

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

THIS YEAR HAS BEEN AN EXCEPTIONALLY BUSY ONE FOR LLILAS AS WE HAVE ORGANIZED OR helped to organize some thirteen conferences and numerous lectures. We also have initiated nine faculty-led research clusters. An elected Executive Committee of fifteen members was established for the first time, as was an external Advisory Council with the mission of assisting the institute with fund-raising and advice on enhancing our outreach activities. The library, arts, and community-outreach interests appearing in the last issue continue, as are shown by the reports on the Benson Google project, on outreach activities by our outreach director, Natalie Arsenault, and on the Brazilian artist-in-residence, Matheus Rocha-Pitta. Our increasingly close ties with the College of Fine Arts are highlighted in the focus on the Music faculty in our faculty profiles section.

Noteworthy among our conferences was *Transitions in the Cuban Revolution*, which marked an initiative to establish exchange relationships with the Universidad de La Habana led by Associate Director Jonathan Brown, who comments on Cuba in this issue. Placing Latin America within a global context has been another aspect of this past year's activities. We collaborated with the Center for Asian American Studies on the conference *Asia in Latin America* and with the Center for Mexican American Studies and the other Title VI Area Studies Centers on the conference *Political and Cultural Economies of Water in the 21st Century*, which reviewed the worldwide challenges to water supplies from economic development and climate change. The Institute of Latin American Studies Student Association (ILASSA) has, as in the past, organized and, mainly through its own efforts, financed a superb annual conference that attracts participants from all over the U.S. and Latin America. This issue includes a report on that conference and also a timely reflection on the need to secure its financial future.

The research clusters are intended to link faculty and graduate students more closely into the activities of LLILAS, including *Portal*, through regular meetings to discuss and plan research and suggest conferences, visiting speakers, and professors. The Democratization cluster helped organize this year's annual Lozano Long Conference, *The Performance of Leftist Governments in Latin America: What Does the Left Do Right?*, which drew speakers from Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, and Venezuela. The keynote speaker and participant was former Chilean President Ricardo Lagos, who delivered the second annual Lozano Long Lecture. This issue includes an interview with President Lagos, as well as reflections on the conference by one of its organizers, Raúl Madrid. Arturo Arias discusses memory and revolution in this issue, themes that have been part of his contribution to the Human Rights and Humanities clusters, in a piece that ties in with the conference *Image, Memory, and the Paradox of Peace*, which examined the effects of the 1992 El Salvador Peace Accords. Nora England, a member of the Indigenous Studies cluster, contributes an article here on indigenous languages, and Ariel Dulitzky, a member of the Indigenous and Human Rights clusters and a former Tinker Professor, talks about his long experience in human rights work. The newly established cluster, Science, Technology, and Development Policy, brings into the institute faculty working on development policy issues such as are reported in the Jackson School's article on the Latin American Forum on Energy and the Environment. A related research cluster, Environment, Development, and Social Change, is represented in the article on the Santo Domingo urban community development initiative by students of Bjørn Sletto, co-chair of the cluster. Several excellent conferences also are planned by the clusters for 2008–2009.

The Brazil Center has been very active through its Brazil and Amazon weeks and its sponsorship of numerous cultural events and exchanges, such as the visit of Matheus Rocha-Pitta, Brazilian artist-in-residence. The Mexican Center has organized several events, including a conference on the impact of U.S.-Mexico migration on the rural areas of both countries. Of particular note was the center's initiative in organizing for the University of Texas the first meeting outside Mexico of the Mexican Association of Universities and Research Institutes, ANUIES. This meeting brought more than seventy Mexican university and institute presidents to Austin as well as high-ranking government officials and political leaders. The one-day meeting included five panels in which Mexican and U.S. educators discussed aspects of actual and potential collaboration in higher education between the two countries. The ANUIES event was another important step in our growing collaboration with Mexico on research and teaching. We signed a research collaboration agreement this year with the Mexican Ministry of Social Development, SEDESOL, and through the initiative of Vice Provost for International Studies Terri Givens, we had a very successful five-day meeting in Mexico City with Mexican universities in which UT researchers discussed their research with Mexican colleagues in the humanities, social, economic, and policy sciences, education, science, and technology. LLILAS interns who helped with conference organization in Mexico report on their impressions of the event in this issue.

The substantial increase in LLILAS-led activities in recent years has been based on the enthusiasm of faculty and the organizing abilities of staff. It has its downside in an increasing workload for staff, and I want to pay a special tribute to the skill and commitment with which they have faced the challenge. Organizing, publicizing, and publishing events and longer term program activities involve all LLILAS staff. The considerable achievements of this past year owe a great deal to their patience, hard work, and creativity.



A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bryan R. Roberts".

BRYAN R. ROBERTS, DIRECTOR

Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies