



RE: Cancellation of Borders / Bridges: the 2020 APLA/AES Joint Spring Conference

Monday, March 9th, 2020

Dear Conference Registrant,

You are receiving this letter because you were registered to participate in “Borders/Bridges,” an academic conference organized by the American Ethnological Association (AES) and the Association for Political and Legal Anthropology (APLA), which was scheduled to be held in Austin, Texas from March 26-28, 2020. In response to public health concerns associated with the widening impact of the global COVID-19 outbreak, the AES and APLA boards have both voted to formally cancel the conference.

We are providing this letter in order to provide you with formal documentation that the conference has been cancelled based on public health concerns. We hope that it will be of assistance as you seek refunds for lodging and travel expenses you may have incurred based on your plan to attend the conference.

The decision to cancel has been made based on careful consideration of the evolving situation. Factors informing the decision include:

- On March 6th, Austin Mayor Steve Adler declared a local disaster in the city and cancelled the South by Southwest music festival.
- Universities in the United States and around the world have implemented travel restrictions that prevent faculty and students from attending the conference.
- Restrictions have been placed on international travelers coming into the US from numerous destinations. Many of our participants come from international destinations, and numerous registrants come from universities which have already cancelled in-person classes and events. Without these participants, the conference is not viable.
- The conference involved numerous attendees who are identified as “higher risk” (seniors and immune-compromised individuals) by the CDC. Their recommendation is for those individuals to avoid crowds as much as possible.

All of these reasons raise serious concerns about protecting the health of conference participants, as well as the residents of the city of Austin, and we therefore have no choice but to cancel the conference.

Sincerely,

Nate Wambold
Director, Meetings & Conferences
American Anthropological Association