

While at Tulane University, I have been intimately involved with several facets of the University as Professor, and current chair, of the Department of Communication, director of the Cuban and Caribbean Studies Institute of the Stone Center for Latin American Studies and, since 2000, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs. This is not where I imagined I'd be as a *cubana* raised in Washington Heights in New York City who studied accounting at Queens College of the City University of New York and became a CPA. Although I wrote a dissertation on the New Latin American at the University of Iowa while pursuing a doctorate in film studies, I had little contact with Latin Americanists during my time there (with the notable exception of Charles Hale). I did have the good fortune to land at Tulane University for a first (and only!) tenure track appointment back in 1985. Little did I know that Latin American Studies and the Stone Center at Tulane would become the guiding lights of my career. With the Stone Center I discovered how much more I had to learn to become a "real" Latin Americanist and did so under the aegis of the many brilliant scholars like Richard Greenleaf who took me under their wing.

Since my first LASA conference in 1989, I have continued to regularly engage with LASA through presentations and panel organizing; co-directing a program for the Ford Foundation/LASA Task Force on Scholarly Relations with Cuba (1991-92, with Ambrosio Fornet from Cuba); organizing and participating in pre-conference sessions; and heading up the Culture and Society Section (1999). I have collaborated with the Film Studies Section since 2003 and have participated actively in the yearly congresses. LASA has been and continues to be an important source of scholarly and professional engagement and collaboration.

My research focuses on Latin American/Latino film and media and is transnational in scope extending beyond any one country or period of specialization. My scholarship and academic work have played a crucial role in the development of Latin American film and media as scholarly fields of inquiry. As one of a handful of Latin American film scholars in the late 1980s and early 90s who was actually trained in film studies, I have always inserted the Latin American into the mainstream of the field, engaging with theoretical debates, and challenging many standard interpretations and periodizations, while acknowledging and debating with Spanish and Portuguese-language Latin American film scholarship. I also inserted film and media studies into the field of Latin American studies, especially through my engagement with LASA. After working on the New Latin American Cinema, I moved to explore questions of gender and filmic representation in the classical cinema period (1930s-50s), especially in the melodrama and later, in the telenovela, as well as questions of historicity and historiography. Subsequently, I have explored Latin American/transnational stardom (Dolores del Rio), documentary filmmaking, transnational cinematic practices, exilic and Latinx cinema, and spatiality and musicality in pieces that have appeared in journals and edited collections, including my own. A particular important publication was "Early Cinema and Modernity in Latin America," (*Cinema Journal*, 2001), the first sustained analysis of early Latin American cinema to be published in English and the first to address early cinema as a continental rather than a national phenomenon in any language. Since 2015 I have been the editor of the journal *Studies in Spanish and Latin American Cinemas*, the only English-language publication dedicated to Spanish and Latin American Cinemas.

Simultaneously, I also trained a generation of Latin American film scholars who have gone on to become far more accomplished than me. Training and mentoring graduate students and young scholars in the field – in the US, Latin America, Canada and Europe-- is work that is deeply satisfying and that I have been able to continue doing even as an administrator for the past 20 years. Bringing young Cubans to

pursue graduate work at Tulane, in Latin American studies and other disciplines, has also been a most gratifying experience.

As Director of the Cuban and Caribbean Studies Institute and Associate Provost, I have learned a lot about university administration and managing complex and often highly competitive individuals and constituencies. In these capacities, I have organized dozens of successful symposia and conferences, created highly successful collaborations with institutions in Cuba, Brazil, and across Latin America. I have worked collaboratively with staff, deans, and administrative officers to establish processes and practices both through times of profound leadership change and of crisis, including Hurricane Katrina and the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. I enjoy occupying a position where I can facilitate communication and help bring people together to establish a broad institutional vision and to ensure the successful implantation of that vision. I hope that I can productively bring these skills to the Vice Presidency and Presidency of LASA.