Music Library Advocacy Committee Handbook

Last updated: November 2, 2021

Introduction

The Music Library Advocacy Committee (hereafter, “Advocacy Committee”) functions according to the policies and procedures in the MLA Constitution and By-laws (Article VI. Committees) and the MLA Administrative Handbook (Section V. Committees). The Administrative Handbook takes precedence over this document, should conflicts arise.

I. Charge

The Advocacy Committee supports both individual and Association-wide efforts to promote music library resources, advocate for our users, and communicate the value of staff expertise. It does so by maintaining an online clearinghouse of user-submitted advocacy resources; managing an online advocacy forum; creating new materials, subject to Board approval, that convey MLA’s positions on advocacy topics; collaborating with other MLA committees and groups to develop resources supporting music library advocacy; acting as a resource and sounding board for MLA leadership when the opportunity arises for official responses to advocacy-related issues; and working with outside organizations that have an interest in library advocacy.

II. Structure

Committee members include:

A. Chair – appointed by the MLA President in consultation with MLA Board of Directors (“the Board”).

B. Committee members – officially appointed by the MLA President in consultation with the Chair.

C. Ex officio member – Publicity & Outreach Officer

All members must be in good standing with MLA. Ex officio members are voting members.

III. Responsibilities

A. Advocacy Committee 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. Administration:

   a. Follow the MLA Administrative Handbook, Sections V. H, as appropriate.
   b. Periodically review all Advocacy Committee-related administrative descriptions and charges (Administrative Structure, Administrative Handbook, etc.), ensuring that they are up-to-date and consistent.
   c. Maintain the Advocacy Committee page on the MLA website
d. Develop a calendar of activities.
e. Track and distribute documents.
f. Submit budget requests to the MLA Financial Officer, as needed.
g. Prepare meeting agendas.
h. Issue one or more calls for Committee applicants on MLA-L prior to Annual Meeting.
i. Make recommendations to the President for appointments.
j. Process resignations.
k. Write “thank you” letters to retiring Advocacy Committee members.
l. Compile the Committee’s annual report and quarterly Board reports
m. Prepare other written reports as requested by the Board.
n. Maintain the Advocacy Committee handbook
o. Provide orientation for the incoming Chair

2. Communication:

a. Communicate to the MLA membership issues of concern related to music library advocacy.
b. Lead Committee discussions, in person, virtually, and in electronic forums.
c. Lead planning for program sessions.
d. Prepare summaries of Committee meetings and discussions.
e. Field and delegate questions from MLA membership.
f. Serve as liaison to IAML’s Advocacy Committee (IAML membership is encouraged but not required).
g. Receive ownership of and manage the Committee’s Humanities Commons group and site, and pass on ownership of both to the succeeding Chair (see section XV.B below)

B. Committee Members:
   1. Participate in group discussions, both in person and virtual, drawing on personal experience, skills, and knowledge.
   2. Complete any assignments in a timely fashion.
   3. Provide feedback on documentation, proposals, and requests for comments.

IV. Qualifications for Appointment

A. Advocacy Committee Chair
   1. Member in good standing of MLA.
   2. Ability to attend MLA annual meeting and to lead Committee meetings.
   3. Strong awareness of and professional interest in music library advocacy.
   4. Strong leadership, diplomatic, organizational, and writing skills.
   5. Ability to represent the Committee’s work in national meetings, both verbally and in writing.
   6. Willingness to subscribe to and read electronic mailing lists that support committee topics.
   7. Ability to manage the Music Library Advocacy group on Humanities Commons
   8. Previous or current experience on the committee is desirable but not required.

B. Committee Members

To the extent possible, the composition of the Committee should reflect the variety of music libraries (public, academic, ensemble, special, etc.) and job types (public services, technical services, administration, etc.) represented in MLA as a whole.

   1. Member in good standing of MLA.
   2. Ability to attend the MLA annual meeting, when feasible
3. Active participation in the work of the Committee.
4. Strong professional interest in Committee business, and a particular skill, area of expertise, or perspective to contribute to Committee discussions.
5. Willingness to subscribe to and read electronic mailing lists that support the Committee’s work and discussions.
6. Willingness to join and participate in the Music Library Advocacy group on Humanities Commons.

V. Appointment Procedures

A. Advocacy Committee Chair
   1. The outgoing chair recommends a successor to the Committee for consideration. The candidate should meet the qualifications identified in section IV.A of this document.
   2. The outgoing Chair submits the recommendation to the MLA President for finalization of the appointment

B. Committee members
   1. Typically, the Chair announces Committee openings on MLA-L well in advance of the annual meeting.
   2. Interested MLA members must apply in writing (via email) to the Committee Chair and include specific information about their particular interest in serving on the Committee and what they could contribute.
   3. At the end of the annual meeting, the Chair reviews the list of interested members and decides on the names to forward for the most effective appointments. The Chair then recommends the names of potential appointees to the MLA President.

C. Mid-term appointments
   1. If a position becomes open due to the resignation or dismissal of a Committee member, the Chair may request a mid-term appointment of a replacement member.
   2. The Chair announces the opening on MLA-L along with a due date for applications.
   3. Interested MLA members must apply in writing (via email) to the Committee Chair and include specific information about their particular interest in serving on the group and what they could contribute.
   4. After the due date, the Chair reviews the list of interested members and decides on the name to forward for the most effective appointment. The Chair then recommends the name of the potential appointee to the MLA President.
   5. The new appointee serves out the remainder of the term of the member that they replaced.

VI. Length of Appointments

A. Committee Chair
   Serves no more than four consecutive years.

B. Committee members
   1. Normally serve a term of four consecutive years.
   2. In exceptional situations, the Chair may recommend to the President a one-year extension of a member’s term.
   3. 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.”
Note: The Advocacy Committee formed in fall 2018. Initial terms were staggered in order to facilitate eventual membership cycling, with two members serving a two-year term, two serving a three-year term, and two (including the Chair) serving a four-year term.

VII. Resignations

A. Resignations
Resignations of Committee members should be in writing, addressed to the MLA President, and submitted to the Committee Chair. The Chair forwards a copy of the written resignation to the MLA President and prepares a written letter of acknowledgment to the individual (with a copy to the MLA President) for their contributions and service to MLA.

B. Mandatory termination of service
If a Music Library Advocacy Committee member ceases to be an active participant in the committee as determined by the Chair, the Chair may write the member to ask whether the member wishes to continue. If the Chair deems a member to be non-responsive or not cooperative after repeated attempts to encourage them to participate, the member will be asked to resign.

VIII. Meetings

A Music Library Advocacy Committee meeting is held during every MLA annual meeting. The Committee Chair convenes and conducts the meeting.

A. A majority of members (including the Chair) constitutes a quorum.
   1. Business meeting agendas may include: correction and approval of the previous year's minutes, progress reports on 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 before the meeting.
      b. The Chair will distribute a preliminary agenda to members at or in advance of the meeting.
      c. Guests may attend business meetings and may speak upon recognition from the Chair.
   2. The Chair submits requests for meeting time and space to the Program Committee through the meeting scheduling process.

IX. Absences

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

B. Members
   Members should inform the Committee Chair if they will be unable to attend the annual business meeting, but they need not send a proxy.

X. Conduct

A. All Advocacy Committee members will abide by the MLA Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy found in Appendix B of the MLA Administrative Handbook. Any individual found in violation of the policy will be dismissed from the Advocacy Committee.

B. All Advocacy Committee members should conduct themselves in a respectful manner toward all other members, both online and in person, regardless of position or perceived level of experience.
C. Conduct during meetings: Committee members are encouraged to speak freely, or as advised by the Chair when multiple people wish to speak. Visitors to the meeting who are not Committee members may speak once recognized by the Chair.

XII. Document Approval Process for Committee-Produced documents

A. Final draft is shared with Committee members, who review it and provide suggestions for revisions.
B. The principal writer of the document takes comments under review and prepares final document for vote.
C. Committee votes on final draft.
D. Committee Chair requests approval of document from the MLA Board and, once received, distributes document as appropriate.

XIII. Budget

Committee chairs submit 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.

XIV. Documentation

A. Internal documents reviewed by the Committee include business meeting minutes, quarterly and annual reports to the MLA Board, and any reports of task forces. These documents are written by the Chair, unless otherwise specified.
B. Document distribution is the responsibility of the Chair.
C. Upon leaving the Committee, the Chair transfers to the MLA Archives committee files that are not required by the succeeding Chair. The Chair should read the Archives section of the MLA website for more information on Archives policies, what should be submitted, and how transfer is to be accomplished, and/or consult the MLA Archivist

XV. Communication Tools

A. MLA infrastructure

1. The Chair is the administrator of the public space on the MLA website. Work can be shared publicly through blogs, forums (online discussion boards), file libraries of files or links, photos (please see the MLA permissions form), an events calendar, and custom web pages.

B. Outside of MLA infrastructure

1. Humanities Commons

   Upon recommendation of the Web Editor, in 2019 the Advocacy Committee selected Humanities Commons to host its public-facing content

   a. The Music Library Advocacy Group (https://hcommons.org/groups/music-library-advocacy/) allows registered users to share documents and conduct discussions (moderated by the Committee).

   b. The Music Library Advocacy Site (https://muslibadvocacy.hcommons.org/) is a blog platform that hosts the Committee’s recommended web links

C. Listserv

1. The Chair is added to MLA-COMM email list, which 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 listserv moderator 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 current listserv owner.

2. Only the Chair, or a member designated by the Chair, may speak for the Committee on the MLA-L listserv.

XVI. Revisions to Procedures

A. Revisions to this handbook can be proposed by any current committee member.
B. Procedures for revisions will be identical to those outlined in section XII, Document Approval Process.
C. Once approved, the revised procedures handbook is sent to the MLA Board Planning Officer.