

MEMORANDUM

To: Donna E. Shalala, President

From: Mary Coombs *MC*
Chair, Faculty Senate

Date: May 5, 2004

Subject: Faculty Senate Legislation #2003-27(B) – Re-approval of the Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS) for two years

On February 23, 2000, the Faculty Senate approved the establishment of the Center for Latin American Studies (Legislation #99016(B)) with the proviso that periodic reviews every five years will be conducted by the Senate. The review was carried out concurrently with that of ICCAS, which had been approved earlier that academic year.

The Faculty Senate, at its April 28, 2004 meeting, voted to re-approve the Center for Latin American Studies for two years. It was expected that, before the end of that period, the issues regarding the possible establishment of a Center for the Study of the Americas, within which CLAS might be subsumed, would be determined. The proposal is enclosed for your reference.

This legislation is now forwarded to you for your action.

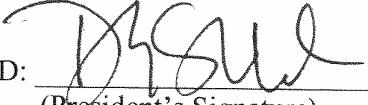
MC/kl

cc: Luis Glaser, Executive Vice President and Provost
Stephen Stein, Interim Director, CLAS
Members of the Ad Hoc Committee that reviewed CLAS

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CAPSULE: Faculty Senate Legislation #2003-27(B) – Re-approval of the Center for Latin American Studies (Legislation #99016(B)) for two years

PRESIDENT'S RESPONSE

APPROVED:  DATE: 6/24/04
(President's Signature)

OFFICE OR INDIVIDUAL TO IMPLEMENT: Jane Connolly

EFFECTIVE DATE OF LEGISLATION: _____
(if other than June 1 next following)

NOT APPROVED AND REFERRED TO: _____

REMARKS (IF NOT APPROVED): _____

Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS)

Report of the Ad Hoc Review Committee of the University of Miami Faculty Senate established to review the Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS) [Legislation #99016(B)], as required by legislation.

Instructions of the Faculty Senate regarding the guidelines for the review are:

- 1) Is the Center still active?
- 2) If so, is it on financially sound footing?
- 3) And is it achieving its mission and striving for excellence?

CLAS was established in 2000. Its objectives are “to facilitate interdisciplinary research and instructional activities pertaining to Latin America, to bridge scholarly interests across campus among diverse fields and to facilitate collegiality and interaction”. [2-23-00 Faculty Senate Meeting Agenda Item C-3, memo from Kumble Subbaswamy, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), to Faculty Senate to establish a Center for Latin American Studies.] Three core activities were identified: multidisciplinary niche groups, Visiting Faculty Scholars; and institutional partnerships. CLAS reports to the Dean, CAS.

As required by legislation, an Ad Hoc Review Committee of the Faculty Senate was convened to perform a five-year review of CLAS. The Review Committee, consisting of five faculty members, met for the first time on January 14, 2004. At its first meeting, the Committee established a procedure for review, and requested the following material from CLAS: the initial proposal, five-year plan, annual performance evaluations, annual reports, fiscal statements, list of associated faculty, publication list, summary of grants, list of sponsored activities, and names of staff and advisory board members.

Based on material received from CLAS, six persons associated with CLAS were selected as candidates to be interviewed by the Ad Hoc Review Committee: Professor Steve Stein, Interim Director, CLAS, Dr. Elena Sabagol, Assistant Director CLAS, Professor James Wyche, Dean CAS, Professor Rebecca Biron, Director Latin American Studies Program CAS, Professor Will Smith, International Studies CAS and Professor Guillermo Goldstein, Biology CAS.

CLAS is still active. The funding of CLAS comes exclusively from the University, CAS (\$150,000). This generates one full-time staff person, one graduate student, 3 work-studies, office expenses, student scholarships, travel grants and funds for all events and activities. CLAS receives no external funding although its initial proposal was “to generate external funding for existing programs and new initiatives”. Because of lack of funding initially from CAS and then external sources (grants, philanthropy, public sector, etc.), CLAS has not been able to adequately fulfill its objectives and develop the necessary infrastructure. And without the infrastructure, it has been impossible for CLAS to develop its funding base.

Consequently, CLAS has concentrated on only a limited number of multidisciplinary research niche groups. On the other hand, CLAS has made impressive efforts in bridging scholarly interest in Latin American Studies across the University and especially within social sciences and humanities and in facilitating collegiality and interactions by offering through films, videos, art exhibits, music presentations, forums, etc. for students, faculty and the community. This has resulted in developing some instructional activities and encouraging new course offerings. Without funding, however, CLAS has not been able to move forward with its Visiting Scholars initiative or in developing formal institutional partnerships around new core activities. The only exception is its arrangement with Florida International University’s Latin American and Caribbean Center to co-host and sponsor an Annual Latin American and Caribbean Student Conference.

In part, CLAS has been unable to meet its objectives because of internal structural developments within the University. Initially, CLAS was a joint venture of CAS and the school for International Studies (SIS) and viewed as totally distinct from the North South Center. In 2001 SIS was de-established and CLAS lost a founding parent. In 2003, the Department of International Studies (CAS) was discontinued, further destabilizing CLAS.

CLAS’ purview is primarily academic and research-oriented. CLAS reaches out to every School/College (Architecture, Business, CAS, Communication, Education, Engineering, Law, Marine Science, Medicine, Music and

Nursing) and draws undergraduates and graduate students as well as faculty regularly to their many events from Departments and Programs. CLAS is closely affiliated to the Latin American Studies Program (CAS) and draws in its faculty to achieve its mission and develop its multidisciplinary niche group projects.

Niche group activities within CLAS are identified as Interdisciplinary Research Groups (IRG). Several have been formed (Brazil and Brazilian Culture IRG, Latin American and Caribbean Diasporas in South Florida IRG, Andean IRG, and Pre Contact and Colonial Mesoamerica IRG), meet monthly or more and distribute their research finding through lectures, academic forums, conferences and publications. They are also posted on CLAS' web site (www.as.miami.edu/las/CLAS/directory/calendar).

Over the last several years CLAS' external partners have covered a wide range and included the Brazilian Consulate, the Carter Fund, Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Association of Latin Arts and Cultures to name just a few. Within UM, cosponsors have included the Center for American Studies, the Center for Ecosystem Science and Policy, Caribbean Literary Studies, Lowe Art Museum, the Departments of History, Foreign Languages, Art History and many more. In April 2004, CLAS will inaugurate the Robert M. Levine Memorial Conference as a tribute to the life and work of its founding Director.

Finally, CLAS has had little contact with the Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies (ICCAS).

Summary:

CLAS is still active. It is not on financially sound footing. It is achieving its mission, although limited, and striving for excellence.

The future of CLAS is unclear. In the fall of 2003 the Dean, CAS, announced the forthcoming establishment of a new CAS initiative. "The Center for the Study of the America", and envisioned CLAS to be de-established and folded within it. An external search for a Director of the new Center has been prepared for distribution (2004). A three year budget has been developed at approximately \$500,000/year. The aim is to build a solid infrastructure and avoid the pitfalls of CLAS.

The Committee recommends: 1) further information be provided regarding the future of CLAS; 2) further information be provided regarding the new Center for the Study of the Study of the Americas; and 3) all centers should be encouraged to work together for the greater cause; and 4) re-approval of the Center.