

## From the Program Co-chair

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When the LASA Executive Committee discussed the possibility of holding the 2018 Congress in Barcelona, members expressed delight about organizing the first LASA in Europe in a city and region with a rich history and culture, innumerable attractions, affordable public transit and culinary options, and easy access to other European cities. What worried the committee was whether the cost and distance of flights from the Americas would discourage participation, particularly from Latin America and the West Coast of the United States. Some wondered if the attendance would plummet. The pessimists were proven wrong, however, as LASA received a record number of applications for the Barcelona Congress. This indicates that we will have a large, robust conference, but it also means that many who have applied will not be accepted; the proverbial good news/bad news.

First, the numbers, based on comparisons with the very large New York Congress in 2016. The number of individual panels rose by 30 percent while panels and events stayed almost the same, growing 1 percent. Membership from 2015 to 2017 skyrocketed by 40 percent, reaching 16,730 in September 2017. Members from Latin American and the Caribbean continue to lead, with just under 50 percent of the total membership. North America (United States and Canada) is next. Not surprisingly in light of the upcoming Congress in Catalonia, Europeans now make up a significant part of LASA, with almost 1,500 members. Membership from Asia is also rising. The presidential panels, discussed below, address the expanding interest and participation in LASA in Europe, Asia, and Russia.

	New York 2016	Barcelona 2018	Increase (%)
Individual proposals	2,307	2,989	30
Panel and event proposals	1,524	1,541	1
Travel funding requests	1,403	2,550	82
Membership (at time of proposal deadline)	11,947	16,730	40

Requests for travel funds also increased greatly: from 1,403 for New York to 2,550 for Barcelona. LASA continues to fund-raise and to search for ways to make the Congress affordable. Many international conferences offer no student discount or travel subsidies. For LASA2017 in Lima, over 700 participants benefitted from some sort of aid. I hope these numbers will encourage you to donate to LASA or your favorite section and to request that your university or organization help in some way. I would also like to share one more statistic: the LASA offices in Pittsburgh received 3,036 emails in the two weeks leading up to the deadline, most of them panicked questions about the submission process. Kudos to the great staff for their hard work and thanks to LASA members for their patience.

Now the bad news. The high number of applicants and the limited space in the Barcelona venues will mean that acceptance rates will drop. Many fine panels and individual papers will be turned down. LASA is working hard to find additional venues near the Barcelona convention center, but other conferences are taking place at the same time and the popularity of Barcelona means that availability is always limited. LASA hopes to find more space but a record number of applications will mean a relatively high rejection rate.

The Program Committee has put together seven excellent presidential panels with prominent participants. The topics include the following:

- Migraciones, guerra fría y solidaridad: Estudios de América Latina desde Europa
- Repensando las relaciones entre América Latina y Europa: Entre desigualdades interdependientes y “cooperaciones” para transiciones civilizatorias
- 1968: 50 Years After
- Los estudios latinoamericanos en Asia y Rusia
- La prensa bajo fuego
- Reflexiones sobre la producción cultural y conocimiento en el siglo XXI
- Memory Studies from the Americas and Spain in a Globalized World

These panels bring together an excellent group of specialists from Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean, Russia, and North America, with more than a dozen disciplines represented. We look forward to sharing more details in December.

Finally, LASA members are asking what the current situation in Catalonia will mean for the Congress. As I write this (October 9) nothing indicates that it will affect the Congress. Protests have been nonviolent, and the recent aggression by Spanish police appears to be an aberration and not the beginning of escalated violence. All sides in

## Congress Survey Report

by ANGELINA COTLER, LASA Director of Membership and Development

Catalonia have expressed their resolve not to disrupt Barcelona's booming tourism economy. (On the other hand, many people in Barcelona are tired of tourists overwhelming the city, outnumbering locals in many spaces. This has led to some tourist-bashing but also some creative efforts to search for ways to improve coexistence and to guarantee that tourism benefits the broad community.)

Like all of you, we are following the news from Spain closely, but we do not believe that the recent events pose a threat to the success of the Congress. We are looking forward to the Barcelona Congress on May 23–26, 2018. It's an exciting place and certainly an exciting time. ■

Our 51st Congress in Lima, Peru, was filled with exciting panels, stimulating debates, and wonderful networking opportunities. Overall, from our perspective, it was a successful Congress. We were honored to welcome 6,620 registered participants, 1,680 local students, and 3,816 members who presented their research at the Pontificia Universidad Católica in Lima. It is significant to note that 29% of the members attending were graduate students and 68% of them non-US residents.

Regardless of all the enthusiasm around the Congress we wanted to make sure that our most important constituents, our members, agree on the success of LASA2017, and thus our yearly online survey was sent to collect demographic information, respondents' feedback, and to measure the overall experience during our time in Peru. We thank the 900 attendees who participated in this year's survey, who represent 13.5% of all of the LASA2017 registered participants.

Half of the respondents to this year's survey were Latin American residents and 40% were from the United States and Canada. Similar to previous years, the majority of respondents work primarily on research activities (56%), while 30% focus on education. About one-third of respondents were attending a LASA Congress for the first-time (30%), while 31% of respondents were seasoned attendees, having attended five or more LASA Congresses. Both groups are important to us, as you evaluate the Congress with new lenses as well as with experienced ones.

Most participants (47%) attended between four and seven sessions during the Congress.

Overall, 65% of the survey respondents were satisfied with LASA2017, 16% were neutral, and 19% were dissatisfied. This was a decrease of 12% from last year's satisfaction rate. Based on the feedback, this decrease is likely due to two major reasons: the registration process and small size rooms. We apologize to those who had to endure the wait and thank all for your patience and understanding. LASA is actively working to offer a better service. At the same time, there was an unanimous 95% positive response for having opened the Congress to local students.

We realize that many sessions occur at the same time, some of them on the same topics. Due to the high volume of sessions accepted in order to honor LASA's spirit of inclusiveness, multidisciplinary, and diversity, this overlap is bound to happen. We hope that the multiple simultaneous sessions permit a wide range of session options in which you can participate and grow.

A recurring concern is that room size was inadequate for the number of attendees in a session. Unfortunately, it is impossible for us to predict the number of attendees for a particular session; thus this factor is not usually considered when assigning rooms. Additionally, since LASA2013, to further allow networking opportunities between colleagues in the same disciplines, we started assigning neighboring rooms by program tracks or similar themes. Sometimes this practice risks having small meeting rooms next to each other. However, we have received very positive feedback on having track-designated rooms as it has improved networking opportunities. We hope this additional networking compensates for the sometimes crowded rooms.