Minutes of the MLA Executive Council

[Note: The Executive Council voted to approve these minutes at its October 2005 meeting.]

THE COUNCIL MET ON 20–21 MAY 2005 AT THE MLA OFFICE IN NEW YORK. PRESIDENT Domna C. Stanton presided. The officers present were First Vice President Marjorie Perloff, Second Vice President Michael Holquist, and Executive Director Rosemary G. Feal. The Executive Council members present were K. Anthony Appiah, Marilyn Gaddis Rose, John Guillory, Mary N. Layoun, Yolanda Martínez–San Miguel, Nancy K. Miller, Elisabeth Mudimbe-Boyi, A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff, Amada Sandoval, Nicolas Shumway, Hortense J. Spillers, Guy Stern, and Priscilla Wald. Executive Council member Michael Bérubé was absent. The MLA staff members present were Director of Operations Terrence Callaghan, Production Manager for MLA Periodical Publications Anna S. A. Chang, Director of Bibliographic Information Services and Editor of the *MLA International Bibliography* Barbara Chen, Managing Editor of MLA Publications and Director of Publishing Operations Judy Goulding, Director of Financial Operations Amilde Hadden, Director of Convention Programs Maribeth T. Kraus, Director of English Programs David Laurence, and Director of Book Publications David G. Nicholls.

On 20 May, after a short regular session for introductions of new council and staff members, the council convened in executive session to review the salaries of senior staff members and to receive a report from the MLA's officers on their review, carried out before the start of the council meeting, of all staff salaries. Any council member who wished to review all staff salaries had the opportunity to do so. Information from compensation surveys was also made available. Following the executive session and for the remainder of the morning, the council convened in regular session to begin working through its agenda. After lunch, the council, in regular session, first discussed the professional divide between those who specialize in language or composition and those who specialize in literature or culture and then continued its consideration of the action items on its agenda. On 21 May, the council began by meeting in executive session to complete its review of the executive director (see item 1, below). After the executive session, the council reconvened in regular session until lunchtime to conclude its formal business. After lunch, the council discussed the MLA's relation to community colleges and then adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

The council took the following actions:

1. *Administration and Finance.* The Finance Committee presented a midyear report on finances with a summary of association income and expenses in the fiscal

The sections Forthcoming Meetings and Conferences of General Interest and Professional Notes and Comment are no longer printed in *PMLA*. They have been moved to the members-only area of the MLA Web site (www.mla.org/resources), where they are updated twice a month.

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year 2004–05 after seven months. The committee noted that the projected deficit in the association's unrestricted fund had increased since the committee's last report, in February. The increased deficit was attributed in large part to lower revenues for the *MLA Handbook* and higher expenses (e.g., for the survey of tenure requirements that the council approved at the request of the Task Force on Evaluating Scholarship for Tenure and Promotion). However, since much sales revenue for the bibliography and the *Handbook* is not recorded until the final months of the fiscal year, the committee said that it was very difficult to predict whether the fiscal year would end with a deficit in the current range. Past performance gave the committee reason to believe that the deficit would be reduced at the end of the fiscal year.

The Finance Committee also presented to the council a tentative budget for the fiscal year 2005–06 that projected a deficit of $185,200 in the association's unrestricted fund. The committee drew the council's attention to several items in the tentative budget, including the expenses associated with the MLA's new media consultants and with the conference on the humanities and human rights to be held at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (see Oct. 2005 *PMLA* 1676). The conference budget that the council requested in February was also presented for the council's consideration. After reviewing the committee's tentative budget for the fiscal year 2005–06, the council voted to approve it. The council also asked the staff to arrange for representatives of the association's new media-relations firm to meet with the council in October.

Council members discussed the low level of membership contributions to the various restricted funds that the association maintains and instructed the staff to undertake a campaign to increase the contributions. A letter is to be sent to members in the higher dues categories to solicit contributions, the dues-notice checkoffs are to be modified, and information on contributing to the association's funds is to be placed in the *Newsletter* and at the MLA Web site.

The council completed the review of the executive director that was stipulated at the time of the executive director's appointment to an initial five-year term, July 2002 through June 2007. As president, Domna Stanton oversaw the review, which resulted in the council's offering to extend Rosemary G. Feal's term as executive director through June 2012.

The council designated Deloitte and Touche to conduct the audit of the association's fiscal year 2004–05 accounts.

Finally, the council adopted the following three resolutions relating to financial management. [Note: The president certified the council's action by signing the original documents containing the resolutions. These documents were then stamped with the association's corporate seal.]

WHEREAS, article 4, section E of the constitution of the Modern Language Association provides as follows: "The permanent fund of the association and its other endowment funds shall be administered by a board of three trustees, each appointed by the Executive Council for a three-year term, the three terms to be staggered by one year. One of the trustees shall be designated the managing trustee"; and

WHEREAS, Herbert Lindenberger, Malcolm Smith, and Catharine Stimpson have been appointed by the Executive Council as the three trustees with authority to administer the permanent fund of the association and its other endowment funds, and Malcolm Smith has been designated the managing trustee of this committee (the "Permanent Fund Committee");

NOW, THEREFORE, be it

RESOLVED, that, upon the written direction to Rosemary G. Feal as executive director, Judy Goulding as managing editor of MLA publications and director of publishing operations, and Terrence Callaghan as director of operations of any member of the Permanent Fund Committee to effect the purchase, transfer, sale, or other disposition of any security or securities held in the permanent fund or any other endowment funds, the executive director, managing editor of MLA publications and director of publishing operations, and director of operations be and hereby are authorized and directed to take all such steps and to execute and deliver all such documents as they shall deem necessary or appropriate to effect such purchase, transfer, sale, or other disposition; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the president of the MLA be and hereby is authorized and directed to certify this resolution to any third party requiring delivery of same in order to substantiate the proper authority for the disposition of the securities of the permanent fund or any other endowment funds.

RESOLVED: That Rosemary G. Feal as executive director of the corporation, Judy Goulding as managing editor of MLA publications and director of publishing operations for the corporation, and Terrence Callaghan as director of operations for the corporation be and hereby are authorized jointly to open a custody account with JPMorgan Chase Bank of New York in the name of the corporation and deposit therein such property of the corporation as they may deem advisable.

It is FURTHER RESOLVED: That Rosemary G. Feal, Judy Goulding, and Terrence Callaghan be and hereby are authorized jointly to direct all changes of investments and authorize the delivery of any securities or cash, and the property therein shall be subject to such control until further action by this board.

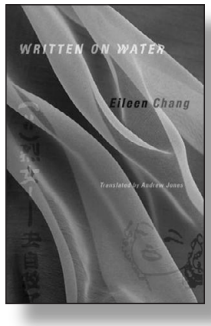
It is FURTHER RESOLVED: That JPMorgan Chase Bank of New York be and hereby is designated a depositary of this corporation and is authorized and directed to pay checks and other orders for the payment of money when signed in the following manner: [manner of signing specified].

RESOLVED: That Rosemary G. Feal as executive director of the corporation, Judy Goulding as managing editor of

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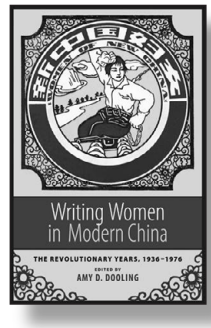


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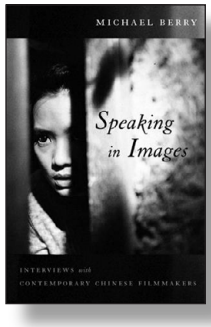


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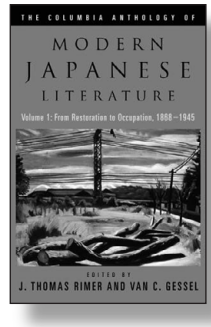
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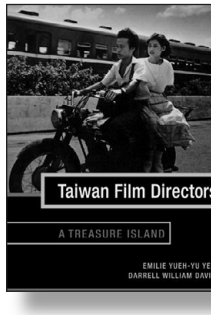


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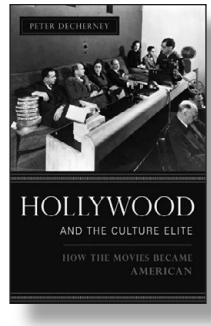


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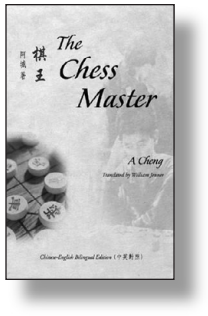
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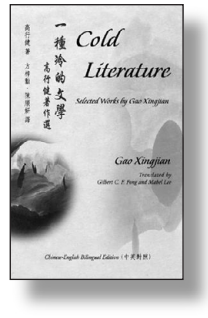


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> MLA publications and director of publishing operations for the corporation, and Terrence Callaghan as director of operations for the corporation be and hereby are authorized jointly to open a custody account with the United States Trust Company of New York in the name of the corporation and deposit therein such property of the corporation as they may deem advisable.
>
> It is FURTHER RESOLVED: That Rosemary G. Feal, Judy Goulding, and Terrence Callaghan be and hereby are authorized jointly to direct all changes of investments and authorize the delivery of any securities or cash, and the property therein shall be subject to such control until further action by this board.
>
> It is FURTHER RESOLVED: That United States Trust Company of New York be and hereby is designated a depositary of this corporation and is authorized and directed to pay checks and other orders for the payment of money when signed in the following manner: [manner of signing specified].

The council adopted two additional corporate resolutions, one from JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A., and one from Citibank. By adopting these resolutions, the council authorized Terrence Callaghan, Rosemary Feal, and Judy Goulding to open bank accounts in the name of the association and to contract with the banks for additional services relating to these accounts. [Note: Signed copies of these resolutions were entered into the minute book of the association.] The council also added Terrence Callaghan to the group of staff members authorized to sign nonpayroll checks over $1,000 (see Oct. 2005 *PMLA* 1674).

2. *Approval of the February 2005 Council Minutes.* The council reviewed a draft of the minutes of its February 2005 meeting. Council members requested two revisions and then voted to approve the revised minutes for publication in the October 2005 issue of *PMLA*.

3. *Council Subcommittee on Long-Range Planning.* Rosemary Feal asked the council to establish a council subcommittee that would help the staff to understand changing conditions in the profession and to conceptualize initiatives that the association should pursue over the next three to five years. She noted that such a subcommittee was needed because it was difficult for the council to engage in long-range planning during regular council meetings, which have full agendas. The members of the subcommittee would meet on the day before the council meeting twice a year, in February and in May. Council members endorsed the establishment of a subcommittee on long-range planning, and Domna Stanton and Feal offered to draft a committee charge for the council's consideration in October.

4. *Academic Freedom Issues.* The council took up three matters related to academic freedom. First, the council discussed the call for a boycott of two Israeli universities issued by the Association of University Teachers (AUT) in Britain. After reviewing a statement on the boycott from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and a general statement on academic freedom that the MLA Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities (CAFPRR) had issued in 1990, the council decided to draft its own statement. The statement approved by the council read as follows:

> The MLA has a long tradition of commitment both to the free exchange of ideas within and among nations and to the evaluation of scholars on the basis not of race, gender, nationality, religion, or political affiliation but, rather, of the character and quality of their work. The decision of the British AUT to refrain from collaboration with individual academics at two Israeli universities on the basis of allegations against the institutions at which they work is damaging to the vital free exchange of ideas. We find it especially troubling that the boycott endorsed by the AUT motions makes exceptions to the boycott conditional on the willingness of individual scholars to express support for particular political views. This violates the ideal that scholarly discourse relies on a conversation among individuals. We therefore urge our colleagues in the AUT to withdraw their call for a boycott.

The council instructed the staff to issue a press release about the statement and to send the statement to the general secretary and the president of the AUT. [Note: The AUT rescinded its call for a boycott shortly after the council meeting.] The council also instructed the staff to post the CAFPRR's statement on the MLA Web site.

Second, the council considered impending congressional action on renewing Section 215 of the USA PATRIOT Act, which allows law-enforcement officials to demand the records of patrons of college, university, and other libraries, and the petition circulated by the Campaign for Reader Privacy that called for changes in the library provisions of Section 215. The council instructed the staff to inform members about the issue by adding a link to the Campaign for Reader Privacy on the MLA Web site page that lists institutional policy alerts.

Finally, the staff reported to the council about an informational meeting held by the AAUP on legislative initiatives in various states based on the Academic Bill of Rights. Eighteen groups from the humanities, the sciences, and the social sciences were represented. Meeting participants learned that there had as yet been little legislative action despite the media attention that the Academic Bill of Rights had received; they concluded that no immediate action was necessary. The staff said it would maintain contact with the group convened by the AAUP and work to identify possible follow-up activities. Council members agreed that it was necessary to remain vigilant and to keep track of legislative action. They also expressed concern that student interest in the movement promoting the Academic Bill of Rights on campuses might lead to a situation in which students and professors became antagonists.

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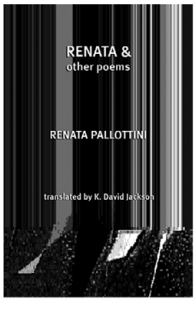
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5. *New Professional Education Assistance Fund*. The council received the staff proposal it had requested in February regarding the implementation of the 2004 Delegate Assembly motion calling for the establishment of a fund to provide partial travel reimbursement to certain groups of faculty members who attend the annual convention (see Oct. 2005 *PMLA* 1680). The proposal, which the council approved after making two changes, establishes a second Professional Education Assistance Fund that will assist part-time faculty members, contingent non-tenure-track faculty members, and unemployed MLA members who attend the convention. The original Professional Education Assistance Fund targets advanced graduate students who attend the convention and served as a model for the new fund. The council reiterated the need to encourage more-established members of the association to contribute to both Professional Education Assistance Funds (see item 1, above).

The new reimbursement program that the council approved will go into effect for the 2006 convention and has the following features. One hundred fifty $200 awards will be offered each year to eligible part-time faculty members, contingent non-tenure-track faculty members, and unemployed MLA members who attend the annual convention. Applicants must be regular members of the MLA—that is, not student members—in the year in which they receive funding and in the preceding year. Membership status will be verified by use of the MLA membership database. The MLA will supply a letter that employed applicants should use to request matching funds from their department chair or another administrator. At the time of application, these applicants must supply evidence that they have requested matching funds. To receive their award, funded applicants must submit the response to their request. Applications must be received at the MLA office by a late-October or early-November date that the staff will specify. The 150 award recipients will be selected from the pool of eligible applicants by lottery. Eligible applicants not selected in one year will be given priority the following year, provided they still meet the eligibility criteria. In addition, priority will be given to applicants who have not received a grant, including a grant from the graduate student program, in the previous five years.

6. *Charge for the Ad Hoc Committee on the Structure of the Convention*. The council received the report of the council subcommittee that had been charged in February with drafting a charge for the Ad Hoc Committee on the Structure of the Annual Convention (see Oct. 2005 *PMLA* 1678). The council approved the following charge for the ad hoc committee:

> The Ad Hoc Committee on the Structure of the Annual Convention is charged with reconsidering the status, structure, and function of the annual convention and with making recommendations for changes. The ad hoc committee will focus on three major areas of inquiry.
>
> 1. The ad hoc committee will consider whether the current types of meetings (e.g., forums, regular sessions, special sessions, special events) and the groups that organize them (i.e., divisions, discussion groups, allied and affiliate organizations, individual MLA members) adequately represent the intellectual and professional interests of the MLA membership.
> 2. The ad hoc committee will explore the demographics of the convention and the factors that influence attendance (or nonattendance) at the convention.
> 3. The ad hoc committee will consider how activities connected with the Job Information Service affect the tenor of the convention, including participation in the intellectual and professional dimensions of the convention.
>
> In fulfilling its charge, the ad hoc committee should bear in mind how changes in the convention structure affect the governance structure of the MLA.

Council members suggested that the ad hoc committee hold an open session during the convention for the purpose of seeking membership comment on the issues it is charged with considering.

The council determined that the ad hoc committee would have approximately ten members, including representatives from the council, the Program Committee, division and discussion group executive committees, and allied organizations and including representation of graduate students, adjunct or part-time faculty members, and department chairs. The council planned to appoint the ad hoc committee in October, so that the committee could begin its deliberations before the end of 2005 and present an interim report to the council in October 2006.

7. *Council Subcommittee on* PMLA *Editor*. Because Marianne Hirsch's term as editor of *PMLA* will expire at the end of June 2006, the council was asked to begin selecting the next editor. A council subcommittee was constituted to oversee the selection process and present a list of candidates to the council in February 2006. Named to the subcommittee were Michael Holquist, chair; Nancy Miller; and LaVonne Ruoff.

8. *Phyllis Franklin Award for Public Advocacy of the Humanities*. The council outlined a selection process for the second recipient of the association's Phyllis Franklin Award for Public Advocacy of the Humanities and agreed on a method for announcing the name of the honoree.

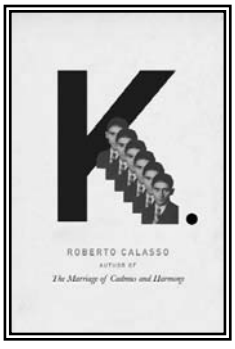
9. *Lifetime Achievement Award*. The council selected J. Hillis Miller, distinguished research professor of English and comparative literature at the University of California, Irvine, as the fourth recipient of the association's Lifetime Achievement Award. The award will be conferred during the 2005 annual convention in Washington, DC.

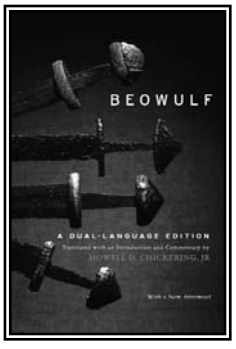
10. *Selection of a Site for the 2006 Convention*. At its February 2005 meeting, the council selected Los Angeles as the site of the 2006 MLA convention, provided that ongoing negotiations involving hotel-related labor unions

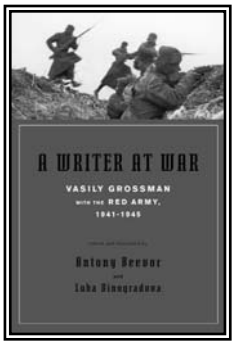
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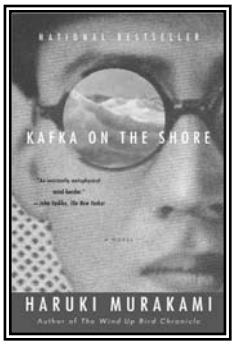
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in Los Angeles reached a successful conclusion (see Oct. 2005 *PMLA* 1682). Since the labor situation in Los Angeles remained unsettled, the council selected New Orleans as the site of the 2006 convention. [Note: Because of the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina on New Orleans, the council's advisory committee, which is empowered to make decisions when time-sensitive matters arise between council meetings, decided at the end of September to change the site of the 2006 convention to Philadelphia. The full council will be asked to ratify this decision at its October 2005 meeting.]

11. *Recommendations from the Program Committee*. The council received and acted on the Program Committee's recommendations regarding allied and affiliate organizations and discussion groups. The council renewed for seven years the allied organization status of seven societies: Margaret Atwood Society, Simone de Beauvoir Society, Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature, Mark Twain Circle of America, Twentieth-Century Spanish Association of America, William Carlos Williams Society, and Women in French. The council renewed the allied status of the Romanian Studies Association of America for only three years because of concerns that the association was not sufficiently distinct from the MLA Discussion Group on Romanian Studies and concerns about the association's low membership figures. The officers of the association will be asked to demonstrate that it is distinct from the discussion group and to work to involve more members in its activities. The association's next review by the Program Committee is scheduled for 2008. The Program Committee was able to complete its review of the American Association for Italian Studies (see Jan. 2005 *PMLA* 284 and May 2005 *PMLA* 954). The committee reported to the council that the conference program that the association submitted for review appeared to demonstrate that the association involves a large and diverse portion of its membership in its activities. The council therefore renewed the association's allied status for seven years.

The council agreed to defer for one year the review of three allied organizations—American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages, American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, and North American Heine Society. Extenuating circumstances led each organization to request additional time to prepare the materials required for the Program Committee's review.

Three organizations—Coalition of Women Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and Composition, Consortium for Computers in the Humanities, and Association of Departments and Programs of Comparative Literature—applied for allied organization status. In each instance, the Program Committee saw a need for additional information from the applicant. The council authorized the Program Committee to request the needed information and to present its recommendations on the applications next year.

In actions relating to discussion groups, the council granted division status to the Discussion Group on Disability Studies and granted permanent status to the Discussion Group on Law as Literature.

12. *Request from the Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages*. The committee requested the council's authorization to seek grant funding for a project that would focus on the development of new models of interaction among language, literature, and area studies programs. The committee noted that finding ways to foster cooperation and collaboration among these different programs would benefit all and would strengthen the preparation of undergraduates and graduate students in these fields. The council authorized the committee to develop the necessary grant proposal.

13. *Request from the Committee on the Literatures of People of Color in the United States and Canada*. The committee requested the council's endorsement of the committee's "Statement on Native American Languages in the College and University Curriculum." The council endorsed the statement. It can be found at the MLA Web site (www.mla.org/statement_on_native) and will be published in *Profession 2005*.

14. *Council Meeting Schedule*. The council approved the following dates for its meetings in 2008: 22–23 February, 16–17 May, and 24–25 October.

15. *Committee Appointments*. The council made four additional committee appointments and set the terms of three members of the Radio Committee whose terms had been ongoing. The names of all new committee members and the new terms for the members of the Radio Committee appear in the listings of MLA committee members in the September 2005 (Directory) issue of *PMLA* and at the MLA Web site.

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