Archives Policies Task Force
Final Report
May 2012

Our charge was "to create policies and guidelines for selecting, capturing, describing, and providing access to Music Library Association documents and records both printed and electronic, in particular materials deposited at the University of Maryland" (UMD). This final report addresses the eleven-item working plan outlined in that charge.

For MLA officers and others who generate materials appropriate for the MLA Archives, policies and guidelines for transfer are contained in the "Guidelines for Transfer" document appended to this report. The guidelines provide general statements about the scope of the MLA Archives; definitions; and the who, when, what and how of transferring materials to the MLA Archives. Those general statements are followed by specific guidelines for committee, subcommittee and round table chairs/coordinators as prescribed in the MLA Committee Handbook; detailed retention schedules for business records, to provide guidance to the Administrative Officers and the Business Office; and the in-force guidelines for submitting electronic records.

1. A definition of the scope of the MLA Archives

    a. See the "Guidelines for Transfer" document.

2. A records management and retention program for MLA: what should be deposited, when, and by whom.

    a. See the "Guidelines for Transfer" document.
    b. Some materials do not need to be kept indefinitely. Many of these are financial documents that reside in the files of the Administrative Officer or at the Business Office. **The Task Force recommends that they be retained in those locations until they are scheduled to be destroyed. In other words, only materials deemed to be of permanent worth should be deposited in the MLA Archives.**

3. Recommended methods for the collection and transfer of MLA documents by the MLA Archivist

    a. The Curator of Special Collections in Performing Arts (SCPA) at UMD has been added to the Committee Chairs' Listserv list so he can easily send reminders at appropriate times.
    b. **Expand the MLA Archives page on the MLA site to include FAQs and guidelines.**
    c. **Add an "Archives Update" to the business meeting agenda beginning with the 2013 conference.** The Curator of SCPA will provide the update in 2013; this

can be taken over by the MLA Archivist in subsequent years. Please note that we have selected this approach rather than proposing a program session at the 2013 conference. We feel that presenting at the business meeting will reach our target audience more effectively than a program session.

4.	Deposit and preservation policies for electronic records (including operating documents and the MLA web site) to be developed in cooperation with the University of Maryland.

a.	Until the University of Maryland becomes a trusted digital repository[1], the MLA Archives can accommodate electronic files if they are burned to CD and submitted with a transmittal form. The currently in force "Policy on Machine-Readable Records" from 2001 (found as Part V, Policy for Electronic Records, in the Guidelines for Transfer) should be followed during this current interim period. In other words, **the Task Force recommends that primary documents be submitted to the MLA Archives in print form when created or revised**, as stated in this policy.
b.	UMPC will likely have their issues worked out by January 2013. **We recommend the appointment of a task force in January 2013** to revisit the policies for MLA's electronic records, including a revision of the 2001 policy document. Vincent Novara, Curator of SCPA at UMD, should be a member of this task force.
c.	Much business and financial data is held electronically in QuickBooks or the membership database. For the membership database, **we recommend that one time per fiscal year, before the renewal cycle begins for the following year, a report be generated and printed showing the name, membership type, institutional affiliation and title, and contact information for the current year's members**. Other reports to be captured, their frequency and their timing will be determined by the MLA Archivist. At present, the data held in QuickBooks is complete and is backed up nightly. Therefore, there is no urgency to identify the reports needed from QuickBooks. Changes to the membership database overwrite old data, so there is some urgency to implement the annual capture of membership data. The Business Office has been notified about capturing 2011/12 membership year data.

5.	Determination of what documents should be accessible to the membership [and/or general public] on the MLA web site.

a.	Documents such as board minutes, minutes of business meetings, and materials that exhibit the Association's rich history (lists of past presidents, award winners, meeting sites) should continue to be accessible to the general public on the MLA site.
b.	Presence on the MLA web site does not eliminate the need to deposit paper copies of operating and other primary documents in the MLA Archives.

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[1] See http://www.crl.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/pages/trac_0.pdf

6.   Policies defining the level of processing that will be applied to the various record groups in the MLA Archives.

    a. The existing record group structure is sound.
    b. In general we support the principles for the levels of processing for the MLA Archives as defined by Greene and Meissner in their article "More Product, Less Process" (*The American Archivist*, Vol. 68, Fall/Winter 2005: 208-263).However, reappraisal of the materials currently in the Archives will be a huge benefit to the collection. The level of processing for the various record groups can be jointly determined by the MLA Archivist and the Curator of SCPA at UMD. Demand for access to particular series will also drive the level of processing they receive.

7.   Development of an annual budget for processing the current year's documents at UMD for the submission to the Fiscal Officer for inclusion in the FY 2012-2013 budget.

    a. Processing time is estimated at 2.5 hours per linear foot. For fiscal years 2006 through 2011, the total annual deposits averaged 11 linear feet (this figure is likely to increase, even with the shift to electronic records). Estimate 30 hours of processing time. **At a pay rate of $10/hour for student help, the annual budget for processing the current year's documents is $300.**

8.   A plan for processing the backlog at the MLA Archives

    a. The Task Force recommends that this plan be developed by the MLA Archivist after s/he visits the MLA Archives and surveys the collection.
    b. UMD student help can work on refoldering and rehousing materials after the collection is reappraised, but a higher level of assessment is needed first.

9.   An investigation of sources of external funding for processing the backlog (e.g., Mellon Foundation, NHPRC, SAA) and the writing of a grant proposal.

    a. This is among the duties of the MLA Archivist: "Prepare grant proposals in collaboration with the Curator of SPCA and the MLA board of directors, and when appropriate serve as principal investigator or its equivalent." Note that this may result in MLA receiving the funding and having to cut checks for staff doing the work at UMD.

10.   Guidelines for Chapter Archives deposited at UMD
    Should chapters be encouraged to deposit their archives at UMD or retain them regionally? If at UMD, develop a records management and retention program for chapter archives. Determine the level at which chapter archives will be processed.

    a. Chapters should deposit two copies of their publications at the MLA Archives at UMD regardless of the location of their chapter archives.

b. **Chapters should be encouraged to establish their own chapter archives in a regional repository.**

11.   Review and revise earlier drafts of a recommendation and job description for the position of MLA Archivist (the 2011 report of the Archives Task Force and the February 2011 Board minutes section XIV.E. set out the basic qualifications and the duties of the MLA Archivist)

a. **The Task Force reviewed and revised the earlier draft and has included as an attachment our proposal and recommendation for a special officer position called MLA Archivist.**