Dear CAIS/SSHORE Delegates,

After serious deliberation, the North Atlantic Worlds conference organizers and the CAIS Executive regret to inform you that we are cancelling this year’s joint CAIS/SSHORE conference at Memorial University in St. John’s, Newfoundland. The ever-changing aspects of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak, its new status as a global pandemic, and its potential impact on the health and safety of our participants are factors that we cannot ignore.

We realize this news will be disappointing, but we want to assure you that this decision was not made lightly or rashly. We have been closely monitoring global updates on the spread of COVID-19 and the risk assessments provided by the World Health Organization and the Government of Canada over the past days and weeks. We have carefully considered multiple factors involved in hosting a large gathering of people from numerous international destinations, and from areas of Canada that require air travel to Newfoundland. We also are aware of the financial and organizational complications that arise from booking travel and conference accommodation without knowing how or when the spread of the virus will be curtailed. The health and well-being of our conference participants and attendees is our primary concern, which has led us to this disappointing but necessary action.

Memorial University conference services has already started the process of full refunds of paid registration fees; please allow at least 2-3 working days for those refunds to appear in your accounts.

We also understand, and regret, the lost career-development opportunity for graduate students and recent graduates. For those of you with oceanic interests, we encourage you to consider submitting a blog to SSHORE as an alternate venue for your work (for previous blogs, see <https://sshoresite.wordpress.com/> and please contact Julia or Danine for more information).

For those with specifically Irish and Irish-Canadian research interests, we are exploring the possibility of a special issue of the *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* dedicated to North Atlantic Worlds themes and will reach out to you if that becomes a reality.

We are grateful to our proposed keynote speakers and all those who submitted proposals for this joint conference. We look forward to seeing you next year at the CAIS 2021 conference hosted by the Université Savoie Mont Blanc in Chambéry, France.

If you have any further questions, please direct them to [atlanticworlds2020@gmail.com](mailto:atlanticworlds2020@gmail.com).

Danine Farquharson and Julia Wright

North Atlantic Worlds Conference co-chairs

Jane McGaughey

CAIS President on behalf of the CAIS Executive