

From the President

by EVELYNE HUBER | University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill | ehuber@unc.edu

The LASA Executive Council (EC) met on November 10, 2012, to deliberate and decide on a number of issues. To begin with the highlights: LASA as an organization is thriving. We have surpassed a membership of 8,000 individuals and institutions combined. This is true despite the fact that institutional membership has declined, particularly among libraries. This downturn is certainly in part due to the spread of electronic access to journals and other information. The EC decided to convene a focus group of institutional members at the Washington Congress, to explore what new needs these members might have and how LASA could better address them. We shall also reach out to Centers of Latin American Studies who are not now but might become members. Vice President/President-elect Merilee Grindle will chair that meeting and follow up on the issue during her presidency.

As expected, the number of submissions for the coming Congress, the first one on the new annual schedule, declined, with the desired result that the acceptance rate climbed steeply. The track chairs and program co-chairs deserve our thanks for their hard and concentrated work. For more information, please read the report from the program chairs in this issue.

One of the positive aspects of the growth of LASA membership has been the growth of Sections. Since the last Congress, four new Sections have been approved. This demonstrates a high level of involvement of our membership. However, there is also a potential downside to the proliferation of Sections. The formation of the Sections requires a good amount of time and energy on the part of both the members who are organizing a new Section and the Secretariat. When Section membership declines and falls below the minimum of fifty required to maintain a Section, this

means a loss of the invested time and energy. To alleviate this problem to the extent possible, the EC decided to raise the minimum number of members required to form a new section from fifty to seventy-five. The minimum number of members required to maintain a Section once it has been formed remains at fifty, unchanged.

The EC also discussed the issue of resolutions. Apparently, there is some confusion about the process. Here is how it works: Once a resolution has been approved by the LASA members present and voting at the business meeting, it is sent to the membership at large for a vote. Under the rules adopted by the EC at its meeting in San Francisco, in order for a resolution to be formally adopted by LASA, at least 20 percent of the membership must vote, and a majority of those voting must vote in favor. So, if fewer than 20 percent of members vote, the resolution is not formally adopted. This is what happened to the resolutions adopted by the LASA business meeting in San Francisco and subsequently sent to the membership for a vote. ■

