I. Report Date: May 2023

II. Name of Committee/Special Officer/Editor: Convention Manager

III. Committee Members: Sylvia Yang, Andrew Justice

IV. Board Action Required:
   ● Budget Request has been submitted via CFOs and the Fiscal Officer
   ● The CMs would like to request Board approval to move forward and secure a contract with Mustache Power to oversee and manage all streaming of the MLA 2024 meeting in Cincinnati.

V. Brief Summary of Activities

   ● St. Louis 2023:
     ○ Congratulations to Morgan Davis who was appointed as the new Assistant Convention Manager! Thanks to Wendy Sistrunk for chairing the search.

     ○ Meeting Stats:
       ■ 276 in-person attendees
       ■ 171 virtual attendees
       ■ 24 exhibitors
       ■ 22 students

     ○ Hotel: There were a number of challenges during the MLA/TLA 2023 Meeting at the Hilton St. Louis at the Ballpark. Including, but not limited to: reservation challenges, continuous wi-fi challenges (in both personal rooms, public spaces, and with the stream), technology related challenges (missing tech), signage challenges, accessibility concerns, significant challenges related to catering (signage, dietary restrictions, etc.), scheduling challenges for reserved spaces, and several conference guests reported that hotel staff were rude or unwilling to help and that hotel dining options were incredibly limited and extremely understaffed.

   ● Upcoming
     ○ In Process: Site visits for Oct 2023, Hilton Cincinnati Netherland Plaza
     ○ In Process: Sylvia (CM) and Carlos (PC) to confer after the Post-Conference Survey Results are processed
     ○ In Process: CMs have requested to transition from a PDF to an online Convention Manual via WordPress; waiting on approval from Web Officers

   ● Alignment with the MLA 2022-2030 Strategic Plan Objectives:

     All areas of the strategic plan must be considered when planning the annual convention.
Implicit bias testing reported complete for CM and ACM.

- Outgoing Convention Manager’s Final Thoughts
  - After five years in this track (extra year added for COVID), I’ve witnessed the CM role/work change **radically** since St. Louis Union Station in 2019 and I have some parting recommendations for MLA’s leadership to consider:
    - As I understand things, the group of Hilton contracts MLA signed in 2016 were a reaction to financial challenges caused by the 2010 San Diego meeting (when noticeably fewer members attended, due to travel costs) and other fiscal concerns which also led to Jerry McBride’s introduction of austerity measures during his presidential term
    - In this context, combining less-popular cities and repeated visits with locked-in rates at the same hotel chain made a lot of sense…something that was obviously changed by the pandemic
    - Even before two consecutive virtual meetings and a plan to alternate future meetings between hybrid and virtual, MLA was going to need to revise our approach to the next group of hotel contract(s)
    - If 2023 in-person attendance numbers hold in 2024, a smaller room block and meeting room footprint seem necessary
    - The introduction of multiple session-streaming rooms means that hardwired internet needs to become a major factor of the contract negotiation process (as well as needing updating for Cincinnati and Salt Lake); meeting area wifi is another vital aspect along these same lines
    - Balancing aforementioned IT costs against different in-person/virtual registration numbers will probably mean MLA should consider smaller hotel chains (the poor performances of Hilton’s notwithstanding)
    - While scaling down may dominate future hybrid meeting plans, the location of our meetings is something MLA should reconsider: even in smaller hotels, more members should attend meetings in cities they want to visit – yes, travel costs might be a bit more, but with smaller hotels and alternating virtual there’s more potential to plan/save for in-person attendance