

UNIVERSITY *of* MISSOURI

DEPARTMENT OF ROMANCE LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCE

July 18, 2016

Dear CLA Members:

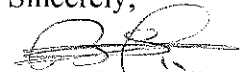
It is with a great deal of pride and enthusiasm that I write to inform you that the University of Missouri at Columbia (MU) will host the 2017 CLA convention. A host committee, composed of myself as chair, and other colleagues from our Departments of Romance Languages, English and Black Studies, and our Afro-Romance Institute, has been assembled in order to make the conference an engaging site of rich intellectual exchanges, which have always been the hallmark of our CLA conferences.

As most of you know, the Columbia campus is the flagship of the University of Missouri-system, which is now headed by an African-American president, Professor Michael Middleton, a career civil rights lawyer, and a law professor. The University of Missouri was founded in Columbia as the first public university west of the Mississippi River. Based on the quality of its teaching, research, and scholarship, MU is a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities. Our University promotes the values of respect, inclusion, diversity, responsibility, discovery, and excellence. The city of Columbia, home to our great University, is known as an ideal college town, combining small-town comforts and community spirit with big-city culture, activities and resources. Our city of about 100,000 people is located midway between Missouri's largest cities, St. Louis and Kansas City. *Money* magazine, *Fortune* magazine, *U.S. News & World Report*, *Men's Journal*, MSN.com and other news entities have named Columbia, Mo., one of the best places in the United States to live because of its high quality of life.

The 2017 CLA conference theme, "Interdisciplinary Studies and Diversity in Languages and Literatures" so aptly chosen, will enable us to emphasize the multidisciplinary nature that binds the teaching and research focus of CLA members. We also plan to showcase the hospitality of our campus and the talents of some of our faculty and students in the school of music, and our creative writing program, for example. Our keynote speaker will be Professor Jamaica Kincaid, a National Book Award Winner and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. We are so happy that she accepted our invitation to join us at the conference.

We promise you an exciting conference in a very hospitable city, hosted by dedicated and congenial colleagues, and a great University, which always warmly welcomes its guests. We look forward to seeing you in early April 2017 (the 5th to the 8th).

Sincerely,



Mamadou Badiane

Associate Professor of Hispanic Studies
Chair of the CLA 2017 Host Committee

