

# Interim Report from the Program Chairs San Francisco 2012

by GABRIELA NOUZEILLES, Program Co-Chair | Princeton University | gnouzeil@princeton.edu  
and TIMOTHY J. POWER, Program Co-Chair | University of Oxford | timothy.power@lac.ox.ac.uk

As we write in early July 2011, the 30th International Congress of LASA is only 10 months away. We are delighted to report that the response to the call for papers for the San Francisco Congress has been excellent, with the total numbers of individual and panel proposals having increased almost 70 percent above the number of proposals for LASA2010 in Toronto. We believe that this positive and promising response is a clear sign that both the site of the 2012 meeting and the chosen theme have generated great enthusiasm among the members of the Association and Latin Americanist scholars at large. The bicentennials of independence provide a unique opportunity for an interdisciplinary discussion on a wide spectrum of theoretical, historical, and political concerns, including the relationship between memory and history, sovereignty and political communities, national and ethnic identities, the dialogue between the past and the present, and the conceptual contours of Latin America as an object of study. The city of San Francisco with its colonial, political, multicultural, plurilingual, and transnational background is an appropriate and inspiring setting for such an intellectual dialogue.

We expect LASA 2012 to be considerably larger than the 2010 Congress in Toronto, but still smaller than the record-breaking event held in Rio de Janeiro in 2009. The table below shows the level of demand for the past six Congresses. Based on the number of

proposals that LASA has received, it seems that the size of the meeting will be somewhere between that of San Juan 2006 and of Montreal 2007. There is, however, a very important qualitative difference with regard to the format of proposals: in the last two conference cycles a greater share of proposals (close to half) is arriving as pre-assembled panels rather than as individual paper proposals. This trend has been encouraged by LASA in recent years, and the increase in session proposals is very good news for the Association. It shows that our Tracks are working to create networks and synergies among the membership, leading to significant coordination of scholars and their research agendas well in advance of the International Congresses. The converse is also true: track chairs now have less work putting together panels “from scratch” out of the mass of individual submissions. The rise in pre-assembled panels thus portends a richer and more cohesive final program. For this trend, we credit our two predecessors for the Toronto Congress, Javier Corrales and Nina Gerassi-Navarro, who still hold the LASA record for stimulating full panel proposals!

We would like to thank again the 68 co-chairs who are now in the process of evaluating and ranking the proposals across our 34 official tracks, and we are looking forward to working with them in summer 2011 as we put together the preliminary program. In addition to the track-selected sessions, we will

also be incorporating the panels that are allocated to LASA’s recognized Sections. As the Congress takes shape, we would like to emphasize that we have made an unprecedented effort to reach out to many scholars and researchers in the United States and abroad, many of whom were not acquainted with LASA or seldom have participated in its professional meetings. We are hopeful that our effort will translate into a wider and more diversified intellectual and scholarly conversation in both well represented disciplines and fields of research that for different reasons have remained on the margins of our Association.

We continue working closely with LASA President Maria Hermínia Tavares de Almeida on the presidential panels. Among others, we have selected a panel on WikiLeaks and Latin America, which stresses the importance of alternative flows of information and the global impact of the Internet on local and national politics and societies, and another on Latin American Studies in the Pacific World, examining the study of Latin America in China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand. We also have been working on the featured and invited sessions, and should have a final list by September of this year. As always, we welcome the input of our colleagues, and look forward to seeing you all in May of next year. ■

**Proposals Submitted to LASA Congresses, 2004-2012**

TYPE OF PROPOSAL	LAS VEGAS 2004	SAN JUAN 2006	MONTREAL 2007	RIO DE JANEIRO 2009	TORONTO 2010	SAN FRANCISCO 2012
Individual	954	1519	2106	3202	663	1362
Session	452	641	752	962	744	1020
Total Proposals	1406	2160	2858	4164	1407	2382
Percent Change Over Previous Congress	NA	+53.6	+32.3	+45.7	-66.2	+69.3
Complete Panels as Percentage of All Proposals	32.1	29.7	26.3	23.1	52.9	42.8

*Note: the data refer to proposals only, not to the final program. The table shows routine paper and session proposals only and excludes Section-allocated panels, presidential panels, special events, and the like.*