

MANUAL ON SECTIONS

2011 Revision

This Manual outlines administrative and operational procedures related to the establishment and conduct of LASA Sections, and describes the relationship of Sections to the Association.

Purpose of Sections

Sections exist to promote the common interest of Association members in specific areas of Latin American studies. They are a means of increasing communication and interaction among persons of similar interests within the framework of the larger organization. They help to broaden involvement in LASA, to democratize leadership selection in LASA activities, and to make LASA more participatory and responsive to constituencies. Through active Section membership individuals may receive recognition for accomplishments in their specialty and also ensure that their interests in their sub-field are recognized in the program at LASA Congresses and in other activities of the Association.

Section Membership

Since Sections are a part of the Association, membership in them requires membership in the Association as well. LASA members may join as many Sections as they so desire by paying the appropriate dues. Continued Section membership is contingent upon continued LASA membership and the payment of annual Section dues.

Establishment of Sections

The Executive Council of the Association has approved the following policies regarding the establishment of Sections:

Founding members of a new Section will notify the Secretariat of their intention to organize a Section. This notification should include a statement of reasonable length establishing the scope of the Section and the type of activities envisioned. The statement must be signed by at least 50 current LASA members who commit to becoming dues-paying members of the Section. The submission should also include a statement of about 50 words that can be published in the *LASA Forum*, describing the purpose of the Section.

A formal petition for the organization of the Section will be referred to the Executive Council (EC) of the Association for approval or other action. The EC has discretion to approve or reject the proposal at this stage, but it will support all proposals that are consistent with the purposes of LASA as a professional Association.

Once approved, the new Section is added to the membership form for the coming calendar year.

Maintenance of Sections

1. Sections are required to maintain a membership of at least 50 members. Should membership fall below 50, a Section may have a one and one-half year grace period *on a one-time basis only*, during which its services and prerogatives will continue intact. At the end of this period, failure to achieve at least 50 members will result in a state of suspension and normal services and prerogatives (such as rights to a session at the LASA Congress) will be discontinued.

2. Each Section must have a Business Meeting, open to the Section membership, at the LASA Congress. Sections with 99 or fewer members must have a quorum of 10 paid members at their Business Meeting, and Sections with over 100 members must have a quorum consisting of 10 percent of their paid membership. The Business Meeting must be announced in the Congress Program. The Section Chair conducts the Business Meeting.

3. Each Section must have, minimally, the following set of officers: a Section Chair, a Secretary-treasurer, and 4 Council members. These elected officers constitute the Council of the Section and they should be consulted by the Section Chair about Section matters. In the selection of officers, each Section should try to obtain broad representation of its membership. All candidates must be dues-paying members both of LASA and of the Section.
4. Sections may conduct their elections by mail or email ballot, or at the Congress itself. The Chair should be assured in advance of the willingness of nominees to run for office.
5. The term of office for the Chair is one year (parallel to the terms of LASA officers.) The term of office for the Secretary-treasurer and the Council members is two years (coinciding, again, with the LASA electoral cycle). The term of office for all newly-elected officers will begin on June 1.
6. The elections for Council members shall be staggered to provide continuity to the Council. Two shall be elected each Congress/LASA electoral cycle. (NOTE: In the first years of a Section, 2 (of the 4) Section Council members will be elected to serve only one year, to establish the staggered cycle.)
5. Within one month after each Congress, the person who chaired the Section will provide the Secretariat with a report of the term activities. Although the reports (maximum of 250 words) may contain additional information, the following must be included:
 - A. A report of the Business Meeting, and a count of the number of persons present.
 - B. The results of Section elections, including the names and addresses of each new officer.
 - C. A review of the term activities and plans for the coming term.
 - D. Names of winners of Section prizes and travel awards, as well as the dollar amount; the names of the selection committee members and a description of the selection process.
 The report will be published in the *LASA Forum*.
8. The EC may decide to terminate a Section if it does not comply with LASA guidelines as specified in this document. For example, termination may occur if no quorum is obtained at a business meeting, if dues-paying membership falls, and stays below, 50, if a Section does not file official reports of their activities, or if it acts in the name of LASA without permission. The Section will be given one term (entailing no more than one LASA Congress) to appeal the decision or reorganize the Section. Sections may also be terminated on their own recommendation.

Activities of Sections

Sections have wide autonomy in the development of their programs, providing that the minimal requirements described under "Maintenance of Sections" are routinely met. They may announce activities in the Sections Column in the *LASA Forum* and provide a more detailed description of programs at their website, which may be linked to the LASA website.

Sections may undertake projects such as publishing newsletters, teaching workshops, conferences, a speaker's bureau, etc. Sections may compile a directory, listing Section members' names, addresses (including electronic), phone numbers, and specializations. Sections may also develop curriculum materials for sale through the Secretariat.

A Section may appoint ad hoc committees to address issues of relevance to the Section. These committees may meet during the year provided they have their own funding.

Policy Statements

Sections are authorized to make policy statements within their area of expertise. Any such statement must include the following: "This statement was approved by the membership of the _____ Section of the Latin American Studies Association. Approval of the statement was by a vote of _____ (specify number) to

_____ (specify number) of the _____ (specify number) persons in the Section entitled to vote on it. This is not an official policy statement of the Latin American Studies Association, which neither endorses nor rejects the views expressed."

Section Finances

Sections determine their own dues structure. A majority of paid members at the business meeting must approve any increase. Dues may be periodically revised to reflect changes in the costs of providing services to Sections. The minimum dues payment for Section membership is \$10, \$4 of which is retained by the Secretariat to cover costs such as postage, supplies and staff time. The remainder of the dues is deposited by the Secretariat in an account in the name of the Section, where unspent funds continue to accrue from year to year. The Secretariat may, with Executive Council approval, change the amount charged to Sections, in line with changes in the costs of its services.

1. The dues within each Section are equal for all members, regardless of member status or residency. Sections may raise the dues beyond the \$10 level if they choose, but dues must be consistent for all members within the Section.
2. The Secretariat provides the Section chair with a list of paid members one month before the Congress. This list should be consulted to assure that all officers elected at the Section business meeting are current dues-paying members of the Section.
3. The Secretariat provides each Section chair and treasurer with a statement of the current Section balance twice a year, in June and December.

Section Publications/Newsletters

Sections may initiate and pursue publication projects that are germane to their interests. However, since Sections are not legal entities but constituent parts of LASA, their publications are subject to the Association's regular policies and procedures regarding publications.

Before making any commitment to initiate a project likely to result in a publication, Sections must submit a proposal to the EC describing the purpose of the proposed work, the approach to be employed, and the qualifications of the proposed editors and/or authors. The EC will review the proposal and provide final approval for the publication.

Since one of the chief functions of Sections is the communication of shared ideas, interests, and activities among its members, Section members may wish to designate a person or committee to be responsible for a Section newsletter.

Some ideas for newsletter content include: 1) Announcements of conferences of interest to Section members, 2) a message from the Section chair, 3) announcements of grant opportunities, Section receptions, and LASA program activities of particular interest, 4) information on books, films, data sets, and software, 5) book reviews, 6) calls for information about Section member research, 7) dialogues on hot topics, 8) news about nominations, program idea solicitations and awards, 9) news of Section members--moves, new appointments, grants, publications, etc., 10) teaching tips, 11) dissertations in progress, and 12) short articles by Section members.

Newsletters might be printed three times a year. To save costs and speed circulation, a Section may choose to publish the letter electronically (ideally sending "hard copy" to all members of a Section who have no email address). Sections themselves must cover whatever expenses such a newsletter might involve, and they are wholly responsible for disseminating the newsletter.

LASA Congress Program

The program of the LASA Congress is the responsibility of the Program Chair and the Program Committee, in consultation with the LASA President and the Secretariat. They have final authority regarding the composition of the Congress Program. Where a Section coincides with a Congress track, the Program Chair may consult with the Section chair, to enable the Section to suggest one of its members as track chair. Program chairs should create tracks that parallel existing Sections as closely as possible, except in the case of country-specific Sections.

There is one common deadline for Section and general program submissions; only Section panels submitted by the deadline will be considered for the program. Unlike proposals submitted for the general Congress Program, proposals for Section sessions are accepted as submitted by the Section chair, and their inclusion in the program is guaranteed, provided that 1) all information is submitted by the specified deadline, and 2) the Section has complied with all other Section obligations, as stipulated in this Manual.

Section members may be involved in general Congress sessions and/or Section sessions. However, the roles each individual may have at the Congress are limited. Normally a participant may perform two roles only at the Congress. However, an individual participating in a panel organized by a LASA Section may present a paper in that session, and may have two additional roles in the General Program. Nevertheless, only one paper may be presented during the Congress.

The chair of a Section is responsible for organizing the Section activities for that Section at each LASA Congress. The Program Committee will cooperate in scheduling necessary meeting room space and arranging program listings provided that materials are submitted by the deadline for proposals for each Congress.

Allocation of Congress Sessions

On May 1 of each year, prior to the annual Congress, the Secretariat will count the number of dues-paying members of each Section to determine the number of sessions allotted to each for the following Congress.

The number of Session slots any Section may have is contingent on the number of Section members, as specified below. The minimum membership to be guaranteed a session at a LASA Congress is 50. The maximum number of session slots, exclusive of the Council/Business Meeting slot, will be five. All Sections will be given a one-Congress exemption to qualify for a session in the Program if they have fewer than 50 members. This provision is designed to help new Sections. A Section need not use all the slots assigned to it *but it may not use more*.

<u>Number of members</u>	<u>Number of sessions</u>
50-75	1
76-125	2
126-200	3
201-499	4
500+	5

Section Program Formats

Sections are required to hold one-half of their allotted Congress sessions in the form of alternative formats, i.e., not the traditional panel format. These may be roundtables, the addition of a special speaker, or an author-meets-critics session (focusing on a book relevant to Section members). Roundtables provide an ideal opportunity for dialogue, for discussion of ideas before they are in article-ready form, and for more people to be involved in the program.

Section Receptions

Sections may host receptions for their members. A room for a reception can be reserved through the Congress Program Chair provided that the Section Chair requests a room by the deadline for "Call for Papers" and panel proposals. Arrangements for catering must be made by the Sections themselves through the Convention Services/Catering Office of the Congress hotel. If Sections use a room in the hotel/convention center, the

refreshments must be purchased through the hotel/convention center catering service. *Costs for catering must be paid by the individuals making the arrangements and will be reimbursed from the Section's restricted account or from outside funds raised by the Section. (For reimbursement from Section funds, the Section must provide the Secretariat with original receipts.)* The reception does not count towards the Program session allocation.

Co-Sponsored Sessions among Sections

Sections may choose to co-sponsor sessions. The session will count toward the allotment of one Section or the other. One arrangement is to have two-Congress co-sponsorship, with the joint session counting toward one Section in one Congress and toward the other Section at the subsequent Congress.

Committee on Sections

A Committee on Sections, comprised of Chairs of the various Sections, meets at every Congress to discuss issues of mutual concern. The meeting will be chaired by the member of the EC designated as Sections Coordinator, or by the LASA President. The Committee has advisory, not discretionary power. The EC has ultimate authority on matters pertaining to Sections.

Promoting the Section at the Congress

LASA Congresses provide an excellent opportunity to attract new Section members. A table at the Welcoming Reception may hold flyers and samples of Section publications. A similar table located in the LASA Registration area at the hotel/convention center may offer Section newsletters, brochures and LASA membership forms throughout the three days of the Congress.

Section Awards

Each Section may give up to two awards per Congress. Reimbursement for necessary expenses is permitted, from Section funds. The title format for Section awards shall be the standard for all Sections: "The Latin American Studies Association Section on (name of Section) Award for Distinguished (Scholarship, Service, or Teaching)".

Section Award Committee Chairs should submit a 100 word statement on each award recipient for publication in the *Forum*. If a black-and-white photo of the winners is included with the statement, it may be printed in the *LASA Forum*, space permitting.

Research and Training Projects

Sections of the Association may desire collectively to undertake special projects (research or training) of interest to their memberships. As indicated earlier in this Manual, such projects may receive Association sponsorship only if they are of major and direct concern to the Association as a whole. If Section-initiated projects are approved by the EC, the Secretariat will cooperate in such matters as budget preparation, negotiations with funding agencies, administration of funds, and the sharing of responsibilities with Section representatives. If Section-initiated projects are not approved by the EC, they may not be undertaken in the name of LASA and they may not have LASA sponsorship. In all cases where Sections contemplate seeking Association sponsorship, it is advisable that Association officers be consulted during the preliminary planning of a project.

Relationship of Sections to the Association

The Association encourages a high level of Section activity. Activities that do not affect the rest of the Association's membership, such as the awarding of a prize, may be handled entirely by a Section. Activities that have considerable ramification for the entire Association membership, that involve LASA financial obligations of any magnitude, or that affect the activities of other Sections and their membership will remain in the purview of the

Association and be the responsibility of the Association and its administrative and committee structure. There are, however, a number of areas in which Sections may not act without the permission of the LASA president:

- 1) No statement may be circulated by a Section in the name of LASA, nor may a Section commit LASA funds.
- 2) No Section may spend more funds than it has in reserve (in deposit through the Secretariat). Except in extreme circumstances, all Sections should have a minimum reserve of \$100. The LASA Secretariat administers the deposits and withdrawals of each Section; it is responsible for releasing funds requested by a Section chair or Section treasurer, provided that the funds are to be used in conformity with LASA guidelines.
- 3) Sections may not make commitments to other groups, apply for funds, or in other ways affect the constituent relationships between Sections of the Association without prior consultation with the LASA President and the Executive Council of the Association.

Coordination

A member of the EC serves as Liaison to the Sections. The liaison 1) may raise issues with the EC on behalf of Sections and act as the Sections' voice at meetings, and 2) interprets EC decisions to the Sections. The current Sections Liaison is Roberto Blancarte (blancart@colmex.mx).

In order to facilitate coordination between Section activities and other aspects of LASA, one member of the LASA staff serves as Sections Coordinator. Sandy Klinzing serves in this role. She may be reached at the Secretariat at 412-648-1907 [phone], 412-624-7145 [fax], or sklinz@pitt.edu.