

Minutes of the MLA Delegate Assembly

The Delegate Assembly approved these minutes at its 2021 meeting.

The Delegate Assembly met on 11 January 2020 at the Washington State Convention Center in Seattle, Washington. First Vice President Judith Butler presided. The assembly was called to order at 12:44 p.m. The chair began her remarks by acknowledging and thanking the Duwamish people and other Coast Salish tribes, who were the first inhabitants of the area that currently includes Seattle. She made preliminary announcements about the conduct of the meeting and called for a demonstration of the electronic voting system to be used during the meeting and for an explanation of the timing system that would display speakers' allotted time to address the assembly. The chair also explained that, because the meeting was open to all MLA members and to credentialed members of the press, speakers should have no expectation of confidentiality. She added that tweeting was allowed but that no photography or voice or video recording was permitted. The chair announced the quorum for the meeting, which was 80 delegates, because 159 delegates had signed in for the meeting at the beginning. [Note: Of the 285 delegates, 186 (65.26%) attended all or part of the meeting (see the list that follows for the names of the delegates in attendance).]

1. On behalf of the Delegate Assembly Organizing Committee (DAOC), Michelle Brazier moved the adoption of the agenda that was previously distributed to delegates. The chair asked if there was debate on the agenda. Since there was none, the chair asked if there were objections to adopting the agenda as distributed. There were no objections, so the chair declared the agenda adopted by unanimous consent.

Brazier then offered a motion on behalf of the DAOC that the rules presented to the assembly be adopted as distributed. This motion occasioned no discussion and no objections. The chair therefore declared the rules adopted by unanimous consent.

Again on behalf of the DAOC, Brazier moved that the assembly approve the minutes of the January 2019 meeting as published in the May 2019 issue of *PMLA*. The chair asked if there were corrections. Since no corrections were offered, the chair declared the minutes approved as published.

2. The assembly elected two of its members, Feroza Framji Jussawalla (Univ. of New

Mexico, Albuquerque) and Supriya M. Nair (Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor) to the DAOC for three-year terms (from 13 Jan. 2020 through the close of the Jan. 2023 convention). The assembly elected one of its members, Samer Mahdy Ali (Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor), to the Executive Council for a four-year term (from 13 January 2020 through the close of the January 2024 convention). Voting from a slate of nominees selected by the current officers of the association, the assembly elected Sonja Rae Fritzsche (Michigan State Univ.), Janet Poole (Univ. of Toronto), and Susan Rubin Suleiman (Harvard Univ.) to the Nominating Committee for two-year terms (2020–21). Voting from a slate of nominees selected by the DAOC, the assembly elected the following persons to the Elections Committee for two-year terms (2020–21): Carolyn Jane Betensky (Univ. of Rhode Island) for Region 1, New England and Eastern Canada; Matthew V. Desing (Univ. of Texas, El Paso) for Region 6, Central and Rocky Mountain; Derrick Higginbotham (Univ. of Hawai‘i, Mānoa) for Region 7, Western United States and Western Canada; and Emily Shortslef (Univ. of Kentucky) for Region 5, South.

The assembly also elected Kamau Brathwaite, Amit Chaudhuri, Richard Flanagan, Susan Howe, M. NourbeSe Philip, Lev Rubinstein, and Luis Valdez to honorary fellowship in the association.

3. The assembly was asked to confirm the automatic annual increase of 2.5% in the dues amount for every membership category, rounded to the next dollar, which the 2017 assembly had approved (see *PMLA*, vol. 132, no. 3, May 2017, p. 762). The chair recognized Maryse Jayasuriya of the DAOC, who presented the chart below, showing the effect of the automatic increase on current dues amounts. She said the increased dues amounts would become effective in September 2020 if the assembly confirmed the automatic increase.

Current Dues Schedule		Dues Schedule Subject to Confirmation	
Dues Class	Amount	Dues Class	Amount
B Employed Less Than Full-Time	\$27	B Employed Less Than Full-Time	\$28
1 Up to \$30,000	\$53	1 Up to \$30,000	\$55
2 \$30,000–\$50,000	\$84	2 \$30,000–\$50,000	\$86
3 \$50,000–\$70,000	\$126	3 \$50,000–\$70,000	\$129
4 \$70,000–\$100,000	\$168	4 \$70,000–\$100,000	\$172
5 \$100,000–\$140,000	\$210	5 \$100,000–\$140,000	\$215
6 \$140,000–\$180,000	\$263	6 \$140,000–\$180,000	\$270
7 \$180,000–\$220,000	\$316	7 \$180,000–\$220,000	\$324
8 Over \$220,000	\$368	8 Over \$220,000	\$377
L Joint Secondary	\$52	L Joint Secondary	\$55
E Student	\$27	E Student	\$28

On behalf of the DAOC, Maryse Jayasuriya moved that the assembly confirm the scheduled dues increase. The chair called for discussion of the motion. Howard Horwitz (Univ. of Utah) asked whether the MLA could consider lowering the dues amounts in dues categories 1 and 2. The chair offered to bring his suggestion to the Executive Council at its February

meeting. Horwitz agreed. The chair asked the assembly to vote on the motion confirming the scheduled dues increase, which was approved by a vote of 117 yes and 44 no.

4. The assembly received a report from the Committee on Amendments to the Constitution that consisted of one proposed amendment to the constitution published on the MLA website in late September 2019.

The chair recognized Gaurav G. Desai, 2019–20 chair of the committee, to present the report. He stated that at its January 2019 meeting the Delegate Assembly had approved a motion to instruct the Committee on Amendments to the Constitution to formulate an amendment that provided for emergency motions (see *PMLA*, vol. 134, no. 3, May 2019, p. 684). Desai explained that he felt the amendment was a Delegate Assembly–friendly amendment, that it would give delegates more power to have their voices heard.

On behalf of the Committee on Amendments to the Constitution, Desai moved that the assembly adopt the amendment presented in the committee’s report, which clarified the deadlines and procedures for the consideration of motions, created a new category called “emergency motions” for motions occasioned by events that take place after 1 September, and explained the deadlines and procedures for the consideration of such motions. This amendment to article 11, section C, Organizing Committee, reads as follows (new language shown in boldface):

2. The responsibilities of the Organizing Committee shall be as follows:

[a.]

b. In accordance with the provisions of articles 9.C.11 and 11.C.3, to receive, initiate, and report on motions to be brought before the Delegate Assembly.

c. In accordance with the provisions of articles 9.C.10 and 11.C.4–6, to receive, initiate, and report on resolutions to be brought before the Delegate Assembly.

[d.–i.]

3. Except for motions arising directly out of the business on the floor of the Delegate Assembly or relating to the conduct of the assembly meeting, motions proposed by members for consideration at a meeting of the Delegate Assembly must be submitted to the Organizing Committee in accordance with the deadlines and procedures below.

a. Motions may be submitted to the chair of the committee by 1

September.

- b. Motions occasioned by events that take place after 1 September (“emergency motions”) may be submitted to the chair of the committee no later than twenty-four hours before a meeting of the Delegate Assembly. Emergency motions shall not name individuals or institutions in such a way that, in the determination of the committee, a response from the named party must be sought. Such motions may be discussed at the meeting under the heading of new business, but no action may be taken at that meeting unless three-fourths of the members present vote to take immediate action on the motion.**
- c. No motion may be submitted later than twenty-four hours before a meeting of the Delegate Assembly.**
- d. All motions shall be accompanied by material that provides evidence in support of the motions’ claims.**

[4.–8.]

The chair opened the floor for discussion of the amendment.

David Pan (Univ. of California, Irvine), a member of the Executive Council, said he understood that this proposed amendment was meant to create an emergency-motions process that, in some ways, replaces the previous emergency-resolutions process. Pan noted that, unlike resolutions, motions are not statements of sentiment but are proposals for actions that the MLA can take. He said he was not sure that it would be necessary to have a category of emergency motions, because the constitution allows for a regular motions process, and he was not sure that there might be emergency events that would occasion the need for this type of motion. Pan contrasted this with the resolutions process, stating that very often members propose resolutions that refer to world events about which they would want the MLA to express some sentiment, so there is a “current-events” aspect to the resolution process. Pan felt that, because there is often confusion between motions and resolutions, it would be confusing to now have an emergency-motions process.

The chair asked Desai if he would like to respond. Desai said the Committee on Amendments to the Constitution did what the Delegate Assembly requested: the assembly wanted to have an emergency-motions process in place, especially because the assembly had

voted in 2019 to amend the constitution to remove the category of emergency resolutions. He said the assembly felt that it was important to have a mechanism in place to address any issues that arose after the deadline for submitting resolutions had passed. He noted that the emergency-motions process was therefore a way to empower the Delegate Assembly to request that the Executive Council address matters important to the assembly and to the membership at large.

Desai added that he was also on the ad hoc committee that put forward two years ago changes to the motions and resolutions processes. He said he felt very strongly that, if the Delegate Assembly lost its power to be able to put forward motions until the day before its meeting, it would lose much of its authority to direct the movement of the association. The chair asked if there were further debate on this issue. Michelle Brazier built on Desai's comments, pointing out that with the regular-motions deadline of 1 October, emergency motions allow the association to have a mechanism for members to bring to the Delegate Assembly issues that occur between 1 October and the Delegate Assembly meeting rather than require members to wait until the following year.

The chair recognized Feroza Framji Jussawalla, who shared that she had wanted to bring to the 2018 Delegate Assembly a resolution regarding issues surrounding the Me Too movement, which exploded after the deadline for submitting resolutions had passed, and that this amendment would be useful in cases such as hers. The chair thanked Jussawalla and clarified that it is possible to write directly to the Executive Council at any time to ask for statements from the council representing the MLA.

The chair again recognized David Pan, who noted that, as the chair mentioned, there is a process for bringing items to the attention of the Executive Council. If the assembly felt there should be an emergency-resolutions process, Pan said, then that was what should be created, rather than the current proposed emergency-motions process. The chair said she believed part of the rationale for removing the option of bringing emergency resolutions to the assembly was that resolutions should have time to be debated and thought about.

Since there was no further discussion, the chair asked the assembly to vote on the amendment. The assembly approved it by a vote of 147 yes and 15 no. The chair said the amendment would go to the Executive Council for fiduciary review.

5. The chair called on Michelle Brazier to present recommendations from the DAOC. Brazier said the committee was proposing several amendments to the Delegate Assembly

bylaws by means of five motions.

Brazier explained that the first motion before the assembly proposed amendments A1 and B1, which eliminate inconsistencies between bylaws and the current constitution. The second motion proposed the adoption of amendments A2 and B2, which conform the bylaws to the constitutional amendment that the assembly had just approved. She noted that these amendments would only go into effect if the membership ratified the constitutional amendment. Brazier explained that the third motion the DAOC was offering proposed four amendments to address “housekeeping” matters in the bylaws.

Brazier introduced the first set of amendments referring to the previous item of business and noting that the constitution no longer permits the introduction of emergency resolutions to the Delegate Assembly. She said Amendment A1 similarly strikes “Emergency resolutions” from the Delegate Assembly agenda listed in the bylaws. Amendment B1 strikes references to emergency resolutions from article 7 of the bylaws (“Deadlines.”) The amendment also modernizes the procedure for submitting signatures in support of resolutions.

Amendment A1 to article VI.C. 8, “New Business,” reads as follows (language subject to change struck, new language shown in boldface):

- 8. New business
 - a. Resolutions ~~received in timely fashion~~
 - ~~b. Emergency resolutions~~
 - eb. Motions**
 - ~~dc. Other new business~~

Amendment B1 to article VI, “Deadlines,” reads as follows (language subject to change struck, new language shown in boldface):

See article 11.C.3 of the MLA constitution for the deadlines and submission requirements that apply to resolutions. Motions to be placed on the agenda of any meeting of the Delegate Assembly must be submitted by the proponent by 1 October. ~~Similarly, resolutions to be considered at a meeting of the assembly must be signed by at least ten members of the association and must reach the Organizing Committee by 1 October, except for those occasioned by emergencies arising after 1 October. Such emergency resolutions must be signed by at least twenty-five members of the association and must reach the Organizing Committee no later than twenty-four~~

~~hours before the scheduled assembly meeting. Such emergency resolutions shall not name individuals or institutions in such a way that, in the determination of the committee, a response from the named party must be sought. Resolutions or motions~~
Motions proposed after 1 October, except for motions arising directly out of the business on the floor of the assembly, may be discussed at the meeting under the heading of **other** new business, but no action may be taken at that meeting. ~~, unless three-quarters of the members present vote to take immediate action on an emergency resolution. Resolutions may not exceed one hundred words in length. Each resolution or motion must be accompanied by material that provides evidence in support of the resolution's or motion's claims.~~

Signatures in support of a resolution or a petition must be received at the MLA office on or before the stated deadline. Members may indicate their support in any of the following ways: (a) **by** sending an original signature or a collection of signatures with the resolution or petition text by mail to arrive on or before the deadline; (b) ~~faxing an individual signature or a collection of signatures with the resolution or petition text on or before the deadline, with the original of the fax to arrive at the MLA office within seven business days of the deadline; or (c) by e-mailing an individual or a collective statement of support on or before the deadline, with printouts of original e-mail messages signed by each originator or supporter to arrive at the MLA office within seven business days of the deadline~~ **from the e-mail address that is recorded in the sender's MLA membership record; or (c) by using the form at the MLA website that is dedicated to the collection of resolution or petition signatures.**

Brazier moved that the assembly adopt amendments A1 and B1. The chair asked if there was any debate. Since there was none, the chair asked the assembly to vote. The assembly passed the motion by a vote of 157 yes and 2 no.

The chair again recognized Michelle Brazier to present the next set of amendments. Referring again to the previous item of business, Brazier explained that to reflect changes made to the constitution both at this meeting and last year, amendment A2 to the Delegate Assembly bylaws strikes “emergency resolutions” from and inserts “emergency motions” into the Delegate Assembly agenda listed in the bylaws. Amendment B2 strikes details about the submission deadlines and procedures for motions and resolutions and inserts language referring the reader

to the relevant provisions of the constitution. This change should prevent inconsistencies between the bylaws and the constitution arising in the future. The amendment also modernizes the procedure for submitting signatures in support of resolutions.

Amendment A2 to article VI.C. 8, “New Business,” reads as follows (language subject to change struck, new language shown in boldface):

- 8. New business
 - a. Resolutions ~~received in timely fashion~~
 - ~~b. Emergency resolutions~~
 - eb. Motions received in a timely fashion**
 - ec. Emergency motions**

Amendment B2 to article VI, “Deadlines,” would strike the entire first paragraph of the article and read as follows (subsequent language subject to change struck, new language shown in boldface):

See article 11.C.3 of the MLA constitution for the deadlines and submission requirements that apply to motions. See article 11.C.4 of the MLA constitution for the deadlines and submission requirements that apply to resolutions.

Signatures in support of a resolution or a petition must be received at the MLA office on or before the stated deadline. Members may indicate their support in any of the following ways: ~~(a) by sending an original signature or a collection of signatures with the resolution or petition text by mail to arrive on or before the deadline; (b) faxing an individual signature or a collection of signatures with the resolution or petition text on or before the deadline, with the original of the fax to arrive at the MLA office within seven business days of the deadline; or (c) by e-mailing an individual or a collective statement of support on or before the deadline, with printouts of original e-mail messages signed by each originator or supporter to arrive at the MLA office within seven business days of the deadline~~ **from the e-mail address that is recorded in the sender’s MLA membership record; or (c) by using the form at the MLA website that is dedicated to the collection of resolution or petition signatures.**

Brazier moved that the assembly adopt amendments A2 and B2, with the proviso that these amendments would not become effective unless the membership ratified the approved amendment to article 11 of the constitution. The chair asked if there was any debate. Robert

Caserio (Penn State Univ., University Park) asked whether a definition of *emergency motion* contrasted with *emergency resolution* could be included in the bylaws. He noted that the assembly spent time in recent years discussing emergency resolutions and their elimination from the constitution, so this sudden reversal without a definition of what an emergency motion is in comparison to an emergency resolution was something the assembly should not do. The chair noted that the amendments being discussed do not refer to this matter and that this useful question would have needed to be addressed during the debate about the constitutional amendment or that it could be taken up as useful counsel. She added that the bylaws are not the place to elaborate on a definition of *emergency motion*. That definition would need to be included in the constitution itself or on the website in the explication of the constitution. The chair asked if there was more debate. Because there was not, she asked the assembly to vote. The motion passed 151 yes to 2 no.

The chair again recognized Michelle Brazier to present the DAOC's final proposed motion. Brazier noted that amendments C and D make minor changes to the Delegate Assembly agenda listed in the bylaws. Amendment E clarifies that the right to make motions at a meeting of the Delegate Assembly is limited to delegates. Amendment F moves up by two weeks the deadline to submit petitions to amend the bylaws. The suggested changes are noted as follows (language subject to change struck, new language shown in boldface):

C. In article VI.C, strike item 7, "Old business."

D. In article VI.C, insert a new item 7, "**Open Discussion**" after 6, "Recommendations by the Executive Council and the Delegate Assembly Organizing Committee."

E. Amend article VI.D.2 so that the sentence reads as follows:

Only duly elected and ex officio members of the assembly shall have the right to **make motions and** vote at the meeting.

F. Amend the second sentence of article IX, "Amendments" so that the article reads as follows:

Amendments. Amendments to these bylaws may be proposed by the Organizing Committee or by petition signed by ten members of the Delegate Assembly. ~~Such proposals~~ **Signed petitions** must be submitted by ~~151~~ October in order to be placed on the agenda of the meeting and must not be in conflict with the MLA constitution. An amendment may be passed by a two-thirds majority of delegates

voting at any meeting or by a simple majority of delegates voting at two successive meetings.

Brazier moved the adoption of these four amendments. The chair asked if there was any debate. Because there was no debate, the chair asked the assembly to vote. The motion passed 151 yes to 2 no.

6. The chair again recognized Michelle Brazier to present the report of the DAOC. Brazier shared that the committee met in October 2019 to plan the assembly's agenda. The committee received one motion by the current 1 October submission deadline. The DAOC determined that the motion complied with the submission requirements, so the proposed motion, 2020-1, would be presented to the assembly when new business is discussed. Brazier noted that at its October meeting the DAOC also reviewed the proposed amendment to the constitution and the amendments to the bylaws bringing them into concord with the constitution. She said the majority of the DAOC's discussion was devoted to discussion of the *Report of the MLA Task Force on Ethical Conduct in Graduate Education*, which the committee received in October. Brazier said she would address that report further following its presentation by the task force chair, MLA President Simon Gikandi, and during the introduction to the open discussion, "MLA Task Force on Ethical Conduct in Graduate Education: Small group discussion of recommendations."

The chair asked if there were any questions about the report. There were none.

7. The assembly received the report of the executive director, the Finance Committee report, and annual reports from the following association committees: *PMLA* Editorial Board, Publications Committee, Committee on Scholarly Editions, Advisory Committee on the *MLA International Bibliography*, Committee on Honors and Awards, Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities, Committee on the Literatures of People of Color in the United States and Canada, Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession, Committee on Information Technology, Committee on Community Colleges, Committee on the Status of Graduate Students in the Humanities, Committee on Contingent Labor in the Profession, and Committee on K-16 Alliances. The chair recognized Paula Krebs to present the executive director's report and the Finance Committee report.

Krebs said that in the time since her report was prepared the association had signed an agreement with Cambridge University Press to produce and distribute *PMLA*, noting that all

editorial duties would remain with the association. She said the association is excited about the distribution possibilities and new online opportunities afforded by working with the press; *PMLA* will be available in libraries worldwide and have wider reach than it has had previously. Krebs explained that this type of work on long-term projects enables the association to work toward closing the deficit that is shown in the Finance Committee Report. She reminded the assembly that two years ago she reported on the association's long-term contract for the *MLA International Bibliography*, which was aimed at stabilizing the association's revenue so that staff members are able to work on new kinds of programming. She noted that last year the association published eighteen pedagogy texts, and a new edition of the handbook will be published in 2021, which she hoped delegates would assign to their students.

In the summer of 2019, the association held its first Reading-Writing Pedagogy Institutes, which train graduate students and faculty members at access-oriented institutions in reading-writing pedagogy and help graduate students who want to learn to teach at access-oriented institutions and faculty members at community colleges and similar institutions who want to hone their skills. The institutes were made possible by a three-year Mellon grant, and Krebs said the association is looking at how to replicate this programming for other languages. Krebs ended by calling attention to the 2019 Report of MLA Activities and asked that delegates read *Profession* and use the *Commons* to share resources.

The chair asked if there were any questions or comments. Because there were none, the chair recognized Anjali Prabhu of the DAOC to present the reports. Prabhu noted that delegates received a summary sheet of the available reports and that the reports are available online. She encouraged everyone to read the reports and contact the MLA with any questions. The chair asked if there were questions about any of the reports. There were none.

The chair recognized Simon Gikandi to present the report of the Task Force on Ethical Conduct in Graduate Education. (Gikandi noted that he was present in his capacity as the chair of the task force.) He explained that the task force was appointed in response to new and long-term problems faced by graduate students. The DAOC had conducted a survey before the January 2019 meeting (see *PMLA*, vol. 134, no. 3, May 2019, p. 684) and found concerns that the committee considered to be urgent. Those concerns were connected to unequal power relations, precarity, sexual harassment, mental health challenges, questions of transparency in advising processes, and the exploitation of graduate students.

Gikandi noted that the report contains details of the task force's recommendations and shared highlights of the report. The task force recommended the following: forms of collaborative or networked advising; the rejection of all forms of sexual harassment and discriminatory behavior; the promotion of transparency to reduce bias and favoritism; the establishment of clear rules for faculty accessibility and responsiveness; that graduate students be provided with professional training without exploitation; the provision of professional opportunities and career guidance in line with the new and continuously changing realities of the academic marketplace; that departments and universities meet the distinctive professional needs and welfare of master's students; that institutions provide mental health services and support for a work-life balance for graduate students; and that, within institutional constraints, all people involved in the training of graduate education provide all graduate students with funding that enables them to live without taking on outside work. Gikandi said the report would be the subject of open discussion.

10. The assembly held an open discussion on the "Report of the MLA Task Force on Ethical Conduct in Graduate Education." Second Vice President Barbara Fuchs presided over the open discussion. After taking the chair, Fuchs recognized Michelle Brazier of the DAOC for an introduction to the topic and to conduct the small-group discussion. Brazier, a member of the task force, noted that the members of the DAOC were enthusiastic about the report and considered it an important next step in the MLA's broader project of addressing power differentials in the academy. Brazier contextualized the work of the task force as culminating in this report, a charge given to the task force by the Executive Council. She said the expectation is that the assembly's work at this meeting would go back to the Executive Council for further action.

Brazier said the committee would be asking the assembly to focus on the nine recommendations laid out in the report. She also noted a change to the typical structure of the open discussion: Rather than ask the assembly to devote thirty minutes to discussion, the committee chose to devote the full hour to the report and to create a hybrid structure, which would replicate some of the small-group discussion of the 2019 Delegate Assembly meeting while also allowing individual members to comment on the report for the record. Brazier explained that forty minutes would be devoted to small-group discussion facilitated by members of the DAOC, and then there would be twenty minutes moderated by the

second vice president for individual statements that members could make at the microphones. Brazier asked the members of the DAOC to stand and be recognized. DAOC member Svetlana Tyutina read the recommendations, which were projected on a screen:

1. Institute collaborative/networked advising.
2. Reject sexual harassment/discriminatory behavior.
3. Promote transparency to reduce bias/favoritism.
4. Establish clear rules for faculty accessibility/responsiveness.
5. Offer professional training without exploitation.
6. Provide career guidance in line with realities of job market.
7. Meet professional needs/welfare of master's students.
8. Provide mental health services/supports for work-life balance.
9. Strive to provide funding that supports living without additional outside work funds.

Tyutina asked the delegates to use their electronic voting devices to indicate which of these recommendations they felt presents the most pressing issue for the profession, noting that this vote was being taken to facilitate discussion and did not constitute any official action by the assembly.

The results of the vote were projected on a screen. The largest percentage, 28.47% (41 delegates) felt that the sixth recommendation, "Provide career guidance in line with realities of the job market," was the most pressing. DAOC member Leah Richards said the purpose of the vote was to "get a sense of the temperature in the room" to find out what delegates were most interested in, and she encouraged them to discuss whichever recommendation they wished to address in their small groups. She asked that everyone in the room (both delegates and observers) form groups of five to six people and spend fifteen minutes discussing strategies that are already in place or that could be easily implemented at institutions to meet these recommendations. When the discussion was underway, Tyutina asked each group to write a brief summary of its discussion to be shared with the room.

After the small-group discussions had concluded, Leah Richards, Svetlana Tyutina, and Maryse Jayasuriya read aloud the responses from the small groups.

Many of the groups addressed recommendation number six, "Provide career guidance in line with realities of job market," and noted that it is important to students aware of careers

outside academia. Groups suggested a variety of forms this might take, including departments offering training on specific types of skills (e.g., coding, big data, digital communication), facilitating student contact with useful professional networks, and cross-listing courses across departments. Groups noted that institutions could provide this guidance by various means, including sponsoring career fairs and training for humanities careers outside the university; holding workshops for networking in a broad range of careers; fostering institutional connections with local institutions; highlighting successful alumni; and being transparent about graduate outcomes in all areas, not just tenure-track academic placements.

One group noted that recommendations three (“Promote transparency to reduce bias/favoritism”) and five (“Offer professional training without exploitation”) addressed overlapping issues. Many groups, expressing a similar sentiment about recommendations being linked to each other, said it was difficult to address only one.

At the conclusion of forty minutes of discussion, Michelle Brazier noted that the feedback would be sent to the Executive Council. The chair opened the floor for twenty additional minutes of discussion. Grace Lavery (Univ. of California, Berkeley) raised the possibility of addressing the specific needs of transgender students, in respect to two particular rights asserted historically under Title IX until protections were recently removed by the federal government: the rights to determine the name by which they are addressed and to choose the pronouns by which they are referred to. Lavery noted that members have attempted to contest those rights on the basis of academic freedom. Lavery felt that it would be an important enunciation because transgender students are such a focal point for an attack more broadly on the culture of the university and an attack on precarious individuals. (In March, the Executive Council released its Statement on Recognizing Individuals’ Personal Pronouns.)

Feroza Framji Jussawalla asked what the association could actually do now in the light of this report. Paula Krebs said the report is a list of recommendations, and the association has many options for possible next steps. She noted that recommendations are not guidelines or standards and that the council might decide to think about a next step that would involve the creation of standards.

Brian Croxall (Brigham Young Univ., UT) drew the delegates’ attention to the second recommendation (“Reject sexual harassment/discriminatory behavior”) and said that the absence of “religion” in a list of types of discriminatory behavior was noticeable. Monica Miller (Middle

Georgia State Univ.) noted that many of these issues could be remedied by recognizing that these issues are related to jobs, labor, and employment and that if the assembly thought about these issues within that framework, in terms of policies and procedures, that would be useful. Ben Post (Murray State Univ.) built on Miller's point and said the assembly could think about freezing dues increases for graduate students and for people working less than part-time, to help remedy the poor job prospects. Liana Silva (Cesar Chavez High School, TX) said that encouraging graduate students to consider secondary education came up during the discussion and that the MLA can be a space where educators from K–12 and higher education institutions can network with colleagues. She said it is complicated for members at K–12 institutions to attend the convention because of the cost of both membership and travel, so the assembly needs to be mindful of that during discussions of encouraging graduate students to pursue work in secondary education. Carine Mardorossian (Northeast MLA) asked whether the report could include concrete examples of actions for each recommendation. Grisel Y. Acosta (Bronx Community Coll., City Univ. of New York) suggested that the second recommendation could be further refined to differentiate among sexual harassment, racism, and other biases. At the end of the hour allotted for the open discussion, the chair thanked everyone for their participation.

11. The association received one motion from a member by the 1 October deadline. Butler reassumed the chair and recognized Sima N. Godfrey of the DAOC to introduce Motion 2020–1, submitted by member Pamela Lothspeich (Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), which reads as follows:

I propose that MLA investigate the availability of data on staffing in Asian and Middle Eastern language and literature programs in the United States and Canada, and report back to the Council and the Delegate Assembly on any findings with respect to inequities in terms of gender, ethnicity/race, rank, pay, and full-time/part-time labor. Some data, like salaries at public universities, may already be publicly available. Certain data may also be readily available from professional organizations such as the Association for Asian Studies, Middle East Studies Association, American Association for Chinese Studies, Japanese Studies Association, American Institute of Indian Studies, and American Association of Teachers of Arabic.

On behalf of the proposer of record, Godfrey moved the adoption of the motion. The chair announced that there could be twenty-five minutes for debate of the motion, exclusive of time

for secondary motions, such as amendments. She said the proposer of record could speak first, if she wished, and asked that a copy of the motion be projected on the screen.

Paula Krebs told the assembly that the motion before them is presented as it was sent to the DAOC and that it has been the subject of much discussion by both the DAOC and the Executive Council. She said that quite often contingent faculty members teach in less-commonly-taught language programs, and they are vulnerable; their positions are often non-tenure-track positions, and many have immigration issues to consider. Krebs said the issue addressed by the motion has also been raised by various MLA committees and so she was pleased that it has come before the Delegate Assembly.

Krebs also cautioned that the association has limits on the kinds of research it can undertake because of the costs involved. She suggested that, as the delegates consider the motion and the way it was framed, they might think about ways the assembly could direct the association to achieve the ends of the motion, even if the motion itself isn't able to be passed. She said the sentiment of the motion was one the association would be eager to work on, but the commitment of resources that would likely be involved in undertaking an investigation of the availability of data, and reporting findings, would be extensive. She therefore asked the delegates to consider whether there might be other ways to address this issue with a more limited scope. She noted that the Executive Council is charged with determining how the MLA spends its money and was nervous about bringing the motion to the assembly because the council worried that it might seem irresponsible to ask the assembly to vote on the motion without having the funding to undertake this project. She stressed, however, that she welcomed both the discussion and ideas from the assembly about how the association might approach these issues.

The chair asked whether the staff had done a preliminary investigation of what the project suggested the motion would cost. Krebs said no. Director of Programs Dennis Looney addressed the assembly and explained that there were two aspects in undertaking this motion: one was the availability of the data requested in the motion, and the second was the cost of the association getting the data.

Laura J. Beard (Univ. of Alberta) said that, as someone who has chaired two language and literature departments that included languages other than English, she is sympathetic to concerns expressed in this motion. She said instructors in other areas share these concerns and asked whether the association, if it undertakes this motion, should also do this in other areas.

Or, if the assembly passes this motion as it stands, will the association also undertake this work in other areas? Wendy Laura Belcher (Princeton Univ.) wondered whether the National Science Foundation, which conducts an annual Survey of Earned Doctorates, could be persuaded to take this on.

Pamela Lothspeich addressed the assembly and said she appreciated the comments. She didn't feel that this motion should be extended to a wider cohort because she was speaking to the field that she knows from her own work. She added that she wished she had included immigration status in her motion because she felt it was important to consider and would highlight vulnerabilities that other fixed-term faculty members face. She noted that these vulnerabilities often intersect. Lothspeich said she was not opposed to narrowing the motion in consideration of the association's resources, or expanding it to include other languages. She noted that, as the motion stands, it provides an opportunity for the MLA to work with other professional organizations like the Association for Asian Studies and the American Institute of Indian Studies. She suggested that the Committee on Contingent Labor's 2011 report, *Professional Employment Practices for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Members: Recommendations and Evaluative Questions*, could be expanded to include best practices specifically to help these vulnerable faculty members and would allow for their colleagues to better advocate on their behalf.

Brian Croxall said the wording of the motion would allow the association to investigate whether these data exist, to see whether it would be possible to undertake this research and the potential costs involved. He said the Executive Council and the Delegate Assembly could further weigh in at that time.

The chair announced that the question on the floor was on the adoption of the motion, and she asked the assembly to vote. The motion passed 56 yes to 54 no. The chair said the motion would therefore be forwarded to the Executive Council.

12. The chair called for the announcement of other items of new business, noting that new proposals could be discussed but could not be voted on. Brian Croxall said all the members who were elected to the Nominating Committee were from R1 institutions. He said he would make a motion if necessary or raise the point that those charged with nominating candidates to run for second vice president and the Executive Council not be from R1 institutions to better reflect the association's membership. The chair asked Croxall

to put his motion in writing. Croxall submitted the following motion to the clerk, which the chair read aloud: "I move that the Nominating Committee reflect wider institutional diversity in the makeup of its membership." The chair asked if there was a second. There was, and the chair asked for discussion of the motion. Svetlana Tuytina said she would like to see more specific categories named in the motion, because "wider" could be "very widely interpreted." She suggested that as the assembly considers this motion it might think about "slots" it wanted to fill in order to represent that diversity. Carine Mardorossian said it was not clear from the motion whether the Nominating Committee or institutions had to reflect that diversity. Grace Lavery (Univ. of California, Berkeley) said that the value being expressed by the proposal is important but that it was difficult to see how to reflect this in the short-term. She said the longer-term question of whether the Nominating Committee should reflect representatives of enumerated identity groups would require a good deal of research, though currently attesting to the value of institutional diversity in the Nominating Committee was important. The chair asked if there was further comment or debate. Because there was none, the chair once again called for other motions that anyone would like to put forth; no one came forward.

13. The chair called for announcements. Alan J. Gravano (Rocky Mountain Univ.) said he had e-mailed the coordinator of governance regarding members who are elected to serve on forum executive committees but do not attend multiple conventions (and so forum executive committee meetings). He wanted the Executive Council and the Delegate Assembly to be aware of the response that he received, which stated that the association does not penalize members of forum executive committees for not attending the convention and that a five-year attendance requirement might deter people from running. Forum executive committee members are encouraged to attend the convention, and they are expected to fulfill their duties and communicate with their fellow members by e-mail. Gravano stated that there are members who would run for seats on committees and attend every convention during their term. He said that he finds the behavior of those who don't attend problematic. The chair asked if there were other announcements; no one came forward.

14. The chair declared the 2020 meeting of the Delegate Assembly adjourned sine die at 3:35 p.m.

Delegates in attendance:

Forum Delegates: Andrea Adolph, Maya Aghasi, Samer Mahdy Ali, Michael Allan, Claus Elholm Andersen, Amy Anderson, Lilla Balint, Danny Barreto, Yasmine Beale-Rivaya, Thomas Oliver Beebee, Wendy Laura Belcher, Katia Bezerra, Valerie Billing, Laura R. Braunstein, Lia Brozgal, Germán Campos-Muñoz, Başak Çandar, Maritza Cardenas, Heekyoung Cho, Ryan Cordell, Eleni Eva Coundouriotis, Monica Diaz, Nicole Guenther Discenza, Clorina Donato, Simone Drake, Mark Andrew Eaton, Clare Echterling, Hoda El Shakry, Julia Elsky, Ruth Evans, Douglas Eyman, Jonathan Farina, Stephanie A. Fetta, Nicole Fleetwood, Stephanie Foote, Laura Forsberg, Derek Furr, Kaiama L. Glover, Amanda Golden, Pamela Gossin, Alan J. Gravano, Sandra Marie Grayson, Jie Guo, Taryn Hakala, Katherine Hallemeier, Christopher Laing Hill, Patrick Colm Hogan, Howard Horwitz, Catherine Infante, Lynn Itagaki, Jacob Jewusiak, Claire Taylor Jones, Katherine Kelp-Stebbins, Rachel King, Wendy Anne Lee, Russ Leo, Devoney Looser, Miguel Lopez-Lozano, Christopher M. Lupke, Amy Lynch-Binieck, Jennifer Maloy, Colin Martin, Meghann Meeusen, Melanie Micir, Monica Miller, Venesa Miseres, María Irene Moyna, Ana Mueller-Wood, N. Michelle Murray, Supriya M. Nair, Corinne Noirot, Lisa Marie Ortiz-Vilarelle, Imani Owens, Cólín Parsons, Beth Piaote, Jared Richman, Jill Robbins, Julia Miele Rodas, Kathryn Vomero Santos, Debarati Sanyal, Anita Savo, Russell Sbriglia, Asha Sen, Lucy Sheehan, Riva Sias, Patricia A. Sieber, Liana Silva, Silvia Spitta, Jennifer Stoever, Jonathan Stone, Andrea W. Tarnowski, Dan Thornton, Akiko Tsuchiya, Sherry M. Velasco, Donny Vigil, Dorothy J. Wang, Jason Paul Webb, Tana Jean Welch, Courtney Wells, Masano Yamashita, Zahi A. Zalloua, Susan Zieger.

Professional-Issues Delegates: Melissa Adams-Campbell, Helene Aji, Sari Altschuler, GerShun Avilez, Jennifer Buckley, Margaret Carson, Brian Croxall, Julie Passanante Elman, Joseph Fisher, Yolanda Flores, DeLisa Hawkes, Rebecca Hogue, Kimberly Johnson, Grace Lavery, David R. Leight, Dominique Mary Licops, Pamela Lothspeich, María del Pilar Melgarejo, Adwoa Opoku-Agyemang, Loknath Persaud, Stephanie Ravillon, Robert Samuels, Riva Sias.

Regional Delegates: Grisel Y. Acosta, Jennifer Andrews, Hadji Bakara, Sharada Balachandran Orihuela, Stephanie L. Batkie, Laura J. Beard, Nicole Burgoyne, Richard Scott Carr, Robert Lawrence Caserio, Hilda Chacón, Manu Smamriti Chander, Thomas Chen, Eva Cherniavsky, Michael C. Cohen, Elena Cueto, Jeffry C. Davis, Lauren Dembowitz, Dennis Denisoff, Jason D. Fichtel, Melissa L. Gjellstad, Ana Maria Gómez-

Bravo, Carole Kennedy Harris, Todd Herzog, Sharon P. Johnson, Priti Joshi, Feroza Framji Jussawalla, Pedro Larrea Rubio, Christopher J. Lukasik, Andrea Malaguti, David Martínez, Sara Mattavelli, Kenna Neitch, Leila Neti, Haley L. Osborn, Rosa Perelmuter, Ben Post, Gregory E. Rutledge, Katherine Sugg, Anne Sullivan, Jiwei Xiao, Priscilla Solis Ybarra, Brian Yothers.

Delegates Representing a Regional MLA: Carine Mardorossian, Craig Svonkin.

Officers and Members of the Executive Council: Angelika Bammer, Judith Butler, Barbara Fuchs, Simon E. Gikandi, Jean Elizabeth Howard, Ann Kalscheur Suarez, Elizabeth Mathews Losh, David Tse-chien Pan, Anjali Prabhu, Leah Richards, Ramon Saldivar, Julie Shoults.

Members of the Delegate Assembly Organizing Committee: Michelle J. Brazier, Maria Chouza-Calo, Sima N. Godfrey, Maryse Jayasuriya, Svetlana Tyutina.

Parliamentarian: Daniel E. Seabold.

Clerk: Paula M. Krebs.