



CAWLS

Canadian Association
for Work & Labour Studies

ACETS

Association canadienne
d'études du travail et du syndicalisme

February 17, 2021

Open Letter to the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (FHSS)

Dear FHSS Leadership:

The Executive of the Canadian Association for Work and Labour Studies (CAWLS) expresses our ongoing concerns with the manner FHSS engages with and responds to issues raised by the Black Canadian Studies Association (BCSA) and its supporters.

After a baseless and racist accusation against a Black graduate student in 2019 by a Congress attendee, CAWLS issued a statement in solidarity with the BCSA calling for Congress to take action after it failed to address the situation swiftly.

In 2020, Congress was understandably forced to cancel the annual meeting due to COVID-19. We understand that previous commitments made to the BCSA on issues of accessibility and the chosen theme for the conference were not guaranteed for future events.

Now here we are in 2021 and FHSS leadership only manages to change its policies on accessibility for Black students and conference theme as requested by BCSA after the association decides to leave Congress and hold its meetings independently.

As scholars, we do not accept that these inadequate responses are simply a matter of slow bureaucratic procedures and processes. FHSS's failure to address issues and make even the most basic adjustments in a timely fashion appears systemic and the result of a 'make-it-up-as-you-go' leadership that only acts when absolutely forced to by a frustrated membership.

We are saddened that BCSA will not be part of the 2021 meetings. After weighing the logistical obstacles associated with hosting our own independent conference on such short notice, CAWLS has decided to hold its meetings virtually with Congress this year after cancelling our 2020 meeting. However, the future of CAWLS' relationship with FHSS will be the major agenda item at our upcoming Annual General Membership meeting in June. As an association of scholars committed to equity and justice, we will not be part of an organization that seems incapable of making the changes necessary to meet the needs of a dynamic scholarly community. Before we can do better, we must expect better.

Sincerely,

Larry Savage, President CAWLS
On behalf of the CAWLS Executive



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