A word from the Director

As the 2009–2010 academic year comes to a close, I am pleased to share some of the year’s highlights in the Latin American Studies Program (LASP). LASP offered seventeen students the opportunity to delve into timely international issues in Costa Rica and China through two-week-long study trips. In addition, the LASP summer internship program offered nineteen students the chance to gain professional experience in the field. These opportunities would not be possible without the steadfast support of numerous individuals and institutional donors to whom I remain grateful. Special recognition is also due to the dedicated LASP team, our distinguished DC and Bologna adjunct professors and our Spanish and Portuguese language instructors. In particular, we celebrate Mahrukh Doctor, Adjunct LASP Professor at the SAIS Bologna Center, who was awarded the Center’s 2009–2010 JHU Alumni Association Excellence in Teaching award. It is always a pleasure to see so many friends of LASP at alumni events, brown bags, receptions and throughout my travels. I am currently teaching a month-long course at the Instituto de Empresa, and I welcome visits from those who may be in Madrid in June. I hope the year ahead will bring more opportunities to engage and strengthen our vibrant LASP community.

With best wishes,

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1. Research, Publications and Faculty Outreach

Professor Roett’s new book on Brazil’s emerging role as a BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China), entitled The New Brazil, will be published by the Brookings Institution Press in July 2010. His research reflects the growing international interest in that country as an important emerging market player in geopolitics, trade and finance. For more information on The New Brazil, visit http://www.brookings.edu/press/Books/2010/thenewbrazil.aspx. A Chinese language version of the LASP edited volume, China’s Expansion into the Western Hemisphere: Implications for Latin America and the United States, (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2008), is also slated for release in 2010.

In addition to numerous media appearances, Dr. Roett was invited to join the Council on Foreign Relations’ Independent Task Force on Brazil, participate in the Reuters Latin American Investment Summit and speak at the Latin America Regional Security Conference. He also presented testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere. Dr. Roett’s full testimony on the current state of U.S.-Latin American relations as well as his policy recommendations for the Obama Administration and the Congress may be found at http://www.sais-jhu.edu/bin/c/a/roett-housetestimony031010.pdf. Several LASP students attended the hearing.

The “old” Latin America has disappeared... New Latin American initiatives seek to further regional economic integration, address pending social problems, and promote greater political coordination. While many are skeptical of the probability of any of these initiatives working, these studies demonstrate a willingness to work without the U.S. That reality needs to be understood in Washington, D.C.

— Riordan Roett

Testimony before Congress, March 10, 2010

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Professor Francisco González’s manuscript, Economic Shocks and Democracy: Argentina, Chile and Uruguay since the Great Depression, is under review for publication. His 2008 book Dual Transitions from Authoritarian Rule was selected as an Outstanding Academic Title by Choice magazine. It will be released as an e-book in response to the demand and good press the book has generated. Within the past academic year, Professor González has been frequently invited to speak on the war on drugs in Mexico as well as on Mexico’s institutional challenges, on energy in the Americas and on China’s demand for raw materials in Latin America. In addition to his appearances on CNN en Español, he was twice a guest on The Diane Rehm Show and was most recently invited to the White House for H.E. Felipe Calderon’s arrival ceremony. He also welcomed a new addition to his family, Tomás Enrique, who joins brother Francisco Thomas.

The cutting edge research of LASP Ph.D. students provides another dynamic component to the LASP academic program. Two LASP doctoral candidates defended dissertations in the past year. Britta Crandall presented a dissertation entitled Hemispheric Giants: The Unusual Story of United States Policy toward Brazil into the 21st Century. Her research has been accepted for publication by Rowman & Littlefield and is expected to be released in December 2010. Britta is teaching a LASP course this summer on contemporary U.S.-Latin American relations. In May 2010, Mariano Turzi defended a dissertation on the political economy of soybean production in Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay. He researched the determinants of the international competitiveness of regionally integrated agricultural value chains in the Southern Cone, focusing on political and institutional underpinnings. As a side note, our own Guadalupe Paz has entered the SAIS Ph.D. program while continuing as the Associate Director of the Latin American Studies Program.

2. Samuel Z. Stone Weekly Seminar Series

Again this year, we were pleased to welcome distinguished speakers to participate in our weekly Samuel Z. Stone Seminar Series. These lectures provide examples of research applications to classroom learning. During the 2009-2010 academic year, LASP hosted, among others, Nancy Lee, Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Western Hemisphere, U.S. Department of the Treasury; Julio F. Lastres, Senior Managing Director, Darby Overseas Investments; Nicolás Eyzaguirre, Western Hemisphere Department Director, International Monetary Fund; José Miguel Vivanco, Executive Director, Americas Division, Human Rights Watch; Fulton Armstrong, Senior Advisor, U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Russell Crandall, LASP MA and Ph.D. alumnus and Director of Andean Affairs, National Security Council. For a complete list of fall and spring semester seminars, please go to http://www.sais-jhu.edu/academics/regional-studies/latin-american/seminars-events.htm.

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3. This Year's LASPies

Latin American Studies continues to be among the most popular regional studies programs at SAIS, with 70 students spread across both the DC and Bologna campuses. Of this year’s graduating LASP students, 19 completed their LASP concentration with an Emerging Markets specialization. Current LASP students bring a diversity of cultural, educational and professional backgrounds to the program. In the latest class of students, at least ten nationalities were represented, including Argentina, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, France, Italy, Peru, Portugal, Spain, South Africa, and Venezuela. With backgrounds ranging from finance to grassroots development work, LASP students bring interesting perspectives to the classroom. We count eight current and former Fulbright scholars among this year’s group.

4. Internships

This academic year marks 30 years since the inception of the LASP Summer Internship Program in 1979, when just four students were placed in Brazil. With expanded internship opportunities/funding, our goal is to place all LASP applicants in the region. This summer, LASP placed 19 students in eight countries of the region—Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Panama, Peru, Mexico, Uruguay. Consistent with the interests of the participating students, five internships were offered in the private sector, three in the public sector, six with multilaterals and five with non-profit organizations. Newly confirmed opportunities for summer 2010 include Grupo Financiero Banorte, Mexico; the Ministry of Finance, Colombia; and the Ministry of the Presidency, Panama. These professional experiences give LASP interns an advantage in the increasingly competitive job market. Featured below are two recipients of LASP alumni-sponsored internships:

2009 Lemaigre Fellow
Emily Howard
- B.A., French and Post-Colonial Studies, NYU
- M.A., SAIS/LASP with Emerging Markets Specialization
- Inter-American Development Bank (Peru) Intern

2010 Hildreth Fellow
Steve Kausek
- B.A., Physics and Middle East Studies, Brown
- M.A. Candidate, SAIS/LASP with International Finance Specialization
- Grupo Financiero Banorte (Mexico) Intern

5. International Study Trips: Costa Rica and China

Costa Rica—November 2009
Our second graduate study trip to Costa Rica sent seven students to examine the country’s sustainable development practices in the context of increased regional integration, trade and natural resources management. Sponsored by the Zemurray Foundation and with support from CIPIR/CIAPA, LASP students gained important exposure to key issues and players in the region through a program of meetings with representatives from the public, private and non-profit communities. Particular attention was given to the February 2010 presidential election and regional political dynamics. Upon their return, students provided the SAIS community with an on-the-ground analysis of key campaign issues and election results.

China—March 2010
For the fourth consecutive year, LASP has sent a delegation of students to China to meet with representatives from the academic, diplomatic, public sector, private sector and media communities, with the goal of gaining a deeper understanding of the various forces at work in the changing dynamics of Sino-Latin American relations. Trip highlights included sessions with Vale, Baosteel and a meeting with the Ambassadors of Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela to China. This trip brought together students from the DC, Bologna and Nanjing campuses.

6. Alumni Networking

Over the past academic year, Professor Roett attended alumni gatherings in Boston, New York and Ecuador, where he reconnected with our expansive network of LASP alumni. The network remains a valuable resource for recruiting purposes, career counseling and social networking both in and outside of the United States. LASP alumni continue to be crucial partners in the success of the popular LASP Summer Internship Program, often serving as internship sponsors and mentors.

7. LASP students and alumni raise funds for Chile earthquake victims

Current LASP students and recent alumni worked together to raise awareness and funds for victims of the Chilean earthquake. Second-year joint-degree student (Duke M.B.A.) LASP student Jason Park and recent LASP alumnus Pablo González organized a happy hour benefit event for relief efforts in Chile in the wake of the February 27 earthquake. The happy hour held on March 11 raised money for Un Techo para mi Pais, a Chilean non-profit involved in reconstruction efforts. In Chile, LASP alumna Nicole Etchart and NESt, an organization she co-founded to promote social enterprises in emerging democracies, were also involved with a fundraising campaign for victims of the earthquake.