

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



With great pleasure and pride, we give you this sixth edition of *Portal* from the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies. The 2010–2011 academic year has been momentous in many ways. We weathered the storm of a severe budget challenge, and at the same time, launched an ambitious major gifts campaign. We had another year chock-full of exciting scholarly programs, we expanded our nationally recognized public engagement activities (formerly known as “outreach”), and we took major steps toward a

closer relationship with our sister institution, the Benson Latin American Collection. Amid all this activity, we continued to serve our stellar graduate students and undergraduate majors, while introducing a newly energized and expanded network of alumni who will help open doors for current students and work with us to keep the LLLILAS intellectual community vibrant long after graduation.

Budget cuts affected the entire UT System, and LLLILAS was no exception, requiring belt-tightening and restructuring. But our principal response has been to accelerate processes of innovation already under way: with six new faculty-led research initiatives, supported by LLLILAS seed monies, which later become self-sustaining; with programs such as the Professional Development Seminars and Faces of the Americas lecture series, which generate their own revenues; and with much-expanded fund-raising activities. Cutbacks also gave us a pointed object lesson in the importance of endowment. The principal reason we were able to continue the full complement of activities that makes our Institute shine was the generosity and vision of our donors from past years, especially Joe and Teresa Long. This lesson, in turn, spurred us on to begin our major gifts campaign, despite (indeed because of!) the hard economic times.

Launched in April 2011 with the name *Bridging the Americas*, our major gifts campaign has “gone public” with the goal to match the Long gift of \$10 million by September 2014. The lion’s share of this new endowment will go to student support. We want the incoming graduate class of 2014 to have full two-year scholarships, which will allow us to recruit the best students in the hemisphere, guarantee our diversity goals, and make sure students finish the program in a timely manner. Proceeds will also support student study and research in Latin America. Other priorities in our campaign include binational professorships in areas of strategic importance for Latin American Studies, our Indigenous Language Initiative, and the Latin American and Latino Studies Digital Library (see article p. 16).

Our confidence in relation to this ambitious goal has many sources, central among them our deeply committed Advisory Council. Each of these 17 individuals believes fervently in the mission of LLLILAS and of the University, and all are taking concrete actions to help us lay the groundwork for success. If you would like to learn more or make a contribution, please visit the “giving” section of our website or <http://www.bridgingtheamericas.org>

Our vibrant scholarly program is well represented in these pages, but since *Portal* cannot cover everything, I would like to mention a few additional highlights. One signature commitment of our scholarly program is to increase the reach and density of collaboration with Latin American colleagues by holding more conferences in Latin America rather than Austin. In the year under review, LLLILAS co-organized three such conferences in São Paulo, Bogotá, and Guadalajara, and such events are instrumental to our goal of solidifying LLLILAS’s reputation as a hemisphere-wide catalyst for scholarly exchange. For a list of all our conferences in 2010–2011, see p. 49.

As I write this welcome note, I am returning from a productive visit to Brazil, where LLLILAS is taking strides to expand and deepen our presence. In conjunction with the U.S. Fulbright Commission, we have initiated a five-year program of scholarly exchange on Environmental Science and Policy (see article p. 26). During my visit, I also participated in an innovative study abroad program, cosponsored by LLLILAS and the new UT Department of African and African Diaspora Studies (AADS), in collaboration with the Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro and a Rio-based NGO (Criola), focused on “Theories of the African Diaspora.” You can expect to receive more news as we take actions to establish new initiatives in each of our three programmatic priorities: social inequalities, sustainable democracies, and cultural agency.

As I reflect on our activities, one unifying theme comes to the fore as a source of inspiration and as affirmation that our footing is sure. LLLILAS is committed to putting scholarly excellence to the service of collective endeavors that make a difference in the world. This unifying theme—in keeping with the UT motto, “What starts here changes the world”—informs all facets of the LLLILAS mission, and serves as the ethical-political compass that guides our plans for the future. It is the principal source of the renewable energy that propels us forward.

Read on! I hope and trust that you will be inspired as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles R. Hale".

Charles R. Hale, Director
Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies