

# From the President

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Dear Colleagues,

Soon we will be gathering in Chicago for LASA2014. Presenting papers, attending sessions, catching up with old friends, making plans for future research collaborations, enjoying the Windy City and its restaurants, museums, and parks—there is much for all of us to do between May 21 and 24. I’m looking forward to seeing upwards of 3,000 LASA members at the Congress and to a wonderful schedule of events.

The theme for LASA2014 is “Democracy and Memory,” and I have been amazed by how many of the sessions and papers have focused on these two concepts and their relationship to Latin America. Clearly, many have been engaged in reflecting on and questioning this relationship and connecting it to the past, present, and future of the region. It is my hope that many of the papers currently being written will find a future as articles in journals and chapters in books so that even more can be included in discussions and relevant research. In addition, I hope many of you will join us for the interdisciplinary discussion of democracy and memory featured in three presidential panels.

LASA2014 will also be a very inclusive Congress. Thanks to the very hard work of numerous track and Section chairs, and to the even harder work of the Congress co-chairs, Florencia Garramuño and Raúl Madrid, there will be an extensive variety of panels, workshops, and roundtables on an extraordinary number of themes. These dedicated LASA volunteers have worked within strict time and space constraints to

ensure that 93 percent of session proposals were accepted and 80 percent of individual papers found a home. Throughout, they have demonstrated a marked commitment to equity for fields and disciplines as well as for scholars of diverse backgrounds. Florencia, Raúl, and the track and Section chairs deserve our hearty thanks for this “above and beyond” service to LASA’s members.

The Congress will also host a workshop of directors of Latin America studies centers and institutes, an initiative begun at the Washington meeting and one I hope will continue in the future. There is much that can be learned about advancing Latin American studies through sharing ideas and networking among those who lead the area studies centers and institutes in our universities and other institutions. I hope all directors who are coming to LASA2014 will join us on Thursday, May 22, for the workshop.

I have been honored to serve as president of LASA since June 2013. This experience has left me with enormous respect for the professional management of the Association, spearheaded by Milagros Pereyra-Rojas and her team at the University of Pittsburgh, and for the large number of members who agreed to serve on committees. This work is central to planning the Congresses and to assessing the work of scholars and others to honor them for advancing Latin American studies. In addition, the guest editors of the *LASA Forum* have put in untold hours to present a series of extremely thoughtful articles, many of them related to democracy and memory, for the publication. We can all be



very grateful that Gratzia Villarroel and Roberto Gargarella agreed to take on this task with such dedication. The work of a LASA president is modest compared to the time and effort so many others have put into making our annual meetings a very good place to be. Thank you so very much for your commitment to this wonderful Association.

See you in Chicago! ■