CANDIDATE INFORMATION
2015 MLA Elections

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CANDIDATE INFORMATION
2015 MLA Elections

Note: To be counted, online ballots must be submitted by midnight EST on 10 December 2015 and paper ballots must be received at the MLA office no later than 10 December 2015.

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 over 270 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/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 have been made by the Nominating and Elections Committees, whose members are elected by the Delegate Assembly.
- Nominees to 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 2015 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 2015 MLA members have been invited to use to cast their votes in the 2015 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.
- Instructions for voting appear on the paper ballot sheet. The names of the candidates appear on the accompanying sheet. The online ballot system includes all forum executive committee contests.
Making Suggestions for the 2016 Executive Committee Elections

➤ At the bottom of the paper ballot is a space that members can use to suggest nominees for the 2016 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 About Committees page.

Abbreviations Used in Biographical Summaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAAS</td>
<td>Association for Asian American Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>AATF</td>
<td>American Association of Teachers of French</td>
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<tr>
<td>AATG</td>
<td>American Association of Teachers of German</td>
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<tr>
<td>AATI</td>
<td>American Association of Teachers of Italian</td>
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<tr>
<td>AATSEEL</td>
<td>American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages</td>
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<tr>
<td>AATSP</td>
<td>American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese</td>
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<tr>
<td>AAUP</td>
<td>American Association of University Professors</td>
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<td>AAUW</td>
<td>American Association of University Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACLA</td>
<td>American Comparative Literature Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACLS</td>
<td>American Council of Learned Societies</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACTFL</td>
<td>American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADE</td>
<td>Association of Departments of English</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADFL</td>
<td>Association of Departments of Foreign Languages</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASA</td>
<td>American Studies Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASECS</td>
<td>American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies</td>
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<td>AWP</td>
<td>Association of Writers and Writing Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCCC</td>
<td>Conference on College Composition and Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEA</td>
<td>College English Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIES</td>
<td>Council for International Exchange of Scholars</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLA</td>
<td>College Language Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>DAAD</td>
<td>Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (German Academic Exchange Service)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ETS</td>
<td>Educational Testing Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIPSE</td>
<td>Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLAS</td>
<td>Foreign Language and Area Studies (fellowship prog. in the US Dept. of Educ.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HASTAC</td>
<td>Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICLA</td>
<td>International Comparative Literature Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IREX</td>
<td>International Research and Exchanges Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LASA</td>
<td>Latin American Studies Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>MELUS</td>
<td>Society for the Study of the Multietnic Literature of the United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>MLA</td>
<td>Midwest Modern Language Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>NACCS</td>
<td>National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCTE</td>
<td>National Council of Teachers of English</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDEA</td>
<td>National Defense Education Act</td>
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Part I: Voting for Second Vice President

The person elected second vice president will serve in that office from 11 January 2016 through the close of the January 2017 convention and will automatically become first vice president in 2017, serving in that office through the close of the January 2018 convention, and president of the MLA in 2018, serving in that office through the close of the January 2019 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 11 Jan. 2016 through 8 Jan. 2017, the first vice president will be Diana Taylor, Spanish, New York Univ., and the president will be Kwame Anthony Appiah, English (philosophy), New York Univ.)

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, “3” next to the name of their third choice, and “4” next to the name of their fourth 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

The economy of higher education has changed, and our field has changed along with it. There are fewer tenure-track jobs and more contingent workers, and colleges and universities are shifting their attention to “workforce development.” I come from a part of the field—rhetoric and writing studies—that has grappled with these trends for decades. Teachers and scholars of writing have often borne the brunt of budget cuts and the transformation of the workforce; but rhetoric scholars also understand the relation among language, writing, citizenship, and public responsibility and pay theoretical and practical attention to writing’s ability to transform the material circumstances in which we live and work.

I’m a longtime MLA member who has served as a writing program director, department chair, center director, and vice provost. I’ve worked with the TA union to ensure fair labor practices, with donors to raise money so graduate students wouldn’t have to take second jobs, and with faculty and staff members to improve working conditions. I want to work with the MLA so that it better reflects the demographics and concerns of the field and so that its convention and job service better reflect the realities of the job market and make use of contemporary technologies. I want to integrate the insights of writing studies into the association and its work on behalf of the profession and to work toward the recognition of scholarly work in modern languages in all its forms and as practiced by all those the MLA represents.

Anne Ruggles Gere. Gertrude Buck Collegiate Prof. and Arthur F. Thurnau Prof. of English, Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

PhD, Univ. of Michigan. Previous appointment: Univ. of Washington, 1975–87. NEH grant, 1983–84; faculty fellow, Inst. for the Humanities, Univ. of Michigan, 1997–98; Spencer Foundation fellowship, 2000–01. Visiting appointments: Univ. of New Hampshire, summer 1986; St. Louis Univ., winter 2004; Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, winter 2015. NWSA Manuscript Prize (for Intimate Practices), 1995; D’Arms Award for Distinguished Grad. Student Mentoring, Univ. of Michigan, 1997; Distinguished Faculty Achievement Award, Univ. of Michigan, 1998; Regents Award for Distinguished Public Service, Univ. of Michigan, 2006. Founding dir., Puget Sound Writing Project, 1978–87; advisory board, Natl. Writing Project, 1980–84; ch., Board of Trustees, Research Foundation, NCTE, 1984–86; Board


Statement

The MLA is a powerful advocate for the humanities, so it is crucial for its leadership and staff to maintain this position while addressing the challenges posed by the imposition of corporate principles, the specter of shrinking budgets, and the withdrawal of public support.

To meet these challenges, MLA members can affirm the value of critical study and creative teaching of languages and literatures by writing about our work for multiple audiences and fostering teaching practices that encourage engaged learning. We can be vigilant about budgeting processes, alert for ways to ensure equitable compensation for all faculty members, and mindful that faculty working conditions are student learning conditions. We can undertake initiatives within and beyond our association to develop mentoring practices that demonstrate the value of the MLA’s work to graduate students and younger colleagues. We can also make the MLA more inclusive and potentially valuable to those beyond our association by drawing on our strengths in multiple languages to build intellectual collaborations within the United States and internationally. We can undertake initiatives to increase the diversity—in all senses of that term—of our membership and our engagements.

One thing I have learned from administrative positions on my own campus, international experiences, various roles within the MLA, and leadership in sister associations is that effective innovations depend on the efforts of many. I am excited by the prospect of participating again in the MLA’s vital work and developing initiatives that will help the association thrive in the twenty-first century.

Keith Gilyard. Edwin Erle Sparks Prof. of English and African Amer. Studies, Penn State Univ., University Park.

EdD, New York Univ.; MFA, Columbia Univ. Previous appointments: Syracuse Univ., 1993–99; City Univ. of New York (CUNY), 1980–95. Spencer Foundation grant, 1998, 1999. Visiting appointments: Thomas R. Watson Visiting Distinguished Prof. of Rhetoric and Composition, Univ. of Louisville; Univ. of California, Berkeley; Univ. of Oklahoma; Presidential Scholar-in-Residence; New York Univ.; Auburn Correctional Facility (NY). American Book Award (for Voices of the Self), Before Columbus Foundation, 1992; Faculty Honoree, CUNY, 1993; Penn State Class of 1933 Medal of Distinction in the Humanities, 2005; Penn State Faculty Scholar Medal for Outstanding Achievement in the Arts and Humanities, 2006;


**Statement**

In an increasingly technological world, we are often dragged into debates about the practicality of the liberal arts. Simply put, however, nothing is more practical in terms of the public good than an intelligent and moral polity. Therefore, inasmuch as the rigorous study of language and literature clarifies values, enables new identifications, and fosters discernment—all attributes critical to the development of a substantive democracy—the MLA should support as strongly as possible the teaching and learning of these aspects of the humanities as well as promote the humanities overall. The task should include, of course, trying to improve the conditions of employment that shape the educational arenas inside which teachers teach and learners learn. In line with this mission, the organization needs to continue to find ways to improve access and inclusion for traditionally underrepresented groups relative both to the student population and the instructional corps. Among our leadership must be those best able to convey the value of our efforts to various constituencies and stakeholders. The work I describe here is what I have been pursuing passionately over the thirty-five years I have spent in English studies as a professor, administrator, and head of two professional associations. Moreover, how I craft methods for engaging the public is shaped by my interdisciplinary background—part literary scholar, part creative writer, part rhetorician, part compositionist. The MLA needs to be represented vibrantly, and I respectfully seek the chance to do so.
Part II: Voting for At-Large Members of the Executive Council

Three persons will be elected for four-year terms that will begin 11 January 2016 and run through the close of the January 2020 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 no one representing the field of German will continue on the council in 2012, at least one of the candidates from that field must be elected. The other persons elected may come from any field. The fields represented by the nominees are English (Inman Berens, O’Dair, Wallack), French (Apter), Spanish (Unruh), and other (Cachey, Cohen, Hayot, Maisto, Palumbo-Liu).

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 continuing council members are regular members (see the listing below, in which life members are marked with a §), one and only one regular member must be elected. Since none of the continuing council members is a student member and since there are no life member candidates, the other persons elected this year will be student members.


Vote for any three nominees.

Lenora Hanson. Grad. student English, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison.

Steffen Kaupp. Grad. student German, Carolina-Duke Grad. Program in German Studies.


Publications include review in Women in German Newsletter.
Statement

The MLA can deepen and renew its ongoing support of its different constituencies by creating the best possible conditions for a humanistic education that is ever more valuable in helping students become interculturally competent global citizens. If elected to the Executive Council, I will be a strong advocate on the following issues:

(1) Supporting MLA advocacy for contingent faculty members, including developing policies supporting job security, fair pay and benefits, and interviewing practices that level the playing field for candidates economically.

(2) Supporting the MLA’s continuing efforts to rethink and restructure graduate education in ways that enable graduate students also to envision careers beyond the faculty track. Resources could be provided to help graduate students acquire a broad set of skills, along with a vision of how to present and market them. I also believe that a commitment to a diverse graduate student education should be linked to institutional diversity initiatives fostering equal access to graduate programs.

(3) For tenure-line faculty members, supporting ongoing MLA advocacy for and development of progress assessment structures that reflect the changing character of teaching and research in the humanities. The MLA can and should foster conversation and debate about the assessment of digital scholarship and about professional recognition of collaborative, nontraditional research projects.

For a longer explication of these issues, please visit my Web site.

Amanda Licastro. Grad. student English, Graduate Center, City Univ. of New York (CUNY).


Statement

I am currently a doctoral candidate in English at the Graduate Center, CUNY. Previously, I taught in an adult literacy center, earned a master’s with a certificate in community college teaching, and worked as an adjunct. I have taught in urban community colleges, large public universities, and rural liberal arts schools, all as a contingent faculty member. My research agenda has developed from this experience: I study the intersection of technology and writing through composition studies, digital humanities (DH), and textual scholarship, with a focus on pedagogical practices. My investigation into the use of interactive technology in higher education leads me to ask how we can ethically integrate digital tools into our research and teaching, providing access to educational resources and enhancing our ability to communicate and collaborate.
Recently the MLA increased efforts to connect literary studies, composition studies, and DH. I believe an alliance between the MLA and the Conference on College Composition and Communication will be productive as we work toward labor equality and security, specifically in terms of the non-tenure-track positions prevalent in composition and DH. I hope to advocate for equal pay and representation especially for the populations most vulnerable to these shifts in higher education. Furthermore, I wish to advance the initiatives of the MLA to transform the future of scholarly communication by integrating open-access policies and revising evaluation practices within the humanities. For more information, see http://cuny.is/mlaexecutivecouncil

**John B. Lyon.** Prof. German, Univ. of Pittsburgh.


**Statement**

As a member of the Executive Council, I would work to continue the MLA’s long tradition of both addressing challenges and fostering emerging opportunities in our field. The most pressing challenges I see today include faculty labor issues (the declining proportion of tenure-track positions and increasing reliance on non-tenure-stream faculty members, the need for benefits and job security for nontenured and contingent faculty members, etc.), the national trend toward monolingualism (downdisings and closings of departments and graduate programs in foreign languages), and the valorization of corporatist and instrumentalist thinking (in crassest form, the demand that the humanities justify themselves solely in terms of earning potential). Having taught at a variety of institutions (elite private, small liberal arts, and large public), I believe strongly in a liberal arts education, regardless of institution type or a student’s ultimate career, and that the humanities, including languages and literature, play a crucial role in this endeavor. But just as our discipline faces challenges, we also face unprecedented opportunities, including new forms of scholarship (e.g., the digital humanities) and the reconfiguration of traditional fields of study, a greater willingness to see connections between graduate education and careers outside academia, developments in pedagogy and course delivery, and greater openness to cross-disciplinary outreach of the humanities. I would bring my administrative and advisory experience as a department chair, secretary-treasurer for a national scholarly organization, and member of the MLA Committee on the Professionalization of PhDs to bear on both preserving what we value and fostering needed innovation.

**David Tse-chien Pan.** Prof. German, Univ. of California, Irvine.


**Statement**

Building on the recent efforts by the MLA to address the issue of contingent faculty, I would like to link the problem of contingent faculty with efforts to promote humanities teaching more generally. By creating a more meaningful connection between the beginning and advanced levels of humanities learning, teaching, and research, the MLA can make a better case for the vital importance of the humanities in higher education. To the extent that the MLA embraces beginning language and composition teaching as the basis of a humanities education, it will also be in a better position to advocate for the interests of the contingent faculty members who often teach these courses. In addition to supporting more tenure-line positions, the MLA can work to regularize the educational programs and the career paths of contingent faculty members, both through advocacy and through its influence on the structure of academic job markets. In directing the UC, Irvine, German program and the humanities core course, I have worked to highlight the importance of language and composition programs as crucial introductions to the humanities. As a member of the MLA Executive Council, I would continue to advocate for the centrality of language and literature in the curriculum in order to foster a more general appreciation of the work of the humanities as well as a transformation of the situation of contingent faculty members.

**Daniel Powell.** Grad. student English, Univ. of Victoria.


**Statement**

I am a first-generation college student from the American South who attended a small, public liberal arts college on full Pell grant funding. Also, although nominated as a student member of the Executive Council attached to a mid-sized Canadian university, I am employed full-time by King’s College London, an
institution ranked among the top twenty global universities. I am keenly aware of both the absence of diverse backgrounds in positions of influence in academia and the responsibility for action that comes with such positions.

I am earning my PhD in English, though my research investigates the humanities as discipline, professionalization, media, and graduate program reform. I claim the identity of digital humanist, which places me in the middle of intense debates about disciplinarity, professionalization, funding models, and the basic ways we make knowledge. These debates are part of larger challenges we face in addressing the sociocultural, economic, and geographic realities of an evolving academy. The MLA has been, is, and must continue to be integral to these discussions.

In my view, the MLA should:

- vigorously extend initiatives like the Task Force on Doctoral Study and Connected Academics
- undertake activism in keeping with its stated mission to the full extent allowed under its status as a 501(c)(3) organization
- commit to being a truly multinational, multilingual organization by aggressively supporting (at the least) francophone, hispanophone, and indigenous–First Nations involvement at all levels

For additional materials related to my candidacy, please visit djp2025.com.

**Rafael A. Ramirez Mendoza.** Grad. student Spanish, Univ. of California, Los Angeles.


**Statement**

The MLA has two key issues to deal with in the upcoming years. First, it should pay special attention to the increase in adjunct positions with unfair wages and less than ideal working conditions. Second, it should address the concrete application of the recommendations on doctoral studies made in the report of the MLA Task Force on Doctoral Study in Modern Language and Literature. The MLA must continuously discuss how these initiatives are being incorporated (or not) and whether they are succeeding or failing and
must listen to the opinions and experiences of graduate students and junior and nontenured faculty members. If elected, I will support a close dialogue among the Executive Council, the Committee on the Status of Graduate Students in the Profession, and the Graduate Student Caucus, and I will support the expansion of *MLA Commons* as a discussion forum.

My academic experience and departmental service have helped me gain a broad understanding of the issues facing graduate students and young scholars. I have served as president of the Spanish and Portuguese Graduate Student Association at UCLA and as editor in chief of *Mester* (our peer-reviewed journal) and *Párrafo* (our literary and artistic magazine). I have also organized and coorganized a number of academic events and served as a graduate student representative on a variety of departmental committees, including an appointment by the Graduate Affairs Committee to conduct a study of twenty-seven United States MA programs in Spanish and Portuguese as part of our graduate curriculum revision.

**Part III: Voting for Special-Interest Delegates**

Seventeen persons will be elected to replace delegates whose terms expire on 10 January 2016. The term of office will be from 11 January 2016 through the close of the January 2019 convention. The numbers preceding the nominees’ names correspond to the numbers assigned to the nominees on the paper ballot sheet.

The names of the special-interest delegates with continuing terms in 2016 appear at the MLA Web site ([www.mla.org/del_assembly_members](http://www.mla.org/del_assembly_members)).

*Vote for one nominee in any or all of the seventeen special-interest contests.*

**I. Composition, Rhetoric, and Writing (1 contest)**

10. **Cydney Alexis.** Asst. prof. English and dir., Writing Center, Kansas State Univ.


Publications include review in *Kairos.*

**Statement**

In my research, teaching, and administration, I emphasize the material realities of composition, of humanistic inquiry, and of being a scholarly writer. Many of us are feeling the squeeze—physical, economic, and psychic—of being located in the humanities, especially on research- and STEM-focused campuses. This squeeze comes with consequences, such as lack of physical space for our labor. Students and stakeholders are lured by a mythic narrative that devalues the humanities, despite compelling evidence that the ability to write is valued by the corporate workforce and despite the humanities’ intrinsic value. I believe in affirming the tangible value of academic labor, humanistic inquiry, composition, and writing centers in ways that make sense to varied audiences.

I practice these skills as assistant professor of English and director of the Writing Center at Kansas State University. I advocate for centers as central sites of campus writing culture and as multidisciplinary research hubs. I enjoy being an ambassador for forms of writing that are persistently devalued as uncreative.

Certain concepts permeate my scholarly life and undergird this ambassadorial work: helping students understand how access and advantage intersect with literate ability, building tight networks among faculty members who see their work in tension, enriching the work lives of contingent faculty members by
diversifying teaching and service loads, mentoring undergraduate research and promoting humanities research in terms that administrators understand, and helping cross-disciplinary faculty members value language learner writing and cultures. These are the interests I would bring to this position if elected.

11. Rebecca Lorimer Leonard. Asst. prof. English and dir., Writing Center, Univ. of Massachusetts, Amherst.


Publications include contrib., Rhetoric: Concord and Controversy (2011), Literacy as Translingual Practice: Between Communities and Classrooms (2013); articles in Written Communication, College English, WPA: Writing Program Administration, Research in the Teaching of English.

Statement
My interest in serving as a delegate stems from my commitment to a broad view of English studies that includes composition and rhetoric as an established and vital field of study. As a comp-rhet specialist and writing center director in an English department, I see a need to advocate for instructors, graduate students, and faculty members who maintain active comp-rhet research agendas while teaching writing-intensive courses and often directing writing programs. I hope to represent the interests of those who undertake this important work, and I hope to take part in robust conversations with other members of the Delegate Assembly, especially about issues of labor and access in departments across the country.

II. Creative Writing (1 contest)


Statement
My work as a fiction writer explores questions of narrative voice, sexuality and the body, and race and identity in the contemporary United States. These questions have also shaped my teaching experience, which includes graduate and undergraduate creative writing courses and contemporary and African American literature courses. I have taught as a non- tenure-line faculty member at a smaller public university, a tenure-line faculty member at a small private university, and now as a tenure-line assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Diverse institutional and geographic experiences have given me a chance to see broad issues in our field from different angles. My areas of primary concern include the increasing reliance on adjunct labor and the poor treatment of our adjunct colleagues, the push to align the goals of humanities education with corporate metrics, the undermining of support for public education, the need to create environments conducive to increased diversity among faculty members and students in our fields, and the need to maintain a supportive and productive relation between creative writing programs and literary studies. I am interested in seeing the MLA respond to these challenges through formal advocacy, support of
members working to address critical issues, and collectively imagining creative responses to the difficult issues facing our membership, and I am excited to have the opportunity to be a part of this process.

13. **Kimberly Johnson.** Prof. English, Brigham Young Univ., UT.


**Statement**

Some years ago, I attended a session at an MLA conference cosponsored by the MLA and the Association of Writers and Writing Programs. In his panel remarks, the AWP president lamented the divisions among the constituencies of our English departments and the perceived gulf that separates creative writers from literary scholars. In the discussion period that followed, I was pleased to be able to applaud the efforts that the MLA has made, particularly during the presidential tenure of Marjorie Perloff, to make use of the strengths that our various disciplines bring to the interpretation of, engagement with, and appreciation of literary texts. As a professor whose appointment straddles literary and creative fields, I have a career-long investment in articulating commonalities among disciplines. An increasing number of institutions have developed in recent years graduate or undergraduate programs in creative writing; particularly at this historical moment, the MLA can help shape the conversation surrounding market pressures, issues of professionalization, and standards and expectations of creative writing within literary departments. I would be honored to participate in this developing conversation by representing creative writing in the Delegate Assembly.

**III. Ethnic Studies (2 contests)**

14. **Anne Cheng.** Prof. English and African Amer. studies, Princeton Univ.


Statement

My interest is to promote conversation about how the humanities might confront the challenges of doing race studies in the twenty-first century.

If, as critics have started to note, the discourse surrounding the “woman of color” is “a dead zone” emptied of specific meaning, it is partially because the fields of race and ethnic studies have become at once de rigueur yet also tired and ghettoized. I would love to see renewed conversations about contemporary imperatives behind race, ethnic, and intersectional studies and about how the humanities could contribute to these dialogues today. It would be productive, for example, to remind ourselves that much of the current focus on the global and the international has its roots in what used to go under the category of ethnic studies.

I am also interested in the challenges posed by interdisciplinarity, an issue often invoked by scholarship in race studies but also beyond. Most institutions tout the values of interdisciplinarity, but their institutional structures, grounded in traditional disciplines, cannot actually accommodate truly interdisciplinary scholars, whose work may not be immediately legible to traditional departments. In recent years, having been involved in my home institution with the missions of building a full range of race and ethnic studies, the expansion of American studies, and the remapping of the humanities in general, I see this problem again and again. I would love to see the MLA tackle this problem. Its solution is vital to the future of the humanities.


Statement

During my eighteen-year teaching career, I have had the opportunity to work with colleagues in different settings, from a historically black university to predominantly white institutions, from the Deep South to the Southwest to the mid-Atlantic. My experience working in institutions of higher education as a professor varies considerably. I have had a joint appointment in English and ethnic studies and single appointments in English and in African American studies—this last, my current appointment, has affiliations with English and women’s and gender studies. These varied appointments have given me the opportunity to see the diverse complexities of the academic landscape. As director of the African American and African Diaspora Studies Program at my institution, I am committed to advocating for ethnic studies programs and to building community through my work as a mentor of adjunct and tenure-track faculty members, students, and graduate students. I would seek to hear the ideas and concerns of colleagues and to share those ideas as a representative. I welcome the opportunity to bring my experience and knowledge to the Delegate Assembly as a member of the MLA’s ethnic studies delegation.


Publications include contrib., Faulkner and Morrison (2013); article in Writing from Below.

Statement
As an assistant professor of multicultural American literature at Adams State University, I treat reader response to traumatic and testimonial literature written by and about multiethnic American women. Theorists emphasize the necessity of writing about—or witnessing—trauma. To this critical conversation I add my own research into the readerly engagement with testimonial literature, articulating a theory of reading (or dual witnessing) that elucidates how speakers and readers may witness together. Specifically, my work places my theories of traumatic reception in conversation with multiethnic American literature and also considers the multiple jeopardy of race and gender and how speakers and readers may productively cross such constructs. Ultimately, my examinations of raced-gendered intersections speak to those testimonial works that promote multicultural dual witnessing out of the fraught (literary) histories of race and gender relations in America.

To explicate how dual witnessing converses with American literature, race theory, and gender criticism, I have written articles on reading race, gender, and trauma in the novels of William Faulkner, Toni Morrison, and Zora Neale Hurston. My scholarship also propels my work in the classroom, where I privilege a diversity of perspectives, placing multiethnic, nonpatriarchal texts at the core of each syllabus. To foreground such voices does not suggest that I omit from my syllabi the works of canonical white male authors. Instead, my courses (alongside my scholarship) analyze central and marginalized authors together to survey the spectrum of American (literary) diversity and help open student awareness to the depth and breadth of American literature.


Statement
Ethnic literature and exploring connections among diverse communities past and present are at the core of my research and teaching. In my research I am heavily engaged in recovering past voices absent from the canon and highlighting current voices whose work has yet to reach a worldwide audience, as evidenced by my work with Australian Aboriginal literature, African American literature, and other literatures. These interests permeate my classroom instruction on a daily basis, and they inspire my students to be actively engaged in reading, archival research, and writing. In the academy our research should translate to what we do in the classroom. It is vital that institutions prepare students to be leaders in a global society. A lot of institutions recognize the need to prepare their students for the global marketplace by diversifying the range of literature that they study, but their ability to fully support their students and teachers on the ground has been a challenge. As a member of the MLA Delegate Assembly in the area of ethnic studies I will champion new, strategic partnerships among institutions and between institutions and organizations to help expand course offerings at both historically black and predominantly white institutions to include a broader range of
ethnic literature. I will also help foster cross-collaborations for faculty members invested in ethnic literature in the form of professional development, publications, and grant writing. The study of ethnic literatures from around the globe can be at the forefront of a larger number of academic programs.

IV. Foreign Language Teaching (1 contest)


Statement

I would welcome the opportunity to join the Delegate Assembly and contribute to discussions of all the issues that the body considers. Among those, I am particularly interested and experienced in several areas: the place of the growing field of East Asian literature in particular and non–English-language literature in general within the body of the MLA; relations among the teaching of literature, the teaching of language, and translation studies; the place of adjunct faculty members in the teaching of literature and foreign languages; diversity and the role of international studies in higher education; and the place of digital publications and digital humanities work in the field and in tenure and promotion.


Publications include Beirut, Imagining the City: Space and Place in Lebanese Literature (2015); contrib., Diasporas, Cultures of Mobilities, “Race” (vol. 2 [Diaspora, Memory, and Intimacy], 2015); articles in Journal of Arabic Literature, Middle Eastern Literatures; review in Arab Studies Quarterly; translations in Banipal: A Magazine of Modern Arabic Literature, New York Times.

Statement

The MLA will need to tackle issues relating to foreign language teaching on multiple fronts into the foreseeable future. In the light of budget cuts to foreign language programs and departments across the United States and recent reports on dwindling enrollments in foreign languages, the MLA’s role as an advocate of foreign language training and teaching is increasingly crucial. Teachers of foreign languages are often perceived to be contingent service providers, and much of the language teaching in the United States academy is done by non-tenure-eligible members of the academic workforce, who face well known issues of professional vulnerability. Moreover, in many departments, the professionalization of literary scholars and language teachers is treated as distinct although, paradoxically, their professional boundaries are often perceived to be interchangeable, so that many of those trained in foreign literatures and cultures eventually become language teachers with scant pedagogical training in teaching languages, while scholars of foreign languages are often overlooked by hiring committees. The MLA is a forum to raise awareness of and tackle such issues.

I am also interested in further developing professional networks within the MLA to connect scholars and teachers of “mainstream” languages and cultures with scholars and teachers of less known and less taught (in the United States academy) national languages and cultures. One way to do so is through expanding the MLA’s commitment to the role of translation, already present in such initiatives as its Texts and Translations series, which aims to bring translated work into the undergraduate classroom.
V. Gays and Lesbians in the Profession (1 contest)


Statement

As a delegate, I would be committed to bettering the work conditions of LGBT individuals in the academy as well as supporting the development of fields that center sexuality and gender at the MLA. LGBT individuals remain vulnerable in processes of hiring and promotion in the academy, particularly when their presentation or medical history violates gender norms and they are also people of color. As academic institutions increasingly cater to students as clients, we need to contend with the ways in which student evaluations reproduce societal prejudices that may adversely affect LGBT junior faculty members, contingent faculty members, and graduate student instructors. Since the fields of gay, lesbian, queer, and transgender studies have been incompletely institutionalized, their practitioners tend to be overrepresented among contingent faculty members, making contingent faculty issues particularly critical to address. LGBT academics have uneven access to partner hires, health coverage, and caretaker leave, even in states that recognize same-sex marriage, and institutional health care plans may exclude transgender health needs. One of my primary goals as a delegate would be to strengthen the MLA’s support of scholarship that centers the study of sexuality and gender. I would work to find creative ways of addressing all the issues that affect LGBT academics as they intersect with the concerns of others who experience precarity and unequal opportunity in the academy.


VI. Independent Scholars and Alternative Careers (1 contest)

22. Wendy Vardaman. Independent scholar, Madison, WI.


Statement

I’m honored to stand for election. Although I received my PhD twenty-five years ago, I’ve recently returned to academics and have much to learn. My career as an independent writer, public humanities activist, and parent of three college-age children gives me a perspective that I hope will add to the
organization’s discussions. I’ve been a stay-at-home parent-poet, on the staff of a children’s Shakespeare theater, coeditor and publisher of a community-focused poetry magazine, a self-employed writer covering Wisconsin poetry, cofounder of a hybrid digital-print micropress, poet laureate of a city, a freelance writing teacher, a graphic and Web designer, and an editorial assistant in the architectural industry. Rather than a citizen of one discipline, I’ve been an explorer traveling among different societies, including the Popular Culture Association, the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature, the Hip Hop Educators’ Institute, book festivals and hackathons, and the AWP. As a critic and public arts advocate, I focus on the importance of the local. I believe that the university as a whole and the professional organizations in its orbit have an opportunity and obligation to contribute to larger conversations about democracy, equity, and access to resources and social space; to address questions of who is a scholar, what scholarship is, and how scholarship is disseminated; and to map the porous boundaries of the university and academic learning and provide opportunities for genuine and just exchange. I will work toward a new understanding of the MLA’s role in an altered cultural economy.


Statement

As a literature PhD who became an academic librarian before alternative careers were much spoken of, I would be honored to represent MLA members who are pursuing independent scholarship or careers outside traditional academic tracks. In a time of ever-increasing adjunctification, we need to advocate both for better and more stable jobs within academia and for stronger support for those whose careers lead elsewhere. Despite overwhelming evidence that the majority of new PhDs will not find full-time, tenure-track faculty positions and despite increasing openness about other options, many graduate programs in the humanities still frame the PhD as training for a small and ever-shrinking pool of traditional faculty jobs. This is neither responsible nor sustainable. Careers outside or adjacent to academia in no way constitute a solution to the problem of adjunct exploitation; nor are they a reason to ignore the very real issues of academic labor. But PhDs who want to seek out alternative careers should not have to fear revealing their career plans or face stigma and discouragement when they do. If elected to the Delegate Assembly, I will advocate for scholars in nontraditional career paths and work to promote a wider range of possibilities in the professionalization of graduate students.

VII. Lecturers, Adjuncts, and Instructors (2 contests)

24. Tony Fong. Postdoctoral fellow, Centre for the Study of the United States, Univ. of Toronto.


Publications include articles in University of Toronto Quarterly, Philip Roth Studies.

Statement

As a Canadian scholar who works on United States literature and cultural studies, I am concerned with United States institutions’ perceptions of Canadian scholarship. Are Canadian universities regarded as uncompetitive in American studies? If so, how can we Canadian scholars rebrand ourselves? Moreover, I
would like to discuss how faculty members who are in adjunct, lecturer, or instructor positions—as I am—can avoid a state of financial and employment precarity.


PhD, Graduate Center, City Univ. of New York (CUNY). Univ. fellowship, Graduate Center, CUNY, 2005–11; Professional Staff Congress–CUNY Adjunct Development Fund grant, Queens Coll., CUNY, 2008, 2012.

Publications include articles in Modern Drama, Translation and Literature, Victorians Journal, UpStage, Oscholars, Syllabus.

Statement
I am honored to be nominated for the Delegate Assembly as a special-interest representative for lecturers, adjuncts, and instructors. Having immigrated to the United States from Ukraine, I was able to receive merit scholarships to study at the City University of New York, one of the nation’s largest and most diverse public university systems. First as a student and later as an adjunct faculty member at CUNY, and now as a lecturer at North Dakota State University, I have witnessed the transformative power of higher education and am committed to finding the means to support and improve it and to make it more widely available.

Having held a number of contingent faculty positions at both public and private universities from 2004 to the present, I have become acutely aware of the ways in which the corporatization of academe and the decline in state funding are hollowing out this great institution. If elected, I will seek to increase the quality of higher education for our students by improving the working conditions and quality of life for contingent faculty members. Specifically, I will advocate for three things: better communication and dialogue between the MLA and its contingent faculty members, who now make up the “new faculty majority”; stronger job security through the conversion of part-time appointments to full-time tenure-line or long-term, benefited positions; and increased support for professional development, including efforts to recruit and retain a more diverse faculty.


Publications include articles in English Literary Renaissance, Shakespeare Jahrbuch, Notes and Queries, Exchanges: The Online Journal of Teaching and Learning in the California State University.
Statement

If I am elected to the MLA Delegate Assembly, I will advocate a stronger response to the most pressing issues affecting marginalized communities in the academy, especially recent graduates and contingent faculty members whose careers are languishing due to part-time employment or unemployment. These issues include inadequate institutional support for research (e.g., inadequate access to resources and financial aid) and lack of training for alternative careers or even access to information about them. Many contingent faculty members face a unique set of challenges as they juggle heavy teaching loads and research but barely cover minimum living expenses; deal with the lack of health and retirement benefits, meaningful academic rank, or job security beyond short-term contracts; and are minimally included in the life of the departments they serve. In addition, I would like to address the regrettable fact that the academic job market is often disheartening even for those who meet the highest standards as teachers and researchers, because of factors beyond their control—not only their race, gender, or sexual orientation but also their institutional affiliation, year of graduation, employment status, immigration status, or other considerations. These issues affect us all as a community of scholars, and we should afford them no place in the academy. Thank you for your consideration.

VIII. Less-Taught Languages (1 contest)


Statement

The less-taught languages category should be rethought. Mandarin Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, Japanese, and other “less-taught” languages are actually vibrant transnational language communities underrepresented in the global academy and in the MLA. My years of participation in association meetings have been part of a struggle to reify the importance of Chinese language and culture in our larger intellectual communities, not as a status object or evidence of diversity but as a fundamental influence on the way life is led today. Because I am a member of an especially diverse department of Asian studies, I see how the underrepresented languages of Southeast and South Asia affect lives around the world. Because recent intellectual history has illuminated ways in which cultural experience can be obscured or suppressed by regional and national traditions, I hope that we make a place in our intellectual life for vernaculars from Javanese to Cypriot Arabic to African American Vernacular English.

To accomplish these goals I would start by opposing the adjunctification of language instruction and by intentionally blurring the unfortunate line drawn between teachers of language and teachers of literature and culture. My forthcoming book on Chinese prose poetry required me to think of literature as an intracommunity interaction rather than the product of a single author; accordingly, I support an intensification of the recent push to educate graduate students as interdisciplinary communicators as well as specialists. Much of what I expect to do, though, will be learned from the colleagues I would like to represent.


PhD, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison. B. Wade and Jane B. White Fellowship, Oberlin Coll., 2005–06; Fulbright research grant (Taiwan), 2006–07; visiting scholar, Academia Sinica (Taipei, Taiwan), 2006–07;


**Statement**

Most language teachers trained in comparative literary studies share my pedagogical concern: how to balance the instrumental imperative of teaching textbook grammar with the humanist ambition to contextualize language culturally. The grammar former is generally less complicated than the latter. In an intermediate Chinese-language class, students may find it easy to learn the vocabulary of “reforms and opening up” (gaige kaifang) but more difficult to acquire relevant facts about Chinese political economy and history.

An option I endorse is the model of languages across the curriculum (LxC). This method adds a credit-bearing discussion module taught in the target language to a content course taught in English. I am also eager to investigate other bilingual models, which may include adding an hour of content discussion (in English, the target language, or both) to a three-hour language course. Such an approach enables teachers to create a content-based discussion module and helps strengthen the curricular coherence between culture and language courses.

A 2007 MLA report, “Foreign Languages and Higher Education,” noted a two-tiered power structure on many college campuses, one that gives literature professors more say than language instructors in setting the instructional goals for language departments. I support ongoing study of this issue and believe power sharing is most effective when language teachers contribute to the design of culture courses. If I am elected to the MLA Delegate Assembly, I will work for a better understanding of how LxC models can best be used to benefit all students and faculty members.

**IX. Politics and the Profession (2 contests)**


**Statement**

As a candidate for a Politics and the Profession seat in the Delegate Assembly, I’m most interested in hearing from the profession at large what it thinks are our most pressing concerns and responding as best I can to make sure they’re represented in our association’s decision making. Beyond that, I’m also interested in increasing awareness of and advocating for the following:

1. The adoption by the MLA of a description of best practices for fair, adequate, and compensated family leave for all university teaching faculty members, including ladder faculty members, postdocs, graduate students, and adjunct faculty members.
2. A commitment from the MLA to draft a statement that advocates on behalf of candidates on the market for a more streamlined process and protocol from its member departments seeking to make a new academic hire. This may include the creation of a common application, asking committees to limit initial application materials, or holding virtual interviews when possible.

3. The protection and fair representation of the academy’s adjunct faculty members, a commitment to improving their working conditions where possible, and a sustained and public conversation about the effects on the humanities of an increased reliance on adjunct faculty members.

31. **Anne Garland Mahler.** Asst. prof. Latin Amer. cultural studies, Univ. of Arizona.


**Statement**

In recent years, we have witnessed a wave of protests against economic inequality and state violence toward racialized populations. As humanists who represent diverse languages and cultures, we have much to offer to the critical engagement of these political realities and their antecedents. In the face of increasing financial strain on the humanities and pressure on academic freedoms, we should continue to utilize our expertise to address issues that may be considered polemic. As a nominee for the Politics and the Profession category in the Delegate Assembly, I am enthusiastic not only about continuing the MLA’s commitment to political subjects that concern our profession but especially about being a part of expanding its political and social engagement.

My research and teaching broadly address intersections between anticapitalist and racial justice discourses in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in the American hemisphere, with a focus on the Caribbean and United States South. Thus far in my short career, I have attempted to use these interests to benefit the MLA community by serving on the founding executive committee of the new Global South forum. I am hopeful that this forum will foster comparative dialogue among disciplines (especially including less represented and emergent fields) as well as create a space for the critical analysis of transnational social movements. In this vein, I would like to use this nomination to engage colleagues in discussions of how the MLA can be more of a leader in the integration of humanistic inquiry and political life.

32. **Abraham Acosta.** Assoc. prof. Latin Amer. cultural studies, Univ. of Arizona.


**Statement**

As a scholar and teacher of Latin American literature and culture in Arizona, a state that has a long history of racism and is on the front lines of anti-immigrant legislation, I have come to recognize how profoundly and acutely the politics of race, citizenship, and multiculturalism impinge on the social formation of our younger generations. As a result, I have come to rely heavily on the notion of diversity as a pedagogical foothold in the classroom. Into each class I incorporate literary, historical, and visual texts that work to create not only an environment of diverse perspectives but also the conditions necessary for thinking about diversity itself—a principle one must grasp philosophically before it can be enlisted in the service of any social or political cause.
My participation as a delegate representing Politics and the Profession would be informed by a similar outlook. I see it as my ethical and intellectual responsibility to cultivate in each discussion an awareness of the historical, cultural, and social effects of institutional power. As an MLA delegate I see it as my obligation not only to promote the virtues of humanistic inquiry in a society seemingly overdetermined by economic and fiscal concerns but also to insist on, foster, and protect the exceedingly diverse nature of humanistic thought that takes place under the name of the MLA.

33. Ivonne del Valle. Assoc. prof. Spanish, Univ. of California, Berkeley.


Statement

In recent years, economic pressures have dramatically affected the functioning of our workplaces. Many of our colleagues wrestle with precarious working conditions, many of our students face growing debt, and the job market is ever more uncertain. At the same time, financial and administrative concerns are taking priority over our academic and educational objectives. This does not occur in a vacuum but is related to questions such as the structural violence certain populations domestically and internationally bear the brunt of (Ferguson and Baltimore, for example) and the massive displacement of groups of people who have to flee their places of origin. All these realities affect us and our students. Although the university has not remained unharmed by the avalanche, we continue to hold a privileged position because of our combined knowledge and the fact that we work in cosmopolitan and multilingual places and are surrounded by intelligent young people who are eager and ready to learn and make an impact in this and other countries. That there are already strong outside attempts to control what occurs in the university shows that others are aware of our possible influence. Still, it would seem that we have not yet done what we can do. It is time that we begin to seriously debate what is at stake and what our responsibilities should be in the face of the growing pressures exerted on our institutions and working conditions and on the world around us.

X. Two-Year Colleges (2 contests)


Statement

I would be honored to serve in the Delegate Assembly as a representative for two-year colleges. At a time when roughly half of all undergraduate college students attend a community college, the MLA must remain attuned to issues raised by our current tiered system of higher learning. Among these issues are remediation, workload and pay inequities, increased reliance on adjunct workers, and a troubling equation of college success with completion rates and job placement statistics. While these issues concern everyone in the academy, they are more pronounced for those teaching in the two-year college and for those devoted to literacy and literature. To be sure, the MLA is enriched by the incredible diversity of its members, by their wide-ranging interests and scholarly pursuits; still, I would be pleased to advocate for an ongoing inquiry into the connections between literary scholarship and theory and the state of literacy learning for community college students, who are typically our least prepared and least privileged college students. Thank you for your consideration.


PhD, Graduate Center, City Univ. of New York (CUNY). Coch., Queer Faculty and Staff Group, CUNY, 2014–15; ch., Adjunct Liaison Comm., Borough of Manhattan Community Coll., CUNY.


Statement

Although I just recently entered the tenure track as a full-time professor, I have been teaching at two-year colleges for over ten years. I believe that two-year colleges are an essential part of our higher education system. I also advocate for improved conditions for two-year-college faculty members.

At BMCC, I implemented and teach the only permanent queer literature course at any two-year college in my area. I am a member of the committee that is spearheading BMCC’s adoption of the Accelerated Learning Program for developmental and remedial learners and also serve on many other committees. I am an active member of my union (PSC-CUNY). I am chair of the Adjunct Liaison Committee, which is a bridge between adjuncts and full-timers and works for adjunct rights.

I fought hard for a tenure-track position at BMCC because I sincerely believe two-year colleges are the backbone of higher-level education. Having taught at BMCC (one of the most diverse two-year colleges in the United States) and Hostos Community College (which enrolls some of the lowest-income students in New York City), I have direct experience of how crucial the two-year college is for many people. I also have direct experience of how faculty members are often marginalized, underpaid, or simply overlooked in the profession.

President Obama has discussed his support of and plans to invest in community colleges. If elected, I will find ways that the MLA can support and invest in some of the most essential colleges, faculty members, and students in higher education.


ABD, Univ. of Missouri. Faculty Member of the Year, 1991. Faculty adviser, Illinois Board of Educ., 1995–98.

Statement

What I am most concerned about is quality. Community colleges in Illinois and elsewhere have elected to be data-driven. This means that valuable time is taken up with data collection that is not a bit helpful to teaching and that is a serious problem for the humanities, which are hard to assess with any kind of reliability. I am also concerned about the hiring of adjuncts instead of tenure-track teachers in all of American higher education. Also, I fear the overuse of online course work.

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37. **Teresa Marie Purvis.** Prof. English, Lansing Community Coll., MI.


   Publications include articles in *Teaching English in the Two-Year College, College Composition and Communication.*

   **Statement**

   As two-year-college faculty members, both full-time and part-time, we face many challenges in our daily work of preparing our students for transfer to four-year colleges and universities and preparing nontransfer students for the job market. We have seen our institutions take on initiatives such as Early College, Achieve the Dream, and others, to which we have responded with professionalism. Two-year-college English faculty members need representation in the Delegate Assembly that recognizes the diversity of our students, our multiple tasks as literacy educators and teachers of the whole of English studies, and our unique place in the structure of higher education and its changing landscape. Our mission to educate our students and to serve our communities is a vital part of higher education in our country, yet it is a mission often misunderstood by the general public and local and national legislators. As a representative for the two-year-college community, I will ensure that our concerns as faculty members in two-year colleges and as advocates for our students are heard in assembly debates and represented in policy decisions during my tenure.

**XI. Women in the Profession (3 contests)**

38. **Margaret Boyle.** Asst. prof. Spanish, Bowdoin Coll.


   **Statement**

   As a member of the MLA Delegate Assembly, I look forward to actively contributing to critical conversations relating to a variety of topics pertinent to women at all levels of the profession. In my view, some of the most pressing issues include compensation, mentoring, family leave, promotion and tenure, recruitment, distribution of service, and work-life balance. I recognize the significant work that has already taken place on many of these issues as well as the challenges that lie ahead, and I am eager to continue working on the creation and revision of informed guidelines and policies. My scholarship and teaching focus on conceptions of gender and sexuality in the early modern period, and I am deeply committed to issues of gender equity within the university. I am grateful for the opportunity to participate at a national level in this meaningful and necessary work.
   Publications include contrib., Ecoambiguity, Community, and Development: Toward a Politicized Ecocriticism (2014); articles in Hispanet, Dissidences: Hispanic Journal of Theory and Criticism, Romance Notes, Hipertexto, MLN.

   Statement
   As an assistant professor of Spanish at Worcester Polytechnic Institute—an amazing, project-based engineering school with a 33% female enrollment—I have become increasingly aware of the need to support women at every stage of their trajectories, no matter their field or age. I am heartened to see more administrative roles assumed by women. Though, of course, I’d like to see less administration in general, I’m proud that my institution is celebrating its sesquicentennial under the leadership of its first female president. Advancing our rights, whether by means of extended maternity leave or through salaries commensurate with skills rather than sex, is essential for the success of individual women but also for the ever more feminized profession. I firmly believe that our feminist agendas must be lived and practiced in concrete ways, not only in the theoretical pages of our articles and books. To that end I serve as adviser to the Alpha Xi Delta sorority, advocating for the sisters and convening workshops to bolster their sense of self in a male-dominated field. I also believe that these pillars of support need to emerge even earlier, in particular when we develop our unique identities and better understand our place in the world. I thus read and score grants for the Women’s Initiative of Worcester, which funds girls’ empowerment programs precisely at the pivotal point of adolescence. I would love to share these insights with the Delegate Assembly as but one voice representing many women in the profession.

   PhD, Johns Hopkins Univ. Proofreader, MLN, 2012.
   Publications include contrib., La violencia en el mundo hispánico en el Siglo de Oro (2010), Female Amerindians in Early Modern Spanish Theater (2014); articles in Bulletin of the Comediantes, Hipogrifo: Revista de literatura y cultura del Siglo de Oro.

   Statement
   Since entering the job market four years ago, I have consistently experienced and witnessed the corporatization of our profession. This trend is especially concerning for women and other minority groups, as we tend to be in the majority in the adjunct and contingent ranks. As Kelly Baker’s recent article in the Chronicle (“Contingency and Gender,” 24 Apr. 2015) points out, this is a function of several issues, including the “cultural assumptions that continue to code teaching as feminine and research as masculine.” As a representative of Women in the Profession, I would work with the Delegate Assembly toward two goals. First, I would discourage departments from hiring multiple adjuncts and encourage them instead to hire—at minimum—one or two full-time lecturers. We must end the practice of hiring adjuncts as “stopgaps” for gaps that never close. I would also encourage those submitting MLA panels to consider including “outsiders” in their panels—contingent laborers and graduate students, as well as women and members of other minority groups. If the MLA convention is to continue as a place where hiring is done, we must give those most in need of a job a venue to present their ideas. As an organization the MLA is at a crossroads: either we continue to hold up the system that has gradually declined over the past few decades, or we make some changes. I’d like to be a part of those changes, both the ones I’ve highlighted above and those proposed by my peers.


Publications include articles in Revista letras, Teatro: Revista de estudios culturales.

Statement

In the context of deepening budgetary crises across universities, it is crucial to remain watchful of hiring practices and promotions that perpetuate salary inequities based on gender. As a new faculty member in the beginning stages of my career, I look forward to working with, and learning from, junior and senior colleagues committed to securing and furthering the interests of women in the profession. While it is important to remember that gender alone cannot account for the many, and oftentimes incommensurable, challenges that women face, it is equally imperative to have institutional representatives who can speak to these differences while working to advance the general interests of women in the academy. In my own research and teaching I pay particular attention to the articulations of gender, race, and sexuality, but I also constantly emphasize that nonessentialist understandings of gender only strengthen feminist scholarship. As a member of the MLA Delegate Assembly, I will welcome the opportunity to work with colleagues from differing backgrounds, and I hope that my experience of being born and raised in rural Mexico will help enrich the diversity of the group.

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42. Gaetana Marrone-Puglia. Prof. Italian, Princeton Univ.


Statement

I have been a member of the Modern Language Association since my graduate years. I believed then and still believe it is our strongest advocate in support of humanistic studies, foreign languages, and all members of the profession. Today the challenges confronting the academic world are daunting for the humanities. We are experiencing major changes in hiring practices and teaching methodologies. The decline in jobs for our graduates, the erosion of tenure-track positions, the loss of transparency in administrative governance—all threaten our academic world. I am especially interested in working to improve the ways in which institutional norms and values influence the hiring and promotion of women and minorities. Much of my research, as well as my advocacy in the Program of Gender and Sexuality at Princeton University, has focused on women and diversity. I am committed to addressing the ways in which academic choices regarding gender sustain and recognize differences beyond mere cosmetics.

43. Barbara Spackman. Giovanni and Ruth Elizabeth Cecchetti Prof. of Italian Studies and prof. comparative lit., Univ. of California, Berkeley.


Statement

If elected, I would work with the Delegate Assembly to continue to strengthen the MLA’s focus on the ways in which gendered expectations continue to inform many of the policies and practices that affect the lives of women of all races and orientations, including gender bias in student evaluations; faculty salary inequities; gendered distribution of service obligations and expectations; sexual harassment and violence, which persist despite the decades-long institution of training programs meant to raise awareness; and increasing reliance on lecturers, adjuncts, and part-time faculty members, especially in language teaching.

Part IV: Voting for Regional Delegates

Thirty-five persons will be elected to replace delegates whose terms expire on 10 January 2016. The term of office will be from 11 January 2016 through the close of the January 2019 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 2016 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.

1. New England and Eastern Canada (4 contests)

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

100. Charles Waite Mahoney. Prof. English, Univ. of Connecticut, Storrs.


Statement

I have been an active member of the MLA since 1992 and had the privilege of serving once before as a member of the Delegate Assembly (1996–98). During the time I have spent at the University of Connecticut (where I have taught since 1994), my service commitments have increasingly been oriented toward institutional and public advocacy for the humanities (I served as associate director of the University of Connecticut Humanities Institute for three years and am currently on the institute’s advisory board) and graduate education (I have served as the English department’s director of graduate studies since 2012 and serve as well on the university’s Graduate Faculty Council and Graduate Faculty Executive Committee). Were I to be elected to the Delegate Assembly, advocacy for graduate education and graduate students would be a central priority for me. As DGS, I work closely with the English Graduate Student Association (representing a cohort of over seventy students) and communicate regularly with numerous directors of graduate programs throughout the Northeast (both public and private institutions). I would bring to the Delegate Assembly an established commitment to representing these interests as well as a clear (and
increasingly embattled) sense of the need to defend graduate education in a time of sustained economic crisis and ongoing public misunderstanding of the value of graduate education in the humanities.

101. **David E. E. Sloane.** Prof. English, Univ. of New Haven.


**Statement**

The MLA should lead the profession in establishing standards for the conditions of teaching English and foreign languages, including class size, course load, treatment of adjuncts, and all areas affecting the teaching of language and literature at the college level. NEMLA published a table of ratings and expectations that I helped develop in 2001 (see *Modern Language Studies* 31.2: 91–100) with the intent of giving leverage to the profession in negotiating with university administrators and state legislators to provide excellence in our field. This work needs to go forward now more than ever as budgets are squeezed and teachers’ credibility is questioned. It’s past time that the MLA should have flexed its muscles as an organization and taken the fight to our individual campuses and states for better support of our mission to advance human communication and understanding.

102. **Susan Cook.** Asst. prof. English, Southern New Hampshire Univ.


**Statement**

I am honored to be nominated for this position. As a faculty member at an institution heavily involved in recent changes in higher education, I believe I can contribute a valuable perspective to the MLA Delegate Assembly. I teach in the traditional branch of a university often featured in the news for its innovations in online and competency-based education. My position has allowed me to see how such innovations come about and how they affect more traditional structures in higher education in a very immediate way. If elected to the Delegate Assembly, I will use my knowledge of shifting trends in higher education to help inform the MLA and contribute to our association’s evolving advocacy of language, literature, and the humanities at large.

I will champion the role of pedagogy as well as research within the MLA, and I will advocate for strategies to support the humanities in higher education without relying on contingent labor. I have taught at
different institutions around the country—small and large, public and private, suburban and rural—but most of my education and career has taken place in New England. I have experience working with national organizations: I have directed national conferences and am currently treasurer for the Nineteenth Century Studies Association. I have served as the director of undergraduate research at my university, which has shown me ways we might more effectively bring together our teaching and our scholarship.

103. **Eng-Beng Lim.** Asst. prof. sexuality studies, Dartmouth Coll.


**Statement**

As an interdisciplinary scholar currently appointed in a women’s, gender, and sexuality studies program, I see the MLA as a crucial professional space that allows me to broaden conversations about literature and literary theory with performance, sexuality, and queer studies as well as postcolonial, diaspora, and international studies. In this regard, I am excited to have the opportunity to represent New England and eastern Canada as a delegate and to extend these interests as the humanistic landscape of higher education changes and evolves in a global context. I am committed to diverse and progressive modes of knowledge production that open up transnational and transcolonial cultural comparativities without succumbing to corporatized modes of thinking. I am also interested in sustaining local and regional ways of understanding literature and performance. I bring to the MLA over a decade of teaching and writing, and I am eager to contribute to our shared principles in transformative education, democratic governance, and social justice.

104. **Catherine M. Peebles.** Murkland Lecturer in Humanities, Univ. of New Hampshire, Durham.


**Statement**

As a full-time lecturer at a state university whose non-tenure-track faculty members have just unionized and ratified a collective bargaining agreement, I am interested in how the changing nature of...
higher education is playing out on many levels, especially in terms of faculty appointments (types of, numbers of) and student populations (who our students are, what their goals are, and how higher education makes sense for them) and most especially the role of the interdisciplinary humanities in students’ lives during and after their BA and MA experiences.

105. **Belinda Walzer.** Lecturer English, Northeastern Univ.


   Publications include articles in *College Literature, Comparative Literature Studies, Philosophy and Rhetoric.*

   **Statement**

   I would be excited to represent New England and eastern Canada as a regional delegate. My experiences as a full-time non-tenure-track faculty member and adjunct at two different institutions and half of a dual-career academic partnership (both in English) give me great insight into the labor issues, particularly for vulnerable and contingent employees, that are symptomatic of the erosion of the humanities in higher education today. This erosion is a reality that means as a governing organization we need to rethink training for doctoral students, incorporating teaching-only and contingent positions more equitably into departments and institutions and supporting the reality and viability of alt-ac careers. As a delegate I would work to make the MLA a decisive voice in the debates around globalizing the curriculum, labor issues, and the marginalization and defunding of the humanities, especially languages and literature, in the wake of the global push for STEM. My interdisciplinary research and training in rhetorical approaches to human rights literature and gender studies and my perspective as someone who bridges the increasingly divided worlds of literature and rhetoric and composition together position me as an important voice for language and literature and rhetoric and composition within the organization. I believe that being a regional delegate to the MLA is an important professional responsibility, and, if elected, I will use the opportunity to bring both sides of the border’s unique regional concerns to the table.

106. **Matthew Cheney.** Grad. student English, Univ. of New Hampshire, Durham.


   **Statement**

   I came to doctoral study a little bit late, having worked as a freelance writer, a high school teacher, and an adjunct instructor at a small state university. During my time as an adjunct, I grew interested in the forces affecting higher education today, and I joined a unionization campaign, then served as the first president of the union. We overcame a lot of skepticism, successfully negotiated a contract, developed an effective working relationship with the university’s administration, and strengthened partnerships with the full-time faculty. I worked as an adjunct to test the waters and see if I wanted to devote my life to university teaching and research; I decided I did.
Given the state of higher education funding today, given the state of the economy, given the state of the world, we cannot only be teachers and researchers. As an academic, I aspire to be a collaborator more than a gatekeeper and to seek ways to maintain our fields’ rigor and stamina while also making sure that our fields remain open to diverse and marginalized voices. The MLA serves a vital role in uniting us and using our combined energy to advocate for the value of literature and the humanities generally. Politics, demographics, technologies, and other forces are always remaking the landscape, and it is important that we participate in that remaking so that we will not be buried in the rubble.

107. **David Rhode.** Grad. student English, Southern New Hampshire Univ.

BA, Univ. of Wisconsin, Whitewater.

**Statement**

I am currently studying for my Master of Arts degree with an English literature major, and I hope to be able to find gainful employment as a professor either at a junior college or four-year university in the future.

**II. New York State (3 contests)**

108. **Fernando Degiovanni.** Assoc. prof. Latin Amer. lit., Graduate Center, City Univ. of New York.


**Statement**

We are going through the end of the profession as we have known it. On the one hand, the fragile position of the humanities in the neoliberal university had made professors tenured in recent years perhaps the last group to be able to enjoy the privileges of job security. On the other, the early professionalization of newly admitted graduate students seems to operate under the idea that a tenure-track teaching position will be readily available on graduation, although the future of many graduate students may lie outside academia. Increasing labor insecurity and early specialization are the paradoxical, yet defining, characteristics of our present. It is imperative for the MLA to continue to reflect on the evolution of the job market and its impact on the way we prepare future generations of graduates in modern languages for jobs both inside and outside academia. Questions about the diversification of curricular offerings and alternative professional training for our future PhDs should be part of an ongoing discussion about the future of the humanities. As a member of the Delegate Assembly representing New York State, I would like to engage in an open debate about these pressing issues.


**Statement**

Contrary to general perception, I believe the study of languages and the cultures they build is ready to take back its center-stage position in the academic world. We know that only the humanities are able to question and to explain our position in this fast-paced, technologically oriented, profit-obsessed environment. The crisis in the humanities seems to be a lack of faith in their capacity to create new narratives to explain our roles in today’s society. Defining and disseminating those narratives, which is at the core of our contemporaneity, becomes an essential endeavor for us as humanists and educators. Therefore, I see the role of the MLA’s leaders (and mine, if elected) as one of advocating for new proposals to reinvent and strengthen programs in language, literature, and culture that can offer our students, undergraduate and graduate, the opportunity to become truly global citizens.


**Statement**

My perspective is shaped by the ten years I have spent teaching at a four-year comprehensive college, where undergraduates constitute 90% of the student body. In such an atmosphere, languages and literature are valued primarily because of what they contribute to undergraduate education. Within this context there are presently, in my view, two extremely significant series of problems. The first is conceptual and derives from the sense of vague hostility to humanities disciplines characteristic of contemporary professional culture. The language of “utility” and “relevance” typically takes as its implicit target fields of study that do not correspond self-evidently to categories of private-sector employment, and the pervasiveness of such rhetoric in turn exerts pressure on undergraduate curricula and on graduate funding to emphasize professional instead of liberal education. The second series of problems is practical and is developing from a single circumstance: across the United States, the numbers of undergraduate majors in languages and literatures are declining. This decline is worrisome not only because of the consequences it may have for the structure of undergraduate programs of study and for faculty recruitment but also because it suggests that fewer students are taking the opportunity to think critically and reflectively and, by adopting perspectives available only through the study of languages and literatures, to consider what truly global citizenship might mean. The MLA should continue to advocate for a model of education that engages directly with these problems, and I would welcome the chance to be part of that effort.
111. **Leah Richards.** Asst. prof. English, LaGuardia Community Coll., City Univ. of New York.


**Statement**

Having taught at two- and four-year public and private colleges and universities as a contingent faculty member and now holding a tenure-track faculty position at an open-admission community college in the largest urban university in the United States, I advocate for junior, contingent, and other vulnerable faculty members; students at two- and four-year colleges and in graduate programs; unions and their members; and the profession at large. Many full-time faculty members in the liberal arts are only marginally less exploited than our contingent colleagues, with blame for this attributed to declines in funding for and interest in the humanities. The decline is funding is unfortunately true, but my work with students majoring in liberal arts as cochair of a team-advising initiative to improve our students’ success shows that the decline in interest is not. When so much teaching is done by adjuncts, meeting the needs of students by simply making further demands on full-time faculty members ultimately benefits no one. Full-time faculty members with a reasonable balance of teaching, service, and scholarship are best able to help our students—and aren’t the students the reason that we work as hard as we do? I would like to work with and within the MLA to try to fix the system while we still can.

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**Statement**

I am truly honored to be considered for this important position as a regional representative for New York State. As a long-standing member of the MLA and as a former elected Delegate Assembly member as well as elected representative on the executive committee of my professional division, I have witnessed the dramatic changes that have taken place in academe and the discussions that have ensued. I have read the studies undertaken by the MLA and have participated actively in our university’s initiatives to deal with the systemic erosion that economic and political forces are causing in our educational system as a whole and particularly in English and foreign language departments. As an MLA regional representative, I envision working with others to spearhead an initiative to survey the successful strategies our colleges and universities have devised and undertaken to stem this erosion. I stand ready to communicate what I know about the creative solutions developed at my institution, and I am sure that others fortunate enough to be at universities that value the humanities can do the same. In short, we know too well the failures that have taken place; but if we share the successes and find a way to disseminate this information so that we can work together in
ways that have proved to be effective, we stand a better chance of ensuring our survival as professionals and of enhancing our departments and programs.

113. **Phillip Usher.** Assoc. prof. French, New York Univ.


**Statement**

Our present is defined by the urgent problem of global warming. Science and geoengineering cannot provide tools to fix the problem—because the problem is ultimately about politics and about human nature. Even less can they offer the intellectual tools essential for understanding this situation, for asking who we are as human animals, and for creating radical and speculative approaches to plotting our place on planet Earth. That is up to us. As Dipesh Chakrabarty and others have noted, our current Anthropocenic situation means that the humanities must rethink themselves fundamentally to connect the deep time of geology to the human time scales of our lives and disciplines. For the humanities to play the role that they must, we need tenure-track jobs that can give scholars the means and the security for carrying out searching research and for helping students engage with the humanities in vital and life-changing ways; we need a strong collective vision that refuses to see languages and literatures as extras or add-ons to disciplines considered more serious; and we need to articulate, each new day, why the humanities matter. As someone who has taught in a variety of institutions (a high school, a liberal arts college, an R1 institution), as a committed and productive researcher, as someone who works on early modern literature while engaging with contemporary critical theory, and as someone who takes seriously the “wager” of a humanities education, I hope to bring a strong and federating voice to the MLA.

**III. Middle Atlantic (3 contests)**

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


**Statement**

As a scholar fairly early in her career, I approach the possible work as a delegate with the awareness of how the association often appears more a gatekeeper of potential and scarce employment than as a source of meaningful support for emerging scholars and adjuncts. I look forward to our thinking together about how
the association can help the bulk of its constituency on issues such as scarce and precarious employment, student debt, and the closure of departments. Improvements might begin, for instance, with revisiting the proposal—adopted by other professional associations—to abolish the prohibitively costly MLA conference interview. My own recent work on the environmental crisis has led me to value greatly the role that aesthetics and speculative thought can play in generating alternatives to some contemporary problems, so I hope also to advance the importance of the humanities in creating new models for addressing planetary crises.


Statement

My perspective on higher education has been shaped by my experiences as an undergraduate, graduate student, postdoc, and now assistant professor at a mix of public and private universities in Iowa, New York, California, and Pennsylvania. I believe the MLA needs, first and foremost, to confront the fact that the current attempts to defund higher education, devalue academic labor, and cut programs in the humanities are all part of a much broader attack on (public) education in this country. We could simply lament this fact, or we (as the MLA) could begin to develop more connections to educators working at the primary- and secondary-school levels—both as a means of building common cause and with an eye toward generating interest in what we do among future college students. I also believe we need to avoid falling into the trap of justifying what we teach on the basis of its relevance to the economy. This is particularly pertinent in language departments, which often bill a language major as useful in acquiring a job yet continue to suffer cuts. As someone who also works in media studies, I would support the MLA’s ongoing efforts to engage with new developments in digital media. At the same time it is clear these measures will not save the humanities, and we need to develop strategies to ensure that work in the digital humanities (and the humanities at large) serves a critical function instead of furthering corporate interests.


Statement

As an assistant professor of German and in my capacity as the director of our department’s study-abroad program for the past four years and as acting undergraduate director in 2014–15 at a large public institution, I have experienced the challenges of our profession firsthand—the growing commercialization of
knowledge, the dramatic increase in student debt, the erosion of tenure, the bureaucratization of the institution, and the systematic financial cuts in institutional support for foreign language departments. But in an increasingly globalized world that is also a more highly specialized and fragmented one, it is the humanities that enable students to develop critical and analytical thinking skills and to create context and connections.

The MLA is the most reliable, generous, and significant professional forum that can respond actively and collaboratively to the economic and institutional challenges we are facing today. Its importance in regard to an effective response to the crisis in the humanities cannot be emphasized enough. I would be grateful for the opportunity to actively participate in the ongoing efforts of the Delegate Assembly of the MLA to support and advance education in the humanities. In particular, I would be interested in finding a way to respond to the challenges we face in regard to our curriculum and our expectations for students and in discussing strategies for maintaining a healthy and sustainable program that responds to the needs and anxieties of our undergraduates and graduate students.


Publications include contrib., Sophie Discovers America: German-Speaking Women Write the New World (2014); articles in German Life and Letters, Arkansas Historical Quarterly, Colloquia Germanica.

Statement

As an assistant professor of German at a small liberal arts college, I am keenly aware of the challenges that face (small) foreign language programs. The MLA plays a crucial role in advocating for the relevance of such programs. If elected as an MLA delegate, I will engage with the issues surrounding these challenges and strive to build connections to support such programs. For the MLA to continue to fulfill its mission, it must seek to respond to the changing needs of an increasingly diverse membership and to expand its role as a professional organization lobbying for our vocation and its significance—for example, by countering attacks on academic freedom, the tenure system, and the relevance of a liberal education. In addition, I would like to help the MLA develop strategies that promote the relevance of the humanities in general. As a member of the Coalition of Women in German, I am also deeply committed to fostering the role of women in the profession, to encouraging feminist scholarship, and to promoting inclusion in teaching and scholarship.


Publications include article in Law, Culture, and the Humanities; review in Textual Practice.

Statement

It is an honor to be nominated for this position and especially to be called as a graduate student representative. Considering the rapidly changing experience of a career in the humanities, I feel passionately
about voicing the concerns of my regional peers in the MLA Delegate Assembly. Facing a future where non-tenure-track and alt-ac jobs are becoming the new norm, I am committed to openly discussing this change in our profession, not just as grads approach the job market but from the very beginning of our training. Issues I am particularly interested in include securing funding to attend the MLA convention for grad students and non-tenure-track faculty members, especially if the convention continues to be the primary locus for job interviews; increasing diverse forms of representation in the MLA; facilitating communication between faculty members and graduate students about the changing profession; and raising awareness about student debt and mental health. If elected, I promise to serve as a conduit between the Delegate Assembly and the wider MLA community and to advocate for my region’s interests. I am running for this position because, ultimately, I believe that doing work within supportive and alert policy-making structures can make a difference in what our lives are actually like.


Publications include article in Victorian Review.

Statement
As a graduate student at a large public university, I’ve helped run a writing program alongside non-tenure-track faculty members and adjuncts, worked on a digital center with librarians, designed professionalization workshops for graduate students, and helped at-risk urban undergraduates adjust to college. I’ve seen the academy from both inside and outside its traditional structures. I believe these experiences make me an effective representative of our membership in all its diversity.

My priorities include (1) supporting all types of graduate student careers and graduate programs seeking to expand traditional molds, (2) shaping responsible practices for online learning and exploiting the possibilities of the new medium rather than trying to imperfectly recreate physical classrooms, and (3) examining the structures that underlie inequality in the academy, both for adjuncts and for underserved student populations, and designing practical strategies for leveling that inequality.

As your MLA delegate, I look forward to working hard, listening carefully, and solving some problems. Thanks for voting!

IV. Great Lakes (7 contests)
Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin

120. Silvia Ruiz-Tresgallo. Asst. prof. Spanish, Univ. of Wisconsin, Stout.

PhD, Penn State Univ. Certificate of Excellence for Outstanding Student Support and Encouragement as an Educator, Multicultural Student Services, Univ. of Wisconsin (UW), Stout, 2011; Curious Stout Innovator Award, Nakatani Teaching and Learning Center, UW, Stout, 2012. LASA, AATSP, Afro Latin Amer. Research Assn.; Asociación Internacional de Literatura y Cine Espagñoles Siglo XXI.

Statement

As an assistant professor working in Wisconsin since 2010, I can truly say I feel honored to have a job that allows me to learn constantly in ways that enhance my research, teaching, and service to the university and the profession. However, I have also seen the imposition of unreasonable austerity measures on all campuses. Professors are paid less and less each passing year while the demands on them keep increasing. Teaching four to five classes per semester while engaging in high-quality research, teaching during the summer, and participating in more service-oriented activities are just a few aspects of a situation that is no longer sustainable. In spite of this difficult situation, we can consider ourselves lucky, as instructors and adjuncts, who receive very low salaries and in many cases are deprived of health insurance, have become the most precarious group. For these reasons, it is my purpose to advocate for the end of the adjunct system. Right now seventy percent of faculty members in the United States are adjuncts, a situation that our departments should no longer support. I would also like to encourage the creation and retention of tenure-track jobs to provide security as well as quality standards for our profession. Professors should be able to be successful in all areas of their work, so excellence in teaching, research, and service should be given equal weight in evaluations. In my opinion, scholars should also become activists to connect the humanities and citizenship.


PhD, Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Mellon Foundation travel grant, April 2005; Mellon Foundation summer dissertation fellowship, 2005.


Statement

The MLA has always been for me an academic community of support and intellectual leadership, where pedagogical ideas, national policies related to academia, and debates regarding the future of the humanities can be shared across various platforms. I believe it is imperative that we continue to voice our opinions, given the many challenges that we, as professionals in the humanities, are facing today. While I cannot offer solutions to the numerous problems besieging higher education, I can offer my commitment to our communities, our ideas, and our profession. If elected, I would work to advocate for the advancement of our disciplines by focusing on some high-impact issues, such as the adjunct crisis, the loss of faculty governance, rising tuition costs and the lack of sufficient financial assistance, low student enrollment, an increasingly shrinking budget, and the overall state of the humanities in higher education.

One perspective I can offer to the assembly is that of the students. Over the past four years, I have been working as the director of undergraduate studies for my department, and I have had the opportunity to listen to the varied opinions of our undergraduates regarding the state of higher education. Also, I was involved with the recently implemented undergraduate general education reforms in my university, and I have served on several different committees across my campus. Given that I have no experience yet with service on committees of national associations, it would be an honor for me to be elected to the Delegate Assembly.


PhD, Univ. of South Carolina. Faculty seminar grant, Council on Intl. Educational Exchange, Mar. 2011. Grad. Teaching Award, Educational Foundation, Univ. of South Carolina, 2002; Environmental Advocate Award, Sustainable Univ. Initiative, Univ. of South Carolina, 2003; Celebrated Faculty Member, Office of Housing and Residential Life, Grand Valley State Univ., 2009. Ed., Yemassee Literary Journal, 2000–02.
Supported by contributions in the Chronicle of Higher Education, or just general talk in our institutions’ hallways, we are bombarded with reports that the humanities are under attack. In many cases, I am not sure if the humanities are under attack or simply suffering from profound neglect by a culture that increasingly sees the humanities and higher education as contributing to the greater good. As a current department chair and someone who has been actively engaged in campus and university issues, I see the value and importance of shared governance. I appreciate the MLA’s support for shared governance and its mission to advocate for scholarship in and the teaching of language and literature. I would like to play a more active role in a large and vocal organization that is working to preserve the integrity of our profession.

123. **Susan Yukie Najita.** Assoc. prof. English, Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor.


**Statement**

The increasing corporatization of institutions of higher learning has led to the fracturing of our profession, radical inequality, expendability, and precarity on a scale we have never before seen. What this means for knowledge production in our discipline(s) is a problematic tiered system and a general impoverishment of the range and depth of intellectual and social exchanges. We are all made more vulnerable to attacks on academic freedom from within and without our institutions of learning. The effects of this situation on graduate education are equally profound and have led us to question the very professional premise of training for future intellectuals in our fields. I am committed not only to making the association even more accessible to hearing the experiences of adjunct members of our profession but also to taking collective action to transform our own institutions of learning. Let us be honest: the professoriat’s own sense of privilege is achieved, these days, on the backs of adjunct employees. Tenured and tenure-track faculty members must develop strategies that can be implemented collectively to turn the culture of our institutions into one that will acknowledge and make inviolable the integral relation between work and living.

124. **Maria Chouza-Caló.** Asst. prof. Spanish, Central Michigan Univ.

PhD, Univ. of California, Santa Barbara. Dir., Spanish grad. program, Dept. of Foreign Langs., Lits., and Cultures, Central Michigan Univ. Asociación de Amigos research fellowship, Univ. of Navarra (Spain), 2004–05; Cota-Robles Fellowship, Grad. Div., Univ. of California, Santa Barbara, 2002–08. Grupo de Investigación en Didáctica de las Lenguas y Culturas (Universidade da Coruña). Ed. board, Revista internacional DIGILEC (Universidade da Coruña).

Publications include contrib., El Siglo de Oro antes y después del Arte nuevo: Nuevos enfoques desde una perspectiva pluridisciplinaria (2009), Pictavia aurea (2013), La violencia en el teatro de Calderón (2014); contrib. (of translations), Literatura y feminismo en España (s. XV–XXI) (2005), Cervantes
Statement

I am honored to be nominated to represent the Great Lakes region. If elected, I will commit myself to addressing the professional needs and interests of all my colleagues. I would also like to promote a serious discussion about the importance and relevance of a humanities curriculum, especially the study of foreign languages and literature, in today’s increasingly globalized world. I consider this to be an issue of concern in the profession, as many universities across the country are endorsing STEM disciplines and undervaluing the study of foreign languages, literature, and culture. In sum, as a delegate, my priority will be to advocate the importance of humanities studies as well as engage in dialogue with my peers on other issues that affect how we teach and mentor our graduate students.

125. Michael W. Joy. Prof. Spanish, Northern Michigan Univ.  
PhD, Univ. of Minnesota, Twin Cities. Excellence in Teaching Award, Northern Michigan Univ., 2012; Student Organization Adviser of the Year Award, Northern Michigan Univ., 2014. SAMLMA.  
Publications include articles in Mid-Atlantic Almanack, Romance Languages Annual.

Statement

I am running for the Delegate Assembly as a way to give back to the organization and to our profession. I have strong academic connections to the Great Lakes region—I earned my bachelor’s degree at a small liberal arts college in Minnesota and my graduate degrees at a large research university, and I now serve as a tenured faculty member at a regional comprehensive university on the shores of Lake Superior. This broad experience at a range of institutions will inform my work on the Delegate Assembly and will enable me to advocate on behalf of all members in the region. While maintaining my research agenda, I have built a strong record of service at my university, including four years as my department’s representative on the AAUP Faculty Council and two years as chair of the College of Arts and Sciences Advisory Council, which considers requests for sabbaticals and applications for tenure and promotion. At a time when funding for higher education in the Great Lakes region is increasingly in the crosshairs of state legislatures and governors, I believe it is vital for the MLA to be even more assertive in its advocacy of the humanities in general and language study in particular. The MLA is our professional organization; as a member of the Delegate Assembly I would work energetically to make it more vital and relevant, both to its members and to our culture at large.

126. Cristina Moreiras-Menor. Prof. Spanish, Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor.  


Statement

In recent years, departments of foreign languages have experienced three important challenges, all of them related to the crisis of the humanities. Our graduate and undergraduate students have increasing difficulties finding good jobs because the study of languages has acquired the reputation of being impractical and unrelated to preparation for a career; undergraduate classes are less populated, and administrations reduce budgets in such a way that our ability to deliver an outstanding education is seriously compromised; and every year our institutions require language departments to teach more classes in English rather than in the target language to guarantee larger numbers in the classroom. All these challenges put us in a very problematic situation before administrators and the general public.

At the end of my fifth year as chair of a large department of languages and literatures, I have learned that the only way to confront these challenges is by working collectively, through sustained conversations with both administrators and students, through the establishment of programs (workshops, reading groups, etc.) designed to strengthen our visibility and mission as a central part of the university, and by educating the general public about the fundamental role that the humanities, and in particular the foreign languages, play in the general education of our young population. I am very committed to trying to identify the right tools needed to educate our administrators, faculty members, students, and citizens about the role of the humanities in our lives.

127. Gabriela Pozzi. Prof. Spanish, Grand Valley State Univ.


Statement

At a time of dwindling enrollments in the humanities, of ever mounting administrative pressure on faculty members to attract more students, of public pressure on universities to be more practical and provide more useful skills, the MLA can and must have a crucial role in educating the public and administrations about the importance of maintaining quality programs in languages and literatures and in supporting the faculty members in these programs. Public universities, especially those that teach mainly undergraduate students, like mine, seem to have lost fully 40% of their humanities majors to the sciences and professional schools. To be able to make the case for the importance of intercultural, as well as linguistic, competence in today’s world, we need the resources and leadership that only a large national organization such as the MLA can provide. I have been working at Grand Valley State University, a large regional institution, for more than twenty years and have occupied a variety of roles as faculty member, chair of my department, and member of the College Council and various personnel committees, so I believe I have a clear sense of the challenges that we face. I would be honored to serve as delegate from the Great Lakes region and to be part of the solution to these challenges.

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PhD, Univ. of Pennsylvania. Jacob K. Javits Fellowship, Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1997–99, 2000–02; residential fellowship, Franke Inst. for the Humanities, Univ. of Chicago, 2005–06. Albert W. Fields Award (for best article published in Explorations in Renaissance Culture), South-Central Renaissance Conference, 2013; Faculty Award for Excellence in Grad. Teaching and Mentoring, Univ. of Chicago, 2015. Cofounder,


Statement

As a scholar of medieval French literature, one of my research interests is the origin and history of the University of Paris. My perspective on higher education is thus informed by an understanding of its longue durée and the ever-evolving relation of universities to the societies in which they are embedded.

The challenges facing colleges and universities today are well known. Those that most concern me include the mounting administrative burden placed on faculty members, the inexplicable increase in (highly compensated) administrative staff members, the stratification of the faculty and administration in a manner that reflects the pernicious and growing inequality of American society at large, and ongoing gender inequality (manifested in persistent pay disparity, especially at private and nonunionized institutions; the exploitation of female faculty members to carry out the “housework” of the university; and the fact that university presidents and faculty stars are overwhelmingly male, while contingent faculty members are largely female). The corporate model that we see in higher education today is not even one in which “building a business” furnishes the relevant metaphor; rather, it is a form of sanctioned piracy that extracts maximum value from human endeavor and then abandons the remains.

In a community fragmented by factors such as rank, department or academic unit, and institutional type, the MLA provides an opportunity for members of the profession to work together to address these and other challenges and to pursue shared objectives. I would be proud to contribute to these efforts.


Statement

When I was in graduate school in the late 1990s, the humanities were already in crisis. In fact, a special MLA session was convened at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, to discuss it. However, I am alarmed at the speed by which this crisis has widened in the past decade. The economic crisis of the last few years provided a convenient justification for the depletion of resources dedicated to the humanities. Given the increasing corporatization of the university, the humanities do not seem to qualify as good business. The slow erosion of tenure in the name of fostering productivity and competitiveness has been accompanied by calls by university administrations that departments conform to business and managerial models. The language of “administrative best practices” and “setting clear goals and assessment criteria” and the demand to produce and respond to statistical data and charts indicate clear disregard for the nature of humanities research and teaching.

Language and literature departments are hardest hit by the reduction of resources because of their smaller size and status as service departments aimed at fulfilling language requirements. Consequently, scholarly contributions are too often undervalued or at best misunderstood. These departments are also more
precariously situated. While the university knows that it cannot, in the end, function without the humanities, too many cases have revealed lately that language and literature departments are deemed dispensable. It falls to the MLA not only to be the counterweight for this trend but also to actively intervene in it.


Statement

I would be honored to serve as a member of the MLA Delegate Assembly. My interest is rooted in the commitment to promote cross-region, intercultural, and interdisciplinary collaborations as well as to increase the visibility of less represented languages and fields in the MLA. Coming from a comparative literature program, I’ve benefited tremendously from interdisciplinary studies. My own research topic includes aspects of literature, cinema, visuality, memory, history, and politics, and being able to work with professors and colleagues from these various areas provides me fresh perspective on issues related to narration and representation of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China—how traumatic memories are twisted, modified, partially effaced, and retold through artistic expression. In addition to being an academic, I have also worked to bridge the divide between Asians and Asian Americans as a student activist, helping to found an Asian American and Asian Resource and Cultural Center at Purdue University. The experience has deepened my understanding of and belief in the power of vigorous collaboration among people from different disciplines, professional ranks, regions, and cultural backgrounds. As an international graduate student pursuing a doctoral degree in the Midwest and at an institution that takes most pride in science and engineering, I understand too well the feeling of trying to have my voice heard—but I will keep on trying. In a time of decreasing institutional support for the humanities, what we do really matters.


Statement

I am honored by the nomination to represent the Great Lakes region in the MLA Delegate Assembly. Since 2012, I have been an active participant in the English department at Indiana University, teaching composition and studying nineteenth-century transatlantic literature with a focus in gender studies. I believe graduate students hold a unique position in the academy and the future of our field because of the precarious job market and changing intellectual landscape that we face. If I am elected, I plan to draw on my diverse service experience, which includes a term as a graduate student liaison at Indiana University, to guarantee
that graduate voices and concerns are heard. My interest in becoming as a member of the Delegate Assembly also stems from my commitment to increasing diversity among graduate students and graduate student interests in the Great Lakes region. As part of this mission, I plan to discuss how not only race but also gender and sexuality affect departmental policies and goals. Finally, I want to foster more capacious discussions about the significance and importance of literary studies in an increasingly globalized and technologized culture, discussions that should explore innovative methodologies and the ability of our field to enact sociopolitical change.

132. **Amanda K. Rector.** Grad. student Spanish and Portuguese, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana.


**Statement**

In May 2014, an MLA task force report on doctoral study in modern language and literature interrogated many facets of graduate programs, including goals and procedures, and recommended several modifications. One of the most significant recommendations was to “validate diverse career outcomes.” It would be my honor to serve as a delegate from the Great Lakes region to represent graduate student interests during a period when many doctoral programs are in a state of transition and upheaval. In an era when graduate programs are evaluating their ability to meet graduate student needs and prepare these students for an evolving job market, it is paramount to consider the needs and interests of all students, not just of those who intend to pursue a career in academia. It would give me great pleasure to serve as a spokesperson and advocate for graduate students as we focus on maintaining the integrity of the humanities in academia while shaping the discipline to meet twenty-first-century expectations and circumstances.

133. **Medardo Rosario.** Grad. student Spanish, Univ. of Chicago.


Publications include contrib., *El universo simbólico del poder en el Siglo de Oro* (2012), *Historia de América Latina* (2012); article in *Anuario de estudios cervantinos*.

**Statement**

Being elected to the MLA Delegate Assembly will represent an opportunity for me to work on the challenges that graduate students from various backgrounds and at different stages of their graduate experience face every day. I am particularly interested in the challenges related to their funding, academic requirements, and teaching commitments. I am also eager to deal with issues regarding employment and the transition from student to faculty member.

As a member the MLA Delegate Assembly I intend to work toward the improvement of the graduate student experience by channeling and articulating the professional and academic interests and concerns of my fellow students. I am determined to represent my professional community with integrity and passion.
V. South (6 contests)

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

134. **Charlene M. Eska.** Assoc. prof. English, Virginia Polytechnic Inst. and State Univ.


**Statement**

With the humanities increasingly under threat, even at institutions with a strong tradition in the humanities, it is becoming ever more important to have a greater ability to work within and across multiple disciplines. Working in the fields of literature, linguistics, law, and medieval languages (particularly Celtic languages), I am able to bridge many of the gaps between these disciplines and therefore can understand and synthesize work on disparate topics and foster the educational and professional needs of those who work in these areas. While a strong humanities education is frequently undervalued by those outside academia, the skills acquired in the field, such as the ability to write clearly, think critically, and synthesize multiple opinions, are becoming increasingly necessary in our global economy. At many institutions foreign language programs have been reduced or cut altogether, yet strong language skills are necessary for our students to take part in larger global issues. How can our students appreciate the diversity of the world in which they live if they have never studied the language or literature of another culture? If elected to the Delegate Assembly, I will work to increase global opportunities for students and scholars—for example, by fostering study-abroad and fellowship programs. Furthermore, I will work toward increasing the amount of scholarly interaction among disciplines. The different humanities disciplines have much in common, and there is much that we can learn from one another.

135. **Jennifer Rhee.** Asst. prof. English, Virginia Commonwealth Univ.


Publications include articles in *Configurations: A Journal of Literature, Science, and Technology, Postmodern Culture, Thresholds*.

**Statement**

Higher education is facing problems of significant weight and complexity: the casualization of labor, student debt, the state of the academic job market, reduction of state and federal funding, the corporatization of universities, threats to academic freedom. Humanistic thinking excels in making sense of these issues in their complexity and is thus critical to an understanding of these large, interconnected problems. As teachers and scholars we play important roles—helping our students develop the analytic skills with which they might engage these complex problems and making analytic contributions that further make sense of the world, all
the while insisting on the vital importance of language, literature, and the arts. As a professional organization, the MLA has an important advocacy role to play in these issues. I’m particularly interested in working toward improving working conditions for non-tenure-track faculty members and graduate students and increasing the number of tenure-track positions as well as advocating for the continued necessity of the humanities and the importance of academic freedom for all faculty members.


Statement

My interest in being elected to the Delegate Assembly is grounded in a passion for service to the humanities, which nourish our lives through our collaborative commitment to realize their possibilities. We could collaborate, too, to remedy a host of serious problems in the humanities, such as shrinking budgets, diminishing faculty self-governance, disappearing tenure lines, and the increasing commodification of knowledge. As a delegate I would offer myself as an inclusive and transparent locus for receiving and articulating the diverse concerns, insights, and aspirations of our community, paying particular attention to members hailing from the South.

I would also use my position to help integrate the MLA more fully into the many overlapping communities in which we work and live, both domestically and abroad. Accordingly I would strive as a delegate to enhance and extend our many networks of support and solidarity for research, teaching, and writing.

Attention to transnational and transcultural interdisciplinarity derives from my work as a Spanish professor of the poetry of the hemispheric Americas as well as my work as a poet and as a translator of global feminist poetry. Through my scholarship, poetry, and translation, I am constantly rethinking such fields as literary theory, political philosophy, translation theory, gender studies, aesthetics, cultural sociology, and economic historiography. I am therefore open and available to your many voices as we collaborate on helping the humanities flourish.


Publications include Toward a Learner-Centered Evaluation of Instruction (2008); coauthor, Introduction to World Literature: Rites of Passage (2012); articles in Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives, College Teaching.
138. **Jeffrey A. Grossman.** Assoc. prof. German, Univ. of Virginia.


**Statement**

As someone with training in comparative literature, theory, and translation studies, I have in my research and teaching focused primarily on what, in our inadequate language, are often called a major literature (German) and a minor literature (Yiddish). I like to imagine that I have over time developed some awareness more generally of the problems facing both kinds of literature—which include not least the categories I have just imposed on them. (How, for better or worse, does one make sense of the status that German has in North American literary studies today?) Beyond German and Yiddish, the study of literature, culture, and the humanities in general currently faces major challenges. These challenges are in turn bound up with both the skyrocketing cost of education and the underfunding of many institutions of higher education. (Is the current governor of Wisconsin an omen of things to come or an outlier whose antieducation notions will soon pass?) One effect of such changes is increased reliance on underpaid contingent and part-time faculty members, who often work without benefits or any semblance of job security. If elected as a delegate, my chief aim will be to seek strategies to address and help resolve various effects of the current situation—one that today threatens (if not always evenly) the flourishing of major and minor languages, of literary studies and humanistic studies more generally, and of the very idea of a liberal arts education.

139. **Kasongo Kapanga.** Prof. French and francophone studies, Univ. of Richmond.


**Statement**

In a period when incoming students and their families stress the link between a college education and marketable skills, I remain deeply convinced that a liberal education and the study of languages and literatures are necessary components in the academic training of the twenty-first-century college student.
Being a culturally proficient global communicator is not only a prize competence but also undoubtedly the prime qualification for a balanced player on the world stage. This is the foundation and philosophy of my training and teaching, which roughly span three continents: Africa, Europe, and America. This is also the source of the enthusiasm that I have been communicating to hundreds of my students and that I hope to communicate to many more who will be entrusted to my care. Whether dealing with teaching French or literature in a classical fashion or guiding Swahili language students through innovative personalized pedagogical formats, I have tackled these tasks with the ultimate goal of getting students aboard linguistically, culturally, and even intellectually. As a regional delegate, I will be ready and willing to participate in the search for ways to keep up this enthusiasm and spur the study of languages, literatures, and cultures across the region, the nation, and the world.

140. Felicia M. McCarren. Prof. French, Tulane Univ.


Statement

Now that everyone speaks English—for example, in European countries, where this was not true twenty-five years ago—those of us working in languages other than English might ask ourselves what we are doing.

My question is not so much about the importance of one language, in my case French, or the global francophonie that for some stands as a kind of resistance to an anglophone domination of the Internet and of cultural and financial markets. For me, the question is about the cultural differences that remain. Often what looks like a small problem of translation can reveal a significant difference. In my current work, I am following France’s evolving discourse about minority experience. I want to participate in that discussion—not to align it with an Anglo-Saxon identity politics but to follow how, in France, it is elaborated as an “identity poetics” in the cultural field.

141. Dominica Radulescu. Edwin A. Morris Prof. of Romance Langs., Washington and Lee Univ.


As a member of the MLA since 1990, an academic living in the South since 1992, and a recent member of the ADE Executive Committee, I am honored to be nominated to stand for election to the Delegate Assembly representing the South. During my recent tenure as department chair, my experiences with the ADE—its staff and also its elected faculty leadership—were entirely rewarding and positive. I became familiar with the advocacy role of the MLA, which provides crucial support to our disciplines, academic units, and higher education institutions. I believe it is important that we, in turn, support and strengthen the MLA through our collective work to represent ourselves and our profession well to an increasingly skeptical public. As a scholar and teacher of African American literature, a former chair of English and Africana studies departments, and currently the leader of the Honors College at my large public research university, I would contribute to the Delegate Assembly a voice for diversity and inclusion, a commitment to both teaching and research, experience with innovative administration, and a university-wide perspective on our disciplines.
143. **Suzanne Raitt.** Chancellor Prof. of English, Coll. of William and Mary.


**Statement**

I am honored to be nominated for the position of regional delegate. This is a particularly exciting—but also unsettling—time in the history of higher education in the United States. In recent years, attention to affordability, student debt, e-learning, job outcomes, rankings, tenure, and the contingent workforce has turned the spotlight on higher education in a way that is unprecedented in our lifetime—and not always friendly. I see this as an opportunity to advocate on the national stage for our colleagues (both tenured and untenured), our students, and our disciplines at a time when the value of higher education, and especially of the humanities, is being fiercely and visibly debated. Studies have shown that a large majority of liberal arts and humanities students feel well prepared for the workforce, do find jobs, and experience high levels of job satisfaction. It is our job to press for accountability from our state legislatures (because higher education is a public good); to respond flexibly and creatively to the current skepticism about the value of a bachelor’s or higher degree; to resist the stratification of higher education into institutions and programs for the haves and the have-nots; to protect tenure and academic freedom against the incursions of state legislatures and other bodies; and to work both in our own institutions and nationally to improve the working and living conditions of contingent faculty members, who do most of the hard work of teaching in our colleges and universities.

144. **Sarah Carpenter.** Grad. student cultural studies, George Mason Univ.


**Statement**

We find ourselves in a period of intense social change. The cultural contingencies of late capitalism in a global neoliberal economy are reshaping the academy at all levels. The past several decades have seen a shift in focus in higher education from intellectual enrichment to extended job training, altering the expectations of university administrators and the conditions under which faculty members work. Increasingly, university administrations treat education as a business whose goal is to attract students and prepare them to perform competitively in a commercial job market. Meanwhile, the decreasing availability of public funds for education means that the administrations must seek ever more avenues for cutting costs. In such conditions, it is not surprising that we find a rapid increase in the percentage of faculty members
working in contingent positions or that these economically less stable positions should be concentrated in the humanities, historically viewed as less practical than their counterpart departments in business management or STEM fields.

The MLA cannot singlehandedly rectify the economic insecurity of contingent faculty members or summarily redress the devaluation, exacerbated by neoliberalism, of critical studies in language and literature. As a leading professional organization with a strong and committed membership, however, the MLA can work to encourage practices of hiring and tenure that are ethical, equitable, and transparent. Together we can advocate for fair treatment of all faculty members, for stronger protections for academic freedom, and for a renewed urgency in the contributions of academic inquiry to public debate.

145. Shonda Stevens. Grad. student Amer. lit. and culture, Florida State Univ.


Publications include coed., Perspectives on the Short Story (4th ed. [for Florida State Univ.], 2016).

Statement

The South Atlantic region represented nearly one-fifth of the total MLA membership last year. As someone with extensive learning and teaching experience throughout this part of the United States, it means a great deal to me to be a nominee for one of this region’s seats in the MLA Delegate Assembly. My role as representative would certainly involve speaking strongly in the ongoing conversation regarding the current state of literature within the university and the damaging lack of institutional support for the humanities in this region and nationwide. I’m interested specifically in prioritizing curriculum development that best prepares our undergraduates for participation in the wider world postgraduation while also making visible the myriad ways that studying the humanities acts as an essential part of higher education.

VI. Central and Rocky Mountain (6 contests)

Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Wyoming


Statement

Since I have studied and served on the faculty at both public and private institutions, I would be committed, if elected to the Delegate Assembly, to representing and voicing the concerns of colleagues at the full range of institutions in our region. I am particularly interested in working on three areas of concern. First, I am eager to collaborate with the Delegate Assembly to heighten the attention given to the role of literary and culture studies in the liberal arts at institutions ranging from the smallest colleges to the largest research universities. The study of languages, literatures, and cultures is at the heart of higher education and furthers such goals as helping students develop cross-cultural communication skills and fostering the ability to empathize. Moreover, our fields are central to preparing students for effective global engagement. I am excited about contributing to the MLA’s efforts to help colleagues communicate these values to university administrators and translate them into new teaching and research opportunities for both undergraduates and graduate students. Second, I would welcome the chance to work with colleagues on initiatives for the professionalization of graduate students in modern languages and literatures. I would also be enthusiastic about advancing MLA support for undergraduate research opportunities in our fields and the humanities at large. Finally, I would stress the importance of holding conversations on salary equity as well as ways to promote greater institutional support for colleagues in non-tenure-line positions.


Statement

About fifteen years ago, I was teaching in a small institution in Mexico when I decided to come to the United States to pursue a doctoral degree. As a student in a liberal arts setting, I had the opportunity of working closely with dedicated scholars whose advice and constant motivation greatly inspired me and helped me understand the responsibility of guiding others and preparing them for their lives and also how to seize opportunity and deal with diversity and change. This experience provided me with an early glimpse of the responsibilities and challenges in higher education in the United States. In the last three years, I have been following in the footsteps of those influential educators by being a professor in a liberal arts setting. This experience gives me a closer look at not only the ongoing process of professional development and service but also the practical challenges that liberal arts colleges face today. I am genuinely impressed with the faculty body’s commitment to maintaining high standards in spite of financial and practical limitations in colleges that are struggling with revenue problems and with changing perceptions about the cost of and need for a liberal arts degree in today’s society. By becoming a member of the MLA Delegate Assembly, I would have the opportunity to participate in open dialogue with other faculty members dealing with these problems and to generate creative solutions and innovative approaches that may serve to support our continuing work in academia.


PhD, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison. NEH Scholarly Editions and Translations Grant, 2014–17. Collegiate Teaching Award, Coll. of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Univ. of Iowa, 2014.

Publications include coed. and cotrans., The Native Conquistador: Alva Ixtlixochitl’s Account of the Conquest of New Spain (2015); contrib., The Conquest All Over Again: Nahua and Zapotec Thinking, Writing, and Painting Spanish Colonialism (2010), Texcoco: Pre-Hispanic and Colonial Perspectives (2014); article in Colonial Latin American Review.
Statement

For decades, higher education has experienced challenges that have directly affected the work of humanities faculty members. Struggles with funding and the perceived value of a humanities degree have altered the possibilities for faculty members as both teachers and scholars. No field of language and literary studies has been left unaffected. Nonetheless, the MLA has been a strong voice in advocating for the needs of university, college, and community college faculty members and articulating the individual intellectual and societal benefits of a course of study in literature and of the vocation of literary scholarship. I would like to be more active in the work of the MLA in these swiftly changing times. My experiences as an adjunct faculty member and a tenure-track assistant professor have given me an enriched perspective on the possibilities and pitfalls that lie before our profession.


Publications include Armas y letras: La conquista de Italia (1405–1625) (2012); articles in Moreana, Romance Notes.

Statement

I am honored and humbled to be nominated as a representative to the Delegate Assembly for the Central and Rocky Mountain region. I came to Kansas State University in 2010 as a visiting assistant professor after completing my doctorate in Romance languages at the University of Georgia. In 2012, I was fortunate to be offered a tenure-track position at Kansas State, and I am currently an assistant professor of French and the French language program coordinator. I think my position has given me the unique opportunity to work at an administrative level early in my academic career, training instructors and graduate teaching assistants as well as negotiating with departmental administration to obtain funding for these positions. I am particularly attuned to the ever-present threat of defunding at the state level that has plagued programs such as modern languages and literatures. I believe the MLA provides an important opportunity for advocating for the humanities, and I see our role, as both teachers and scholars, as central to contributing to this advocacy through innovative and interdisciplinary approaches to research, teaching, and curricular design that not only honors traditional topics of study but also encourages new perspectives on the humanities. Should I be elected, I would welcome your input as we work to advocate for funding in the humanities and the improvement of working conditions so that our colleagues in adjunct positions and our students in graduate programs are offered fair and equitable treatment. Thank you for your consideration.


Publications include cotrans., The History of Chinese Traditional Theatre (2007); article in Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies.

Statement

As a candidate for a regional Delegate Assembly seat, I draw on my extensive knowledge and experience as a scholar to shape the role I hope to play. If elected, I will represent the concerns of my colleagues in my university and region who teach foreign language, literature, and culture in the face of an
ongoing and increasing threat to humanities departments. I will give voice to the important issues and concerns of large public schools like my own, in the hope of redefining the value of public education and implementing real changes that benefit the students, faculty members, and communities at those schools. As an international scholar in an unusual and underrepresented discipline, I will increase awareness of less common but valuable research approaches and fields of study or at least ensure that they receive continued attention and support. Furthermore, I will articulate the discursive effect of the rise of the digital humanities in the contemporary academy. I will call for active discussion to ensure that the strongest of traditional approaches to languages and literatures are preserved while integrating the best of new methods. While my role in the Delegate Assembly will follow in a long tradition of service, I will bring to my assembly service a new energy and perspective and new ideas.


Statement
I am honored and excited to stand for election to the MLA Delegate Assembly. As an assistant professor at a state university, I am primarily concerned about the increasing privatization of the public university system. With the recent economic downsizing and state budget cuts to education across the country, public universities have come to depend heavily on private donors and students’ tuition and fees. Donations are often made to programs that are considered profitable, thus effectively narrowing the scope of a university education. Humanities programs across the nation have seen budget cuts that have resulted in the loss of tenure lines, an increase in underpaid contingent and part-time labor, and even the closure of programs. This all comes at a time when students are paying unprecedented sums in tuition and fees and thus feel hesitant to pursue degrees not commonly considered practical. I hope to become a member of the MLA Delegate Assembly to work with a body that is large enough and that possesses the collective skills and savvy to put pressure on our government representatives to allocate more funds to education and to regulate administrative salaries, so that students’ tuition dollars can go to the proliferation and strengthening of humanities programs.

152. Maria O’Malley. Asst. prof. English, Univ. of Nebraska, Kearney.
PhD, Univ. of Colorado. Fellow, Center for the Humanities and Arts, Univ. of Colorado, Boulder, 2007–08; Research Services Council grant, Univ. of Nebraska, Kearney, 2013. Emily Dickinson Intl. Soc., ASA, ASECS.

Statement
It would be a privilege for me to represent the Central and Rocky Mountain region in the MLA Delegate Assembly. Since I became a member of the MLA in January 2001, I have followed the MLA’s initiatives and reports closely. In addition to my work as a university professor, I stay informed about matters related to higher education, in particular those issues that directly affect research in and the teaching of languages and literature, higher education funding, and the future of the academic profession. I have experience as a professor at private liberal arts colleges and at a regional comprehensive state university. As a scholar of American culture, I am attuned to the ways in which the MLA can serve as a force to rejuvenate intellectual, artistic, and cultural engagement by the wider public in the United States. In particular, as
universities cut language programs, the MLA is uniquely positioned to fill this gap, not just as an advocate for language study but also as an association of scholars who can reach the public through venues outside the traditional university classroom. In my vision for the future of the MLA, I see the association as a leading contributor to the lifelong learning of the public in the twenty-first century.

153. **Mary Anna Sobhani.** Asst. prof. Spanish, Univ. of Arkansas, Fort Smith.

PhD, Univ. of Arkansas. AAUP, ACLA. Founding ed. and ed. in chief, *Azahares: Spanish Language Literary Magazine* (Univ. of Arkansas, Fort Smith).

Publications include articles in *Journal of Baha’i Studies, Interdisciplinary Humanities, Céfiro: Enlace hispano cultural y literario;* poems in *Acentos Review, Interstice.*

154. **Michael J. Beilfuss.** Visiting asst. prof. English, Oklahoma State Univ.

PhD, Texas A&M Univ.


**Statement**

My primary professional concerns include the continual devaluing of the humanities by forces outside the academy as well as the growing reliance on contingent faculty members to teach more and more students and staff service courses. I find it troubling that most undergraduates who are not English or foreign language majors are often exposed to English and foreign language subjects only by less experienced and overworked instructors. We need to continue to advocate for more support for contingent faculty members and to develop new models for hiring and promotion. We may also explore ways of encouraging more experienced, tenured faculty members to teach service classes.

As a profession we also need to continue to work hard to articulate the value of a liberal arts education. While we should reach out to the general public and media, it’s important to explicitly communicate this value to our students as well, especially in service courses. These students may become future ambassadors of the profession and demonstrate the value we contribute to society. As I see it, one of our main missions as scholars and teachers of literature and language is to help students develop into engaged citizens. More specifically, we cultivate the critical, analytical, and creative consciousness of written and spoken language. As a member of the Delegate Assembly I would do my best to advocate for this mission and to promote greater support for contingent and graduate faculty members.

155. **Sean Dempsey.** Asst. prof. English, Univ. of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

PhD, Boston Univ. Junior visiting fellow, Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen (Vienna), 2007; summer school fellowship, University Centre Saint-Ignatius Antwerp, 2008; scholarship, School of Criticism and Theory (Cornell Univ.), summer 2011; fellowship, SIAS Summer Inst., Natl. Humanities Center (2013) and Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin (2014).

Publications include articles in *ELH, Studies in Romanticism, Mosaic, Robert Frost Review.*

**Statement**

I am honored to stand for election as a regional delegate. Entering into the profession in this moment of both crisis and opportunity, I acknowledge the challenges the humanities face. But I am also invigorated by how many bright, often first-generation, students I encounter at the University of Arkansas. Recognizing that the paramount challenge is the fiscal and hiring constraints most of us face at our respective institutions, I am interested in serving as a delegate to help press against those constraints and to learn more about how innovative structures at the departmental level and across the humanities can help us do more with existing
resources. As a regional delegate, I would advocate for increased cooperation to address the challenges we face across fields of study, types of institutions, and career paths. I am also interested in exploring how the MLA can facilitate the transmission of successful models of departmental governance, departmental outreach to nonmajor populations within the university, and interdisciplinary engagement.

156. **N. Carolina Bloem.** Grad. student Spanish, Univ. of Utah.


**Statement**

One of my main concerns is the wholesome professional development of graduate students. The MLA can provide graduate students with many opportunities to learn about current trends of thought and research. However, the MLA must also pay attention to making sure that students’ academic interests will lead to a good livelihood after graduation. Finding and securing paths to employment as well as keeping the prestige and utility of our profession are my key interests. There is a need to show the importance and relevance of studying the humanities, languages, and literature. As we efficiently show the world the need for these studies, we will be able to improve our enrollment numbers in universities and colleges. Higher enrollments and increased participation by students in these fields might result in improved funding from academic institutions. Also, I propose that we create a more useful network to find intellectual career paths that integrate academia and the business world. Considering the current trend of budget cutting in our field, we need to make changes both to show how important higher education is for individuals in general and to secure our future employment.

157. **Hayley Langton.** Grad. student British lit., Brigham Young Univ., UT.


**Statement**

I would be honored to represent my fellow graduate students in the MLA Delegate Assembly. I am deeply interested in the changes occurring in the humanities as a discipline and am well aware of the challenges they pose to graduate students preparing for their academic and professional careers. It is my hope that the MLA can be a valuable resource to students by seeking to improve future opportunities in the field (e.g., in answer to the so-called adjunct crisis) while also reminding its members of the classical and humanist roots that make up the foundation of our disciplines.

As a graduate student in the Central and Rocky Mountain region, my broad range of experience—in seventeenth-century literature, technical writing, composition pedagogy, classical rhetoric, and visual media—allows me to represent fellow graduate students with varying backgrounds. As a young mother, I also understand the needs of those wishing to balance personal and academic interests. Having taught composition since my entrance into the graduate program, I also believe in fostering an active interest in pedagogy and writing studies. I believe that as the upcoming leaders of the field, graduate students play a unique role in the MLA; if elected, I hope to lessen the gap between the MLA and its student members by representing their concerns to the Delegate Assembly while communicating the many benefits the MLA provides to them.
VII. Western United States and Western Canada (6 contests)

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


Statement

As a special interest delegate to the MLA Delegate Assembly from January 2012 to January 2015, I was impressed by the members’ level of engagement with issues important to the profession and noted that, despite instant electronic communication and the availability of MLA Commons, members still must confront on-the-ground challenges particular to their regions. These include not only the casualization of academic employment but also diminished library budgets and access to databases. State legislatures in the Midwest and West are more frequently weighing in on issues of class size and faculty course loads, and there is an increasing tendency to see technological innovations as a reason for defunding faculty lines and library budgets. Bringing these issues to the Delegate Assembly for consideration is a vital step in uniting all the regions to work together to improve conditions for research and for employment in the humanities.

159. No candidate
160. **Russell A. Berman.** Walter A. Haas Prof. in the Humanities and prof. comparative lit. and German studies, Stanford Univ.


**Statement**

The mission of the MLA includes promoting research and teaching in the language and literature fields and defending the professional interests of all instructors. In addition to providing a vibrant setting for the exchange of new scholarship, the association has therefore rightly taken on an important advocacy role related to our core agenda, and the Delegate Assembly should speak clearly in support of our professional goals. We should articulate the importance of the study of literature and language, including second language acquisition as well as composition and rhetoric. The case for our fields has to be made repeatedly to a skeptical public. We must draw attention to the erosion of working conditions and employment status, i.e., the decline of tenure, the rise of contingency, and the deterioration of institutional support for many instructors. If we do not stand up for our interests and those of our professional colleagues, especially non-tenure-track colleagues, no one else will. If we fail in this, we fail, period. Institutional mistreatment of teachers is an expression of hostility to learning, and the MLA Delegate Assembly should be vocal in supporting the association’s efforts to combat these developments and to pursue better working conditions—and therefore better learning conditions—throughout higher education. This must be our foremost focus. We should therefore avoid sectarian disputes, for example over foreign policy issues, that will divide us and weaken us. Instead, we should work together in the interest of learning and the interests of all teachers.

161. **Michael Fuller.** Prof. East Asian langs. and lits., Univ. of California, Irvine.


Statement

Texts written in Classical Chinese preserve a significant portion of the record of human literary experience, yet this vast corpus still does not have a significant role in shaping our understanding of the literary. The reasons for this lack of engagement are complex. Few of the texts are readily available in English. Moreover, the evolving social, political, and philosophical systems that informed Chinese textual hermeneutics have a depth that has proven a barrier to comparative study and even to exploratory dialogues between scholars of the classical Chinese traditions and the larger MLA community. If elected as a delegate, I will strive to bring scholars of the Chinese traditions into MLA discussions. I believe this conversation is long overdue and will challenge and enrich the work of all who participate in it.

162. Sima N. Godfrey. Univ. of British Columbia.


Statement

In the early 2000s, I took an academic detour through the burgeoning field of European studies. Learning the language and the intricacies of the European Union was a rewarding, if sometimes daunting, exercise. Ironically, it is from my engagement with the cultural politics of the European Union, rather than my years of teaching in a French or Romance languages department, that I became truly aware of and committed to the importance and value of foreign language learning as well as the literary and cultural studies they enable. We should not underestimate the importance of enhancing students’ intellectual mobility across different languages and cultures. In our increasingly fractious world, I believe that literature and
humanities departments must be actively promoted (and not just defended) as critical sites for the intellectual growth of responsible citizens. The MLA is singularly well poised to make this case. As a member of the Delegate Assembly, I would like to serve both this mandate and the interests of American and Canadian colleagues in the Western region.


164. **Kit Dobson.** Assoc. prof. English, Mount Royal Univ.


**Statement**

Thank you for taking the time to consider my nomination for this position in the MLA Delegate Assembly. I stand for election in my desire to serve the arts in an uncertain time. Issues of precarity, diversity, disciplinarity, and governance not only are part of my service history but also lie at the heart of my teaching and research. I am keen to work collaboratively with other members of the assembly to understand what the pressures are within and beyond our institutions and to share best practices and functional strategies for resisting the neoliberalization of the academy. It is my hope that, together, we can shape a university to come that will, in spite of the obstacles, remain a space of hope and possibility.

165. **Stefania Forlini.** Asst. prof. English, Univ. of Calgary.


166. **Brian Bernards.** Asst. prof. East Asian langs. and cultures, Univ. of Southern California.

   PhD, Univ. of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Pacific Rim Research Program grant, Univ. of California, 2008–09; Fulbright-Hays dissertation research fellowship, 2008–09; Sawyer Seminar grant, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, 2013–14; research grant, Advancing Scholarship in the Humanities and


Statement
I support the ongoing restructuring and reassessment of the MLA’s forums to provide a more inclusive organizational structure that recognizes evolving demographics and geopolitics as well as shifting and emerging trends in fields of humanistic inquiry. I support an MLA convention structure that promotes novel thematic and critical paradigms that cut across humanities disciplines and allow for maximum dialogue among them. I see my own work as playing a contributive role in propelling postcolonial studies beyond the analysis of literature and other cultural production in Western or European languages. A plurality of intercultural relationships and exchanges, both hierarchical and lateral—between Southeast Asia and China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan; between the Indian Ocean and the Caribbean—have shaped our modern world and inspired the global imaginary, though they have been historically repressed by a model of “the West and the rest.” While area studies frameworks are vital to deepening our understanding of local epistemologies, the MLA should encourage scholars to take advantage of the wonderful opportunities it provides for them to initiate conversations under countless thematic rubrics, such as creolizaton, ecocriticism, environmental humanities, comparative archipelagoes, gender studies, postsocialism, travel literature, etc., that acknowledge but are not bound or isolated by language and area divisions. Beyond these thematic interests, I wholeheartedly support the MLA’s commitment to redress the class, gender, and racial inequities and disparities exacerbated by the corporatization of higher education, which has greatly diminished faculty and student voices in the university structure.


Statement
I would be honored to represent members of the Western region while advocating for our common interest in the humanities as a public good. Although grounded in German studies as a unique point of entry into cultures, literatures, languages, and histories, I have constantly engaged in interdisciplinary conversations about higher education, digital literacy, intercultural competency, and multilingualism. I would like to join you and others in the Delegate Assembly to address the pressing issues that our institutions face across the nation and around the globe.
168. **Caroline Egan.** Grad. student comparative lit., Stanford Univ.


Publications include article in *Comparatist*; transcription in *Comparative Literature Studies*.

**Statement**

It is an honor to be nominated to serve in the MLA Delegate Assembly. Three central objectives animate my interest in running for this position: (1) the active promotion of the concerns of Region 7 (Western United States and Western Canada) members, especially graduate students; (2) a focus on the language and literature classroom as a primary space for the development of the public humanities; and (3) the need for continued and developing discussion of professional opportunities beyond traditional academic venues.

My own academic formation has included studies at a large public university (Penn State) and a private institution (Stanford), teaching language and literature classes, tutoring and translating as a volunteer, working in a research library and at an academic press, and serving as a member of the MLA Committee on the Status of Graduate Students in the Profession. If elected to the Delegate Assembly, I would draw on these varied academic and professional experiences to approach my duties with diligence, conscientiousness, and creativity.

169. **Magnolia Pauker.** Grad. student gender, race, sexuality, and social justice, Univ. of British Columbia.


**Statement**

As a PhD student and, simultaneously, an adjunct professor, I am keenly aware of the shifting terms of and conditions in and through which academic labor is constituted today. As a leading professional organization, the MLA today has a both a decisive role to play and a responsibility to address issues pertaining to the increasing precarity of academic labor and academic freedom. Since MLA members must decide together how the organization will address pivotal social justice issues that are both local and global in scope, generative and collaborative representation will be crucial. I view serving in the Delegate Assembly as both an honor and a professional duty to which I am committed.