

A report on “The Imagining Latina/o Studies Conference: Past, Present, & Future”

July 17-19, 2014

Palmer House Hilton, Chicago

We are very pleased to report on the Imagining Latino/a Studies: Past, Present, & Future Conference, which took place July 17-19, 2014 at the Palmer House Hilton in Chicago. The conference was the largest meeting of Latina/o Studies scholars ever, with a total of 520 registered participants. The program included 119 panels in three days, in addition to a welcome plenary followed by a reception, film showings, a spoken word event, and a book exhibit. The three business meetings that addressed the organizing of the new association were dynamic and there was great participation and discussion. All of the panels, even those scheduled for 8 am on Thursday, the first day, were well attended. The members of the planning committee are very happy with the outcome.

Most importantly, we witnessed a buzz around the new association and its potential to represent the needs and interests of our colleagues across the US and internationally. During the three business meetings, participants voted to create the association, suggested names which will be voted on later, accepted a basic governing structure, and volunteered for the various committees that will be needed as the association gets formed.

Colleagues were happy to network, to mentor informally, to talk to each other about scholarly interests across regional locations, ethnicity and nationality, and disciplinary boundaries. Intellectual dialogue was respectful, generous, and constructive. Emerging topics such as Latino elites and conservatives, intralatiniano differentiation, constructions of illegality, social movements around immigration, and Latina/os in new destinations are becoming central to the field. In brief, participants were excited to finally have a conference/space of their own.

Thinking about the future, colleagues commented on the high quality of the interdisciplinary scholarly work shared at the conference and the ways in which Latina/o Studies “has come of age.” We hope that we do not lose this momentum, that the new association is energetic, dynamic, and exerts leadership in representing the interests and needs of our membership.

A couple of campuses expressed interest in hosting the 2016 meeting and we look forward to sharing what we learned during this process.

Please be on the lookout for communications from the coordinating committee, who will follow up on the details of the association.

Gracias for your participation!

Latina/o Studies Conference Planning Committee