

SECOLAS General Business Meeting
Meeting Minutes

March 11, 2016
Hotel Caribe
Cartagena de Indias, Colombia

Present:

Angela Willis (presiding), Steven Hyland (Minutes), Maria Paula Andrade, Patricia Arcia, José Manuel Batista, Gene Bell-Villada, Reginald A. Bess, Melissa Birkhofer, Jürgen Buchenau, María del Carmen Caña Jiménez, Greg Crider, Ann González, Jim Henderson, Jimmy Huck, Andrea Lepage, Austreberto Martínez Villegas, Mary Elizabeth Moore, Maria Luci Moreira, Steve Morris, Haley Nelson, Marissa Nichols, Nick Ortiz, Blake Pattridge, Matthew Richey, Frank Robinson, Peter Sanchez, Jaclyn Sumner, Vinodh Venkatesh, Kayla Watson, Greg Weeks

Next Meeting: March 2017, TBA

President Angela Willis called the meeting to order, giving special mention of thanks to the Local Arrangements co-Chairs Jürgen Buchenau and Greg Crider, Steven Hyland and Patty López de Arcia

Committee members and attendees introduced themselves

Steven Hyland gave the **Treasury Report**, noting the organization earned a surplus of \$5,034.92. He also indicated that SECOLAS could expect a small surplus from the Cartagena conference. Finally, Hyland stated that there more than 230 people on the program.

Greg Weeks then offered a report on the **The Latin Americanist** (TLA), stating that Wiley-Blackwell was moving the journal to the ScholarOne online submission and editorial platform. He also said that he is working with the publisher to produce an Impact Factor rating, but that discussions were on-going.

Greg Crider gave the report on **SECOLAS Annals**, which was soon to be published. Crider revealed that he and co-editor Jürgen Buchenau received 30 submissions last June. The number of articles led them to establish 2 rounds of review, with an initial assessment conducted by the co-editors followed by external review. Crider and Buchenau settled on 15 submissions for external review.

Announcements

Jim Henderson addressed the attendees expressing his pleasure about the current fiscal state of SECOLAS. He also declared that SECOLAS could return to South Carolina now that the Confederate battle flag no longer flew on the capitol grounds in Columbia.

Per SECOLAS Constitution, Steven Hyland informed the audience that the Executive Committee approved proposals to amend Articles I and V of the Constitution and a proposal to add an eighth article regarding dissolution of the organization. Articles I and VIII relate to required language in order to secure 501(c)3 tax exempt status from the IRS. The proposed amendment to Article V would expand the size of the Executive Committee. Since changes to constitutional articles require the membership's approval, the membership shall receive an electronic ballot to vote on the proposed amendments in the near future.

Hyland then informed the audience that the EC approved proposals to change sections 1 (The Annual Meeting), II (Sponsorship of the Secretariat), and V (Prizes) of the SECOLAS Constitution's By-laws. Brief discussion ensued. In concordance with the Constitution, the audience voted and approved the changes. The by-law changes go into effect immediately.

New Business:

Jürgen Buchenau announced that SECOLAS 2017 will take place in Chapel Hill, NC from March 23-26, 2017. The Carolina Inn would serve as the conference hotel. UNC and Duke would co-host the event, giving SECOLAS access to the classrooms in the FedEx center. The EC approved the proposal.

SECOLAS 2018 will be held in Nashville, TN. Vanderbilt would be the host institution. The EC approved the proposal.

The EC is exploring Cuba or Mexico for SECOLAS 2019.

José Manuel Batista [Literature/Humanities] and Jackie Sumner [History/Social Sciences] agreed to serve as the Program Chairs for SECOLAS 2017.

Elections:

Officers

Steven Hyland will continue as Secretary-Treasurer.

The EC nominated and SECOLAS unanimously elected Jimmy Huck of Tulane University as President Elect, with a term as president in 2017-2018.

Blake Pattridge at-large term ends now. The EC nominated and SECOLAS unanimously elected Jackie Sumner of Presbyterian College as his replacement.

Pending approval by membership vote of amending Article V, the EC nominated and SECOLAS elected Dr. Reginald Bess of South Carolina State University and Steven Taylor of Troy University as the additional two at-large members. Dr. Bess agreed to a 1-year term and Steven Taylor will accept the 3-year position. Patty López de Arcia was nominated by the EC and elected by SECOLAS to be the first graduate student on the EC.

- Slate of candidates were approved by meeting attendees via voice vote

Awards Committees

The EC nominated Joseph Lenti of Eastern Washington University for a three-year term to the Alfred B. Thomas Book Award Committee. He will join Tim Hawkins (Indiana State University) (Chair, 2017) and Rebecca Atencio (Tulane) (2018), replacing Steven Taylor (Troy University).

- Approved by meeting attendees via voice vote

Aaron Coy Moulton of the University of Arkansas will join the Sturgis Leavitt Award Committee for a three-year term by virtue of winning the 2016 award. He will join Maria del Carmen Collado (Instituto Mora) (Chair, 2017) and Benjamin Cowan (George Mason University) (2018).

The EC nominated Melissa Birkhofer of Western Carolina University for a three-year term to the Edward Moseley Student Paper Award. She will join Oscar de la Torre Cueva (University of North Carolina at Charlotte) (Chair, 2017) and Michael Pisanti (Central Michigan) (2018).

- Approved by meeting attendees via voice vote

Closing:

Angela Willis adjourned the meeting at 7pm.

ADDENDUM to the General Business Meeting Minutes from Cartagena

In June 2015, the Executive Committee of SECOLAS discussed and approved modest financial support for a site visit to Cartagena de Indias, Colombia by Steven Hyland (Secretary-Treasurer) and Gregory Crider (Local Arrangements Co-Chair) in preparation for annual conference that was eventually held in March 2016 at the Hotel Caribe.

Upon their departure from Cartagena, Steven wrote a report of the trip. Greg signed-off on it. Steven then sent the report to SECOLAS President Angela Willis, Local Arrangements Co-Chair Jurgen Buchenau, and the Executive Committee on July 7, 2015. It is included below.

The total cost expended on this trip from the SECOLAS treasury was \$1,556.84.

Dear Angie and Jurgen,

Greg and I visited Cartagena July 1-3, 2015. We stayed at three different hotels, all of which submitted proposals for hosting the SECOLAS 2016 conference. In addition, we met with a series of local academics and cultural figures to help with developing program opportunities and facilitating the participation of Colombian scholars. Our summary follows.

Hotels

We stayed a night each at the Hotel Almirante, Hotel Las Americas, and Hotel Caribe. In general terms, all three hotels provide the facilities to carry out a successful conference. Each of the hotels is away from the historic center, but all are a 10-15 minute taxi ride away. Taxis are safe and cheap in Cartagena, costing 6,000-7,000 pesos [~US \$3.00] each way between hotel and old city. The Almirante and Caribe are located in the Bocagrande neighborhood, which is populated with residential areas, tourist hotels of various levels, commercial shopping centers, and small shops and restaurants along the primary streets of the barrio. Las Americas is located in the northern reaches of town, very close to the airport but isolated from everything else. In comparison to Bocagrande, there is little other than beach that people can experience via walking. In addition, the hotels have gyms in which people can work out. All sites have business centers and on-site restaurants and bars. Printing costs are not included in the nightly rate.

Hotel Almirante

Greg and I agree that this was our favorite hotel. Its location is very good. The hotel features the best salons for panels, and they are located inside the main building. The hall for the banquet overlooks the Caribbean Sea and should feel more intimate than Charleston because the room is shaped like a semi-circle and not the deep hall in the Francis Marion.

The staff is very attentive. They had people greet us at arrival and departure, and check-in and check-out was quick and easy. The staff was also packed with bilingual folk. The facilities are very good. The standard rooms are nice, clean and many have views of the sea. The Almirante had the best breakfast spread. The swimming pool overlooks the sea too, and there is a childcare room that has staff. That service is included in the nightly rate.

Wifi in these hotels are mostly even, but not the most breathtaking. It is what it is. Also, Steven's shower had a dysfunctional hot water shower handle, so his first shower was really really cold. Almirante does not have direct access to the beach, so the intrepid will have to cross a small street that gives the sense of playing a game of frogger. The beach is public.

Hotel Las Americas

This is a beautiful hotel that has a very modern tower (3 years old) and a Caribbean style older section (17 years old) that has great charm. Las Americas treated us like we were bringing a group of more than 1,000 people, hosting a private lunch with two of the hotel's principals. The chef is from Barcelona, and Steven could have eaten several more plates of the cream cheese flan (To. Die. For.). This resort hotel hosts multiple restaurants and bars as well as various gift shops. Las Americas also has its own private beach with easy access.

The standard rooms in the tower are fine and most come with a balcony that overlooks the sea. An amazing feature of the hotel is the numerous pools that target different segments of the clientele. One group features lots of shades and slides for children. Another set of three pools targets those who have children that are a little older and parents who want gobs of sun. A third pool, up on the 10th floor, has a bar, electronic music and an entry requirements of possessing the body of Adonis. Only two of those three reqs are true, but I will not reveal which. There are several restaurants and a couple of bars on site from which to choose.

The conference space is located on the other side of the two-lane highway, but there is a walkway connecting the hotel to it. It is a massive hall that can hold three events of several hundred people simultaneously. It was difficult to envision how the rooms would look because they were not set up.

There are two principal weaknesses for Las Americas, namely location and cost. We met with an historian from the University of Cartagena, and she expressed that most Cartageneros viewed the resort hotel to be far and thus inconvenient. The joint is pricy. Steven also did not have hot water in his shower.

Hotel Caribe

This is the granddaddy of them all; designed by a Cuban architect and opened in 1942. There is a rustic quality here that is charming. The location, its swimming pool and the beautiful gardens

and patios are its strength. The facility has 3-5 restaurants. We also think this facility will be the most economical of the three.

The standard rooms are fine and similar to the others. The rooms located in the Colonial building open onto breezeways, and the hotel is currently refurbishing the rooms on the third floor. There are two additional towers that have been added in the last 20 years that have an additional 200 or so rooms.

The salons are fine, but participants would have to go between different buildings to access various panels. This is an observation, not a criticism. At a minimum, the beautiful patio that is populated with toucans and deer is a very nice place to congregate. It was unclear to me where the banquet would be held, but we have several choices to select.

Hotel Caribe has a private access to a beach featuring a crosswalk guard to slow down the traffic. It has putt-putt and there is a 'kids area' in one of the buildings with ping pong and other games.

The check-in at the Hotel Caribe was a bit chaotic. This is just a function of how they allocate space and have people 'hace la cola'. Also, there was a strange option (a 'seguro') that one can voluntarily pay. It is poorly explained at check-in. Steven thought it was something like a security deposit, but rather it is an insurance policy (for what exactly is unclear) that one pays. The seguro is roughly ~\$7.00/night.

The breakfast, which like the others is buffet style, is fine, but for Greg the weakest of the three. One can get freshly cooked eggs, but the stand is located outside. Eggs are made to order. Juices, coffee, tea, cheeses, fruit. Wifi was inconsistent and the weakest of the three hotels visited. Greg had great difficulty keeping a consistent connection on an iPhone 5.

Local Providers for Excursions

Horacio Caamaño of Conference Direct is negotiating with the hotels on prices and terms in behalf of SECOLAS. He also put us in touch with Gema Tours, one of the most distinguished tourism agencies in Cartagena. Horacio arranged a meeting with the Convention Center and Tourism Board too.

Gema Tours is a full-service company that has many great ideas about potential excursions and optional site-seeing opportunities. Gema Tours provided transfers to/from the airport for Greg and me and escorted us on two separate days around the city looking at six or seven potential sites for events, such as the opening reception, the banquet, and the post-banquet mixer.

Gema also can arrange chiva bus tours for us (as can concierge services at any of the hotels, though Almirante and Caribe are best located for these party-bus excursions).

In addition, they will provide optional site-seeing opportunities, such as city tours, snorkeling trip to nearby island, and an option to visit the quilombo Palenque (about two hours from Cartagena).

They are professional and well-respected in town.

We met with the Tourism Board and they will provide brochures and welcome packets for participants arriving from abroad. We will consult with Horacio about what else they can provide or offer us as we get further into the autumn. We were very pleased with the meeting and they were very interested in helping us. They made an important introduction for us - Jaime Abello (see below)

Meetings

We met with six people/groups in three days. All expressed great interest in supporting SECOLAS and all have given great ideas about how to recruit and advertise the conference.

1. Rafael Acevedo Puello - historian at University of Cartagena; cold-call (Steven found him on the internet, though he also was recommended via Jim Henderson)

1. This was a great first meeting. Rafael is a young historian who is going to have a great career. He will help identify scholars at other institutions to send the convocatoria. He explained that academics in Colombia work on a system of credits (publications, conference participation, etc) and that this would help drive interest. He also said Cartagena would do the rest. Rafael also advised securing convenios with other universities to add strength/legitimacy in the eyes of Colombians. He expressed concern that since my university is unknown in Colombia, we might want to see if we can secure a convenio with someone at a 'more prestigious' university. I specifically asked about registration costs for Colombians. He was noncommittal. We concluded the meeting with a 90-minute tour of the old city.

2. Maribel de la Cruz - historian at University of Cartagena; cold-call (Steven found her on the internet)

1. Greg and Steven met with Maribel in the Juan Valdez Cafe in front of the University of Cartagena. We had to reschedule once and then arrived late, but she was remarkably generous to us. She also recommended the convenio, but was more explicit in what to ask for (primarily emotional support and a promise to diffuse the information) to add legitimacy to the proceedings. Like Rafael, she explained the credit system and even noted that it applies to graduate students. She also encouraged us to consider letting undergrads attend to see how an international conference operates. We asked about the 'prestige' factor of SECOLAS institutional underwriters (UNCC, Winthrop, and Wingate). She said that was not an issue, but she did counsel us to be aggressive in

getting convenios with other Latin American universities, repeatedly mentioning the Instituto Mora in Mexico City. [This is a Greg/Jurgen mission.]

2. I sent the convocatoria to Maribel later that night. She offered the following advice: "Aunque seria bueno sugerir ejes temáticos o áreas de interés. Así mismo la presentación de simposios para que grupos de investigadores que trabajen los mismos temas presenten mesas de trabajo." I have seen this on many other CFPs from Latin America and Europe. I think we should consider her advice and see how we could massage this. It might also make it easier for Steven Taylor and Chris Dennis when organizing the panels. We could make these themes suggestive yet broad in appeal (e.g. colonial history; cultural studies; 21st century novel; etc).
 3. Maribel also supported the idea that we emphasize the opportunity for conference presenters to publish in *The Latin Americanist* and suggested that we include information about the accessibility and breadth of the reach of the journal.
 4. She strongly encouraged us to meet with María Beatriz García Dereix, Director of the Cultural Section of the Banco de la República
3. María Beatriz García Dereix - Director of the Cultural Section of the Banco de la República
1. Again, great conversation and she is very excited to help. She oversees the cultural sites operated by the Banco de la República, namely the Museo de Oro and the Biblioteca Bartolomé Calvo.
 2. She had the idea that we could do the cocktail reception in the municipal theater. She also will respond to any questions or ideas we may have about cultural programming. At a minimum, she said the Museo de Oro is a must-see.
 3. She also made a call to the director of the Archivo Histórico, which is located in the Palacio de la Inquisición! Greg thinks many historians would love to play around in there and hear the story of the development of the archive, which is a relatively recent phenomenon. There is a possibility that we could have the reception in this space as well.
 4. Greg also thinks that we could advertise to our members the possibility of doing research in the archives. Because the meeting is close to spring break for so many of us, some historians, social scientists, and literary critics may choose to extend their stay to poke around in the archives. Obviously, the primary market for this activity would be Colombianists.
4. María Clara Faciolince and María Angélica Rodríguez, Cartagena Tourism Board

1. We met with Executive Director María Clara and her assistant. They are willing to help us with materials. As said above, we will work with Horacio about seeing what other resources can be made available to us
 2. María Clara suggested a walking tour of Gabriel García Marquez's Cartagena. She said it would be a 3-hour tour. Greg and I swallowed slowly [it's hot and muggy here!]. María Clara then called Jaime Abello, General Director of the Fundación GGM para el nuevo periodismo iberoamericano for us and we set up a meeting for the following day
5. Jaime Abello - Director of the Fundación GGM para el nuevo periodismo iberoamericano
1. What a cool guy. He is very influential in Cartagena and is invited to conferences and events related to journalism all over Latin America and the Caribbean. Jaime was very generous to us because we arrived 30 minutes earlier than scheduled and he took us right in.
 2. Jaime suggested that instead of doing the walking tour, we should do a tertulia at a nice event space before the cocktail reception. He envisioned GGM scholar Dr. Ariel Castillo from the Universidad del Atlántico (Barranquilla), Gabo's brother, and himself doing a roundtable of sorts discussing GGM's life and works. He thinks this would be more amenable given the demographic and interest of the conference participants. He even intimated at simultaneous translation for our non-Spanish-speaking crowd. There would be scheduling issues to work out (Jaime is traveling to Puerto Rico that week), but a Thursday afternoon tertulia is a possibility.
 3. He has a great sense of humor and ribbed Greg for not yet having Whatsapp. Greg has since remedied his app-backwardness and joined the hip world of Whatsapp.
6. Javier Ortiz Cassiani - Historian, columnist for *El Herald*, and general bad ass
1. He is the reigning Afrocolombian of the Year for journalism and media. Jaime Abello said his participation was key.
 2. Javier is so nice, and he is very interested in helping SECOLAS and its members build alliances and collaboration with Colombians. He especially liked the interdisciplinary element of SECOLAS and the conference.
 3. He said at a minimum he would give a paper and he would help us with getting the word out. He knows everybody and anyone he does not know wants to know him. Before we sat down to talk, two undergraduate women approached the table, introduced themselves, proceeded to ignore me while saying how important his work had been for them. He was very gracious with them. Really humble guy. I was energized after the meeting.

Greg and I are very excited about how this conference may turn out. In the next week, we will lay out our vision for the conference. Just to give you a heads up, the official dates of the conference (in our grand vision) will go from 10-12 March to 9-13 March. The 9th and the 13th will be optional events, but we want them on the calendar for purposes of both institutional funding and expanding options for members. We will explain further in a forthcoming message.

We also can note here that we felt safe in all areas that we visited, including the Old City, Bocagrande, and Las Americas. Taxis were safe and plentiful. (Radio taxis, common safe practice in Mexico and other parts of the Americas, were not necessary.)

Until then, thank you for the opportunity and the trust you placed and Greg and me. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Un abrazo,

Steven and Greg