

Letter from the President of the Western Society for French History

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Dear Readers of the *Journal of the Western Society for French History*,

Our current moment is one that requires a response, and I am proud that the Western Society for French History (WSFH) has found a way to do just that. I am pleased to report that despite current national and global political and economic trends, the Western continues to meet our mission to not only support research and teaching on the history of the French and Francophone worlds, but also to increase equity in our field and profession more broadly and engender a sense of academic community.

To achieve that sense of belonging, we began the year by coming together twice in spring to discuss how local and national trends were affecting our institutions, field, and senses of well-being. Thank you to everyone who participated in those conversations. I recognize that finding time to meet is always challenging, but the times in which we find ourselves are a calling to the WSFH's historic mission of creating cohesion. I will hope that we continue to see the Western as a place where we develop and further that unity.

In July, we hosted a joint Annual Conference with the Society for French Historical Studies and the Society for the Study of French History—with participation from the Association for the Study of Modern & Contemporary France, Georges Rudé Society, and H-France—in Paris, France. The response to the conference was tremendous, and it was extremely rewarding to see so many of our colleagues explore the conference's theme: Resistance. During the conference, the Society sponsored a panel related to the publication of the WSFH white paper, [*"The Job Market in French and Francophone History \(2015-2024\)."*](#) At that session, we provided updated statistics from the 2024-2025 job market and fostered a conversation about the state of the field that aimed not to promote a narrative of "doom and gloom," but to focus on the various directions in which we can help lead our field as we confront, consider, and reconcile with our contemporary professional realities. We are looking forward to our next conference in Memphis, TN in 2026.

The Western also continues its advocacy in the profession. We have signed on to statements and letters issued by the American Historical Association on a wide range of topics this year related to the current administration's affront to scholarly pursuits. I have also written to administrators in my capacity as WSFH President in support of our colleagues.

We had a number of other things to celebrate this year, too. In addition to highlighting the success of the Paris conference, I ask that you visit our website to learn more about the recipients of the Millstone, Ronald S. Love, and Edward T. Gargan Prizes

advancing the field of French and Francophone history, as well as the Millstone Research Fellowship winners this year. Our field is strong, and WSFH is proud to be able to honor and commend the outstanding work being done by our colleagues at every career stage.

The Western has been special to me ever since I attended my first meeting in Banff as a graduate student in 2012. Through the Society I have found not only future co-editors (of books, special issues, and special sections) and co-authors; I have made dear friends and colleagues who I look to for guidance and support. As I prepare to hand off the presidency to Jonathyne Briggs, I am happy to report that the Western remains a strong beacon for many.