

## LASA Business Meeting

### LASA President's Report

LASA President Evelyne Huber welcomed everyone to the Business Meeting. Huber reported that this was the first Congress on an annual schedule and it has worked out extremely well. The reason for the transition to an annual Congress was to be able to limit the proposal rejection rate, which had been running at about 30 percent. This time all panel proposals were accepted and the rejection rate for individual papers was very low. The transition was a huge job for the Secretariat and was accomplished well by Milagros Pereyra, Maria Soledad Cabezas, Pilar Rodriguez, Sandy Klinzing, and their colleagues in Pittsburgh. There were about 3,500 registered participants. This Congress can boast a reasonable schedule, with a 45-minute time slot for lunch, and still end at 6:00 pm instead of 8:00 as with the 18-month Congresses. The Congress program chairs did a fantastic job of organizing a nice set of invited panels, and Gwen Fitzpatrick secured space at Georgetown University for the Welcoming Reception. This time the leadership team of Huber, Past President Maria Hermínia Tavares, and President-elect Merilee Grindle were proactive in contacting the State Department regarding Cuban visas. The team was joined by a number of past presidents in signing a letter to the State Department, and they were joined by other professional associations who wrote their own letters of support. Lastly, Huber reported that the Association continues in good shape and in good hands.

### Report of the LASA Secretariat

LASA Executive Director Milagros Pereyra reported that the 2012 membership year achieved an individual membership total of 7,633, a 15 percent increase over 2011. Of

this number, 1,849 were new members for 2012. Thus far for 2013 there are 4,685 individual members, representing a 39 percent decrease since 2012. However, LASA is just at midpoint in its membership year and she does expect that number to increase significantly during the Congress and afterward, as individuals register to be able to submit their proposals for LASA2014.

Institutional memberships currently number 35, representing a decline of 7 percent since 2012. She does not expect this number to increase; there has been a recent decline in institutional memberships due to the increasing availability of digital journals.

Regarding fund-raising, LASA received financial support for Congress travel grants once again from the Open Society Foundations and the Inter-American Foundation, and from the AVINA Foundation for LASA Life Memberships for the next four recipients of the Kalman Silvert Award.

The LASA Endowment has risen to \$4.5 million. An independent firm was brought in to conduct an evaluation of the Endowment managers. They determined that the oversight provided by Morgan Stanley Smith Barney was excellent and reasonably priced; thus LASA will continue with the current managers. The next Congress will take place in Chicago and President-elect Merilee Grindle will report on that.

### Report of the XXXI Congress Program Committee

LASA2013 Program Co-chair Gwen Kirkpatrick reported that she and Co-chair Kenneth Roberts had reached out to

international scholars to serve as track chairs. They also combined some small tracks from the previous year. There were more submissions of panel proposals than individual papers. They were able to accept 100 percent of the panel submissions and most of the individual submissions. Moving to an annual cycle reduced the number of submissions, and the hotel is sufficiently large to accommodate many sessions.

The pre-conference workshops drew considerable interest. Some that had been successful in the past were being repeated. *Latin American Research Review* editor Philip Oxhorn organized two workshops and another took place at the Library of Congress.

Lastly, Kirkpatrick reported that the co-chairs also tried to avoid having other panels compete with the presidential panels. One panel was organized by Cynthia Arnson of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Roberta Jacobson, Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, also participated in a panel that discussed the main issues in U.S.–Latin American relations. There was another panel on gender as well. Kirkpatrick also attempted to form a panel with granting agencies, but only the National Endowment for the Humanities responded. She recommended that this attempt be repeated since younger scholars are very interested in the subject.

### Vice President's Report

Vice President Merilee Grindle indicated her delight at being elected vice president of LASA, a role that will be followed shortly by the title of president, and then past president. As vice president her primary job is to name individuals to committees

and to work with the program co-chairs to name track chairs for LASA2014. Thus far she has contacted over 100 individuals, and about 98 have been delighted to agree to serve. This speaks well about the level of commitment of the membership to the Association. The new program co-chairs are Raúl Madrid (University of Texas at Austin) and Florencia Garramuño (Universidad de San Andres in Buenos Aires). LASA2014 will take place in Chicago from May 21 to May 24. The theme is Democracy and Memory. The theme mirrors a set of activities that Grindle and her colleagues are planning at Harvard. It also commemorates the 40th anniversary of the coup in Chile (this fall) and the 50th anniversary of the coup in Brazil. What is attractive about this theme is that there is virtually no discipline that has not been engaged in thinking about democracy and memory. The program co-chairs and Grindle will formulate panels to discuss what is remembered, how it is remembered, and what the legacies are in terms of the current social and political institutions in Latin America today. She is looking forward to a very busy year. Lastly, Grindle acknowledged that she is a long-term fan of LASA, which brings individuals together as no other institution can.

### Resolutions

Vice President Grindle reviewed the resolutions process, which includes (1) submission at least 30 days prior to the Executive Council (EC) meeting; (2) submission with the signatures of at least 30 LASA members in good standing; (3) review by the Resolutions Subcommittee where they are discussed; (4) discussion at the meeting of Ways and Means; and (5) submission to the full EC for consideration. If at least two-thirds of the EC approves

the resolutions they are presented at the LASA Business Meeting and then mailed to the LASA membership for a vote. Grindle asked if the members present wished her to read the two resolutions that had been approved for presentation; members responded that they could read them themselves. The Secretariat will send the resolutions electronically to the membership within the next few weeks. For a resolution to be approved it must be voted upon by at least 20 percent of the current membership and approved by the majority of those voters.

### New Business

Long-standing LASA member Sheryl Lutjens presented a petition on behalf of herself and several members. The petition sought to call attention to their concerns regarding the need for increased discussion between LASA leadership and the membership when important decisions were being taken. One of these concerns had to do with the change from an 18-month Congress to an annual schedule, as well as the selection of the later part of May for the Congress dates. It was believed that the decision had been taken without previous consultation with the membership, and that, although it had positive results in terms of increased proposal acceptance, it did place a financial burden on many members to attend an annual event. The Sections also felt a burden to prepare proposals and organize events with such a quick turnaround.

The selection of May for the Congress meant that since most universities have completed their academic year at that point there was no option to sponsor a Latin American scholar for the Congress and then have him or her spend time on a U.S.

campus as well, collaborating with colleagues.

Lutjens then referred to the Association's previous decision to not host Congresses in the United States as long as there was a general denial of visas for several would-be Latin American participants. The membership was not consulted when Congresses did return to the United States in LASA2013. Lutjens reported her understanding that 13 Cuban and 2 Mexican scholars had been denied visas for this Congress.

Lastly, the previous year the EC had voted to change the policy regarding the approval of resolutions. In 2012 the resolutions had failed not because of a lack of favorable votes but because more than 20 percent of the membership failed to respond regarding approval of the resolutions.

### President Huber responded to the points raised:

A survey was conducted with the membership regarding the scheduling of the Congresses. A full 70 percent of the membership responded and the majority voted for the move to an annual Congress. In regard to location of the Congress, a lot depends upon the space within potential hotels and the cost involved to the membership. A number of parameters have to be considered in deciding upon the Congress venue. The date of the Congress was also carefully reviewed to avoid conflict with other associations. In regard to hosting Congress outside the United States and the denial of visas, Huber reminded her colleagues that a number of visas had been denied for Canada as well. Vice President Grindle referred to the "experimental nature" of the move to an annual Congress. The decision will be

## LASA2013 Awards and Recipients

reviewed after three Congresses. Thus far it seems to have been effective in reducing the number of proposals rejected.

Another member present encouraged the LASA leadership always to be “proactive” in regard to the potential denial of visas. LASA should also attempt to include Cuban resident scholars among the EC. Executive Director Pereyra responded that LASA had consulted with an attorney who specializes in issues regarding Cuba and OFAC regulations, and the attorney had advised that under current law Cuban resident scholars were not permitted to participate in the governing of the Association. Pereyra agreed to provide the letter including that opinion from the attorney. Pereyra added that LASA provides free Congress registration to Cuban scholars.

A final recommendation was that the Association make every effort to schedule the LASA Business Meeting at a time when it would not conflict with other sessions. ■

### Kalman Silvert Award

The Kalman Silvert Award Committee consisted of Maria Hermínia Tavares de Almeida, Chair (Universidade de São Paulo), Julio Cotler (Instituto de Estudios Peruanos), Eric Hershberg (American University), John Coatsworth (Columbia University), and Philip Oxhorn (McGill University).

The 2013 recipient of the Association’s highest award, the Kalman Silvert Award, is Peter H. Smith, a scholar on United States and Latin American relations, and the Simón Bolívar Professor of Latin American Studies at University of California in San Diego. Smith obtained his PhD in comparative politics of Latin America from Columbia University in 1996. He has been a president of the Latin American Studies Association as well as being consultant to the Ford Foundation and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. The following remarks are taken from Smith’s autobiographical statement in the spring 2013 issue of the *LASA Forum*. For the complete text, please see the *LASA Forum* article.

“The journey began many years ago when I yearned to take a summer trip to Europe, as many of my college classmates did at the time. The problem was a lack of funds, so I set out on a less expensive venture: a bus ride from New York City to Mexico City. I knew no Spanish, no Mexican history, no Latin American politics, nothing. . . . That trip changed my life. . . . I witnessed student protests, listened to expositions about all sorts of political values, and heard discussions (and diatribes) about Fidel Castro and U.S. imperialism. . . . Fortunately I enrolled for graduate study in history at Columbia University in 1961,

just in time for the inauguration of its renowned Institute of Latin American Studies. I was able to study with such luminaries as Albert O. Hirschman, Juan J. Linz, Frank Tannenbaum, and the indefatigable Lewis Hanke. . . . In subsequent years I embarked upon a program of self-education in political science, initially by auditing courses at the University of California, Berkeley. With the encouragement of Kalman Silvert, I determined to acquire a working command of quantitative methodology. This linkage of history and political science would define a core concern of my scholarly efforts: to analyze long-term patterns of political change in Latin America through the judicious application of cutting-edge methods in political science.

My first corpus of research focused on Argentina and resulted in two books: *Politics and Beef in Argentina* (1969), which examined political struggles over a key sector of the national economy from the 1880s to the 1940s, and *Argentina and the Failure of Democracy* (1974), based on a statistical analysis of roll-call votes in the Chamber of Deputies from 1904 through 1955. . . . These efforts also resulted in a book chapter on the breakdown of Argentine democracy in 1930. I then turned to Mexico and sought to unravel the political logic of its authoritarian regime. . . . I decided to examine the structure and transformation of the nation’s political elite from 1900 through the 1970s. I gathered and computerized data on the political biographies of more than 6,000 officeholders, and produced a book entitled *Labyrinths of Power* (1979). One significant by-product of this effort was a roll-call analysis of voting patterns in Mexico’s constitutional convention of 1917.