

LASA2014 Survey Report

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As with previous LASA International Congresses, participants were asked to complete a 25-question online survey on Congress-related issues. Additional comments were requested this year on the LASA2014 application and registration processes.

Seven hundred and seventeen participants responded; this is a 9.7 percent decrease from 2013 and represents 18 percent of the total LASA2014 participants. Half of the respondents were from the United States and Canada while 40 percent were from Latin America. The majority are involved in research (55 percent) and education (40 percent). Thirty-one percent of the respondents were first-time attendees and offered new perspectives.

Most participants attended between four and seven sessions during the Congress. Survey responses indicate that the small number of sessions attended could be due to the need for a lunch break, slow elevators, or conflicts in scheduling. Because of LASA's focus on increasing participation at LASA Congresses, however, the number of simultaneous sessions is unlikely to decrease.

Evaluations

Overall, 76 percent of the participants were satisfied with LASA2014, 20 percent were neutral, and only 4 percent were dissatisfied. This was an increase of 1 percent from last year's satisfaction level.

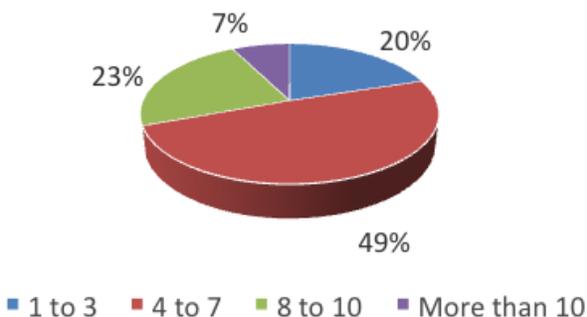
Participants were very satisfied with the quality of the panels and other sessions, but many respondents noted that too many panels with similar topics occurred at the same time. Although LASA tries to correct overlaps before finalizing the schedule, it is impossible to resolve all conflicts. LASA staff will continue efforts to correct these in LASA2015. Additionally, for next year, chairs will be assigned from the presenters' pool in the panels created from individual paper proposals to ensure that all panels are chaired and have more cohesion. Participants agreed that the Congress provided opportunities to learn about recent work in Latin America, to present their ideas, and to network with colleagues.

Additional Feedback

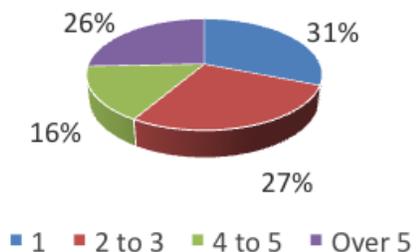
In this year's survey we asked for comments on the registration and application processes. We want the first day to be as welcoming as possible and also to help participants solve any issues with the increasingly popular online application. This year, online applications were filed by 49 percent of the respondents (an 11 percent increase over last year). We hope this trend continues as LASA strives to reduce its use of paper.

Additionally, we were happy to see that 66 percent of the participants were at least partly reimbursed to attend the Congress. LASA is grateful to our sponsors and the endowment fund, which continue year after year to provide partial travel grants to our participants. If you are interested in receiving a grant, please make sure you apply by September 8, 2014 (17h00 EDT).

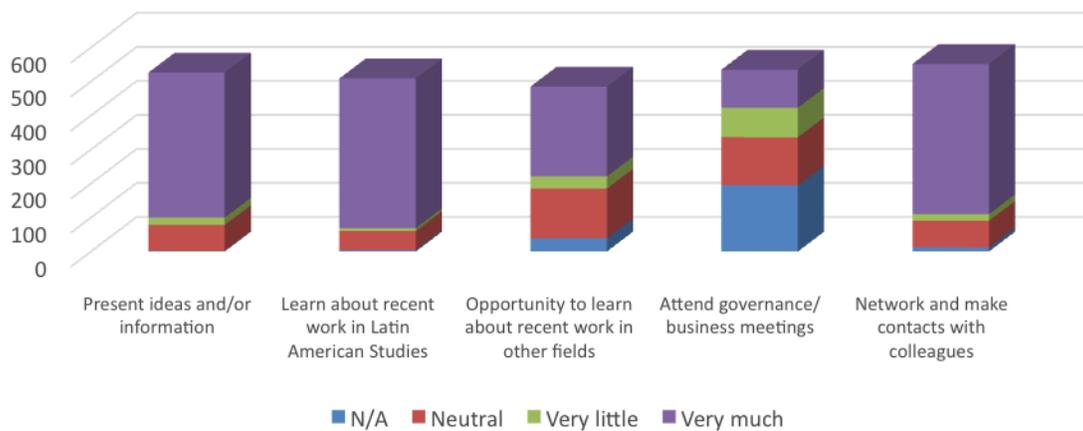
Sessions attended at LASA2014



LASA Congresses attended in the past (including LASA2014)



LASA2014 provided an opportunity to...



Future Congresses

Around 46 percent of the LASA2014 survey respondents are planning to attend LASA2015 in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

We are definitely excited about the upcoming Congress and its theme, “Precariedades, exclusiones, emergencias.” LASA2015 will be held in the Caribe Hilton, a hotel near Old San Juan. Hotels are the most popular venues for conferences. We also consider alliances with local universities and the use of their facilities but often encounter limitations on space and problems with availability. Please feel free to suggest future university venues.

In response to our request for suggestions we received 131 comments, which mostly centered on the following two topics:

Congress location and high costs:

Suggestions were made for future Congress sites, ranging from U.S. locations with less expensive accommodations to Latin

American countries outside the Caribbean. Cities within the United States are selected based on their appeal to the membership. Though New York City is not inexpensive, it is the top city selected by our respondents to host a Congress. This is where LASA’s 50th anniversary will occur in 2016. Keeping costs low is always our goal, and after some aggressive negotiations we were able to reduce the cost of accommodations in New York to a decent price (for New York). For 2017 we are finalizing our contract with a Latin American country to be announced.

Discontent with yearly Congresses and with the number of simultaneous panels.

The yearly schedule was created based on feedback collected from previous years regarding the overwhelming size of LASA Congresses and the lack of opportunities to participate due to so many panels being rejected. The yearly schedule is meant to allow for smaller LASA Congresses and to offer more opportunities for participation in LASA. Though the number of simultaneous panels may not change (to

allow more participants to take part), the number of attendees each year may be smaller, allowing for a less overwhelming experience.

Thanks to all who took the time to fill out the survey. Your feedback helps us to improve and to be an association that continues to strive to meet our members’ needs. As always, please feel free to contact us with any questions or suggestions. Have a great summer, and don’t forget to submit a proposal for LASA2015! ■