
An Update From ACLS President Joy Connolly

Dear ACLS Community,

I write to send you our good wishes and to share important news about our continuing response at ACLS to the COVID-19 crisis.

With the health and well-being of our members as our first priority, and given the extensive travel and meeting restrictions in place, ACLS regrettably announces that the in-person annual meeting to be held April 30-May 2 in Baltimore has been cancelled.

We will conduct the business of the Meeting of the Council on Friday, May 1, as virtual sessions. The proceedings will include my report to the Council and the constitutionally mandated components of the Meeting of the Council. We rely on the participation of all delegates and executive directors of our member societies. We also thank our Haskins Lecturer, Professor Linda Kerber, for her flexibility and understanding as we reschedule her talk as a special event this autumn: please stay tuned!

We look forward to sharing the results of our strategic planning process with the whole community at the end of April. Consultation on the plan was broad and lively up through the end of January, and we were about to go to press with our final draft when the impacts of COVID-19 began to take hold. While the document you will see next month incorporates the substance of those discussions, we will be best served by a flexible plan of action that allows us to prioritize our most urgent goals in the context of this ever-changing landscape.

To that end, in keeping with the spirit of consultation that has shaped the planning process, we are meeting this week with the Executive Committee of the Conference of Executive Officers, the Executive Committee of our Delegates, the Strategic Plan Advisory Committee, and others who have offered valuable advice over the past several months. We are grateful to everyone involved for their time, wisdom, and support. The new plan will be available on our website just before the 2020 Annual Meeting. It maps out how we will **serve** scholars, societies, and institutions; **connect** our many constituencies; **amplify** the value of humanistic knowledge; and **renew** ourselves and the work we support. Despite the still-emerging health and economic implications of the pandemic, we remain confident and determined to embark on the journey ahead.

Along with our new plan, even in the midst of this crisis, there is plenty of reason to celebrate. **We are pleased to confirm that ACLS will honor all fellowships and grants awarded for 2020-2021.** News about these cohorts of fellows and grantees will be announced on our website and social media channels regularly over the coming weeks.

We were delighted to learn last week that ACLS fellow, Lizabeth Cohen F'93, **won her second Bancroft Prize** for her recent book, *Saving America's Cities: Ed Logue and the Struggle to Renew Urban America in the Suburban Age*. A good friend to ACLS, Professor Cohen is the Jones Professor of American Studies and past dean of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. Congratulations!

As always, we are happy to hear from you. Emily Dickinson provides our poem this week – a wonderfully sharp commentary, apropos for this moment.

Best wishes,

Joy