Subject line: MLA Leadership Is Censoring a Palestine Solidarity Resolution! (some requests)

Dear XXX:

I'm reaching out because you're scheduled to *[present a paper / chair a panel]* at the MLA convention in New Orleans next month. As you may have heard, **the MLA's Executive Council and Executive Director have refused to allow our elected Delegate Assembly to vote on a Palestine solidarity resolution at the convention**. As one of a number of responses, I and other organizers of the resolution are reaching out to folks who are participating on panels and roundtables.

By way of background: in September, 39 MLA members submitted a "Resolution to Endorse the 2005 Palestinian BDS Call" for consideration by the Delegate Assembly. The resolution received overwhelmingly positive comments and more than 130 MLA members signed on in support. Although we participated in a lengthy vetting process and the resolution had cleared all procedural hurdles, on October 29, Executive Director Paula Krebs informed us that the MLA Executive Council was refusing to allow it to move forward for a vote at the convention. MLA leadership removed the resolution from its website and has even blocked attempts by elected delegates to discuss the resolution on an official email list. At this point, our understanding is that MLA leadership will only allow delegates to "discuss" the resolution, but not vote on it. Most recently, eight former MLA presidents have pushed for the EC to reverse its decision. If you'd like more details, you can read more here: https://lithub.com/the-modern-language-association-must-let-members-decide-about-bds/ and here: https://lithub.com/8-former-modern-language-association-presidents-call-for-bds-vote/

If you were willing, we would love it if you would join the many members who are protesting this decision by MLA leadership and demanding that MLA members have the opportunity to vote on this resolution. **In particular, we would be very grateful if you would be willing to read the following brief statement at the beginning of your** *[panel / presentation]*:

Before proceeding with this panel, I/we want to read a statement. This year, as many of you know, the MLA leadership refused to allow members the chance to decide whether or not they would approve a resolution endorsing the 2005 call of Palestinian civil society organizations to boycott, sanction, and divest from Israel. This refusal comes in the context of an ongoing, accelerated genocide in Gaza and the scholasticide that is part of it. The AAUP just this year affirmed that boycotts "can be considered legitimate tactical responses to conditions that are fundamentally incompatible with the mission of higher education," and BDS has been endorsed by a number of academic organizations. Now, the members of the largest humanities organization in the world won't even have the chance to vote. We can, however, raise our voices: we hope you will join us in protesting this decision throughout and beyond the conference, in demanding that the MLA uphold its mission to support "justice throughout the humanities ecosystem" rather than prioritizing corporate profit, and in speaking out against the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

And if you were willing, you might also read out the text of the resolution itself, which can be found below (it's quite short).

If you're interested in getting involved in organizing around the resolution and Palestine solidarity more generally, leading up to and at the convention, please let me know! **You can find extensive supporting documentation related to the resolution, along with more info and ways that you can connect with us, ask questions, and get more involved, here: linktr.ee/mla4pal or by following us on Instagram at @mlamjp2025.**

Thank you so much in advance!

Solidarity and warm wishes,

XXX

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Resolution to Endorse the 2005 Palestinian BDS Call

Whereas, international law experts, including UN officials, describe the Israeli war on Gaza as a genocide;

Whereas, human rights organizations and the International Court of Justice have determined that Israel is maintaining a system of apartheid;

Whereas, in April 2024 the United Nations documented that Israel's campaign of scholasticide has destroyed every university in Gaza and killed at least 5,479 students and 356 educators;

Whereas, the complicity of Israeli academic institutions in denying Palestinian human rights has been comprehensively documented;

Whereas, in 2005, 170 Palestinian civil society organizations called for boycott, divestment, and sanctions against Israel;

Whereas, that call is to boycott institutions, not individual Israeli academics, and to support academic freedom;

Whereas the American Association of University Professors declared academic boycotts "legitimate tactical responses to conditions that are fundamentally incompatible with the mission of higher education";

Whereas, the MLA's commitment to "justice throughout the humanities ecosystem" requires ending institutional complicity with genocide and supporting Palestinian colleagues; therefore

Be it resolved that we, the members of the MLA, endorse the 2005 BDS call.