

LITERARY MANAGERS & DRAMATURGS OF THE AMERICAS (LMDA)
Executive Plan (2024-2026)
DRAFT
20 May 2024

PART I: THE MISSION

Since its founding in 1985, LMDA has defined its mission as **affirming the function of dramaturgy, exploring its practice, and promoting the profession.**

With approximately 450 members in Canada, the U.S., and Mexico – including literary managers, institutional and freelance dramaturgs, creative producers, literary agents, directors, development executives, educators, students, and other artists and administrators in theatre and the performing arts – LMDA has made its organizational mark on the theatrical landscape by serving its diverse constituency and providing leadership in the growing global field of dramaturgy.

As stated in its bylaws, LMDA's purpose is **to cultivate, develop, and promote the fields of dramaturgy and literary management** by:

- creating an international network of dramaturgs and literary managers
- educating the public about and promoting the work of dramaturgs and literary managers
- establishing a communication network and information bank for members and the public

To fulfill its mission and purpose, LMDA's goals are threefold:

1. **serve the membership**
2. **strengthen the organization**
3. **further the field of dramaturgy**

The organization's first Three-Year Plan, which concluded in 2009, expanded the scope of LMDA's activities in order to better serve the role of dramaturgs and literary managers in North American theatre and to assert the organization's growing responsibilities as a prominent arts service organization. The second three-year plan, concluding in 2012, worked to sustain the organization's expansion in tangible ways while reaching beyond our borders in North America.

The third plan concluded in 2016 and made furthering the field a top priority, which encouraged the organization to make bold gestures and take a clear leadership role in dramaturgical discourses. Among its accomplishments were completing a comprehensive membership survey, developing outreach to and involvement of early-career dramaturgs (including Lessing Week fundraising activities), expanding regional activity and reporting, establishing a rolling membership renewal, creating a strong presence on social media, supporting the launch of the National New Play Network New Play Exchange, disseminating Employment Guidelines, and initiating Sample Contracts.

The scope of the Executive Plan was adjusted to two years in 2016 to coincide with the term of the President and Executive Committee. The plan that concluded in 2018 brought new and revised online resources, such as the updated LMDA Bibliography and Guide for Dramaturgy Programs. The plan that concluded in 2020, focused on creating Good Practices documents to encourage equity, diversity, and inclusion, and support the work and values of our membership.

The 2020 annual conference was meant to be in Mexico City but, due to COVID-19-related safety concerns and restrictions, was the organization's first fully "virtual" conference; sparking connections with artists beyond the Americas, including artists from the Lark, Dramaturgs' Network (d'n), and the Asian Dramaturgs Network. During 2021, we transitioned to a "hybrid" mode in which both in-person and virtual programming and convening were offered in service of the membership's connectivity. The plans that concluded in 2022 and 2024 focused on hosting the first ever conference in Mexico, building relationships around the globe, improving access and diversity initiatives as well as technology platforms, rebranding the organization, creating an education to employment pipeline, and stabilizing funding for the organization's mission.

This presidency seeks to elevate the work of dramaturgy in **rebuilding arts institutions, audience engagement, and the civic presence of performance** in a world changed by pandemic and other social upheavals and increase the **creation, preservation, and documentation** of dramaturgical initiatives past and present, in the Americas and around the globe.

This plan is a living document whose success relies on an active dialogue among the LMDA Executive, Board, and membership.

Part II: THE PLAN (2024-2026)

This plan strives to leverage a broad conception of dramaturgy to fortify our internal and external relationships, communications, and resources and support the rebuilding of arts infrastructures. As LMDA works to serve our entire membership and the field of dramaturgy, we seek to strengthen, preserve, and document our contributions and collaborations to theatre and to artistic endeavors in fields beyond theatre.

During the next two years, the Executive Committee will focus on the following objectives and strategies to further LMDA's primary goals:

Goal 1: Serve the Membership

Objective 1: Continue to clarify, promote, and expand member benefits

- a. Generate insights, resources, and events about rebuilding arts organizations, arts ecosystems, and audiences for the arts in different communities, the role dramaturgy and dramaturgs can play in those efforts, and how LMDA can support that vital work.
- b. Share and celebrate member success stories around freelance work, institutional initiatives, career transitions (within and without the field), and networking. Have a personal story and pictures on the website about each of our member-connecting or process-supporting programs.
- c. Reorganize the Executive Committee to streamline portfolios and encourage targeted member activities: combine Programs and Regional Activity, rename Institutions as Institutions and Resources, support the next phase of the Anti-Oppression portfolio by joining the Advocacy and Anti Oppression Portfolios.
- d. Promote, expand, and enrich the current Grants and Awards portfolio.
- e. Clarify the structure connecting LMDA and the Kennedy-Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF) and how best to have it support, promote, and expand member benefits.

Objective 2: Continue to expand LMDA's constituencies and develop dramaturgical connections beyond the Americas

- a. Identify or create two networking specific events to be the anchors of the organization's calendar in the times between the digital conference and the in-person conference, organized in collaboration between the Freelance Portfolio and the Institutional portfolio, in conversation with the VPs of Mexico and Canada.
- b. Continue to nurture and develop LMDA Mexico, with the plan to focus on incremental steps building networks among Mexican dramaturgs and connections between LMDA and universities teaching theatre and dramaturgy
- c. Support LMDA Canada in maintaining membership between Canada-based conference years. Draft an agreement outline about how LMDA and LMDA Canada are going to collaborate on conferences.
- d. Connect the idea of a "education to employment" pipeline to specific placements, programs, or resources within and without the organization.
- e. Explore a student or faculty exchange between LMDA's University Relations committee or the ATHE Focus Group and European academic programs that teach or advocate for dramaturgy.
- f. Hold a binational conference or a second conference in Mexico and continue to build capacity for an ongoing rotation of conferences held in Canada, the US, and Mexico.

Goal 2: Strengthen the Organization

Objective 1: Clarify and strengthen the brand for the organization

- a. Invest in the recruitment and retention of members through the Membership portfolio, with direct asks to people in academic and artistic institutions to join.
- b. Define and maximize the role of affinity groups play in LMDA's brand and programming in relationship to portfolios, the EC, and the Board
- c. Emphasize the role of dramaturgy in all areas of theatre training and practice, in particular seeking new ways of connecting through the University Relations and Freelance portfolios to acting training and design education.
- d. Elevate and highlight direct use of the LMDA Bibliography, LMDA Wiki entries, and the potentials of the archive.

Objective 2: Work with the Board of Directors to secure sustainable funding to fulfill LMDA's mission.

- a. Seek grants to support the budget line for Accessibility services.
- b. Target some fundraising beyond LMDA members: who or what kind of organization might give to LMDA in what ways?
- c. Mobilize the Fall Fundraiser and Lessing Circle to create more robust Awards and Grants.
- d. Analyze membership data and donation data each year to evaluate the intersection and impact of the membership pricing on member donations.

- e. Working with the Board's Development Committee, reanimate the idea of Radiating Change as a personal outreach and artistic renewal program, with or without funds.

Goal 3:

Objective 1: Lead the Discourse on the Future of Theatre the Performing Arts

- a. Create and host an annual artistic director's roundtable on rebuilding our field(s) and connect it to Howlround or *The Theatre Times*. Make this part of the Institutions portfolio and a signature LMDA event.
- b. Create and host an annual playwright's roundtable on rebuilding our field(s) and make it shared programming for TCG, the Dramatist Guild Conference, and LMDA in some way. Make this part of the Programs and Regional Activities portfolio and a signature LMDA event.
- c. Imagine how the themes of Rebuilding Audiences and Dramaturging the Community might shape the discourse and drive actions for the future of theatre and the performing arts. Encourage the VP of Advocacy and Anti Oppression to flag opportunities to share in different venues on these themes.
- d. Maintain and advance the use of employment guidelines and the quest for Union protections related to dramaturgy.

Objective 2: Continue Aligning LMDA activities with key conversations, changes, and leaders in the field

- a. Publish a *Dramaturging the Phoenix* anthology. Encourage its use in and out of academia.
- b. Offer more workshops in how to activate dramaturgy in devising and dance processes as well as new play development.
- c. Connect the work of Anti-Oppression within LMDA to conversations at ATHE and other professional organizations in the field.
- d. Support an interface of LMDA, the American Theatre Archives Project, and the Theatre Library Association around preservation, documentation, and resource sharing about the history and ongoing work of dramaturgy.

PART III: THE PEOPLE

This plan's objectives will be pursued by the LMDA Executive Committee. Collectively, the LMDA officers and committee members should reflect the diversity of the organization. Officers are expected to volunteer an average of 5-10 hours per month, and committee members are expected to volunteer an average of 3-5 hours per month.

A. The Executive Committee

As part of their duties, the members of the Executive Committee also sit on the LMDA Board of Directors, which includes ***Jenna K. Rodgers and Anne G. Morgan*** (chairs, term ends in June 2025), ***Ken Cerniglia, Michael Chemers, David Geary, Vicki Stroich, Arminda Thomas, Ariane van Buren, and Gavin Witt***.

Here is an outline of area responsibilities and personnel for the Executive 2024-26 term:

President, Sara Freeman: sets the agenda for the organization; nominates and supports the work of the LMDA Executive; provides vision for the organization, its programming, and conferences; and represents LMDA to other organizations.

Past President, Lynde Rosario: provides leadership continuity and institutional knowledge, and undertakes specific past president projects to be determined at the beginning of term.

President-Elect, to be elected in 2025: shadows the President and formulates a new two-year plan and Executive slate.

Executive Director, Lindsey R. Barr: manages the administrative elements of the organization, including membership renewal, accounts receivable and payable, inquiries, meeting agendas and minutes, coordinate voting, and craft/disseminate press releases. [Paid position appointed by the Board of Directors for renewable one-year terms.]

Treasurer, supervises the annual budget, collection of dues, cash reserves, and the processing and administering of grants; coordinates fundraising efforts and grant writing.

LMDA Canada Leadership Team: Ashley Chodat, Stephen Drover, Mollie Garrett, David Geary, Nathaniel Hanula-James, Evan Medd, Eden Middleton, Kodie Rollan

LMDA Mexico Leadership Team: Rocío Galicia, Martha Herrera Lasso, Adriana Mascorro, Emilio Méndez.

VP Canada, Stephen Drover: represents the organizational interests of the Canadian membership on the Executive Committee.

VP Mexico, Lourdes Guzmán González : represents the organizational interests of the Mexican membership on the Executive Committee.

VP Advocacy and Anti-Oppression, Kodie Rollan and Emma Bilderbeck: spearheads advocacy for dramaturgical work in any form and against oppression in the fields where dramaturgs are employed. Coordinates the Advocacy and Anti Oppression Action Team.*
Immediate past VP serving in advisory capacity: Russ Dembin.

VP Communications & Marketing, Suzi Elnaggar: coordinates the website, newsletter, and internal and external communications. *VP of Social Media;* Maren Flessen. *Bulletin Co-Editor:* Ally Varitek

VPs Freelance Dramaturgs, Yasmin Zacaria Mikhaiel: represents freelance dramaturgs, brainstorms programming specific to freelance dramaturgs, coordinates across the Executive Committee for the creation of programming specific to, or that includes, the needs of freelance dramaturgs.

VP Grants & Awards, *Alexandra Juckno*: coordinates the promotion, evaluation of applications, and selection of winners for LMDA's grants and awards.

VP Institutional Dramaturgs, *Jess Ellison* represents institutional dramaturgs, coordinates across the Executive Committee for programming specific to institutional dramaturgs, and coordinates efforts to preserve the legacy and resources of dramaturgical artistry. *Coordinator for Wikipedia entries, Archives, and Bibliography supports this portfolio: Amanda Dawson*

VP Membership, *Heather Helinsky*: works to recruit and retain members from a wide range of dramaturgical fields, backgrounds, and career stages.

VP Programs and Regional Activity, *Liana Irvine*: coordinates the activities of the LMDA regions and reporting of the Regional Representatives and identifies and meets the needs of the LMDA constituencies with tailored programming. *Coordinator for Programs communication: Rob Silverman-Ascher.*

VP Publications, *Allison Backus*: recruits and supports the editors of the LMDA *Review* and serves an editor as desired.

VP University Relations, *KJ Martinson and Dan Smith*: represents professors and students in universities and colleges, coordinates the activities of the U Caucus at the annual conference.

B. Conference Coordinators and Co-Chairs

Conference Coordinator (selected for each annual conference) *Melannie Walker, Kansas City, MO 2024; to be identified for 2025*: Develops programming, supervises local planning, and reports updates to and attends meetings with the President and Executive Board.

Conference Co-Chairs, *to be identified for 2025*: Reports to Conference Coordinator, Becomes the Head of the Local Committees (programming committee of 4-6 people, conference committee of on-site volunteers)

Digital Conference Coordinator: 2025 *Margo Skornia (instituting two-year terms under discussion)*: Support the LMDA team with pre-digital conference activities and post-digital conference archiving. Running the conference digitally on the two predetermined days on the preferred digital platform. Participating in the adjudication of digital conference activities. Gathering and coordinating digital conference content, participants, and volunteers prior to and throughout the duration of the digital conference.

C. Portfolio Committees

VPs will Update and Confirm Committees starting July 2024.

Advocacy and Anti Oppression Action Team*:

**Further description of this Portfolio and Action Team work, since it is so expansive: In specific, this portfolio oversees the revision and dissemination of the Employment Guidelines and Sample Contracts; coordinates activities that protect and promote the work of members and the profession; and collaborates with LMDA leadership to build and strengthen LMDA's diversity programs and policies, actively recruit & retain a diverse membership, and to identify opportunities and partnerships that deepen LMDA's engagement with issues of environment and sustainability.*

Communications and Marketing:

Digital Conferences:

Grants and Awards:

Institutional Dramaturgs

Membership

Programs and Regional Activity

Publications

University Relations