

2018 SLAS CONFERENCE REPORT

Organisation & Planning

University of Southampton hosted the 2018 SLAS Annual Conference, as per an invitation of the SLAS Executive Committee to one of its members (Dr. Ana Margheritis).

The School of Social Sciences at Southampton endorsed the plans and preliminary tasks started in the Fall of 2016. The conference date, preliminary schedule and budget estimates were agreed with the SLAS Executive Committee then.

Colleagues from both Social Sciences and Humanities at Southampton met in November 2016 and the Organising Committee resulted from an inter-faculty collaboration (please see composition below).

At that meeting, there was unanimous agreement on the following goals: 1) to set an appealing theme to colleagues in all disciplines and locations, and of interest to both junior and senior scholars; 2) to encourage a balanced disciplinary representation across panels; 3) to give priority to academic and professional standards in the call for submissions and elaboration of the programme.

In early 2017, the conference website was designed, the venue and most services booked, and a high-profile keynote speaker confirmed. The website and online submission forms were ready and launched as soon as the 2017 SLAS Conference ended.

Keynote

The keynote speaker was Prof. Carmen Diana Deere, Distinguished Professor Emerita of Latin American Studies and Food & Resource Economics at University of Florida, USA, Honorary Professor Emerita of the Latin American Faculty of Social Science (FLACSO) in Quito, Ecuador, and former President of LASA (Latin American Studies Association, the most important professional association in the field).

We were honoured that she accepted our invitation. Her presence certainly raised the visibility of the event, which coincided with the announcement of her being the 2018 awardee of the Kalman Silvert Award at LASA. This is a Lifetime Achievement Award which “recognizes senior members of the profession who have made distinguished lifetime contributions to the study of Latin America” (see

http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/eng/congress/awards/silvert_about.asp).

Please see Prof. Carmen Diana Deere’s short bio at

<http://generic.wordpress.soton.ac.uk/slas2018/programme/keynote/>

Conference Theme

The theme of the 2018 SLAS conference was ‘Latin American Studies around the World.’ Our main goal was to invite critical reflection on the history and current state of Latin American Studies in the UK and around the world. How and why is Latin American Studies organized and practiced differently in its various national and institutional locations? What can be learned from these differences? To what extent are such differences mediated by global networks of exchange? To what purposes or callings does Latin American Studies respond today? How might Latin American Studies in the UK engage or indeed drive global trends more effectively?

Given the current trends in the field in the UK, this reflection was timely and instrumental to highlight the role that SLAS might play to the benefit of its members. It dovetailed nicely with the 2018 theme of the XXXVI LASA International Congress, too.

We were delighted that the keynote speaker enthusiastically engaged with the theme, offering an admirable lecture based on rigorous research on professional practices across countries. Her talk raised insightful points of relevance for individuals and institutions alike. The presentation contained original quantitative data and thought-provoking arguments, which were very helpful to inform individual career decisions, institutional programme development at specialised centres and universities, and SLAS' strategic positioning.

We note that the opening panel and the closing plenary also focused on the theme, providing further consistency to the event.

In particular, given that Ana is Associate Fellow at ILAS (School of Advanced Study, University of London), we built upon a collaboration to strengthen the programme: Prof. Mark Thurner proposed two roundtables to close the conference. In his capacity as PI of the Leverhulme Trust LAGLOBAL Research Network, he kindly enlisted and covered the costs of participation for 10 prominent Latin Americanist scholars from across the globe. Their participation allowed for a rich comparison of professional practices across regions. The debate raised key questions for institutions in general and SLAS in particular.

For further details on the theme, see <https://generic.wordpress.soton.ac.uk/slas2018/>

For details on the plenary, <http://generic.wordpress.soton.ac.uk/slas2018/plenary-roundtable/>

Call for Papers and Panels

To address the goals mentioned above, the Organising Committee set clear criteria for submissions and a minimum number of papers (3) for panel proposals.

We worked hard to fill the chair and discussant roles in each panel, for which we enlisted mostly senior colleagues. We made our best effort to group together individual submissions in coherent panels, as well as to maintain a minimum number of three papers per panel --and four, if possible. Aware that many submissions came from students, we decided to distribute these across panels rather than forming student-only panels. We aimed at giving everybody the best experience possible and we strived to maximise the chances of all participants to engage in discussions, advising, networking, etc.

We note that the call reached out to colleagues not only in the UK but also in Europe, Latin America, and the USA. Around half of the submissions came from overseas scholars.

A significant number of submissions came from scholars based in Latin American countries. Unfortunately, some of them cancelled their participation due to the lack of financial support. As the time of the Call for Submissions approached, the Organising Committee engaged in an intense campaign of advertising via social media, the University of Southampton portal, and professional networks. We also sent regular updates to the SLAS' web manager.

By the deadline (16 July 2017), we received 25 panel proposals and 67 individual submissions. Two thirds of the submissions came from non-SLAS members.

As per the paper proposers' self-selection online, this is the breakdown of individual paper proposals by discipline: Anthropology (6), Cultural Studies (12), Development Studies (11), Economics (5), Health Sciences (5), History (8), International Relations (5), Modern Languages (5), Political Science (12), Sociology (23).

As per the panel proposers' self-selection online, this is the breakdown of panel proposals by discipline: Cultural Studies (5), Development Studies (6), Fine Arts (1), Geography (4), History (3), International Relations (1), Modern Languages (5), Political Science (5), Sociology (1).

As per the SLAS Executive Committee's request, the deadline was extended up to 31st August. We also encourage proposals falling within the remit of under-represented disciplines. Beyond that date, we screened out-of-round submissions on ad hoc basis. Two more panel proposals and 15 individual paper proposals were received in the extension period.

Letters of acceptance were sent out in early September.

Conference Programme

The preliminary programme was announced on 1 September 2017. It underwent some revisions to accommodate out-of-round submissions and updates during the registration process. The final programme, containing a total of 48 panels plus the keynote address a double-slot closing roundtable, was sent to print and uploaded to the website the first week of March 2018.

During the conference, an average of 8 panels run simultaneously in the six time slots. We strived to keep a good balance of topics/disciplinary tracks within and across the six time slots, thus offering a wide variety of choices along both days.

The final schedule of events, conference programme and list of abstracts can be found here: <https://generic.wordpress.soton.ac.uk/slas2018/programme/general-programme/>

Additional Events

The 2018 SLAS Conference was held at the Winchester Campus of University of Southampton in Winchester, Hampshire. The proximity to London, easy access to the train station and local airport, and relatively small size of the city facilitated the logistics of the event. The location offered some exciting opportunities to explore a beautiful medieval city. Thanks to the support of the Winchester City Council, we secured free walking tours and a discount on the entrance fee to the main landmark (the Winchester Cathedral) for delegates and their guests.

Some additional events were added to the programme, such as exhibits (see <http://generic.wordpress.soton.ac.uk/slas2018/exhibits/>), a meeting of the UK Political Science Association Specialist Group on Latin American Politics (see <http://generic.wordpress.soton.ac.uk/slas2018/wp-content/uploads/sites/178/2018/02/Latin-American-Politics-Specialist-Group.pdf>), and a networking lunch and discussion on publishing for PILAS members.

In order to encourage full registration and engagement in most events, the Organising Committee was keen on scheduling the dinner towards the end of the conference, organising a high profile artistic performance for attendees, and opening touristic options and the dinner to delegates' spouses/guests.

As per the request of the SLAS Executive Committee, we scheduled the dinner the first day of the conference, followed by music and dancing, as in previous conferences.

The keynote address was followed by a wine reception on campus.

The dinner took place at the Winchester Guildhall (Bapsy Hall). Two bands performed traditional Latin music. We were delighted to see that delegates enjoyed the celebration.

Support

The Hospitality Office, a centrally-managed unit at University of Southampton, was engaged to book the venue, catering and other facilities and services.

The administrative staff at the School of Social Sciences kindly provided contacts, supplies and occasional help on travel bookings and other.

The organisers of the past two SLAS conferences at Liverpool and Glasgow kindly provided advice and suggestions.

A web manager was hired to help with the designing and launching of the website in early 2017. She also managed dedicated e-mail and twitter accounts.

Two postgraduate students and eight undergraduate students at University of Southampton were hired to assist with administrative and logistic tasks during the week of the event.

Two additional postgraduate students from University of London volunteered to help during the event.

The University of Southampton Print Office was engaged to design and print the conference programme.

The Online Store at University of Southampton was engaged to process registration and exhibitors' fees.

All other payments and transfers were made through the University of Southampton online system called Agresso, under the advice of the Finance Office at the School of Social Sciences and the central office of Purchases & Expenses.

Registration

Delegate rates included delegate pack, lunch, and registration fees.

The Hospitality and Online Store offices advised against disaggregating fees for one and two days in such a short event. They also advised against having too many categories for delegates because online booking would look confusing and this might jeopardise registration.

As per the SLAS Executive Committee's request, we included the same categories as in previous conferences and gave delegates the option of registering for only one day or the entire conference.

To attend the budget considerations below, we decided to charge dinner and entertainment for delegates and their guests separately.

By the time registration closed (8 March 2018), 166 delegates registered for the conference and 110 for the dinner (see details below). Forty-seven of these delegates registered during the early-bird period. Based on internal organisation records and personal communications, we know that around 25 colleagues attended without registering. Hence, total attendees amounted to 180-190 delegates, which was our target.

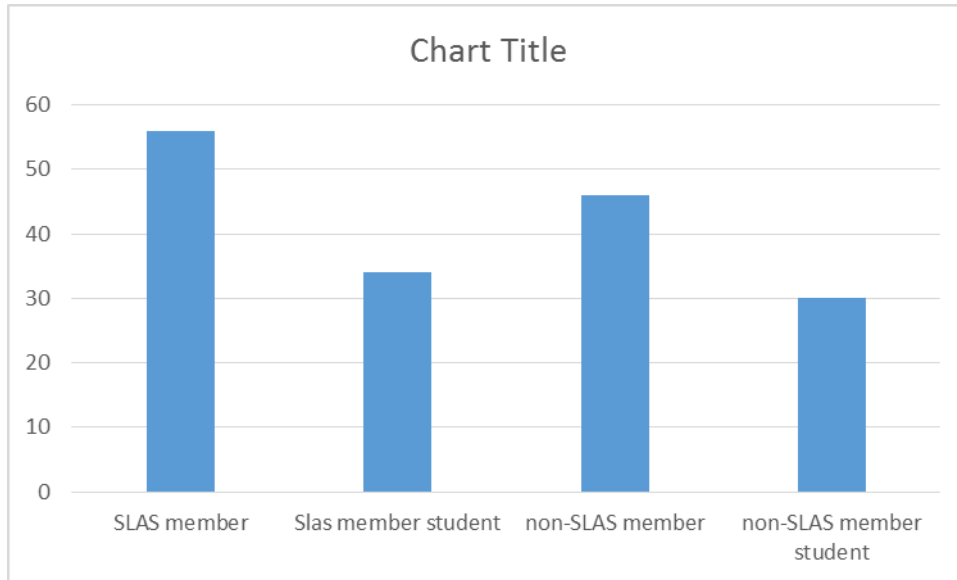
Cancellations, reimbursements and certificates of attendance were attended via email and processed via the Online Store.

For the scheme of fees by categories for early and regular registration, see

<http://generic.wordpress.soton.ac.uk/slas2018/registration/>

Summary of Registration Figures

SLAS member	56
SLAS member student	34
non-SLAS member	46
non-SLAS member student	30
	166

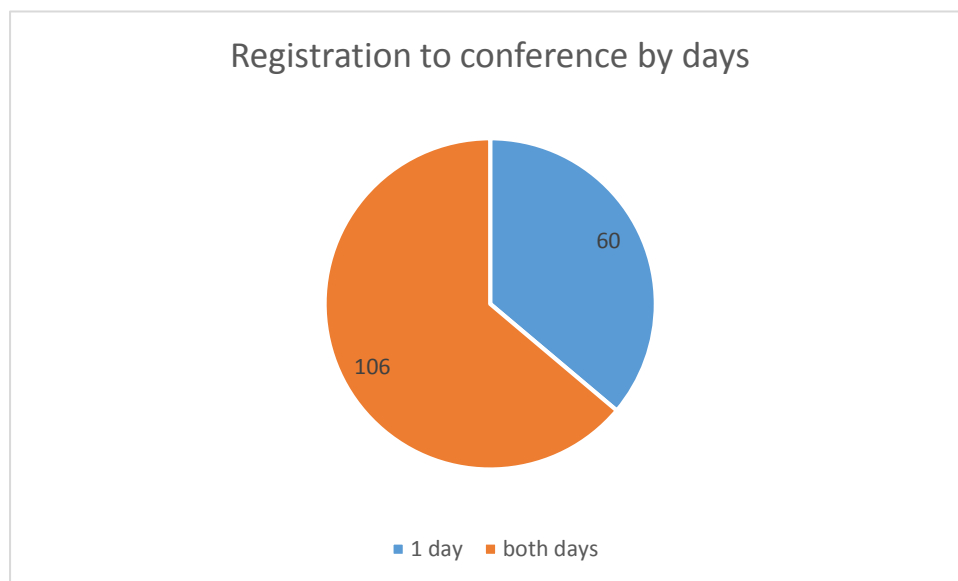


Registration by Delegate Categories

Row Labels	Sum of aa
1.Early Bird Registration - SLAS MEMBER Delegate Package - 1 Day	8
1.SLAS MEMBER Delegate Package - 1 Day	13
2.Early Bird Registration - SLAS MEMBER Delegate Package - 2 Day	9
2.SLAS MEMBER Delegate Package - 2 Day	26
3.Early Bird Registration - Non-SLAS MEMBER Delegate Package - 1 Day	5
3.Non-SLAS MEMBER Delegate Package - 1 Day	12
4.Early Bird Registration - Non-SLAS MEMBER Delegate Package - 2 Day	4
4.Non-SLAS MEMBER Delegate Package - 2 Day	25
5.SLAS MEMBER Student- Retiree- Unemployed Delegate Package - 1 Day	7
6.Early Bird Registration - SLAS MEMBER Student- Retiree- Unemployed Delegate Package - 2 Day	14
6.SLAS MEMBER Student- Retiree- Unemployed Delegate Package - 2 Day	13
7.Early Bird Registration - Non-SLAS MEMBER Student- Retiree- Unemployed Delegate Package - 1 Day	2
7.Non-SLAS MEMBER Student- Retiree- Unemployed Delegate Package - 1 Day	11
8.Early Bird Registration - Non-SLAS MEMBER Student- Retiree- Unemployed Delegate Package - 2 Day	3
8.Non-SLAS MEMBER Student- Retiree- Unemployed Delegate Package - 2 Day	14
Grand Total	166

Registration by day of the conference

Row Labels	Sum of number
Thursday	18
Friday	38
1 day only	4
Both	106
Grand Total	166



Exhibitors

Following the model of previous conferences, we prepared a conference prospectus for publishers explaining conditions for display and advertising. We contacted them in late 2017. Eight exhibitors bought leaflets in the conference pack. Two bought full-page adverts in the programme book.

Exhibitor fees were set at the same rate as in the past two conferences. Please see details at <http://generic.wordpress.soton.ac.uk/slas2018/registration/>

Budget

The Organising Committee met on 12 October 2017 to finalise the budget.

Aware of the large number of students attending and of Winchester being as pricy as London, one of our main concerns was to keep fees and other costs affordable.

In order to set the registration fees above, the Organising Committee took into consideration the fees charged for the previous two SLAS conferences and projected two sets of three possible scenarios based on cost estimates and expected income (one with fees as per the previous year's conference and one with a £10 increase).

Given that our preliminary budget total was £25,543, the Organising Committee unanimously agreed on the second option, which translated into prudent estimates of income as per the table below.

Calculations income with new fees (based on potential lower attendance than last year of 180 participants; 130 students and 50 non-students)	Pessimistic Mainly early bird Mainly registrations for 1 day Mainly SLAS members	Realistic Early bird, balanced registration between Registration for 1 and 2 days attendance Mainly SLAS members	Positive Mainly early bird Mostly 2 days attendance Mixed of both SLAS and non-members
Concession	130*100= £13,000	130*130= £16,900	130*165= £21,450
Non concession	50*130=£6,500	50*160= £8,000	50*200= £10,000
Total income	£19,500	£24,900	£31,450

Another important budget consideration was the request to built-in the budget the difference between the real cost of the dinner and entertainment per capita (£82) and the dinner fee: £39 (which was kept as close as possible to the £30 rate usually allowed for reimbursements at UK universities).

We selected the venue after visiting the premises and comparing three budgets.

The catering was selected among five providers, following the bid procedures established by the Procurement Office at University of Southampton.

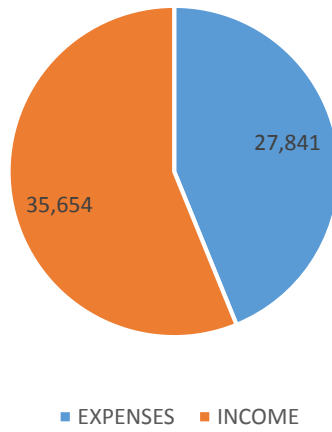
Discount rates in hotels were requested in early 2017. They turned out not to be convenient. Several accommodation options within a broad price range were identified in both Winchester and Southampton. This information, together with directions for travelling, touristic activities and maps, was available in the conference website since June 2017. See <http://generic.wordpress.soton.ac.uk/slas2018/venue/where-to-stay/>

Below is a summary of the final budget breakdown, as well as detailed charts.

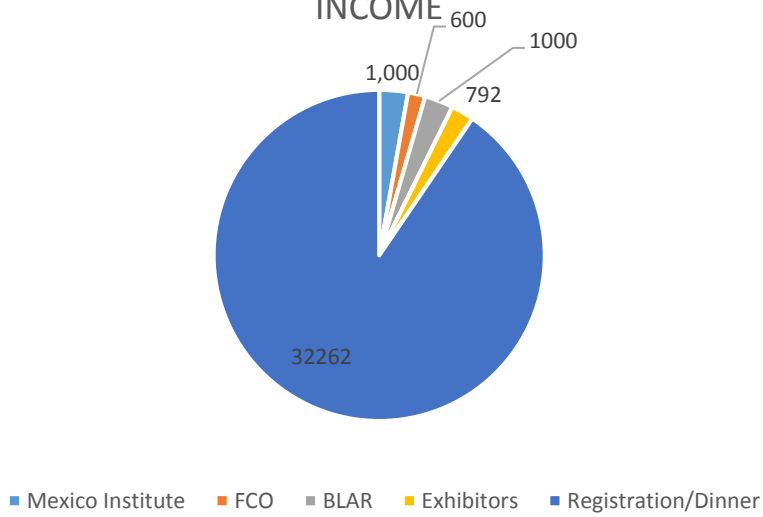
After processing invoices, cancellations and reimbursements, a surplus of £8,249 was transferred from the University of Southampton to SLAS' bank account in July 2018.

	EXPENSES	INCOME
Mexico Institute		1,000
FCO		600
BLAR		1,000
Exhibitors		792
Registration/Dinner		32,262
Hospitality Office, services	12,501	
Web manager	800	
Delegate package	943	
Student helpers	1965	
Keynote	1,093	
Dinner/Entertainment	10029	
Online store transaction fee	510	
TOTAL	27,841	35,654

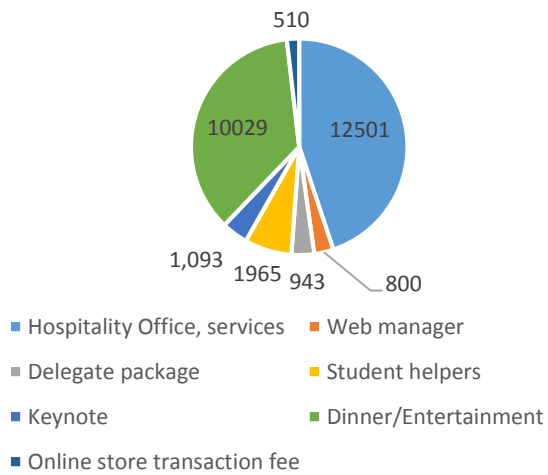
Overall Budget



INCOME



EXPENSES



Acknowledgments

We are very grateful for the generous support of the following individuals and institutions:

FOS Office, School of Social Sciences, University of Southampton

Professor Jane Falkingham, Dean, School of Social Sciences, University of Southampton

Professor Clare Mar-Molinero, Director of the Centre for Mexico-Southampton

Collaboration, Faculty of Humanities, University of Southampton

Professor Mark Thurner, ILAS, School of Advanced Study, University of London

Americas Directorate, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Wiley-Blackwell Publishing

Student helpers from Southampton: Aranda-Jan, Ana; Canesa Davies, Sarah; Ciftci, Yusuf;

Godden, Harvey; Hui, Yuan; Hobson, Rachel; Merry, Charlotte; Ridgway, Cameron;

Saunders, Honor; Scola, Leila.

Additional volunteers: José Guevara, ILAS, UL, and Ximena González-Wegener, UCL.

Organising Committee

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