



# AAPG

## DISCOVER

The Latin America Region Newsletter

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### PRESIDENT'S NOTE

*Victor Ramirez, Latin America Region President*

AAPG Latin America Region Colleagues,  
As I have stated before, our Region is making great efforts to maintain and increase its global presence, primarily by increasing membership across Latin America. An important focus is reaching out to Students and Young Professionals, which in 2013 resulted in the creation of five student chapters and two Young Professional (YP) chapters. The Latin America Region currently has 22 Student Chapters in eight countries; and our YP Chapters in Peru, Colombia and Argentina provide support to universities in their countries and help recent graduates make the transition from academia to industry.

Members of the Region leadership team are supporting students through providing lectures to Student and YP Chapters; and by including Student and YP activities in regularly scheduled regional events. These strategies not only create a wise use of the Region's financial resources, they also provide a long-term investment in the future of AAPG.

Taking advantage of AAPG's presence in Trinidad and Tobago for the GTW in March, the Latin America Region sponsored two important events for students and young professionals. The student-industry reception connected geoscience students with professionals, and the "Switch" movie screening and discussion at the University of the West Indies complemented our regional strategy designed to establish a dialogue about the future of earth's energy sources.

The presence of students representing 16 universities from seven countries for the Imperial Barrel Award Competition in Bogotá



Victor Ramirez

provided an excellent opportunity to pilot the Student Leader Mentoring Program – an initiative designed to develop "leaders of leaders" across Latin America. The mentoring program, developed

and delivered by the Colombia YP Chapter Executive Committee, is a prime example of the region-wide efforts to keep geoscientists actively engaged with AAPG throughout their careers.

In addition to strengthening AAPG's presence throughout our Region, a key goal for 2014 is giving Latin America Region a stronger voice worldwide. Electing Faustino Monroy and Federico Seminario to the House of Delegates and Miguel Ramirez to the Advisory Council is key to making our mark on AAPG, "a global geosciences organization."

Realizing a stronger global presence by the Latin America Region is an achievable goal, but the leadership team cannot do it alone. We encourage all geoscientists in the Latin America region to join AAPG, to keep your membership current and to tell others about the benefits AAPG provides to both professional and personal development. For questions about your membership status, contact AAPG Member Services, [members@aapg.org](mailto:members@aapg.org), or Latin America Region Programs Manager Emily Smith Llinás, [ellinas@aapg.org](mailto:ellinas@aapg.org).

Thanks for your support of the AAPG Latin America Region.

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## REGIONAL NEWS UPDATE

### Science takes Center Stage in Trinidad & Tobago

March was a busy month in Port of Spain, when the AAPG Latin America Region and the Geological Society of Trinidad and Tobago (GSTT) co-hosted a Geosciences Technology Workshop (GTW), a student-industry networking reception and a "Switch" movie showing all in one week.

The GTW Trinidad and Tobago, attended by 123 people from 11 countries and 36 companies, focused on deep horizon and deep water frontier exploration in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Xavier Moonan, AAPG delegate and GSTT president, welcomed participants to his "geological playground," home to the world's first oil well, a 280-foot deep well drilled near the La Brea Pitch Lake in 1857. Trinidad and Tobago provided a major focus for the workshop, which also included studies of basins in offshore Colombia, Guyana, Suriname, Brazil and Western Africa.

After the workshop, Moonan said the event provided an excellent opportunity for attendees to hear high quality presentations and to participate in technical discussions that helped them apply the concepts to their day-to-day work.

"The quality of the talks was very good, not only because of the sharing of key data points and ideas, but because many of the presenters were quite passionate about their geologic area of study. As such they were able to capture the full attention of the audience, leading to lots of direct and specific questions from the floor," Moonan said.

GTW session chair Hasley Vincent, geologist and sedimentologist at BP Trinidad and Tobago, agreed.

"What distinguished this workshop from others is the immediate opportunity to hear the opinions of a wide, cross section of professionals following the talks. This was invaluable, as technical views did not always agree with those of the presenters, which made for a dynamic learning environment," Vincent said.

Vincent, who works at the appraisal scale, left the GTW with an increased appreciation for the uncertainty along the northern and eastern South American margins, as well as a greater understanding of the need for representative analogs to analyze data. "The frontier nature of the Atlantic margin was evident, and references to the African analogs was useful to articulate the potential of the deep water play," he said.

GTW participants had an opportunity to share their knowledge with the next generation of geoscientists at the Student-Industry Networking Reception held on March 11. Approximately 90 individuals attended the event, which provided students from the University of the West Indies' St. Augustine and Mona campuses and the University of Trinidad and Tobago a forum for discussing how best to apply their studies in the "real world."

Barry Beckles, petroleum geoscience student and president of the University of the West Indies AAPG Student Chapter, said the reception exceeded his expectations.

"I didn't think I would have learned as much as I did [at the reception]," Beckles said, "I think the persons who couldn't make it missed out on a valuable opportunity to make some beneficial connections."

The week finalized at the University of the West Indies St. Augustine campus, where all three years of petroleum geoscience students attended a presentation of "Switch" – the movie produced by former AAPG president Scott Tinker, which provides information about current and future energy transitions.

Beckles said "Switch" was informative, as well as shocking and challenging to individuals planning to enter the energy industry. "I was also alarmed by the fact that India has 1.4 billion people and over 400 million of them live without electricity," Beckles said, adding he appreciated the opportunity to find out about what is happening outside of Trinidad and Tobago.

"[The movie] reiterated the fact that this industry is, and will continue to be, necessary for the rest of our lives at least – but also pointed out that we need to make it cleaner. This could possibly open up an entirely new arena of jobs within the industry ... maybe green geoscience!" Beckles commented.



*GTW participants and university students enjoyed refreshments and discussion at the AAPG-GSTT Student-Industry Networking Reception in Port of Spain on March 11*



*GSTT president Xavier Moonan and UWI Student Chapter president Barry Beckles share ideas at the Student-Industry Networking Reception following GTW Trinidad and Tobago*

## LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

### Leadership Team grows during March Elections

Latin America Region members participated in a special election to increase regional representation in the AAPG House of Delegates and on the AAPG Advisory Council. Elected delegates Faustino Monroy, Pemex, Asociación Mexicana de Geólogos Petroleros, and Federico Seminario, PlusPetrol, Sociedad Geológica del Perú, will join representatives from affiliated societies and other international regions in approving and enforcing AAPG bylaws, in promoting awareness of AAPG activities and membership and approving membership and certification requests. The Latin America Region is eligible to fill nine House of Delegates positions, but until the elections, only seven positions were filled. With Monroy and Seminario elected, the Latin America Region can now send a full contingent to the annual House of Delegates meeting in Houston on April 6.

Newly elected Advisory Council member Miguel Ramirez, of Avanti Energy (Colombia), served as president of the Latin America Region from 2011-13. Ramirez will join AAPG past presidents and

Region, Section and Division leaders in serving in an advisory capacity to the AAPG Executive Committee, reporting on matters involving ethics and discipline, long-range planning, constitutional review, nominations for officers, honors and awards and other special projects as requested by the AAPG Executive Committee.

The Latin America Region congratulates these gentlemen on their new positions.



Faustino Monroy



Federico Seminario



Miguel Ramirez

## STUDENTS AND YPs

### New Student Chapter UNAM takes Latin America Region IBA Competition

Spirits were high at the fifth Latin America Imperial Barrel Award (IBA) competition in Bogotá, Colombia on March 7. The event, which brought 16 universities from seven countries, resulted in a win for the Mexican team.

In the IBA competition, which started at Imperial College in London in 1976, university teams use real but imperfect industry datasets and modern software to conduct petroleum systems analysis and prospect risk assessment. Teams of four to five students analyze datasets during eight weeks, then deliver their prospect proposal in a 25-minute presentation and 15-minute question and answer session before a panel of industry judges.

The competition provides students the opportunity to use real technology on an authentic dataset, to receive feedback from an industry panel, to impress potential employers in the audience, and to win cash awards for their schools.

The IBA came to Latin America in 2010, when just one team competed. Participation has grown steadily since then, and this year's event included teams from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad & Tobago and Venezuela.

The winning team, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) from Mexico City is one of the Region's newest AAPG Student Chapters. Shortly after receiving the AAPG welcome letter in December 2013, chapter faculty adviser Ricardo Padilla formed an IBA team with three undergraduate and two graduate students. Team members had vastly different interests, experience and levels of academic preparation. The group's heterogeneity

presented a challenge at first but later worked to the group's advantage, said team member Alonso Reyes.

"Fortunately we found a way to take advantage of each individual's unique characteristics to form a solid, well-organized group," Reyes said. "What helped a lot was having clear objectives for our participation, to learn as much as possible to represent our university and our country proudly, and most importantly, to share our passion for geosciences."

UNAM team member Iza Canales said she took on the IBA challenge so she could experience something outside the usual scope of her academic work, and so she could have the opportunity to represent her school and her country in an international competition.

"The most difficult part of the process was learning so many concepts, simplifying them, and understanding them well enough to be able to present them clearly and concisely, in English," said Canales, a native Spanish speaker. She was quick to add that the experience of participating in the IBA was well worth the effort.

"In addition to winning, the trip itself was very gratifying. It was great to see how well the organizers received everyone and recognized all the hard work of everyone who participated."

Reyes agreed adding, "It was an honor to have been selected to represent the Latin America Region. I am very grateful to AAPG for the opportunities they gave us through this competition, in which we could meet colleagues from other countries who live different

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realities, but who share our common language of geosciences. Thank you!"

The UNAM team will represent the Latin America Region in the global IBA competition in Houston April 4-5. They are supported by the other Latin American IBA team participants, including the second place team from the Universidad Nacional de San Marcos from Lima, Peru.

According to event organizers, just making it through the competition makes teams worthy of recognition.

"There are no losers in the IBA," said Romina Portas, IBA Latin America Region coordinator as she distributed certificates to participants. "Just being here makes you winners."



*Latin America IBA winners from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM)*  
*(Left to right) Enrique Arce, Iza Canales, Ricardo Padilla (Advisor), Alexis García, Antonio Castillo and Alfonso Reyes*

## STUDENTS AND YPs

### YPs Develop Student Leaders at the Student Leader Mentoring Program

Developing "Leaders of Leaders" was the theme of the day at the Student Leadership Mentoring Program (SLMP) pilot held on March 8 in Bogotá. The session, organized and delivered by the Colombia YP Chapter, gave 12 student leaders from five countries the opportunity to share challenges and best practices and to develop leadership skills that will serve them throughout their academic and professional careers.

Juliana Ceballos, chapter president from EAFIT University in Medellin, Colombia, said she appreciated the opportunity to hear young professionals share their experiences about what makes chapters successful and what current leaders can do now to leave a legacy of responsibility and commitment to other students.

"Something new I learned is that, as soon as a chapter is formed, leaders should begin delegating activities and preparing students so that they will be ready to be a part of the chapter's executive committee in the future. I also learned that teamwork is very important, since things do not always go as expected, and with a larger group, there is greater support, and ideas flow more easily," Ceballos said.

She added that she will apply what she learned in her current chapter, motivating students just beginning their studies, as well as those who are part way through, to take advantage of opportunities to learn about teamwork, to grow as a person and to strengthen academic skills in their area of interest.

Leonel Wainstein, representative of Universidad Nacional de La Plata in Argentina (UNLP), said meeting colleagues from other chapters and hearing their experiences was the most valuable part of the session.

"I learned about the current situation of the AAPG and what we can do to have better regional coordination. I hope to organize more activities in Argentina and to continue working with all of the Latin American universities," Wainstein said.

Wainstein's plans include telling younger students about AAPG and making visits to energy companies in order to learn more about working in the industry.

The Colombia YP Chapter plans to offer additional mentoring program sessions throughout Colombia and Latin America and to incorporate elements of the program into region-wide activities including the Latin America Region Student Leadership Summit in late 2014



*Student Leader Mentoring Program Participants and Colombia YP Chapter Leaders*

*Standing (left to right): L Hernandez (UNMSM, Peru), R Vargas & M Vargas (YP Chapter Colombia), J Ayala (UAndes, Colombia), J Sanchez (UNAL, Colombia), I Iregui (Student Liaison LAR), A Velasquez (YP Chapter Colombia), P Vilorio (UNALMED, Colombia) J Ceballos (EAFIT, Colombia), J Herrera (UNLP, Argentina), J Carvajal (UIS, Colombia), M Félix (UFS, Brasil), L Weinstein (UBA, Argentina).*

*Kneeling (left to right): A Castillo (UNAM, México), J Díaz (YP Chapter Colombia), F Rodríguez (YP Chapter Colombia)*

### Congratulations to our new student chapters!

Universidad Autónoma de Mexico, Mexico City, Mexico – Dec. 2013  
Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Brazil – Jan. 2014

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**6-9 April 2014**

**AAPG Annual Convention & Exhibition**

George R. Brown Convention Center, Houston

**8 April 2014**

**Latin America Region All-Member Meeting & Reception**

Hilton Americas Hotel, Room 335A, Houston

5:30-7:00 p.m.

**23 April 2014**

**"Switch" movie screening**

Organized by AAPG & the Sociedad Colombiana de Geología Planetario Distrital, Bogotá, Colombia

5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

**14-15 May 2014**

**GTW Brasil – "Stratigraphic Traps and Play Concepts in Deep Water Settings"**

Organized by AAPG & Associação Brasileira de Geólogos de Petróleo

Windsor Barra Hotel, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

**4-7 June 2014**

**Congreso Mexicano del Petróleo**

Organized by the Asociación Mexicana de Geólogos Petroleros Mundo Imperial, Acapulco, Guerrero, Mexico

## Have Something to Report?

Do you have something to share with the Latin America Region?

Send us your articles, photos and upcoming events for publication in our newsletter and on our web site. Send submissions to [latinamerica@aapg.org](mailto:latinamerica@aapg.org)

## STAY IN TOUCH

**Region website**

[latinamerica.aapg.org](http://latinamerica.aapg.org)



[facebook.com/aapglatinamerica](https://facebook.com/aapglatinamerica)

**Email**

[latinamerica@aapg.org](mailto:latinamerica@aapg.org)



[@AAPGLA](https://twitter.com/AAPGLA)

**Phone**

+571.485.2338 (Colombia)

+1.281.886.8525 (USA)