them on my campus. For example, as chair of the English department, I used the Delegate Assembly’s Recommendations on Staffing to convert part-time positions to tenure-track positions. Another of the MLA’s strategic priorities is working with K–16 education. I was fortunate to collaborate with my institution’s College of Education to design a literacy curriculum for future teachers based on the life course.

This candidacy extends my personal commitment to serve in general and to advocate for age studies in particular. Colleagues across the disciplines keenly experience the current challenges to the humanities and higher education. How do these challenges intersect with age? There are 25,000 members of the MLA, each one affected by the possibilities, limitations, and constructions of a specific point in the life course. Advocacy of age within the governing structure can address policies such as those that maintain and increase convention attendance, particularly among older members; those that engage teacher-scholars at small institutions, where faculty members often feel disempowered; those that address the specific needs of midcareer scholars; and those that enable and encourage the continuing worldwide participation in our work. As your representative, I would welcome and use every opportunity to make age and its study visible and vital.


Statement
My work as a scholar of age and literature shapes my investment in accessibility and equity in higher education. As a member of the Delegate Assembly, I would like to address issues such as continuing education for older adults, a critical approach to youth-centric campus culture, ageist hiring practices in academia, and the accessibility of the traditional classroom and online platforms to all ages. My goal would be to complement the work of our colleagues striving for equity regarding race, gender, class, and sexuality.
by spurring a critical conversation to identify and eliminate ageism in higher education as it takes place in professional and pedagogical contexts.

Equity matters on all fronts, including the labor of contingent faculty members. Faculty members who require the most help—for example, at nonunionized colleges in the South—are often overlooked. As a way of combating the systematic devaluation of our work in the humanities—not only the rise of contingent labor but also the imminent defunding of the NEA and NEH—the MLA must provide a unified message that justifies our work to an increasingly skeptical public.

Finally, the field of age studies takes a deeply interdisciplinary approach to scholarship that I would like to encourage across the different fields represented by the MLA. If elected, I will attempt to publicize the value of work that bridges the social sciences and the humanities and draw together scholars and professionals outside of academia.

**TC Cognitive and Affect Studies**

686. **Patrick Colm Hogan.** Prof. English and Board of Trustees Distinguished Prof., Univ. of Connecticut, Storrs.


**Statement**

As the representative of TC Cognitive and Affect Studies, I would of course be attentive to MLA support for theoretical analysis, empirical research, and related pedagogical practices bearing on cognitive processing and emotion. Moreover, my interests in this area, though principally on the side of cognitive and affective science, extend to the sorts of political critique that are prominent in poststructurally influenced
affect theory. However, cognitive and affective research and teaching are likely to be direct issues in little if any Delegate Assembly business. As to more general concerns, I try to favor the sort of systematic, effortful empathy that some research suggests is cultivated by literary study. I therefore tend to support positive or ameliorative over negative or punitive approaches to political dilemmas of the sort often considered by the Delegate Assembly. For example, I would urge the positive cultivation of links with Palestinian universities and academics rather than the inhibition of links with Israeli universities and academics (to take a recent topic from Delegate Assembly business). In keeping with the views of many TC Cognitive and Affect Studies members, I would also try to connect MLA support of the humanities with empirical research on the value of literary study, insofar as this is relevant to Delegate Assembly business and possible for a delegate.


**Statement**

I am pleased to be nominated to serve in the Delegate Assembly, and it would be an honor to represent TC Cognitive and Affect Studies. I believe the MLA is at its strongest as a transdisciplinary organization. If elected as a delegate, I would advocate for measures to strengthen transdisciplinary ties and to lower barriers to participation, especially for members of communities and areas of interest underrepresented in the MLA. I see the MLA as a point of nexus bringing together scholars and teachers across the humanities and other disciplines for collaborative inquiries, as in cognitive and affect studies. Such collaboration, along with public engagement, is all the more necessary in response to the many challenges facing higher education in general and the humanities in particular.

**TC Disability Studies**

688. **Stephanie Lynn Kerschbaum.** Assoc. prof. English, Univ. of Delaware, Newark.


689. **Julia Miele Rodas.** Assoc. prof. English, Bronx Community Coll., City Univ. of New York.


**Statement**

I am pleased to be running for the TC Disability Studies seat, and I would be honored to contribute to the work of the Delegate Assembly. I am a longtime disability scholar who has often promoted the work, ideas, and values of the field in new arenas—mine was the first disability studies (DS) dissertation at the CUNY Graduate Center in 2003, a time when there were no senior disability scholars in the English program. I have published widely in DS and have continued to promote disability scholarship. Since 2007, I have served on the editorial board of the *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies*. I founded a disability scholarship group to support the work of DS practitioners at CUNY, and I currently serve as cochair of the Columbia University Seminar in Disability, Culture, and Society. As a forum delegate for TC Disability Studies, I would bring my dedication to DS and would remain committed to the ongoing work of the group, especially its efforts to promote more intersectional scholarship.

In addition, as a faculty member at Bronx Community College, I am especially concerned that DS be more accessible. I am committed to advocating for a DS that is radically inclusive of nonwhite culture, literature, and people; I am also eager to promote conversations about teaching DS at all levels. We must work diligently to make DS accessible to community college students, to people living in poverty, and to those who are often excluded from higher education.

**TC Marxism, Literature, and Society**

690. **Gavin Arnall.** Asst. prof. Romance langs., Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor.


691. **Nicole Fleetwood.** Assoc. prof. Amer. studies, Rutgers Univ., New Brunswick.


**TC Medical Humanities and Health Studies**

692. **Thomas Lawrence Long.** Assoc. prof. in residence, School of Nursing, Univ. of Connecticut, Storrs.


Statement

Since beginning my full-time career in higher education in 1989 (the same year I joined the MLA), I have observed the shifting landscape of the profession of languages and literatures and engaged in advocacy and professional leadership on behalf of that profession and on behalf of public colleges and universities. As an English professor, I have been employed at a community college, a comprehensive state university, and now a flagship public research university. The MLA needs to be attentive to the profession at all these levels. With continued erosion in public funding for higher education, we also need to advocate on behalf of labor justice for adjunct faculty members and full-time contingent faculty members (like me), students burdened with loan debt, and the humanistic values of our disciplines. MLA members must also be willing to engage in spirited, reasonable debate about public issues affecting our institutions and students at a time when civil discourse and scholarly expertise are demeaned. At the same time, the MLA must remain a steward of scholarly and instructional professionalism, providing our members with print, digital, and in-person forums for the dissemination of new knowledge about literary and cultural traditions and about teaching them to students.

693. **Tana Jean Welch.** Asst. prof. medical humanities, Coll. of Medicine, Florida State Univ.


**Statement**

During my tenure as assistant professor of medical humanities at the Florida State University College of Medicine, I’ve developed various courses in the medical humanities, including courses in literature and medicine and narrative medicine. I also serve as the faculty adviser for the College of Medicine’s student literary arts journal, *HEAL: Humanism Evolving through Art and Literature*, and poetry editor of *Literary AMWA*, a new journal forthcoming from the American Medical Women’s Association. This valuable interdisciplinary experience complements the interdisciplinary nature of my research, which blends literary studies, ethics, posthumanism, science, and gender studies to examine the ways national and global politics intersect and shape various bodies. My research also draws heavily on new materialism—a methodology that takes into account how both material and social elements shape the human experience—and has thus proved useful in demonstrating how literary works can provide a practical illustration of intersectionality to health-care providers.

I view the field of health humanities as an opportunity to expand the reach of the humanities while also promoting greater understanding of the social and political factors that influence health and healing—a vital necessity in our current political climate. As a delegate, I would work to create greater awareness within the MLA of the interdisciplinary possibilities within health humanities and health studies. I would also work to forge partnerships and collaborations between MLA members and organizations outside the MLA, such as the American Society of Bioethics and Humanities and the Association of American Medical Colleges.

**TC Psychology, Psychoanalysis, and Literature**

694. **Russell Sbriglia.** Asst. prof. English, Seton Hall Univ.


Publications include ed., *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Literature but Were Afraid to Ask Žižek* (2017); articles in *Poe Studies: History, Theory, Interpretation*, *Arizona Quarterly*, *Postmodern Culture*.

**Statement**

It would be an honor to represent TC Psychology, Psychoanalysis, and Literature in the MLA Delegate Assembly. Psychoanalytic theory stands at the center of my study of literature, both in general and with respect to nineteenth-century American literature (my field of specialization) in particular. In my scholarship and teaching alike, I find psychoanalysis to be one of the most effective tools not only for grounding textual interpretation but also for bringing textual interpretation back to the forefront of literary studies (interpretation having been largely displaced by the historicist emphasis on contextualization). At a moment when literary studies seems poised for a return to theory—as best seen, perhaps, in the far-reaching “objectual turn” brought about by New Materialism and object-oriented ontology—I believe that psychoanalysis, over the next few years, has the potential to become as influential as it once was in theory’s heyday. It is thus a very exciting time indeed to be working on literature and psychoanalysis.

695. **Calvin Thomas.** Prof. English, Georgia State Univ.


**Statement**

My statement is simply this: resist.

**TC Sexuality Studies**

696. **Travis M. Foster.** Asst. prof. English, Villanova Univ.

PhD, Univ. of Wisconsin. Mark and Elisabeth Eccles Teaching Award, Univ. of Wisconsin, 2005; Junior Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching, Villanova Univ., 2017. Podcast Advisory Council, C19: The Soc. of Nineteenth-Century Americanists, 2017–.


**Statement**

Our professional organization should empower and defend its members against attacks and economic precarity. I’m particularly interested in two ways the MLA can do this. First, I would like to see us both continue and expand on our tradition of defending scholars—particularly scholars working on issues related to race, settler colonialism, and queerness—who find their credibility under attack. We should not merely be defending academic freedom but also proactively affirming our colleagues’ expertise and knowledge, while also strongly encouraging university administrations to do the same. These affirmations are particularly important for defending graduate students, junior faculty members, contingent scholars, and others not protected by the tenure system. This leads to a second and related area of concern. It is vital that the MLA more actively support unionization and working-condition-improvement campaigns at all levels of the university. Our members at institutions from Fordham to Yale to Hillsborough Community College are risking their careers and livelihood, and the MLA should do everything it can to lend credibility to their arguments and to highlight the justness of their demands.

697. **Ari Friedlander.** Asst. prof. English, Univ. of Mississippi.


**Statement**

I am honored to stand for election to the TC Sexuality Studies seat in the Delegate Assembly. My research takes an intersectional approach to the history and representation of sexuality, with a particular focus on the role of socioeconomic phenomena in the historical development of sexual categories and practices. In this historical moment, in which reactionary political forces threaten fragile recent advances in both the social safety net and LGBTQIA rights, I think it is doubly important that the MLA guard against any complacency in advocating for the disadvantaged—both within its ranks and in the larger academic world. As a delegate, I will push to acknowledge and address the role social difference plays within the profession, while also remembering that it can never be separated from interlocking axes of oppression, including those of race, sexuality, ability, and gender. As a member of TC Sexuality Studies, I will seek to make sure all sponsored panels reflect the diversity of the profession at large, including graduate students and contingent faculty members. I bring a track record of scholarly collaboration, reflected in the two international sexuality studies conferences I’ve organized in the past three years (at the Huntington Library and the Freie Universität Berlin). I believe that this capacity for communication and outreach will serve the membership well in the large and sometimes unwieldy Delegate Assembly.

**TC Translation Studies**

698. **Kathryn Vomero Santos.** Asst. prof. English, Texas A&M Univ., Corpus Christi.


Publications include coed., *Arthur Golding’s A Moral Fabletalk and Other Renaissance Fable Translations* (2017); contrib., *Shakespeare and Immigration* (2014); article in *Philological Quarterly.*

**Statement**

Having been a participant in recent seminars and institutes on the topic of translation sponsored by organizations such as the NEH, the Mellon Foundation, and the Folger Shakespeare Library, I am excited by the multiple directions that translation studies has taken as it continues to move out of the peripheries and into a more central place in academic study. But one of the reasons it remains partially in the shadows is precisely what is so important about it: its interdisciplinarity. I believe that the MLA can serve an essential role not only in bringing these various conversations together within the field of translation studies but also in identifying the key ways that they interface with larger facets of the profession. I also hope that I can use my role as delegate to support instructors as they bring translation studies into the classroom. In my teaching experience, I have observed how the multidisciplinary topic of translation energizes and encourages students from many different backgrounds to recognize how translation, in all of its forms, shapes the literature and language they study and the cultures in which they live. As an organization and as individual professionals in this field, we would do well to embrace the bridge metaphor so frequently associated with the theory and practice of translation as we continue to reexamine the role that the humanities play in higher education and in public spheres.

699. **Russell Scott Valentino.** Prof. Slavic and East European langs. and cultures, Indiana Univ., Bloomington.


Statement

Having had the good fortune to serve the different professional communities to which I belong in a wide range of capacities—from editor and administrator to department chair and nonprofit arts board president—I can say that serving a professional community deepens and expands one’s understanding of the work performed by that community and of the people who compose it. Such service invariably enhances one’s understanding of one’s own discipline. It also keeps one grounded in the work of others, an essential feature of any scholarly and artistic community.

To my mind, follow-through is essential in such work, as is attention to detail and personal care in both thought and expression. It also helps to be ready to think creatively, make connections across categories and disciplines, and keep a historical perspective. This is all part of being a good colleague, of course, but these are also principles of doing good work in general.

Seeking first to understand is absolutely essential. Being able to ask questions (not comments formed as questions) in such a way as to zero in on the core of an issue; to elicit candid, honest responses; and to simultaneously demonstrate implicit respect for an enterprise or an interlocutor is a skill I have tried to cultivate. One’s own comments, suggestions, and recommendations for how best to move forward should come after. This is where expertise, analytic skill, and expressive effectiveness enter the picture and where keeping one’s cool sometimes shows whether one is where one should be.