MLA Membership Committee Handbook


Committee Charge

The charge of the Membership Committee will be to increase and significantly diversify MLA’s membership in all categories by reaching out to the broad range of populations we serve, as well as develop and implement an active and successful means of retaining current and future members by identifying and promoting the benefits and added value of membership in our Association.

I. Committee membership, appointment, and voting:

A. Membership and Appointment

1. Chair
   a. Committee chairs are appointed by the MLA President in consultation with MLA Board of Directors (“the Board”). All committee chairs must be members in good standing.

2. Members
   a. Other committee members are appointed by the MLA President in consultation with the parent committee chair and the Board. All members of the committee must be MLA members in good standing throughout their tenure and have an active interest in the work of the particular committee. These groups support the needs of MLA membership in their areas of responsibility, actively communicating topics of current national interest, identifying and framing issues, conducting discussions, preparing proposals and discussion papers, and answering questions.

3. Subcommittees
   a. The Membership Committee recommends creation of subcommittees as the need arises, with the approval of the Board.
   b. Subcommittee chairs are appointed by the MLA President in consultation with the Membership Committee Chair and the Board.
   c. Subcommittee members must belong to MLA and have an active interest in the work of the particular subcommittee. They support the needs of MLA membership in their areas of responsibility, actively communicating topics of current national interest, identifying and framing issues, conducting discussions, preparing proposals and discussion papers, and answering questions.

B. Voting

1. All members in the individual or student classifications are voting members of their respective committees/subcommittees. Ex-officio members are voting members unless precluded by the committee’s formal charge.

2. Issues to be decided by vote shall be decided by a majority of the voting members present, or when the vote is conducted electronically, by a majority of the voting membership.

3. In the event of a tie, the issue shall be considered defeated.
II. Responsibilities

A. Chair

“The chair of each committee is responsible for assuring that the charge given to the committee by the President and the committee’s obligations as described in Section V. A-G are carried out; and that committee members are kept fully advised of and involved in all committee activities.” (MLA Administrative Handbook, Section V. C).

1. Follow the MLA Administrative Handbook, Sections V. H, as appropriate.
2. Review all Membership Committee-related administrative descriptions and charges (Administrative Structure, Administrative Handbook, etc.) ensuring that they are up-to-date and consistent.
3. Prepare the committee roster.
4. Update the Membership Committee portion of the MLA Administrative Structure and submit corrections.
5. Develop and maintain the calendar of activities.
6. Coordinate the work of subcommittees, if applicable.
7. Track and distribute documents.
8. Make work assignments.
9. Anticipate travel and other budget needs.
10. Submit budget requests to the MLA Financial Officer, as needed.
11. Submit travel expenses to the MLA Administrative Officer.
12. Submit receipts/Requests for Payment (RFPs) for expenses, as needed, to the MLA Administrative Officer. (Expenses should be pre-authorized by the Board.)
13. Request and plan business meeting at the MLA annual meeting, as needed.
15. Manage the preparation and distribution of business meeting minutes.
16. Plan and submit program proposal(s) to the Program Committee for the MLA annual meeting, including requesting honoraria/expenses for program presenters.
17. Have responsibility for the content of publications (if any).
18. Make recommendations to the President for appointments.
20. Write “thank you” letters to retiring committee members and annual meeting program presenters (in some cases the President may issue these).
21. Maintain the committee handbook.
22. Prepare reports of activities to be submitted to the Board as requested based upon the Board’s meeting calendar.
23. Prepare and submit the annual report with goals for the coming year to the Planning and Reports Officer (refer to Appendix 2).
24. Prepare other written reports as requested by the Board.
25. Prepare summaries of comments or written reports.
26. Provide orientation for the incoming chair.
27. Communicate to the MLA membership issues of broad concern.
28. Field and delegate questions from MLA membership.
29. Lead in-person and virtual discussions.
30. Develop a process for responding to requests for feedback from organizations and individuals in a timely fashion.

B. Members
1. Participate in both in-person and virtual group discussions.
2. Take assignments seriously and complete them in a timely fashion.
3. Provide feedback on documentation, proposals, and requests for comments.

III. Qualifications for Appointment
A. Chair
1. A member-in-good-standing of MLA.
2. Strong leadership, diplomatic, organizational, and writing skills.
3. Strong professional interest and ability to participate in the committee’s work.
4. Ability to attend the MLA annual meeting unless extenuating circumstances occur.
5. Internet connectivity (engagement with and experience with e-mail, listservs, wikis, blogs, etc.).
6. Previous or current experience on the committee strongly preferred, but not required.

B. Members
1. A member-in-good-standing of MLA.
2. Ability to actively participate in the meetings and work of the committee.
3. Commitment to attend the MLA annual meeting to the best of one’s abilities.
4. Specific professional interest in committee business and a particular skill, area of expertise, or perspective to contribute to committee deliberations.
5. Internet connectivity (engagement with and experience with e-mail, listservs, wikis, blogs, etc.).

IV. Appointment Procedures
A. Chair
The outgoing chair recommends a successor to the committee for consideration. The candidate normally has experience serving on the committee. Previous experience chairing a committee is preferred, but not required. After the committee’s approval, the chair submits the recommendation to the MLA President to finalize the appointment. The recommendation should be made and approved well in advance of the MLA annual meeting.

B. Members
Typically, the chair submits known openings to the President in October-early November; the Planning and Reports Officer puts out a unified call on MLA-L for new members on all MLA committees in November, well in advance of the annual meeting. Interested MLA members must contact the committee chair (on paper or electronically) and should provide specific information about their particular interest in serving on the committee and what they could contribute. While it is not necessary to require potential members to apply and/or interview for membership, many committees find this to be a successful
approach to recruiting, especially when they have more interested potential members than they have openings. At the end of the Annual Meeting, the chair reviews the list of interested members and decides the names to forward for the most effective appointments, taking into careful account the need for balance within each group. The chair then recommends the names of potential appointees to the MLA President. The President, in consultation with the Board, makes the final decision and appointment. Appointments are not final, nor should they be announced, until individuals receive appointment letters. Because of this, chairs should not promise appointments to people. Names of interested members not selected are not carried forward formally from year to year.

The committee has no standard number of members. The chair determines the necessary number of members. In most cases, committee appointments are staggered, so that rotations off the committee are balanced by experienced members who remain on the committee.

It is not recommended that individuals serve on more than one committee at a time. It is the chair’s responsibility to check the membership directory to verify that a candidate is a member in good standing and, preferably, not already serving on other committees.

V. Length of Appointments
A. Committee chairs normally serve no more than four consecutive years and will not usually succeed themselves.
B. Standard committee member terms are four years. Members are expected to serve only one term except in special cases that are brought to the President by the committee chair. If a member becomes chair, their four-year term is reset.
C. Per the MLA Administrative Handbook (V. A. 3.), “In consultation with the President, committee chairs may request the resignation of members who are not contributing to the fulfillment of the committee’s charge.”

VI. Resignations
A. To resign from the committee, the member writes a letter to the MLA President but submits it to the committee chair.
   1. The chair forwards a copy of the written resignation to the MLA President.
   2. The chair prepares a written letter of acknowledgment to the individual (with a copy to the MLA President) for his/her contributions and service to MLA.
B. Mandatory termination of service
   1. If a committee member ceases to be a member-in-good-standing of MLA by the time of the Annual Meeting (i.e., is no longer listed in the online MLA membership directory), his or her term of service ends. No letter of resignation is required, nor will the committee chair write a letter of acknowledgment to the individual for his/her service.

VII. Meetings
A. Generally one business meeting is held at every MLA annual meeting. The chair convenes and conducts the meeting(s).
   1. A majority of voting members constitutes a quorum.
   2. Business meeting agendas may include: correction and approval of the previous year’s minutes; a review of the previous year’s activities and current initiatives; and planning for the coming year.
      a. Anyone wishing to place an item on the agenda should submit a request to the chair at least one week before the meeting.
b. The chair will distribute a preliminary agenda to members in advance of the meeting.

c. Guests may attend business meetings and may speak upon recognition from the chair.

3. The MLA Program Committee determines which proposed program sessions will occur at each MLA Annual Meeting. The Program Chair issues a call for proposals annually, in the spring following the annual meeting, and shortly after that, a call for scheduling business meetings. Business meetings should be strictly that and not program sessions.

4. The chair submits requests for meeting time and space to the Program Committee through the meeting scheduling process.

VIII. Absences at MLA Annual Meetings

A. Chair
   1. The chair may designate another voting member to act as temporary chair.
   2. If the chair is unable to designate a temporary chair, the voting members shall designate one of their members to serve as temporary chair.

B. Members
   1. Members should inform their committee chair if they will be unable to attend the annual business meeting, but they need not send a proxy.

IX. Budget

A. The chair submits a budget proposal (as needed) to the Finance Committee of the Board each Spring. Budget proposals are typically due at least four weeks before the start of the spring Board meeting. Estimates should be realistic and goals should be clear.

X. Documentation

A. Internal working documents of the committee and their organization is managed individually by the chair.

B. Document distribution is the responsibility of the chair.

C. Minutes/recordkeeping requirements (see the MLA Administrative Handbook V. D. 6): "Each committee keeps a record of its meetings in the nature of minutes for the use of the committee and the Board."

D. Archives
   The chair sends committee files that are no longer required for current business to the MLA Archives. The chair will archive correspondence of a substantive nature, while using discretion in determining what is substantive. The MLA Archives prefers documentation in paper format.

Minimally, the chair should send paper copies of the following documents, collected in labeled folders, using the document transmittal form found on the MLA website, at http://www.musiclibraryassoc.org/member.aspx?id=66.

xxxx = previous year  
yyyy = current year  
zzzz = upcoming year  

Reports (xxxx-yyyy)
   Chair’s Report to the Board (Spring xxxx)
   Chair’s Report to the Board (Fall xxxx)
   Chair’s Report to the Board (yyyy Conference)
   xxxx Annual Reports (Parent Committee and Subcommittees)
yyyy Conference Summary Reports (Parent Committee and Subcommittees)
Task Force Reports (xxxx- yyyy)
Budget (xxxx- yyyy)
  Budget Request (xxxx)
  Request for Payment Forms and Receipts (photocopies)
yyyy Conference
  Meeting Room and Equipment Requests
  Agendas (Business, Open)
  Minutes (xxxx Conference)
  Roster (yyyy-zzzz)
  Calendar (yyyy-zzzz)
Appointments (yyyy)
  Call for Committee Applicants (yyyy)
  Recommendations to President (yyyy)
  Updated Portion of MLA Administrative Structure (yyyy)
  Thank You Letters to Retiring Members (yyyy)

XI. Communication Tools
A. Within MLA infrastructure
1. Tools
   a. Google apps are in use on the MLA website and available for use. Documents in collaborative workspaces should use relatively uniform and consistent templates.
2. Guides
   a. Technical Resources guides will be made available as resources allow. See Member Resources for an example, How to Use Skype: A Guide to Web-based Conference Calls.
B. Outside of MLA infrastructure
Groups are encouraged to use free, web-based tools for committee business, but should be sure to save/backup data where possible and strive for consistency in public-facing documents. Tools include Skype, PBworks, Google Docs, listservs hosted at members’ institutions, Facebook, institutional listservs, institutional servers, Jing, Sharepoint, SurveyMonkey, and many others. These are merely examples; groups may use developing tools that suit their purposes.
The Membership Committee currently uses Dropbox as a tool to support collaboration and assist in the management of committee documentation.
C. Listserv
Committee chairs are added to MLA-COMM e-mail list:
A listserv hosted at Indiana University, MLA-COMM-L@listserv.indiana.edu, exists for committee chairs and MLA Board members. This listserv is typically used for administrative matters related to the running of committees and reporting of their work, including calls for reports. The MLA Administrative Officer updates the list membership at least once per year, following annual committee appointments. Questions regarding this listserv and membership should be directed to the MLA President, MLA Administrative Officer, or the listserv owner, Dick Griscom, griscom@upenn.edu.
### Appendix 1: Sample Membership Committee Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February-March</td>
<td>MLA Annual Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March (after annual meeting)</td>
<td>Chair submits recommendations for new committee members to President as soon as possible after verifying their current membership in MLA. Chair sends “thank you for your service” letters to retiring committee members, with copies to President. Verify currency/accuracy of committee charge, send changes to President. Updated Membership Committee portion of MLA Administrative Structure sent to President, Executive Secretary, and BCC Webmaster. Ensure that reports of business meetings and program sessions are submitted for publication in MLA Newsletter. President sends copies of appointment letters to Chair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Call for Board report for Spring Board meeting from President. Watch for call on MLA-L and MLA-COMM-L. Prepare and submit program/business meeting forms to Program Chair as requested. Watch for call on MLA-L and MLA-COMM-L. Submit budget request to Fiscal Officer as requested. Watch for call on MLA-L and MLA-COMM-L.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April-May</td>
<td>Board report due to President for Spring Board meeting. Watch for call on MLA-L and MLA-COMM-L.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late April-Early May</td>
<td>Board report due to President for Spring Board meeting. Watch for call on MLA-L and MLA-COMM-L.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>End of Fiscal Year (June 30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Fiscal Year Starts (July 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Call for Annual Report from Planning and Reports Officer. Watch for call on MLA-L and MLA-COMM-L. Call for Board report for Fall Board meeting from President. Watch for call on MLA-L and MLA-COMM-L.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Annual Report due to Planning and Reports Officer. Board report due to President for Fall Board meeting. Watch for call on MLA-L and MLA-COMM-L.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November-December</td>
<td>Unified call for new members put out by President (via Planning and Reports Officer).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Call for Board report for Winter Board meeting from President. Watch for call on MLA-L and MLA-COMM-L. Call to Committee members for Annual Meeting business meeting agenda items. Committee members consulted about potential meeting time conflicts at next MLA Annual Meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Annual Meeting business meeting agenda (draft) distributed to Committee members for review.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Board report due to President for Winter Board meeting. Watch for call on MLA-L and MLA-COMM-L.

MLA Calendar:  http://musiclibraryassoc.org/member.aspx?id=64
1. **Annual Reports**

MLA issues a formal Association-wide Annual Report each year. This glossy, edited publication appears online as a PDF and is used for promotional purposes and as the primary summary of MLA activities for that fiscal year. Past reports are available online at [http://www.musiclibraryassoc.org/about.aspx?id=55](http://www.musiclibraryassoc.org/about.aspx?id=55). The MLA Board Planning and Reports Officer collects content for this report, issuing a call for submissions with sufficient notice so that reports can be compiled soon after the close of an MLA fiscal year on June 30. All committees, joint committees, and special officers must submit a report for this publication, according to a standard format provided as part of the call for reports. Other groups, such as the MLA Board of Directors, also submit reports and summary MLA budgetary information also appears. The MLA Newsletter Editor edits the submitted reports for content, length, and style, and typesets the text into the formal publication. The previous year’s Annual Report is typically issued prior to the MLA Annual Meeting. Individual sections of the Annual Report typically represent a committee or officer’s work at a fairly high level, suitable for promotional purposes and introduction to the Association for those not intimately familiar with it. Annual Reports are separate from the more periodic Board reports and should be prepared separately.

**Sample Call for Committee annual reports**

Sent to Committee Chair listserv and MLA-L by Planning Officer

Dear MLA Members,

All committees, special officers, chairs of joint committees, and representatives to ALA and NISO, must submit an Annual Report to MLA. These annual reports cover the fiscal year from July 1, 20XX to June 30, 20XX. Subcommittees should submit annual reports through their parent committee chair.

Annual Reports are due [Date], to the Planning and Reports Officer, [Name] [Email]

In the past year, the MLA Board, in an effort to encourage committees to give specific direction to their work, decided to ask committees to articulate goals for each year. Since goals for committees are a new part of the process, when reporting this year you may report on any targets your committee may have had or worked towards informally. Part of your report this year should be specific goals for the upcoming 20XX/20XX fiscal year.

You can find some past Annual Reports for these individuals and groups all prettified and collected together in MLA's glossy big Annual Report <http://www.musiclibraryassoc.org/about.aspx?id=55> if you'd like some inspiration for what to cover and how much detail to go into.

Please use the following format for your Annual Report:

**ANNUAL REPORT FORMAT**

**COMMITTEE NAME**

Members: Mary Q. Contrary, (2010), Chair; Jack Spratt (2011); L.J. Horner (2011)

Report on Activities:

List of previous goals and progress made toward each goal:

List of goals for the next year:
Please let me or [Name (MLA President)] know if you have any questions.

Thanks,
[Name]
MLA Board Planning and Reports Officer [dates]

2. Reports to the Board of Directors

Board reports summarize committee activity since the previous Board meeting, including requests for Board decisions/actions, if needed. Reports for the spring Board meeting should include budget requests, if needed, for the fiscal year to come, July-June. Reports for the fall Board meeting should include committee goals for the current fiscal year, July-June. Reports are normally due 2 weeks prior to each board meeting as announced by the President (September, February, June).

Sample Call from MLA President

Dear Colleagues,

The MLA Board will be meeting in Middleton, Wisconsin, xxxx, 20xx.

In order to prepare the files for the Board to review, I will need brief reports from Officers, Editors, and Committee Chairs no later than xxxx, xxxx, 20xx. Of course, early submissions are always welcome. Committee chairs that have subcommittees reporting should plan to include their subcommittee reports in their comprehensive committee report.

1. Please send your report as a Word (not PDF) attachment and format it in the following way:
   I. NAME OF COMMITTEE
   II. MEMBERS
   III. BOARD ACTION REQUIRED
   IV. BRIEF SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

2. If there is no Board Action Required, please write NONE next to number III.

3. Under number IV, please be very, very brief. Use bullet points and keep your comments to no more than one page with 12-point type (if you have a committee that has several subcommittees, you may stretch this a bit).
Appendix 3: Sample Appointment

TO: NAME
   President, Music Library Association

FROM: NAME
   Chair, Membership Committee

RE: Recommendation for appointment of [name of committee position]

DATE: [Month, day, year]

Dear [Name of MLA President],

I recommend the appointment of FIRSTNAME LASTNAME as the new [name of committee position]. This is a four-year appointment that will take effect at the close of the annual meeting [name city, year]. According to the MLA membership Web site, he/she is a member in good standing of the Association. In preparing the letter of appointment, please include the responsibilities outlined in the committee handbook:

   Responsibilities include:

   ● Participate in both in-person and virtual group discussions.
   ● Manage and complete assignments and projects in a timely fashion.
   ● Provide feedback on documentation, proposals, and requests for comments.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you,

[NAME]