Music Library Association

Texas Chapter Conference Planning Handbook

Updated: 1.19.2023

Handbook Outline

This handbook is divided into two sections. The first is an outline of major conference-planning responsibilities. The second takes those responsibilities and puts them into calendar form, to suggest when each task should be started and finished, as well as provide any further important details.

Task outline

1. Specific conference location
    a. This refers to identifying the specific location the meeting will be held at the hosting institution. As TMLA aims to host conferences in a hybrid manner, conference locations will need to have the technology to be able to host a hybrid conference. If the conference location is not able to do so, the TMLA executive committee will do its best to assist the conference location in obtaining the technology needed, but this is not guaranteed.
    b. The specific conference location should be decided between the end of the TMLA Fall annual meeting and the end of that year. If the location is not decided at the end of the Fall annual meeting, then the TMLA Chair should prompt discussion though TMLA-L.
2. Specific conference dates
    a. All tasks associated with identifying the best weekend to hold the conference. Conferences are typically held from noon Friday to noon Saturday. In years where we meet jointly with another MLA regional chapter, this may vary.
    b. Meetings are typically held in late September or October.
    c. Matters typically taken into consideration when planning the meeting (especially, weekends to avoid) are Oklahoma/Texas football weekend (to avoid unusually high traffic in-transit to meeting site), and also homecoming weekend for the hosting institution.
3. "Local Arrangements" Committee
    a. This committee is made up of the TMLA Chair and chapter members from the specific hosting institution. Other people may be included at the TMLA Chair's discretion. The Local Arrangements Committee should expect to work closely with the Program Planning Committee.
    b. This committee is responsible for solidifying the conference location (buildings, rooms, etc.), specific conference dates, obtaining hybrid technology/software (if

needed), solidifying dinner reservations and food needs, solidifying hotel bookings/a conference hotel (if needed), creating conference information for the website, scheduling any tours/programming at the conference location, and helping with any transportation or parking needs that may arise.

c. For the 2010 meeting, collaborative software was debuted for use in program and overall conference planning, and it may be a more effective way to keep track of planning progress. Google Drive is currently used as TMLA's main online collaborative software. Any documentation for conference planning should be saved in the Google Drive for future reference.

4. Program Planning Committee
    a. This committee is typically made up of the TMLA Vice-Chair and "Local Arrangements" members at the hosting institution. Other people may be included at the TMLA Chair's discretion. The Program Planning Committee should expect to work closely with the Local Arrangements Committee.
    b. This committee is responsible for creating and promoting the call for papers (CFP), selecting presentations for the conference, creating a program schedule (in collaboration with the Local Arrangements Committee), communicating with presenters about technological needs, obtaining presenter biographies (if wanted), and helping moderate sessions during the day of the conference.
    c. Any documentation for conference planning should be saved in the Google Drive for future reference. See 3c for additional information.
5. Nominating Committee
    a. This committee is made up of the TMLA Past Chair and at least 1-2 other TMLA members. The call for committee members can be done through TMLA-L and is done at least 90 days (or 3 months) in advance of the annual meeting. If needed, the TMLA Past Chair can call upon people to assist with the Nominating Committee.
    b. The Nominating Committee is in charge of proposing at least two members for Vice-Chair each year and at least two members for Secretary/Treasurer in alternate years. They are also responsible for obtaining biographies for all nominees.
        i. NOTE: If the Nominating Committee asks the standing Secretary/Treasurer to fill a successive term, no second name is required to be submitted for that office that year. This is the same with the Web Editor position.
    c. The Committee works with the Web Editor to create an online ballot, usually through a secure platform like Qualtrics, for distribution to the TMLA membership 30 days before the annual business meeting.
6. Call for papers/paper theme
    a. If there is to be a theme for the conference, this needs to be identified by the Program Committee. The TMLA Chair typically puts out the official call for papers. Setting a deadline and sending out periodic reminders can be useful. A deadline of 2 months with periodic reminders is usually quite good.

    b. TMLA conferences usually have three types of presentations: "breakout" sessions (45-minute presentation of varying types - individual/group papers, lecture recitals, workshops, etc.), roundtables (20-30 minute guided group discussion), or lightning talks (short 10-20 minute session).
    c. Within that call for papers, it would be useful to suggest that all paper submissions come with a 200-300 word abstract describing the paper's anticipated content.
    d. Once paper submissions arrive, the Program Committee decides whether or not to accept them. The Program Committee should keep in close contact with the presenters to make sure all of their technology, handout, etc. needs are met.
7. Conference packet (local guides, attractions)
    a. This typically includes literature about the locale where the meeting is held, such as brochures from the local chamber of commerce, brochures advertising the hosting institution (especially music library-related services), and whatever other goodies the Local Arrangements members wish to include as souvenirs. The information in the "packet" can also be hosted as a webpage on the TMLA website.
8. Registration/Registration costs
    a. TMLA Chair and Program Committee consult on setting meeting costs.
    b. Online payment through PayPal or other service is strongly encouraged as more and more conferences allow attendees to pay this way.
    c. Registration levels: In addition to setting a regular registration level, it may be advantageous to have a reduced student registration fee to encourage greater attendance, as well as advertising the music library profession to MLS students in the state (or beyond).
9. Additional funding for meeting
    a. In the past, music library-related vendors have sponsored dinners or other events at meetings. Usually this is most practical when the vendor can have some sort of presence at the meeting, whether through a session or other type of exposure. This can be a way to cover meeting expenses, but again the appropriateness of doing this needs to be assessed by the program planning committee.
10. Hotel arrangements
    a. This has traditionally taken two forms:
        i. An official conference hotel
        ii. A list of nearby lodging provided to the membership before the meeting
    b. Local arrangements members determine which scenario is appropriate for a given year. The second scenario is more common, although at times a conference hotel has been identified.
11. Directional signs for the meeting
    a. A nice courtesy for meeting attendees. The variety and location of signage is up to the discretion of the Local Arrangements committee members. Remember: some hosting locations may have signage requirements in place. Please check with the hosting institution before creating any signage or affixing any signage.

12. Transportation issues
    a. Occasionally there have been circumstances which have necessitated the host institution provide shuttle buses or other transportation within a conference site, or to and from a meeting hotel. This is rare, but worth assessing the need for such at each respective conference site.
    b. Usually this comprises providing maps, directions, etc. to the conference site and local lodging.
13. Parking
    a. Parking privileges for attendees must be arranged with host institution.
    b. After arrangements are made, post on relevant information on website and/or distribute to membership through TMLA listserv.
14. Friday evening dinner
    a. A traditional gathering of meeting attendees after the first day of the conference.
    b. In some occasions, this expense can be arranged to be pre-paid by attendees before the meeting. Up to the discretion of the Program Committee.
    c. Gluten-free, vegetarian, and vegan options should be sought out when looking at restaurants for the Friday evening dinner.
15. Saturday morning Breakfast
    a. Another traditional gathering of attendees on the conference's second day before sessions begin. Gluten-free, vegetarian, and vegan options should be made available.
16. Snacks or other refreshments
    a. At the discretion of the Local Arrangements members. Please keep the dietary needs and restrictions of those attending the conference in mind. Gluten-free, vegetarian, and vegan options should be made available.
17. Miscellaneous program planning matters
    a. Make sure there is a place for a "Check-in"/Registration table!
    b. Nametags – typically arranged by the TMLA Secretary/Treasurer
    c. Traditionally the dean/director of the hosting institution welcomes everyone at the beginning of the meeting.
    d. Tours of music library facilities or other parts of the library also tend to be popular.
    e. As per the chapter constitution and bylaws, each chapter meeting concludes with a business meeting.
18. Other suggested pre-meeting correspondences
    a. Message to TMLA-L and MLA-L officially inviting people to the conference, usually close to the time preparations are solidly in the works, and preferably a conference website has been created and populated with information to refer folks to.
19. Conference website
    a. A primary way of communicating conference information to the membership.
    b. The chapter's web editor should be consulted in planning the conference website's construction.

c. Matters typically included on conference website:
    i. Conference site maps, directions and parking information
    ii. Conference schedule
    iii. Registration information
    iv. Lodging information
    v. Area attractions and events at the time of the conference (usually music related)
    vi. Link to Fine Arts/Music Library website of the host institution

Suggested Calendar

I. 8-9 months before meeting
   a. TMLA Chair and interested members from hosting institution should hold first meeting and form Local Arrangements Committee
      i. Decide dates for the meeting
      ii. Decide specific conference location
   b. TMLA Vice-Chair identifies and forms Program Planning Committee
   c. Local Arrangements Committee tasks
      i. Brainstorm ideas for meals/meal gatherings
      ii. Investigate lodging options/conference hotel options
      iii. Plan registration costs
      iv. Send invite to Dean/Director of hosting institution to give introduction at conference (they are busy people; do this early!)

II. 4-5 months before meeting
   a. TMLA Chair – Best of Chapter decision
      i. At least 1 month before the MLA Spring Meeting, create a secure form, such as a Qualtrics, containing the presentations presented at the previous year's TMLA fall meeting and their abstracts (if possible) to choose the top two presentations for TMLA's "Best of Chapter" award. Distribute this form to TMLA members who attended the meeting.
      ii. At the MLA Spring Meeting, announce the "Best of Chapter" winners.
      iii. Immediately after the MLA Spring Meeting, announce the "Best of Chapter" winners on TMLA-L.
      iv. Submit the Best of Chapters winners to Music Library Association's Best of Chapters Competition. This will come through the Chapter Chair listserv.
   b. TMLA Vice-Chair – TMLA Travel Grant first steps (Start this process at MLA Spring Meeting; See "2-3 months before meeting" for more)
      i. Discuss at MLA chapter meeting (usually in March) about how many grants to award and dollar amount of each award
      ii. Draft Call for Travel Grant Applications and have the call approved by TMLA Executive Committee
   c. Program Planning Committee tasks
      i. Host 1st meeting and create call for papers
      ii. TMLA Vice-Chair creates CFP submission form (online; through Google Forms)
      iii. TMLA Vice-Chair sends call for papers (CFP) to MLA-L, TMLA-L, AMS Announce, SMT-Announce, and MLStEP listserv
         1. Send CFP to Web Editor for posting on TMLA website
      iv. TMLA Vice-Chair sends out reminders through listservs as needed for call for papers

III. 2-3 months before meeting
    a. Local Arrangements Committee tasks
        i. TMLA Chair creates Registration form with payment method attached and gets this up on the website (TMLA Web Editor will need to help with this)
            1. Registration form should include name of registrant, email address, type of registration, any dietary restrictions/allergies, and if they will join us for Friday dinner with any "plus ones"
        ii. TMLA Chair invites MLA-L, TMLA-L, AMS Announce, SMT-Announce, and MLStEP listserv to conference and begins advertising
        iii. Local Arrangements committee (tasks can be divided through meetings/emails)
            1. Create conference "packets"/information and gather conference "swag" (if wanted) and provide information to TMLA Web Editor
            2. Create directional signage and aids for leading conference attendees to the conference location and provide information to TMLA Web Editor
            3. Figure out parking situation at conference location and provide information to TMLA Web Editor
            4. Begin discussing conference schedule in collaboration with the Program Planning Committee. Start to discuss any tours or events that may take place at the conference location and what time may be allocated for those events.
    b. Program Planning Committee tasks
        i. Committee chooses papers from CFP submissions (TMLA Vice-Chair anonymizes submissions if needed)
        ii. TMLA Vice-Chair contacts presenters on the status of their proposals
        iii. Program Planning Committee and Local Arrangements Committee begin discussing conference schedule. Start to discuss any tours or events that may take place at the conference location and what time may be allocated for those events.
    c. TMLA Vice-Chair – TMLA Travel Grant
        i. Once call is approved by Executive Committee, distribute call through MLA-L, TMLA-L, and MLStEP listserv. Make sure that deadline is 1 month's time.
            1. If needed, deadline can be extended by 1-2 weeks with Executive Committee's approval.
        ii. TMLA Vice-Chair provides Executive Committee with travel grant applications through collaborative software/Google Drive. Executive Committee selects travel grant recipients and all applicants should be notified of the outcome of their application around two weeks after the deadline.
        iii. TMLA Vice-Chair announces travel grant recipients on MLA-L and TMLA-L immediately after.

d. TMLA Past Chair – Nominating Committee
    i. Assemble a group of at least 1-2 additional TMLA member to create a Nominating Committee OR Send message through TMLA-L to assemble group of at least 1-2 additional TMLA members to create a Nominating Committee
    ii. Send out call for TMLA Web Editor through TMLA-L (if needed)
    iii. Review applications for TMLA Web Editor with Executive Committee and choose Web Editor (if needed) OR Collaborate with Executive Committee to select potential Web Editor from TMLA membership
e. Nominating Committee Tasks
    i. Select and contact at least two TMLA members who could serve as the next TMLA Vice-Chair. If they accept the nomination, obtain a brief biography from each member. If either say no, keep asking members until at least two TMLA members are on the ballot for the TMLA Vice-Chair.
        1. Do the same for the TMLA Secretary/Treasurer if needed.
    ii. Contact the Web Editor to collaborate on an online ballot through a secure platform like Qualtrics. Make sure to include a section in the ballot for any write-in candidates.

IV. 1 month before meeting
a. Local Arrangement Committee
    i. Have conference schedule solidified and to TMLA Web Editor
    ii. Make sure reservations are made for Friday Evening dinner and that plans are made to get any snacks for Friday afternoon and breakfast on Saturday morning
    iii. Reconfirm any tours/events scheduled at the hosting institution with tour guides/archives/ect.
    iv. Technology needs, including internet/WIFI, hybrid technology needs for the conference rooms, should be obtained and solidified
        1. Hybrid technology should be tested by the Local Arrangements Committee at least a month before the conference with the TMLA Chair and TMLA Vice-Chair and a practice Zoom link
b. Program Planning Committee
    i. Have conference schedule solidified and to TMLA Web Editor
    ii. Solidify MC (usually TMLA Chair if a TMLA only conference) and who is chairing each session/panel if necessary
    iii. Contact presenters about technology needs and pass needs along to the Local Arrangements Committee if needed
c. Nominating Committee
    i. Collaborate with Web Editor to get candidate biographies on TMLA website.
    ii. Send an email through TMLA-L announcing the upcoming TMLA election along with brief candidate biographies.

iii. When the election opens, send individualized ballot links to members in "good standing" and send out a message through TMLA-L announcing that election is open. The election should run for at least two weeks.

d. TMLA Vice-Chair – TMLA Travel Grant
   i. Discuss with TMLA Secretary/Treasurer to get travel grant checks prepared for distribution at the Business Meeting portion

e. TMLA Chair
   i. TMLA Chair continues to email MLA-L, TMLA-L, AMS Announce, SMT-Announce, and MLStEP listserv reminders about conference
   ii. TMLA Chair creates official hybrid conference link (through software such as Zoom) to be distributed 1 week before the meeting

V. 1 week before meeting

a. TMLA Chair
   i. Hybrid conference link should be distributed through email to all participants through email.

b. Local Arrangements Committee
   i. Conference location should be set up for the conference with registration desk, registration sign in, nametags with markers, and a conference room(s) with hybrid technology. Food should be picked up in advance if needed.

c. Program Planning Committee
   i. Presenters should be checked in with one more time to make sure that they have everything they need to present.

d. TMLA Vice-Chair
   i. Check in with Travel Grant attendees. Make sure that TMLA Secretary/Treasurer will have checks for distribution at Business Meeting.

VI. Immediately after meeting

a. TMLA Chair (Now TMLA Immediate Past Chair)
   i. Make sure that online recording of conference is uploaded to Google Drive (or another collaborative software)
   ii. Work out any necessary meeting expense and reimbursements with TMLA Secretary/Treasurer
   iii. Contact new Vice-Chair and Secretary/Treasurer (if needed) for their addresses for the website
      1. Pass along new addresses and information to Web Editor for TMLA website

b. TMLA Past Chair (Now off the executive committee)
   i. Announce election results on TMLA-L for anyone who was not able to attend the Business Meeting.
   ii. Contact Web Editor to post election results on the TMLA website
   iii. Assist in Web Editor transition (if needed)