

From the Outgoing President

by MERILEE GRINDLE | Harvard University | merilee_grindle@harvard.edu

I'd like to thank all of the LASA members who participated in the Congress in Chicago. At the meeting, many people shared with me how excited they were about the panels they participated in, the discussions they were able to have about their work, and the connections they made with those who had mutual interests. And Chicago could not have been more welcoming. The weather was perfect, the lakefront and museums beckoned, the parks were at their greenest, and the restaurants lived up to their great reputation. Bravos to Florencia Garamuño and Raúl Madrid, who organized the meeting, and to all the track and Section chairs and the committees who put in great service to the Association. As always, the Secretariat ensured that all would run smoothly. I felt fortunate to be a part of it all.

How quickly a year in the presidency of LASA passes! I learned a great deal in this role—the amount of work that goes into an annual Congress, the wide range of skills that are called into action to make it happen, and the significance of the intellectual agendas that bring people together. I was delighted, given the busy lives we all lead, to learn how willing so many people are to accept responsibilities to serve on committees and as chairs of tracks and Sections. As your president, I learned why LASA works so well and how much it seeks, through the Secretariat and the Executive Council, to respond to its members. Through discussions with members, with the Secretariat, and with the Executive Council, I learned that the rules and guidelines that members sometimes chafe against are established, and

sometimes altered, with very clear criteria in mind: to ensure equity for our members, quality in the scholarship characterizing the meetings, and the sustainability of a membership association. I would like to thank you all for this great opportunity to see, close up, the dynamics of this organization and its clear and important mission.

And so the beat goes on. On June 1, Debra Castillo of Cornell University became the new president of LASA. With Program Co-Chairs Rosalva Aida Hernández Castillo and Luis Cárcamo-Huechante, she has a large group of people already planning for the next LASA Congress, with the fascinating theme of “Precariedades, exclusiones, emergencias.” I hope many of you are in the midst of planning proposals for panels and papers, because the success of a meeting depends on the diversity and richness of the program. I am looking forward to an excellent Congress in San Juan and will enjoy having somewhat more time to attend panels and peruse the book exhibit and the film festival. I hope to see many of you there. ■

