The Future of Latin American Library Collections and Research

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Published by Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials


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Preface

For SALALM LV, I chose to depart from the usual practice of dedicating the conference to a timely academic theme in the humanities or social sciences. I sought instead to have a forum for examining recent systemic shifts in the areas of publishing, information access, and scholarly communication; the implications for the development of Latin American research library collections; and, more broadly, the implications for how research libraries will continue to document and make available the region’s intellectual and creative production. Having a better understanding of these developments is, in my view, crucial for Latin American studies librarians and other information specialists because they are certain to have consequences, and perhaps not always positive ones, on the possibilities for future Latin American studies scholarship and intellectual engagement with the region. Hence, the objective of the conference was to stimulate analysis and discussion of recent trends and their many manifestations by putting together a rich and diverse array of panels, roundtables, and workshops that paid special attention to the opportunities, risks, and consequences presented by them and to the strategies which SALALM, its members, and other stakeholders are—or could be—implementing in order to adapt and shape future outcomes.

The first three contributions in the volume, including the text of the tone-setting keynote address offered by Deborah Jakubs, the Rita DiGiallonardo Holloway University Librarian and Vice Provost for Library Affairs at Duke University, are representative of some of the broad picture perspectives that were presented during the conference. The others deal with concrete and often innovative experiences in the areas of collection building, documenting, archiving, cataloging, and teaching. Two of them describe experiences particular to Latin America. I hope that readers will find them as engaging and thought-provoking as I did.

These pages, however, do not include several presentations, roundtables, and meetings that, though not producing formal papers for the volume, tremendously enriched the discussions and learning that took place during the conference. Particularly relevant to the central theme were the contributions by David Block (University of Texas at Austin), Dan Hazen (Harvard), and James Simon (CRL) during the first conference panel. Also notable were the two roundtables on cooperative collection development coordinated by Lynn Shirey (Harvard); the roundtable on the evolving roles of Latin American studies librarians organized by Jesús Alonso-Regalado (University at Albany, SUNY) and Anne Barnhart (University of West Georgia); and the Pecha Kucha event organized by Alison Hicks (University of Colorado), featuring snapshots of innovative library practices. I strongly encourage readers interested in these
and many other stimulating discussions that transpired during SALALM LV to review the conference program reproduced in this volume and to consult the summaries of the presentations found in the *SALALM Newsletter* issues for December 2010 and February 2011. Both can be found at [http://salalm.org/publications/salalm-newsletter/](http://salalm.org/publications/salalm-newsletter/).

I am immensely grateful to Patricia Figueroa, Local Arrangements Chair, and to the Brown University Library, the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, and the John Carter Brown Library for making the conference not only possible but thoroughly enjoyable. I am also most grateful to the Princeton University Library for its generous sponsorship of SALALM LV; to Hortensia Calvo and Carol Avila at the SALALM Secretariat at Tulane University for their support and advice with conference preparations; to the SALALM Libreros for their participation and support; and to Orchid Mazurkiewicz, Editorial Board Chair, for her assistance and diligence in getting these papers edited and published. Finally, I want to express my sincere appreciation to our keynote speaker, Deborah Jakubs, and to all the committee chairs, panel organizers, and presenters for their help in organizing a successful meeting.

Fernando Acosta-Rodríguez