

LASA2012 Survey Report

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As with previous LASA International Congresses, LASA2012 meeting participants were asked to respond to a survey on a range of Congress-related issues. The slightly expanded 2012 questionnaire, with 25 items, was again conducted on line.

Six-hundred and fifty-six individuals responded. Even though this amounted to only 14 percent of total participants, LASA obtained valuable suggestions for changes to future Congresses.

There were three survey categories: demographics ; LASA2012; and future Congresses. The wording of questions about the Congress itself was kept as faithful as possible to that of previous surveys to ensure maximum comparability. The present survey contained additional questions, including those regarding the LASA application and online *Forum*.

The 2012 survey allowed respondents to indicate levels of satisfaction with several components of the Congress, such as panels, business meetings, the Film Festival, *Gran Baile*, etc. Overall satisfaction with LASA2012 was 83 percent. This represented an increase over the satisfaction levels of 75 percent for LASA2010 and 79 percent for LASA2009.

The last question of the current survey was open-ended and allowed respondents to leave both commendations and criticisms. We received 179 unique comments from 656 (or 27 percent of) respondents.

Suggestions/criticisms were associated with the three primary areas of the 2012 survey: logistics/scheduling; papers/panels; and cost.

On logistics and scheduling, several respondents were displeased that similarly

themed panels and sessions were scheduled at the same time. Some respondents also expressed disappointment that the Congresses are moving from an 18-month cycle to an annual cycle, since it may adversely affect the availability of university funding. Additionally, several respondents requested to have more Latin American countries as hosts of the Congresses, which LASA is actively pursuing.

Similarly to surveys for previous Congresses, many respondents insisted on the need for increased quality and selectivity of panel papers; panel-related comments focused on absent panelists or cancelled panels. Additionally, many respondents noted that some rooms lacked sufficient audience as participants were stretched between several same-themed panels and sightseeing.

Regarding expenses—always of great concern—respondents reported that the costs of attending the San Francisco Congress were between one and two thousand dollars, a figure equivalent to that for Toronto in 2010. Seventy-three percent of LASA2012 respondents received partial or full reimbursement of travel-related expenses from a range of sources, most notably university funds and national research grants; this was similar to the patterns of reimbursement for LASA2010.

Responses to past surveys have been extremely helpful as the Association has moved on to subsequent Congresses; similarly, responses to the present survey will help provide significant guidance as the Association prepares for LASA2013 and beyond.

That many respondents also took the time to write detailed comments, both positive and negative, is especially appreciated. This

kind of information helps ensure that LASA is able to continue what is working and improve on aspects of the Congress that can be bettered. Once again, our gratitude!

The annual meeting schedule will allow for slightly smaller Congresses—something that many Association members have desired over the years. And as LASA plans for future meetings, it will continue to work, among many things, on seeking the elusive balance between a process of increased quality/selectivity and a schedule that maximizes thematic diversity and opportunities. ■