

From the Incoming President

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As this issue goes to press, we are in the midst of one of the most complex decisions that has faced LASA for some years. As Sonia explains in her report, in response to a pattern of increasing difficulties and outright denials of visas for our Latin American colleagues, the EC voted to explore possibilities for a relocation of LASA2007 outside the United States. The Secretariat carried out an extensive review of possible alternative sites, and organized site visits to the cities that were most likely to offer necessary and beneficial conditions. After much research and deliberation, the Secretariat recommended, in the event that the EC decided to move, that the new site for LASA2007 be Montreal. We then proceeded to estimate the costs—both tangible and intangible—of such an action, and to prepare a statement to the membership that would accompany the referendum. On Saturday, May 13, some 2,169 LASA members voted overwhelmingly—80 percent—in favor of the relocation. The option to move also received near-unanimous support from an “extended” Executive Council consisting of both incoming and current EC members (we put the vote to the extended EC in recognition of the fact that the decision-making process involved both outgoing and incoming officers; through this mechanism, both groups had the opportunity to cast their vote, providing greater assurance of ample deliberation from diverse perspectives).

With these steps complete, all the pieces are now in place for a move to Montreal. By the time this *Forum* reaches you, the final decision (both the confirmed date and the site) will in all probability be made.

However, the last crucial step requires us to go back to the hotels in both Montreal and Boston to negotiate the terms of the change in venue. In the next issue of the *Forum*, we will be in a position to report fully on the results of this process. As soon as the final decision is confirmed and set in stone, an email message will go out to the entire membership.

On behalf of the Secretariat and the Executive Council, I want to thank each and every member of LASA for your patience in this process; and for those who took the time to vote and to send comments, special thanks are due.

Whatever your feelings and judgment about the relocation, please be assured that your voice has been heard; in the event that you have objections to the final decision, I will make a special effort to address these concerns in a future *Forum*, or in other appropriate means. It is my sincere hope that this relocation decision, although difficult and at times stressful, will draw us closer together as an Association, affirming the mission of free and unhindered scholarly exchange that is the very soul of LASA, debating the pros and cons of different strategies, and ultimately, taking the concrete action in defense of these principles that corresponds to the will of the majority.

Please be attentive to further communication on this issue in the weeks to come. ■

