



17 May 2024

Dear CHA Members,

I am writing with an update on our fast-approaching annual meeting.

As many of you know, the Association of McGill Professors of Law (AMPL) has been on strike since 24 April. On 8 May, AMPL wrote to me in my capacity as president of the Canadian Historical Association with a request either to cancel our annual meeting scheduled for June 17-19 or move it to a different venue.

The CHA supports the right to organize, to bargain collectively, and to strike. And the CHA is committed to equity, collegial governance, and reducing precarity in our ranks. In his 2021 report on precarity in the history profession, Steven High was clear: unions must have a seat at the table and must be part of the solution. “History shows that collective action drives progressive change.” I couldn’t agree more.

We worked hard to find a solution that would enable us to proceed with our annual meeting. Had we canceled the meeting, the CHA would have had to pay a significant financial penalty to the Federation of Humanities and Social Sciences. In addition, the Federation made it clear that it would not refund Congress fees to delegates who decided not to attend. Finally, we knew that many delegates had purchased non-refundable plane tickets.

Next, we looked for a different venue. But this too carried a host of financial and logistical problems. First, we would pay the same financial penalty to the Federation. Second, while we were able to locate some rooms, we could not locate enough rooms. And third, we would not have been able to offer childcare services and day camps to delegates attending the annual meeting with children.

To reiterate, we support AMPL – the first certified faculty association at McGill – and we are troubled by reports of McGill’s bad faith bargaining and even refusal to bargain.

Working with the AMPL leadership, we reached an agreement. In solidarity, we have moved some of our sessions to a different venue and we are looking at how we might build a collective show of support into our program. In the meantime, we encourage individual members to join AMPL’s picket lines.

Canadian Historical Association | Société historique du Canada
1912-130 Albert Street (Ottawa, ON) K1P 5G4 Tel | Tél : 613 233-7885 cha-shc@cha-shc.ca
www.cha-shc.ca

For its part, AMPL recognizes the many financial and logistical challenges we confronted when looking for a new venue; at the same time, it appreciates the support and solidarity of the CHA. To this end, it has agreed to supply the CHA with picket stickers permitting entry to McGill buildings. In turn, the CHA will distribute the picket stickers to delegates which will allow you to attend and present your research at the annual meeting.

I want to take this opportunity to formally thank AMPL's leadership for their generosity and to wish AMPL every success in its strike.

I also want to thank Michel Duquet, Steven High, Jo McCutcheon, Alexandre Dubé, and Amanda Ricci, as well as the program co-chairs Donald Nerbas and Elsbeth Heaman. Everyone rolled up their sleeves.

I very much hope to see you at the annual meeting. To me, it is the best thing about the CHA. But if you choose not to attend because of the labour action on the McGill campus, the CHA will reimburse your association fees. If you are a graduate student or you are precariously employed, the CHA will reimburse your association and your Congress fees.

Finally, details on how, exactly, the stickers will be distributed are being worked out. Stay tuned, and as always, thanks for your patience.

Please feel free to contact me at wrightd@unb.ca if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Don

Donald Wright
President, CHA | SHC