

SSSP 2024-2025 Chicago, IL
Local Arrangement Committee (LAC) Report
Kayla M Martensen, Chair
Final Report Submitted July 15, 2025
The members of the SSSP 2024-2025 LAC are:

Kayla M. Martensen, Chair (2024-2025)
The University of New Mexico
kmartensen@unm.edu

Iolanthe Brooks (2024-2025)
Northwestern University
iobrooks@u.northwestern.edu

Tia Dickerson (2024-2025)
Columbia University
td2859@columbia.edu

Teresa Irene Gonzales (Advisory Role) (2024-2025)
Loyola University Chicago
tgonzales3@luc.edu

Kayla worked directly with Michele Koontz and President Rose Brewer in the role of Chair of the Local Arrangements Committee. Both offered invaluable guidance and insight throughout the process. I'm deeply grateful for their support and assistance.

The committee was responsible for completing a range of tasks. Below is an overview of these responsibilities and how we carried them out.

Kayla Martensen and Iolanthe (IO) Brooks met via Zoom on November 5, 2025, to review the committee's assigned tasks and develop a plan for completing them.

Kayla Martensen created a list of names and contact information for the Local Colleges and Universities. Directory was submitted 11/28/2024.

Io Brooks and Kayla Martensen co-created a list of potential walking tours, and they both reached out to several walking tours to determine fit. Kayla went on a Pilsen Art Walking Tour to observe if it was the right fit. Because it was the off-season (winter) in Chicago, we were only able to observe one of the walking tours. We did not recommend the walking tour that Kayla toured, but we found another similar tour that seemed to be a better fit. Kayla wrote a report for Rose and Michele that detailed six possible tours, including logistics and descriptions of each tour. Suggestions for tours were submitted on 12/2/2024.

The two tours chosen were: the Historic Pullman Tour, selected to ground participants in Chicago's central role in U.S. labor history and to uplift the enduring significance of Black labor

organizing and company town politics. This tour, led by the Illinois Labor History Society, offers a unique opportunity to reflect on economic justice and collective resistance through a historically significant site. We also chose the Pilsen Mural Tour to highlight the historically Mexican neighborhood's legacy of immigrant resistance and cultural resilience through community-driven storytelling and art. Led by Pilsen Public Art Tours, the experience connects participants to local histories of displacement and struggle and visits the neighborhood's first housing co-op, the Pilsen Housing Cooperative (PIHCO). Kayla wrote a description of the chosen tours, submitted on 1/28/2025.

Kayla Martensen wrote the Welcome to the City of Chicago essay, which highlighted Chicago's legacy of resistance and activism, acknowledged its Indigenous history and present, and provided practical recommendations for exploring neighborhoods, food, art, and social justice landmarks near the conference. Teresa Irene Gonzales gave the document a review with suggested feedback. The essay was submitted on 3/8/2025.

Io Brooks and Tia Dickerson wrote the Graduate Student Welcome to the City overview and submitted it to Kayla Martensen on 3/8/2025. Kayla submitted it to SSSP 3/8/2025.

The LAC committee was collectively in communication in the development of a nomination for the Indigenous People's Social Justice Award recipient. After filtering through our local networks and conducting internet searches, the committee nominated Chi-Nations Youth Council. No members of the LAC are affiliated with this organization. Chi-Nations Youth Council was nominated for their community-rooted work supporting Native youth through arts, activism, and education, and for their sustained commitment to Indigenous cultural resurgence, land stewardship, and collective liberation. The nomination information was sent on 3/8/2025. Kayla Martensen wrote a letter to CNYC informing them they were the recipient of the award on 4/8/2025. When they agreed to accept, congratulatory emails were sent by Rose Brewer, Michele Koontz, and Elroi Windsor.

Kayla Martensen wrote the Press Release that was sent to Tia Dickerson for feedback. The press release was submitted on 7/7/2025. There as a lack of clarity on what the LAC should do with the press release outside of write and submit it.

Kayla Martensen wrote the LAC committee report that was circulated to LAC members for feedback. The report was submitted on 7/14/2025.

Future Recommendations

Action Items

(1) The LAC Committee recommends that the board reconsider the deadlines for walking tours and local event listings. It was challenging to coordinate with vendors for summer walking tours during the winter months, with only one vendor willing to host a tour at all in the middle of winter, while many vendors did not respond to our inquiry at all.

Furthermore, while we were able to include major events happening in Chicago during the conference, other local happenings, which were arguably of more interest to attendees, were not yet announced by the Welcome to the City deadline.

The LAC Committee suggests using a dynamic Welcome to the City format, such as a Google Doc, that allows events to be added as they become available. Alternatively, allowing the LAC committee to add local events at a later time would suffice.

If feasible, we also recommend extending the walking tour deadline to mid-spring to allow committee members time to coordinate the tours we are recommending. For good reason, it was suggested that the LAC take the walking tour in advance which was not possible for either of the walking tours we ultimately suggested because of the early deadline requirement.

Respectfully,

Kayla M Martensen
LAC Chair 2024-2025