

Report from the Program Chairs

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The response to the call for papers for the Rio Congress has been tremendous, with the total number of proposals having increased 43 percent above the number of proposals for LASA2007 in Montréal. This increased interest is exciting and provides strong evidence for the continued growth of LASA's importance as a scholarly association and the Brazilian Congress site's great appeal. Unfortunately, this growth in the number of proposals is accompanied by certain challenges—LASA2009 will not be able to accommodate all of the 4,312 proposals due to time and space constraints. Thanks to the Congress location at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro we shall have a larger number of meeting rooms available than for any previous LASA Congress. However, even if we increase the number of presentations by some 20 percent over Montréal—which already saw record attendance—roughly 20 percent of the proposals will have to be rejected.

The track chairs will be dealing with large numbers of proposals to review, but several tracks have co-chairs to help with this process. The following tracks received over 150 proposals (individual and panel proposals combined): Afro-Latin and Indigenous Peoples; Civil Society and Social Movements; Culture, Power and Political Subjectivities; Economics and Development; Education, Pedagogy and Scholarly Resources; Histories and Historiographies; Literary Studies: Contemporary; Literature and Culture: Interdisciplinary Approaches; Political Institutions and Processes; Politics and Public Policy. The proposals and guidelines for selection were sent to the track chairs at the end of May and the track chairs were asked to report their decisions by the end of June. Let us express our gratitude to the track chairs for taking on this big task, and to Milagros Pereyra-Rojas, the Executive Director of LASA, and Monica Davis, the LASA staff coordinator for the Rio Congress, for managing the central coordination.

Work is also under way on organizing the presidential panels. President Eric Hershberg and the two of us are working with Brazilian and broader Latin American associations to highlight some of the cutting edge thinking and practical initiatives with regard to the many dimensions of inequality. One of the panels will highlight the notion of *Universalismo Básico* as a guiding principle for social policy formation to combat the inequalities in the public provision of social protection and access to basic services such as health and education. The final contours of the program will take shape this summer, and we shall be able to report more details in the *Forum's* fall issue. One thing we can already state with certainty is that Rio 2009 will be an exciting intellectual event, carried by the interest and engagement of an unprecedented number of scholars. ■

Target Dates for LASA2009

October 20, 2008	Notifications of acceptance/rejection
December 15, 2008	Deadline to submit changes/corrections for Program Book (lasacong@pitt.edu)
January 19, 2009	Notification of travel grant requests (date subject to change based upon availability of funds)
February 15, 2009	Pre-registration deadline
February 15, 2009	Deadline for canceling pre-registration without penalty
March 9, 2009	Deadline to submit electronic paper for conference proceedings (lasacong@pitt.edu)