

5 May 2020

Dear Colleague,

We are all experiencing extraordinary uncertainty in every dimension of life: health, our personal lives, our professional lives, the economy, and higher education. We face these uncertainties along with family, friends, colleagues, and students.

Your institutions are also facing uncertainty on how to plan for the next academic year, with the new normal including austerity budgets and travel restrictions. Many of you are dealing with legislated social distancing and possible travel quarantines as well. SBL and AAR, too, are considering these many issues as we plan scholarly exchange in November.

Core to the work of learned societies is their ability to convene for and on behalf of their members. SBL's [mission statement](#) emphasizes that it provides members opportunities for mutual support, intellectual growth, and professional development through, among other things, the organization of congresses for scholarly exchange. **SBL is committed to providing venues for scholarly exchange this year and every year, regardless of the situation, so that every paper accepted has an opportunity for presentation.** This is an essential part of what you do as a scholar, independently or in the context of—and on behalf of—your institution for professional advancement.

Planning for the Annual Meetings in Boston is complicated and involves considering significant health and financial factors. **At this point, it is incumbent on the SBL and AAR to continue to plan for a joint Annual Meeting to be held in November 2020.** As of today, the meetings are scheduled to be in-person in Boston, MA. However, we recognize that the circumstances could change between now and November, and we will continue to monitor the current facts and circumstances regarding COVID-19, as well as governmental responses. We will continue to advise membership on any changes that may be necessary.

We will continue with plans to open volunteer registration on 12 May and regular registration on 14 May. You will receive another email when registration opens. However, as we expressed in a March letter to members, we want to reduce the financial risk for those planning to attend the Annual Meeting. All registrations will be fully refundable until 21 October, without a cancellation fee.

Sincerely,

The SBL Council
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