A note from the director

As we prepare for the tenth anniversary of our program and major at Bowdoin in 2010, we thought that an excellent way to launch the celebration of this milestone was to publish our very first newsletter, now in your hands. The program has expanded considerably, now offering courses in a variety of disciplines, including Africana Studies, Anthropology, Art History, Economics, Environmental Studies, French, History, Music, Sociology, and Spanish. When the major was approved in 2000 we were averaging approximately 230 students per academic year in our courses. Over the last few years, enrollments have more than doubled. Similarly, faculty contributing to our program has soared from eight to eighteen in 2008-09. And, as you will see throughout these pages, our faculty, students and alumni are tireless in their commitment to the region.

To celebrate our anniversary we have ambitious plans for the upcoming academic year. Along with some twenty courses to be offered over the course of the year, we are planning a monthly lecture series to enhance our understanding of the relationship between the United States and Latin America, to celebrate Latino Heritage Month in collaboration with the Latin American Student Organization, to assist the Brunswick-Trinidad Sister City Association with their annual Cuba Week, and to commemorate the 1809-10 declarations of Independence in several Spanish-speaking countries. We also will initiate a thorough self-study, which will include an external evaluation of our program in 2010.

So, Bowdoin and Brunswick will be, as they have been in the past years, quite busy with “Latin stuff from the South.” Ask our hard-working coordinator, Emily Briley, whose enthusiasm has kept our program running smoothly and efficiently. Many, many thanks to Emily and to all of you who make all this commotion possible. We are especially grateful to our alums, who have shared their journeys with us. I hope you enjoy reading about all that is happening at Bowdoin and beyond.

Enrique Yepes  
Peter M. Small Associate Professor of Spanish
Faculty news

JOE BANDY studies globalization and social change, environmental sociology, poverty and social policy, social movements and identity, and U.S./Mexican relations. His research has investigated the responses of U.S. and Mexican labor movements to free trade policy. Most recently, he’s been investigating environmental sustainability in Maine. His courses include “Globalization and Social Change” and “Environmental Sociology.” Joe is a leader at Bowdoin in pedagogical approaches such as problem-based service learning and the case study method, and he is the faculty advisor for Bowdoin Students for Peace.

Colombian NADIA CELIS works on Latino, Latin American and Caribbean literature, Cultural Studies and Gender Studies. She is currently studying the place of bodies in Caribbean cultural identity and in female subjectivity. Two of her recent articles include, “La tración de la belleza: Cuerpos, deseo y subjetividad femenina en Fanny Buitrago y Mayra Santos-Febres” (Chasqui 37:2, 2008), and “Las verdades de Shakira: Corporalidad y caribeñidad en un fenómeno global” (Aguaita 17/18, 2008). This summer Nadia is returning to her native Caribbean shore in order to conduct research, funded with a course development grant, for a new seminar on the intellectual milieu of Gabriel García Márquez. Nadia is also our faculty liaison for the Latin American Student Organization, LASO.

Most of ELena CUETO-ASIN’s work focuses on theater, film, mass media and travel writing in modern Spain, but she is an active contributor to our program through events, seminars and independent studies on Latin America. Elena’s course on the postcolonial experience of travel, for instance, examines immigration, political activism, exile and tourism between Spain and the Americas, a topic on which she has published several articles. She is a frequent traveler herself to Latin America – like this spring, when she went to Central America in order to attend the VIII Congreso Internacional de Literatura Hispánica in Costa Rica.


P. Gabrielle Foreman, from Occidental College, is a distinguished literary historian, focusing on nineteenth-century African-American writers. She was named a Kellogg National Leadership Fellow for her work with youth and is co-founder of Action for Social Change and Youth Empowerment. The course she taught this year for our program, “Representing Slavery in the Americas,” examined slave narratives and anti-slavery novels from the United States, Cuba and Jamaica.

STEPHEN MEARDON, who is a Bowdoin alum, comes most recently from the Universidad de los Andes, in Bogotá, where he was a Fulbright scholar last year. Steve’s research is in the history of American international trade policy, including the complex and changing motives of trade agreements in the history of U.S.-Latin America commercial relations. His article, “From Religious Revivals to Tariff Rancor: Preaching Free Trade and Protection During the Second American Party System,” appeared last semester in Duke University’s journal History of Political Economy (40:5, 2008). He looks forward to teaching a course this fall on pan Americanism and the history of U.S. economic engagement with the Americas.

Ethnomusicologist ANTHONY PERMAN got his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he had been awarded a research fellowship for his work on the semiotics of the Ndau drumming styles in Zimbabwe. This year Anthony taught the “Music of the Caribbean” and “Music, Religion and Spirituality” courses. He also directed the World Music Ensemble and several senior projects.

LESLIE SHAW directs an archaeological dig at the Mayan site of Maax Na in Belize. Leslie’s Latin American Studies and Anthropology students have worked at this excavation site. Her courses focus on ethnicity and gender in archaeology, Mesoamerican civilizations, and Native American issues. This year, as the College liaison for Native American affairs, Leslie has been fostering communication between Bowdoin and Maine’s tribal communities. Last April, for example, Bowdoin hosted the Wabanaki Arts Festival and next June a number of Wabanaki high school students will visit our campus.
This year **John Turner** has taken advantage of his sabbatical leave to strengthen our ties to Latin America and Spain. He has visited several off-campus study programs, and initiated collaboration between Bowdoin and the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá. Our next Teaching Fellow is coming from there, and more faculty and student interaction is in the works. Although his principal focus is on the Spanish Golden Age, John is one of our program’s pioneers, having offered numerous courses and conducted research on Latin American authors such as Julio Cortázar and Mario Vargas Llosa.

The University of Texas Press recently published **Krista Van Vleet**’s monograph on the practices and politics of kinship and gender among Native Andeans in Bolivia. The book is a lively ethnography of women living in the highland region of Sullk’ata, who habitually share food, work, and stories to create a sense of relatedness and negotiate hierarchies. Krista regularly contributes to the reflection on gender at Bowdoin, as in the fascinating talk on “Transsexuality among Cultures” she gave for the Gay and Lesbian Studies program. Similarly, her course “Gender and Family in Latin America,” examines issues such as indigenous gender ideology, cross-cultural conceptions of sexuality, reproductive control and domestic violence.

**Esmeralda Ulloa** is a Ph. D. candidate in Spanish American literature at Harvard. Her dissertation studies the representation of the Inca and Aztec empires in contemporary Latin American poetry and narrative. Esmeralda works on colonial Latin American Literature and Cultural Studies. One of her courses this year was “Colonial Experience and Post-colonial Perspectives,” examining texts such as treatises on the legal status of the natives and narratives of shipwreck and survival in the New World.

**Martinican Hanétha Vété-Congolo** studies orality, comparative literature and postcolonial issues as well as literary representations of gender and sexuality in the Caribbean and the Francophone world. Her most recent article is, “Verification et validation de la Négritude dans L’autre qui danse et “L’âme soeur” de Suzanne Dracius”, included in the volume Négritude: Legacy and Present Relevance. Hanétha’s poetry collection Avoir et Être: Ce que j’Aï, ce que je Suis, is about to be published by Le Chasseur Abstrait Editorial with a foreword from French 2006 Renaudot Prize, Alain Mabanckou. She also has a forthcoming book entitled, L’interoralité dans le système littéraire caribéen: le mot confé de l’identité.

**Art Historian Susan Wegner** brings to our program an indispensable foundation in the art of ancient Mexico and Perú. She has published on the late Chimú vessels from the Andes, and has engaged our students in systematic research in Bowdoin’s Museum of Arts collection of ancient Costa Rican and Mexican jades. She received a course development grant this year to travel to the Andes in order to collect materials on the transculturation between indigenous and European art traditions from the 16th century onward, and will have a study gallery in the fall at the museum to foster cross-cultural comparisons among, for instance, Nazca, Chinese and Greek ceramics.

**Allen Wells** was awarded Guggenheim and American Council of Learned Societies fellowships to complete Tropical Zion (see inset). The book tells the story of 750 refugees from Nazi Germany who founded a dairy cooperative in the Dominican Republic, then under the rule of Rafael Trujillo. The dictator sought to “whiten” his nation by welcoming refugees who were themselves subject to racist scorn in Europe. In the process these refugees became pawns on realpolitik chessboards in Washington, Berlin, Ciudad Trujillo, New York and London. Allen’s father was one of the refugees whose life was spared by Trujillo. Allen has recently taught courses on the Mexican Revolution, Contemporary Argentina and Colonial Latin America.
Along with her Spanish classes, **Genie Wheelwright** serves as Vice President of the Brunswick-Trinidad Sister City Association, which she helped create in 2001 in order to foster cultural and socio-economic exchange between our town and its Cuban sister. She works actively in the organization of the Cuba Week, filling Brunswick with Caribbean flair every spring (see our events page). Genie also facilitates periodic immersion visits from neighboring high schools, a great opportunity for her Spanish students to learn through community service and for our neighboring secondary students to learn about college life.

**Nat Wheelwright**, Bass Professor of Natural Sciences, was recently awarded an OPUS grant from the National Science Foundation. The grant will allow him to synthesize 18 years of research on the behavioral ecology of a population of Savannah Sparrows breeding on Kent Island, New Brunswick, the site of the Bowdoin Scientific Station. Nat also continues his long-term research on the reproductive ecology of tropical trees in Monteverde, Costa Rica. Last year, Nat taught a course on plant-animal interactions and conservation for Cuban professors, graduate students and government scientists in Santiago de Cuba. This spring, he and Allen team-taught “Environment and Society in Latin America.”

**Carolyn Woldenzon** studies the relationship between politics and literature as well as the historical novel in Latin America, colonial chronicles, and migrant and diasporic cultures. Recently she wrote the sections on the history of the Jewish communities in her native Perú and on the representation of the “Jew in Peruvian literature” for the Encyclopedia of the Jewish Diaspora edited by ABC-CLIO. Her essay, “Days of Awe and the Jewish Experience of a Cuban Exile: The Case of Achy Obejas,” is included in the forthcoming volume, Literature of Migration from the Islands to the Diaspora: Voces Caribeñas. Her seminar, “The War of the (Latin American) Worlds,” discusses the clash between tradition and modernity in the last two centuries in narrative and film.

**Enrique Yepes** works mostly on contemporary Spanish American and U.S. Latino poetry, although he continues to publish articles on film, narrative, essay, and the merging of visual arts and the written word. His essay “La inmensa minoría: Poesía y activismo por la paz en Colombia,” was published by the National University of Ireland last February. This article is part of a book-length study on the not-always-smooth intersection between poetry, cultural activism and the politics of identity in several Latin American countries. Next fall Enrique is teaching a new course on Pablo Neruda’s Canto General, tracing the intellectual and historical milieu that shaped this seminal work.

Our program has been fortunate that several scholars from the Consortium for Faculty Diversity are contributing to our curriculum. This year, **Jarrett Brown**, a pre-doctoral candidate from the College of William and Mary in American Studies, taught “Migration Narratives: Writers of the Caribbean,” which explored modernity, memory, identity, and transnational issues in migratory movements. Next fall, **Mariana Cruz**, a Ph.D. candidate in Education at Cornell, will teach “Latinos, Latinas in the U.S.” This course will incorporate Mariana’s research on discursive representations of identity, nationalism, and citizenship in Latino/a and Puerto Rican studies.

**Simón Rodríguez**, *Sociedades americanas*, 1840.

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**Keep track of our faculty and their web pages at:**
www.bowdoin.edu/latin-american-studies/faculty/
An interview with Gustavo Faverón-Patriau

You joined us in 2005, what were you up to before that?
Well, I graduated from the Universidad Católica del Perú, and during the 1990s I taught semiotics, Latin American literature and literary theory in several universities in Lima. I also began writing literary criticism for El Comercio, the largest newspaper in Perú. Later on I started writing on politics and became the director of the newspaper’s Saturday cultural magazine, Somos. It was quite an interesting and challenging experience, because ours was one of the few newspapers opposing the dictatorship of Alberto Fujimori. By 1999, however, I decided to return to literature, my true calling, and I went to Cornell University, where I got my Ph.D. in 2005.

Which courses have you enjoyed the most at Bowdoin?
The ones I have found the most interesting are “Borges and the Borgesian” and “The Shining Path and the End of the World.” The course on Borges focused on his essays and narrative, particularly in their dialogue with world literature and film. For example, we studied French philosopher Michel Foucault and Polish-American filmmakers Larry and Andy Wachowski (“The Matrix”). The interdisciplinary course on the Shining Path examines terrorism –its Peruvian Maoist version of the 80s and 90s in particular– from a perspective that combines the social sciences and, of course, literary production in the form of short stories, novels, plays, and poetry.

Could you tell us about your recent research projects?
In 2006 I published Rebeldes: Sublevaciones indígenas y naciones emergentes en Hispanoamérica en el siglo XVIII, a series of essays on several indigenous upheavals from the eighteenth century in Latin America. The book’s thesis is that rebellions conducted by indigenous leaders were proposing more ethnically inclusive national projects than those carried out by the criollos (the elite of Spanish descent born in the Americas) who led the Independence movements later on in the nineteenth century.

Diversity of political and aesthetic positions that writers adopted in response to the internal war that was going on in the nation during those years. In addition, Cornell professor Edmundo Paz Soldán and I edited Bolaño Salvaje, a compilation of studies on the renowned Chilean novelist and poet Roberto Bolaño and his place in the Latin American literary tradition.

This year, during my sabbatical, I am finishing my manuscript Disidencias: Fisuras de lo hegemónico en la narrativa latinoamericana del siglo XIX. It studies canonical nineteenth-century novels, mostly written by the white criollo elite. These widely studied novels have generally been interpreted as the basis of hegemonic national identity projects. I contend that counter-hegemonic ideologies can also be found in these novels. For example, I show how María, a Latin American “classic” by Jorge Isaacs which has often been read as an allegory of national integration, includes a divergent discourse on the marginality and insularity of the Jewish Diaspora at that time in Colombia.

I also finished writing my first novel, which is about to be published in Perú, and continue to direct Dissidencias: Hispanic Journal of Theory and Criticism, an online scholarly journal I founded in 2005 that is now co-sponsored by Romance Languages and Latin American Studies: www.dissidences.org.

Gustavo Faverón-Patriau, Rebeldes: Sublevaciones indígenas y naciones emergentes en Hispanoamérica en el siglo XVIII. (Madrid: Tecnos, 2006).
The Latin American Studies Program at Bowdoin offers an integrated interdisciplinary curriculum that explores the cultural heritage of Mesoamerica, the Caribbean, and South America. Its multidisciplinary approach is designed to bring several scholarly methods and perspectives together in fostering increased understanding of Latin America’s history, social and economic realities, cultural diversity, and a range of aesthetic expression. Competence in Spanish or another appropriate language spoken in the region is required above the Intermediate level (204). It is also recommended that students participate in a study-away program in Latin America. Upon their return, students who study away should consider an independent study course to take advantage of their recent educational experience.

Requirements for the Major in Latin American Studies

The major consists of nine courses, including the following:

1) An introduction to Latin American Cultural Studies such as LAM 209, Introduction to Hispanic Studies: Poetry and Theater or LAM 210, Introduction to Hispanic Studies: Essay and Narrative.

2) An historical survey encompassing several countries in the region, such as LAM 252, Colonial Latin America or LAM 255, Modern Latin America.

3) A 200-level course in the social sciences focused on Latin America, such as LAM 237, Gender and Family in Latin America or LAM 225, Globalization and Social Change.

4) A concentration of four additional courses centered on a particular geographic region (Andean region, Caribbean, Mesoamerica, Southern Cone, etc.) or theme (colonization, cultural production, indigenous cultures, globalization, development issues, gender relations, etc.) The four-course concentration is selected by each major in consultation with the faculty in Latin American Studies. The courses for the concentration should be primarily at the 200- or 300-level.

4) An elective course in Latin American Studies, outside of the student’s area of concentration.

5) In the senior year, each major will have the option of completing: a) an independent study or honors thesis; or b) a 300-level seminar in Latin American Studies.

We’re delighted to announce that William B. Taylor, the Muriel McKevitt Sonne Professor Emeritus, University of California, Berkeley has joined the History Department as a research associate. Few scholars have had a more profound impact on the field of Latin American history. Among his ten books and more than fifty scholarly articles are three key monographs, all published by Stanford University Press—Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca (1972), Drinking, Homicide and Rebellion (1979), and Magistrates of the Sacred (1996), which not only have transformed our understanding of colonial Latin America, but have provided theoretical and methodological insights that have influenced a generation of colonial and modern students of rural history, indigenous communities and the Church. All three books have been recognized—the first two were runners up for the Bolton-Johnson Prize, the most prestigious prize in Latin American history, while the third not only won that prestigious award, but garnered the Latin American Studies Association’s Bryce Wood Book Prize and the American Historical Association’s Albert J. Beveridge Prize, given to the most distinguished work in English on the history of the United States, Latin America and Canada.

¡Bienvenido, Bill!
Honors projects recently completed on Latin America

* “Planning the Argentine Family: The State, the Church, and Feminism in the Twentieth Century.” **Cassia Roth,** '08, directed by Jen Scanlon (Gender and Women’s Studies). Latin American Studies Prize 2008.

* “El agua hay que dejarla correr: Música y danza folkórica y la transformación de la tradición en la comunidad peruana de Nueva York.” **Naomi Sturm,** '08, directed by Joanna Bosse (Music). Latin American Studies Prize 2008.

* “Adiós, Happy Hybrido: The Experience of Fission in Contemporary Art from Tijuana.” **Sara Griffin,** '09, directed by Pamela Fletcher (Art History). Anne Bartlett Lewis Memorial Prize in Art History.

* “Environment, Society and the State in Chile’s Forestry Industry.” **Emily Guerin,** '09, directed by Allen Wells (History). James Bland Prize for Honors in History.


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**L.A.S. Research Grants**

Established in 2000 by the Latin American Studies Committee, and funded by the office of the Dean for Academic Affairs, these competitive grants support student research in Latin America and the Caribbean that contributes to a subsequent independent study for a semester or a year, under the direction of a faculty member.

**Michelle Argüeta, ’09,** spent a month in Guatemala, gathering resources and interviewing people who were involved in the revolutionary movement during the 1970’s and 1980’s. She conducted a year-long Independent Study with Allen Wells on the little known urban guerrilla movement in the Guatemalan civil war. Here is part of Michelle’s report on her research trip: “Different people coped with repression in different ways, some choosing to fight, others to ignore, and even others to escape. My citizenship in the U.S. is a product of that war as my parents left the country hoping for a safer and better life for me. Any middle-aged person that lived in Guatemala during the war years will recount their personal worries during that time - their faces will darken and they will dig up memories that they sought so long to repress, but I have been told that this was the best possible time for me to gather interviews, as people are slowly beginning to lose the fear that the repressive measures during the 1980’s in particular had instilled in them.”

**Julia Seltzer, ’09,** traveled to Medellín, Colombia to study “The Power of Poetry,” as her project was called. Here’s how she begins her report: “This summer I left for Medellín expecting to take part in an event that served as an irrefutable testament to the power of poetry as a tool for activism towards peace. Leave it to say, I was not disappointed. On July 5th, as I sat in the Teatro Carlos Vieco at the Inauguration Ceremony of the XVIII Annual International Festival of Poetry, I heard the voice of Fernando Rendón, one of the founders of the Festival, boom across the leafy outdoor stadium, ‘We call you to join in a patient and persistent poetic revolution.’ Rows of poets from all over the world sat behind him on stage as he called the packed crowd to action. While poets from countries throughout Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe came to the podium to share their work, a steady rain began to fall. Umbrellas were opened and plastic sheets dispensed, but the audience did not disperse; their maintained presence and fervent applause reflected their devotion to the Festival.” Last fall, Julia followed up her research with an Independent Study on the history of social poetry in twentieth-century Latin America under the direction of Enrique Yepes.

You may read grant awardees’ reports at: [www.bowdoin.edu/latin-american-studies/research/research-grants/previous-years.shtml](http://www.bowdoin.edu/latin-american-studies/research/research-grants/previous-years.shtml)
This year the Latin American Student Organization engaged in a series of conversations on our goals. Here are excerpts from our new mission statement:

“Our goal is first and foremost to create a tight knit community where members can feel at home. ... Secondly, ... we gather around our love for Latin America and celebrate the wonders of the region. We also wish to diversify the social scene at Bowdoin ... [and] we are interested in addressing issues that concern Latinos, both in the United States and abroad. ... Finally, we want to disseminate a greater appreciation for Latin America, and welcome all students who seek to learn more about the region.”

Latino Heritage Month (Sept. 15 – Oct. 15) was particularly active this year. Events organized by LASO included dessert and churro nights, a Latin party in Morrell Gym, a coffee house in which members read poetry and prose, and a film viewing of The Revolution Will Not Be Televised. Particularly successful were the “Grab & Go” – members prepared and served sample-size food to passing students, faculty and staff –, and the Latin American theme dinner in Thorne Hall, with the cooperation of Dining Services.

Among many other events that LASO sponsored or helped organize, members highlight the following:

- Documentary film show, “Latina Confessions” by NYC filmmaker Louis Perego Moreno, during Women’s History Month.
- Valentine’s Auction, in which students were auctioned off in order to raise money for a Latino organization.
- Attending the New England Latino Conference, in conjunction with the Dean’s Office.
- The Multi-Cultural Retreat, with the Dean’s Office, to help first-year students’ transition to Bowdoin.
- The Cultural Party, with various cultural groups.

“Experiencia en Ecuador” was a journey to the Ecuadorian Northern Andes to empower rural children by improving the quality of schools in an impoverished community in La Merced. Led by Jamilah Gurwala and Hannah Stokes.

“Ibarra, Ecuador”

“Spring to Safe Passage” worked alongside the teachers of Camino Seguro (founded by Hanley Denning ’92) to support education for children whose families make their living off the Guatemala City dump. Led by Kyle Dempsey and Suzanne Heller.

“Learning Lima” went to the capital of Peru to help cultivate change in the shantytowns of Lima by working on a community development project with Solidarity in Action (Solidaridad en Marcha). Led by Ike Irby and Becca Van Horn.

“Guatemala City”

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“Guatemala City”

From L.A.S.O.
Student Focus: An interview with Ian Yaffe ‘09

Ian Yaffe, ‘09, has made an extraordinary contribution in educating our community about impoverishment and coming up with ways to overcome it. In 2008, he received both the national Campus Compact’s Howard R. Swearer Student Humanitarian Award and the Student Heart and Soul Award from the Maine Campus Compact for having launched Food Forward, a program that transports nearly 3,000 pounds of unused food from campus to the MidCoast Hunger Prevention Program each semester. This year, he was the recipient of the Haldane Cup, given to a member of the senior class who demonstrates outstanding qualities of leadership and character. Ian also won the Goodwin Commencement Speech Prize for his talk, “Moving Forward with the Common Good and Bowdoin.” We asked Ian about his major, his off-campus study in Cuba last year, and about his plans for the future.

Why did you choose a Latin American Studies major?
Well, it was the only program to combine all of my academic interests, particularly Spanish and History. In addition, the courses on Latin America have pushed forward my beliefs on social justice, education, identity and humanity.

What prompted your decision to go to Cuba?
I’ve always wanted to go since taking Spanish in High School with Maribel Prieto, who left Cuba when she was very young. Aside from the music, culture, and food, I wanted to learn about this island that has had such a profound impact on Latin America and has become an almost mythical place for most people in the United States.

What obstacles did you have to overcome to get there?
I had to accomplish two key tasks: get permission from the Treasury Department and get an academic visa from the Cuban Government. In the end, I was able to obtain my travel license by transferring to the State University of New York in Oswego, which hosts a program with the University of Havana. The visa wasn’t difficult to obtain after that, but it was done in Cuban time—my final clearance was received about a week prior to my scheduled departure! Once in Havana, I had to apply for temporary residency, which basically just took time (about a month) and, of course, make sure I had an exit visa before I left.

What did you enjoy most?
Getting lost in Havana and interacting with Cubans. I met so many Cubans just by wandering around: one moment I was asking for directions and the next I was having coffee in someone’s house; one moment I was standing in line for pizza and then next I was on my way across the city because someone said that’s where the best pizza was. As I continually lost myself in Havana, I became more familiar with the place than any city in the United States! After a week of travelling in the Oriente, I remember arriving at sunrise in Havana and feeling like I had just come home. I can’t wait for that feeling again as a touch down at José Martí airport. Until then, I’ll cross my fingers for a change in the policy that has single-handedly made Cuba such an incredible place and held it back in unimaginable (and unjust) ways.

What were the biggest challenges?
There are a lot of lines to wait in, but plenty of conversations to strike up while you’re doing that. As a student, I got the best of both worlds: I had a carné (ID) giving me all the benefits of Cuban residency while maintaining my status as an extranjero whenever necessary. Especially by the end of my trip, I was able to switch between both Cubas by simply leaving my camera behind. On the other hand, I often struggled wondering what image to portray to Cubans. It was hard to reconcile issues like the fact that what I make in an hour or two is the average salary for a month of work in Cuba. I was always aware of what I represented as someone from the United States and cautious about which people I would be myself with. Luckily I didn’t have to make that distinction apparent to most strangers.

What are your plans for the future?
Immediately, I’ll be returning to Martha’s Vineyard and working as Assistant Harbormaster and Firefighter while I await the decision on my application to the U.S. Coast Guard’s Officer Candidate School. Depending on how that goes, my next plan is a trip across Latin America: from Mexico to the Straights of Magellan, back up north on the Atlantic side, and finally a trip across several Caribbean islands.

“The Havana Fire Chief and me at their central station (no easy task to get entry to since it’s part of the military).”
Events

- **October 2, 2008** - Russell Crandall, '94 and MacArthur Associate Professor of Political Science, Davidson College, “The United States and Latin America after the Cold War.”

- **November 6, 2008** - Elena Jackson Albarrán, '98 and Assistant Professor of History, Miami University (Ohio), “Children of the Revolution: Constructing the Mexican Citizen, 1920-1940.”

- **February 12, 2009** – Stephen Meardon, '93 and Assistant Professor of Economics at Bowdoin, “Trade Treaties in Longfellow’s Time.”

- **March 26, 2009** - Steve Topik, Professor of History, University of California, Irvine, “Nature’s Bounty? Coffee as a Commodity from Africa to the Middle East to Latin America, 1400-1900.”

- **March 30, 2009** - Isaac Saney, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada, “Race, Racism & Revolution: Lessons from Cuba.” - Part of the Brunswick-Trinidad Sister City Association’s Cuba Week.

- **April 3, 2009** - Three LAS seminars (Wells’ Mexican Revolution, Wolfenzon’s War of the Latin American Worlds, and Yepes’ Reading Images) traveled to Dartmouth College in Hanover, NH for a tour of José Clemente Orozco’s murals at the Butler Library. Art Historian Mary Coffey, from Dartmouth, spoke about the making of the mural and its significance.

- **April 13, 2009** - Susanna Hecht, Professor of Urban Planning at UCLA, “The New Amazon Map: Social Change, Climate Change and Globalization in the New World Tropics.”

- **April 16, 2009** - Jorge Olivares, Allen Family Professor of Latin American Literature, Colby College, “Reinaldo Arenas’ Mona: Leonardo Da Vinci in the Age of AIDS.” – Sponsored by the Gay and Lesbian Studies Program.

Under the direction of teaching fellow Sara Miguel-Gómez, the students in both sections of LAM 209 (taught by Esmeralda Ulloa and Enrique Yepes) performed “Estudio en blanco y negro” by Cuban Virgilio Piñera and “Historia de un flemón” by Argentine Osvaldo Dragún in Smith Auditorium, Sills Hall on April 29 and 30, 2009. Both plays are experimental short pieces, written in the second half of the twentieth century, that explore social and ideological tensions with a minimalist approach in the “theater of the absurd” style.

On May 10, 2008, the Brunswick-Trinidad Sister City Association—one of our most valued partners in town—unveiled the mural *Dance of Two Cultures*, by Maine artist Christopher Cart. Located at 11 Pleasant Street, this is Brunswick’s first community outdoor mural. It celebrates the cultural exchange between Maine and Cuba through common practices such as baseball, music, dance, trading, fishing and lobstering. The designs of Trinidad middle school students were used on the tile-like arches that frame each scene. The project was undertaken in collaboration with the Mid-Coast Regional Arts Program.

From March 27 to April 5, 2009, The Association celebrated their yearly Cuba Week with a series of films and lectures, samples of Cuban cuisine at many restaurants in town and, of course, a Cuban salsa dance. Even Dining Services had a Cuban-themed dinner on campus. LAS major Ian Yaffe ’09, who spent a semester in Havana last year, was the student liaison to the Cuba Week organizational committee.

http://www.brunswicktrinidad.org/
Alumni news

We loved receiving the following messages from Bowdoin graduates who majored or minored in LAS, or who concentrated in Latin America for some other major. Due to space considerations, some entries have been edited or condensed. We look forward to hearing from these and other alums for future issues of L.A.S. noticias!

Keep us updated: lasnewsletter@bowdoin.edu

ARON, DAVID, '05

After graduating in 2005, I moved to New York City to teach special education as a New York City Teaching Fellow. I spent three wonderfully intense years teaching math, English, social studies, and science to high school students with special needs at Bushwick Leaders’ High School in Brooklyn. I attended Brooklyn College and received a Masters degree in Secondary Special Education in 2007. In July I left Brooklyn for Minneapolis ("the mini-apple") to attend the University of Minnesota Law School, where I am currently a 1L. This could change, but I am interested in Labor and Employment Law, and the areas in which this field intersects with education and immigration issues. Over Spring Break, I will be traveling with the U of M’s Asylum Law Program to work on cases of individuals seeking asylum in Miami, Florida.

“Teachers take on challenges at P.S. 75 that few schools attempt. Katherine Baldwin and Liz Ciotti work together in a second grade that they also teach in two languages. (Of 26 children, 9 are special ed, 13 Spanish-dominant and 6 are both special ed and Spanish-dominant). One day they teach in English, the next Spanish. Every child gets a chance to shine; on Spanish days, Hispanic special ed children help out general ed children.”

“Learning-Disabled Students Blossom in Blended Classes”


Baldwin, Katherine, '98

I graduated as a Spanish major with a minor in Latin American Studies. Since then, I have been working and living in New York City as a bilingual elementary school teacher. I started teaching with Teach for America in 1998, and was initially placed at a school in the Bronx. I taught the 3rd grade bilingual class, and most of my students were from Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, and they all spoke Spanish at home... [After 4 years] I moved to a different school where I currently work in the Dual Language program. I have been at my current school, PS 75, for the past 7 years, and I work with both Spanish- and English-speaking students. My students come from all over the world: Mexico, the Caribbean, Europe, and South America. I teach one full day in English, then the next day in Spanish. We alternate days like that throughout the year. The Spanish-speaking students in my class are learning English while at the same time maintaining their literacy skills in Spanish. The English-speaking kids are learning both English and Spanish too...

Berte, Sira, '91

After graduation, I started working in Washington, DC for Senator Dodd, who was chairman of the Senate’s Cmte. on Western Hemisphere Affairs--I did everything from being his first female driver to overseeing his Washington schedule. The highlight was the day Rigoberta Menchú came to our offices! I left the Hill and worked in Latin American small business development for Appropriate Technology International, the IDB and then the OAS. I then received my MBA from the University of Maryland and had the opportunity to study with economists in Havana; post-embargo Cuba; I also had a fellowship with the Ex-Im Bank where I focused on small business export finance. My husband, Brian Pearson, and I then moved back up to Maine... After 4 yrs. in Maine, we sold our house and possessions to travel overland for six months from Chile to Ecuador, following the original Inca Trail... we even surprised the family I had lived with in Quito during Bowdoin junior year... From there we moved to Santiago, Chile, where I consulted for the Ministerio de Economia, Ford Foundation and UNDP, on Chilean small business development for two years. For the past three years, I worked for a Chilean company called, Seminarium Internacional (www.seminarium.com) developing executive level business courses throughout the region for business professionals... My husband and I [also] started a boutique tourism company called Santiago Adventures...(www.santiagoadventures.com). But, I am most excited about the Chilean sommelier course I am taking to become the best bi-lingual sommelier in the market!

Sira Berte and Brian Pearson offer quality tours to the mountains, coast, and vineyards of Chile.

Source: http://www.santiagoadventures.com/about/index.htm
Castillo, María, ’99
I was a minor in Latin American Studies. I am originally Ecuadorian and... have traveled back several times to Ecuador to visit my family. I went to Egypt to learn Arabic. Then I moved back to New York and worked there in the medical sales industry, including a biotech company doing cord blood stem cell research. I then felt I needed a change and went on to complete a Masters in International Studies and Diplomacy in London. Since then, I have been working in a media company doing country analysis reports all over the world, including the United Arab Emirates, Spain, Israel, and Croatia. I have requested a project in Latin America and am very much looking forward to that.

Castillo, Vernon, ’97
After graduating from Bowdoin, I spent two years and three months in Paraguay as a beekeeping extensionist. I returned to the US in 1999 and received my MA from the University at Albany in Latin American and Caribbean Studies. Since then I have been working at Union College as a Senior Associate Dean and am hoping to complete my PHD in Latin American and Caribbean Studies.

Finnegan, Karen, ’03
After graduating Bowdoin, I spent a few years working in an urban community health center in Boston where I focused on health education and community outreach. In May 2008, I received my MPH in Epidemiology from Emory University and moved to DC. I am now working as a health analyst on international health research projects with an emphasis on HIV and family planning services in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Goulder, Shelley, ’07
After graduation I worked as a counselor at a girls summer camp in Damariscotta, Maine. Then I moved down to Boston to work as a full time tutor and teaching assistant at the MATCH Charter Public High School. I... tutored five students daily in every subject imaginable, and loved every minute of it. This year I am working at the new MATCH Middle School. I provide support to the Academic Resources Department, plan field trips, and do a myriad of other tasks that seem to crop up everyday.

Greer, Michelle, ’93
I received my Ph.D. in Modern Latin American art from... New York University in 2004. I now teach Latin American art history at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia... My book, Beyond National Identity: Pictorial Indigenism as a Modernist Strategy in Andean Art, 1920-1960 is... [forthcoming] with Penn State University Press in 2009. I gave two talks in conjunction with a traveling exhibition of the work of the Ecuadorian artist Oswaldo Guayasamin at Georgetown University and the Art Museum of the Americas and will travel to Florida Atlantic University in October to give yet another presentation on the artist. Also, this October I will be interviewed for a documentary on the Ecuadorian artist Camilo Egas. This past year I published two articles on Andean art “Pintar la nación indígena como una estrategia modernista en la obra de Eduardo Kingman,” Revista de Historia Procesos, Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar. no. 23, Fall 2007, and “Manifestations of Masculinity: The Indigenous Body as a Site for Modernist Experimentation in Andean Art,” Brújula: revista interdisciplinaria sobre estudios latinoamericanos, Art and Encounters, December 2007, vol. 6 no. 1... I am currently on academic leave from George Mason with a Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship at The Phillips Collection in Washington, DC to begin work on a new book project on Latin American artists in Paris between the two world wars.

Hess, Benjamin “Jamie,” ’02
I am currently working as an International Development Fellow with Catholic Relief Services in Guatemala. Mostly I work on savings-led microfinance projects, but I’ve also had the opportunity to support our agriculture, health, migration, and youth development initiatives. In 2006, I received a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship and earned my Master’s in International Peace Studies at the United Nations-mandated University for Peace in Costa Rica. I’ve also worked in Peru and Dominican Republic since graduating from Bowdoin in 2002... My fascinating semester abroad in Argentina, terrific teachers in the Spanish and History departments, and a senior spring break trip where I met my wife while hiking to Machu Picchu were all the result of my Bowdoin experience.
Kluck, Matthew, ’98
I am currently in the last semester of my MS program in Economics in Fairbanks, Alaska. Since Bowdoin, my geographic horizons have broadened, thanks in part to work in Scandinavia and Arctic Canada, and therefore much of my current work focuses on polar issues. Having said that, I am beginning my PhD at Korbel School in Denver this fall in International Relations with a focus on economic development, and perhaps Latin America will play a role yet again in my studies. I was fortunate enough to travel to the region in 2000, cycling with a friend from Punta Arenas, Chile to Lima, Peru over six months… I continue to read El País and Chilean dailies in an effort to keep the language skills alive.

Lettieri, Michael, ’05
After graduating in ’05 (History major, Latin American concentration) I spent a year working at the Council on Hemispheric Affairs in Washington, DC writing press releases/reports and doing interviews with a variety of media outlets. I also served as an electoral observer during Mexico’s 2006 presidential election. Since then, I’ve moved on to the University of California, San Diego where I’m in the third year of a doctoral program in Latin American history, focusing on mid-20th century Mexican politics… I’ve spent the past two summers in Mexico City conducting preliminary archival research for my dissertation, which examines the negotiation of transportation policy under the one-party state.

Levine, Kym, ’03
After double-majoring in Latin American Studies and Biology, I spent the summer in Trinidad and expanded on my Caribbean studies that had begun with Pat Saunders. She helped me apply for and earn a fellowship allowing me to take classes at UWI Trinidad for several months and I cannot thank her enough for her support and kindness…I now work at Novartis in Cambridge, Massachusetts. I realized that I am a science nerd at heart and have been working as a research scientist in the oncology department for the past several years.

Melia, Michael, ’99
I am a correspondent for the Associated Press in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where I’ve been posted since 2006. The hurricane season keeps me particularly busy here in the Caribbean, but I’ve been fortunate to cover a wide range of interesting stories in places including Trinidad, Guyana and Guantanomo Bay. A few years ago I was very pleased for finding a way to get my story, “José Martí, Cuba’s independence hero, emerges from his statue” on the wire -- no small feat considering how few people really know about this influential writer! My posting here is supposed to last about three years, which would take me through next summer. This year Julie and I welcomed our new little guy, Thomas Abraham, born February 19.

Miller, Beth Knauff, ’96
I graduated with an A.B. in Spanish with a minor in Latin American Studies. Since living abroad in Ecuador for my junior year at Bowdoin, I have since traveled to the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica and most recently, Nicaragua. This last trip was through Bridges to Community, an organization some Bowdoin students have traveled with in the past. I have been a high school Spanish teacher since 1996, and I love what I do. I’m currently the Foreign Language Department Chair at St. Anne’s-Belfield School in Charlottesville, Virginia. While I frequently weave Latin American history, literature, culture and art into my lessons, I am teaching an independent study course on Latin American studies for the first time this year.

Pearson, Marcus, ’05
After graduating in 2005, I hopped on a bus in San Diego and proceeded to hop on more than 170 more buses, trains, trucks, and boats between Tijuana, Mexico and Ushuaia, Argentina. Along the way I volunteered for various grassroots organizations and grew a mustache. Beginning in August of 2006 I spent six months at the Universidad Autónoma de México in Mexico City doing graduate work with a focus on Latin American Environmental Policy and Economics. I also sporadically volunteered as a legal research assistant at AIDA (the Interamerican Association of Environmental Defense) in Mexico. Though currently living in Montana I am sitting on the board of a Guatemalan non-profit organization called Los Cimientos Alliance/K’aslem Mandala, whose mission is to empower Mayan youth to improve environmental, economic and social conditions in their families and communities by increasing their job skills and inspiring them to positively impact the extraordinary biological diversity and history of their local habitat.
**PISANI, ANTHONY, ’93**

I am an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Pediatrics at the University of Rochester. During my first five years here, I was involved in hospital administration, teaching in family therapy and pediatrics, and clinical work with children and families...I recently shifted focus to training clinicians in suicide prevention. In August, I was awarded a three-year National Institute of Mental Health fellowship to retrain as a suicide prevention researcher. I owe a great deal of my career to Latin American Studies at Bowdoin. First, my courses, starting with my freshman seminar on the Cuban Revolution, turned me to writing and to academia; we attended a professional conference in Nova Scotia that I never forgot... Second, my knowledge of Spanish language and Latin American culture got my first job in mental health and has been central to my clinical work. One day I work with Spanish-speaking families in a primary care clinic in Rochester, and I was recently invited to give a keynote address a family therapy conference in Caracas. Third, my studies abroad and the absolutely extravagant education I received in Spanish and Latin American literature from John Turner and others developed my taste for beauty and all things hispano. Finally, the interdisciplinary commitment of the LAS faculty has stayed with me. I strive in my work (and life) to draw on wisdom without regard to disciplinary or political boundaries. In my personal life...I have been married to Amy for nine years. We have three children Mia (5), Luke (3), and Cara (1).

**ROTH, CASSIA, ’08**

After my graduation in May, I headed to Monterrey, Mexico to work with Johns Hopkins University’s Center for Talented Youth at the Tecnológico de Monterrey. While there, I started the process to apply to gradute schools in Latin American history. I randomly stumbled upon the Washington-based think tank, Center for Strategic and International Studies and applied for... [and received] a research internship in the Americas program...[I]t was a fun and interesting time to be in the capital, and I interacted with scholars and met with interesting people (like the Brazilian Minister of Health), that I would have never thought I would talk to! Next fall I will be pursuing my doctorate in Latin American history at UCLA.

**SELCKE, GRETCHEN, ’00**

I am a fifth-year graduate student and doctoral candidate in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Vanderbilt University [and] a graduate fellow at Vanderbilt’s Center for the Americas and an Arts and Sciences graduate select scholar. I previously served as the assistant editor of the Afro Hispanic Review and am currently a member of the publication’s editorial board. My dissertation, entitled “Isolation on and off the Island: The Politics of Displacement in Contemporary Spanish Caribbean Fiction,” explores contemporary Spanish Caribbean and U.S. Latino literatures. In addition, I’m working with Dr. William Luís on his forthcoming study on the Caribbean Vanguard. My research interests include contemporary Caribbean writing and literary theory.

**SHESTKY, ELIZABETH, ’02**

While working at a law firm in Boston after I graduated, I looked for ways to return to Latin America. I was eventually hired by the American School in Guatemala, where I worked as a first grade teacher for two years and was able to travel throughout Central America. I then applied to graduate school and began a Ph.D. program in [Latin American] history at Duke University in the fall of 2005. Since then, I have taken several research trips to Bolivia and spent a summer in Brazil to learn Portuguese. I am currently doing research for my dissertation, which explores the effect of obligatory military service on ethnic identity in twentieth-century Bolivia.

**SOWELL, EMILY, ’05**

I worked for three years in the felony division of the Lake County Clerk’s Office in Lake County, Florida. I just began my first year at the Law School of Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia. Although I haven’t had the chance to travel back to Latin America since graduating, I will be concentrating in International Law and hopefully will have the chance to do so soon!

**STURM, NAOMI, ’08**

Since graduating I actually stayed working at Bowdoin’s Student Aid Office and as a TA for Music 101 and Dance 101. I recently received the Wexer Prize for best undergraduate paper given at the annual North East Chapter for the Society of Ethnomusicology Conference. The paper was part of my Honors Thesis written for Latin American Studies. I’ve just been accepted by Columbia University’s Ph.D. program in Ethnomusicology (with a focus on Latin American immigrant studies) and will begin the program next fall. I am currently working on some independent dance choreographies.

**TRANSGURD, ROBIN, ’06**

Until last April, I was Vice Director of Quito-based NGO ASELER – Asesoría y Servicios Legales para los Refugiados en Ecuador... [which] provides legal assistance to the community of approximately 250,000 Colombian refugees in Ecuador. After many busy but wonderful months, I have finally gotten around to posting on my blog about life in Ecuador: [http://trangsrud.travellerspoint.com/](http://trangsrud.travellerspoint.com/). I am currently an immigration paralegal in Boston.
How did you first get interested in Latin America? I took “History of Mexico” with Professor Wells my freshman year and among other things remember being shocked to learn that over 300 Mexicans died in a U.S. Marine invasion of Veracruz in 1914. I went back to my dorm room and read the section of my high school Advanced Placement American History book where it should have mentioned this fact. Instead, it mentioned that Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa murdered 17 New Mexicans. Wanting more of this conscious-raising experience, I took “Latin American Revolutions” (also with Professor Wells) the following semester and I have been forever hooked on Latin America (as well as the politicization process it spawned).

Tell us about your honors project. My project traced the use of the symbol and subsequent mythologizing of Mexican revolutionary Emiliano Zapata by the Mexican state, the right and the left after his assassination in 1919. In its pursuit to consolidate power and co-opt the revolutionary agrarian sector, the Mexican state began appropriating Zapata as a symbol of an “institutional revolution” in 1924 with annual ceremonies held on the anniversary of his death. The state monopolized the Zapata myth with their “official” interpretation and use of his symbol for over 40 years. Since the late 1960s, leftist movements, including the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) in the 1990s, now have wrested control of this multivocal myth.

What did you do right after graduation? I moved to Los Angeles, CA where I began training in community organizing and affordable housing via the LISC Americorps program. There I linked up with a group dedicated to raising consciousness about the Zapatista movement - Chiapas Coalition ‘98 -. In addition to organizing events, tabling information, and raising funds, I also participated in one of three delegations the Coalition sent to observe (and hence protect) the Zapatista caravan from Chiapas to Mexico City in March 2001. I observed and filmed the Zapatista Comandancia as they stopped in roadside communities to speak on their way to address the national Congress in the capital. After my year of Americorps service, I became the Assistant Director of Main Street Canoga Park (MSCP), where I assisted in organizing an annual Día de los Muertos Festival, to stimulate the local economy while promoting cultural awareness and increasing the level of participation of Central American and Mexican residents in their community. I also found time to audit a class at LA Community College, met Professor Rudy Acuña, author of Occupied America: A History of Chicanos, and traveled throughout Nicaragua in 2002 and Cuba in 2003.

What was grad school like? I spent two years studying human rights at the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) at Columbia University with a specific focus on the right to adequate housing and the struggle to apply that right in the United States. As part of the program, I did an internship in Venezuela with PROVEA - a human rights organization in Caracas whose staff members’ political views about the Bolivarian Revolution ranged from suspicious to critical to supportive. This internship allowed me to witness and report on inspiring community-led approaches to realizing the right to adequate housing as defined in both international law and the Venezuelan constitution. I came back completely energized and determined to contribute to building a participatory democratic movement in the U.S.

What are you up to now? After working in the NYC housing field for two years, in November 2008, I became the Policy and Research Coordinator of Community Voices Heard (CVH) - a member-led, direct action base-building organization founded by women of color on welfare. I engage members in our campaigns in participatory research projects that elevate their voices in policy reports aimed to shift the discourse in a way that pushes our campaigns on welfare/workforce development, public housing, and sustainable communities forward. Working at CVH has also given me an opportunity to work with several exciting national coalitions, particularly the Right to the City Alliance. In addition to this work, I am participating...
where you from?
soy de aquí
y soy de allá
I didn’t build
this border
that halts me
the word fron
tera splits
on my tongue

Gina Valdés

(From Cool Salsa: Bilingual Poems on Growing Up Latino in the United States)