

Reaching Out to Latin American Geographers

The AAG has long welcomed geographers from around the world to its ranks, to its meetings, and to its journals. International exchange among geographers worldwide continues to grow, and approximately 20% of the attendees at the AAG Annual Meetings are now from countries other than the U.S.

This broad international interaction is not only welcome, it is indispensable to the success and intellectual depth of all our activities.

In this spirit, I'm pleased to announce that the 2005-2006 edition of the AAG's *Guide to Geography Programs*, which currently encompasses geography programs in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, will expand its scope to include listings for Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. Over the years, this publication has evolved from providing information about geography programs in the U.S., to including information about Canadian programs, to encompassing the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. We will now make information about geography programs throughout all of the Americas readily available, and doing so will also enable a title change to the AAG *Guide to Geography Programs in the Americas*. This seems to me a most appropriate title for a publication of the Association of American Geographers.

This expansion of information will enable AAG members to locate colleagues throughout the region for developing research projects, for applying to the Fulbright scholars programs, and for other forms of cooperation. It will also enable U.S. and Latin American students to discover and compare graduate programs from all of the Americas.

What else might the AAG do to reach out to and welcome Latin American geographers in warm and meaningful ways? There are many possibilities:

- It would be an easy matter to include Spanish-language translations of the abstracts of our articles in the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* and *The Professional Geographer*. I propose that we consider publishing translations of these journal abstracts beginning in 2006.
- The AAG could also provide translations into Spanish of some of the resources available on the AAG website and in the AAG *Newsletter*. These Spanish language resources would not only be an important step forward in strengthening ties with our Latin American colleagues, but also for reaching out to Spanish speaking geographers within Hispanic communities in the U.S. As



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such, they represent a resource for enhancing diversity within our discipline in the U.S. and Canada.

- The AAG might consider organizing, together with Latin American geographers and related groups, joint sponsorship of meetings in Central America and South America during the next year or two in order to encourage scholarly exchange and explore ways of cooperating further.
- The AAG could, perhaps in conjunction with the Latin American Specialty Group (LASG), encourage the establishment of a Spanish-language e-community listserv on the AAG website for discussion of issues related to geography in and of Latin America, or of geography in general.
- Perhaps a limited number of sessions at the AAG Annual Meeting could be conducted in Spanish.
- The AAG might consider the special promotion of AAG Gift Memberships to Latin American colleagues and the prospect of lower-cost membership not only for Latin America, but also for lower per capita GNP countries around the world.

The AAG would clearly want to work closely with and welcome ideas and input from individual geographers throughout Latin America, as well as related groups such as the Congress of Latin Americanist Geographers (CLAG), the AAG Latin American Specialty Group, the Pan-American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH) of the Organization of American States (OAS), and the International Geographical Union (IGU), among others, in our outreach efforts.

Of course, extending a warm welcome and encouraging scholarly exchange with our geography colleagues in Latin America does not mean a lesser interest in international collaboration with other regions. The AAG will continue to invite new partnerships and encourage strong existing interaction with geographers throughout the world, including those from

Europe, South Asia, East Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. We also have plans to expand the International Reception for all international attendees at our AAG Annual Meetings. International exchange brings rich new perspectives, ideas, and experiences into our geographic conversation, and benefits our research and teaching broadly. Your comments and feedback on these ideas would be appreciated. *Saludos!* ■

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Geography programs in Latin America and the Caribbean are invited to list in the AAG *Guide to Geography Programs in the Americas*. To receive further information or for questions contact guide@aag.org. Note that this year, there is no cost for Latin American program listings in the *Guide*.