



July 20, 2018

To the Steering Committee of the BABEL Working Group:

Thank you for raising the concerns articulated in the letter delivered to the Medieval Institute on July 18, 2018. Please know that we take these very seriously, and we appreciate that you have raised them.

We value diversity and inclusion, and it is critical to us that the Congress remains welcoming to all. Indeed, the Congress includes a statement on diversity and inclusion on our website and printed in the annual program (wmich.edu/medievalcongress/policies-guidelines/policies). We intend for our statement on diversity and inclusion to serve as a set of guiding principles for the Congress.

The Congress has grown up organically over many decades, and it has changed over those decades based on input from the international community of medievalists. Congress topics have shifted over time in response to the session proposals submitted by an ever-evolving group of medievalists. We value feedback from the community, and we intend to take this opportunity to improve our selection procedures.

To that end, we will appoint a working group to consider changes to the current selection process, focusing especially on the questions that have been raised in your letter regarding the composition and public identity of the selection committee. A request for nominees to join the working group will be forthcoming shortly. We will strive to select a committee that represents the full breadth of the international community of medievalists, and the composition of the working group will be made public. We are committed to creating a selection process that is inclusive, rigorous, fair, and as transparent as possible. The working group will be tasked with making final recommendations on a timeline such that changes are in effect for the 2020 International Congress on Medieval Studies. We are also willing to reconsider all four of the rejected sessions proposed to be co-sponsored by the Fellowship of Medievalists of Color for the 2019 Congress, should we be contacted by the sponsoring groups who proposed them.

Thank you again for sharing these concerns and for providing an opportunity for us to respond to them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jana K. Schulman".

Jana K. Schulman
Professor of English
Director, The Medieval Institute