

**AAPG LATIN AMERICA PRESIDENT** *Victor Ramirez*

# Making an Impact

*One of the most gratifying aspects of being Region president is the opportunity I have to see the impact AAPG is making across Latin America and the Caribbean.*

*During the first week of November the AAPG Latin America Region had a presence at four major regional events:*

- *The Latin America Region Student Chapter Leadership Summit (LAR-SCLS).*
- *VIII INGEPET Peru in Lima.*
- *The IX Exploration and Development Congress (CONEXPLO) in Mendoza, Argentina.*
- *Expo Oil & Gas Colombia 2014.*



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The LAR-SCLS attracted 45 students from 20 universities and seven countries, as well as influential leaders from AAPG. I could not be prouder of all they accomplished during the Summit. INGEPET, whose theme was "Facing Latin America's Energy Challenges," provided 1,500 participants with a solid program featuring technical themes in the morning sessions and general interest forums in the afternoons. CONEXPLO, which focused on unconventional resources, featured a technical conference, five courses and two field trips, and was attended by presidents of both AAPG and SEG. The Expo Oil & Gas Colombia featured a massive exposition highlighting all sectors of the petroleum industry as well as technical forums about offshore exploration, reserves incorporation and institutional challenges.

To have a presence at these three important events occurring simultaneously in Lima, Mendoza and Bogotá, the AAPG Latin America Region relied on student and Young Professionals (YPs) to work in our stands. The volunteers were knowledgeable and professional, and their enthusiasm for AAPG was evident to hundreds of visitors who came to learn more about our Association.

Our students and YPs also are working to organize their own events. Last month, I attended the Colombia YP Chapter's workshop, Analysis and Discussion of the Current Industry Situation: Risks and Opportunities for Petroleum Geology Students and Professionals.

I talked with participants about how this convergence of events is part of the industry cycle and that, while we don't expect massive layoffs of geoscientists worldwide, large companies will be tightening budgets. We discussed the possibility of pursuing postgraduate studies waiting for the industry to recover.

I personally would like to thank our young volunteers – both those who organize and who support our initiatives – for their



*YP Peru Chapter President Juan Carlos Quinto, AAPG Programs Manager Emily Llinás, YP Peru Chapter Education Liaison Miguel Nicho and Latin America Region Treasurer Pedro Alarcon at INGEPET Peru.*

service and dedication to AAPG. We appreciate your support, and we are working every day to support you, too.

The articles in this month's newsletter demonstrate the Latin America Region leadership team's commitment to students and YPs. From discounted GTW rates to lecture programs, we are doing all we can to help you grow personally and professionally.

I encourage all of our members, particularly students and YPs, to continue to be involved. You will find, as many of us have, that the more you give to AAPG, the more AAPG will give back to you.

Happy 2015!



RECENT NEWS

### GTW Colombia presents novel approaches to heavy oil and unconventional resource exploration



Students and Young Professionals were an important part of the GTW Colombia 2014.

**F**inding resources in changing and challenging environments was the focus of the Geosciences Technology Workshop (GTW): Expanding Unconventional Resources in Colombia With New Science – From Heavy Oil to Shale Gas/Shale Oil Opportunities, held in Bogotá 11-12 December.

The GTW, organized by the AAPG Latin America Region and Affiliated Society Asociación Colombiana de Geólogos y Geofísicos del Petróleo (ACGGP) brought a strong attendance despite angst over falling oil prices worldwide and regulatory and community group challenges affecting production in Colombia.

The session opened with a talk by Max Torres, vice president of exploration at Ecopetrol, who discussed Colombia’s national oil company’s exploration activities in unconventional and heavy oil environments.

The first day of the workshop focused on reservoir characterization and technology and applications related to unconventional resources. While most discussions centered on Colombia’s Middle Magdalena Valley and Eastern Cordillera Basins, participants also heard perspectives from the Vaca Muerta Formation in Argentina and the Chicontepec Basin in Mexico.

The second day focused on reservoir characterization and technology applications for heavy oil, and focus areas included Colombia’s Southeast Caño Field and the Llanos, Caguan-Putumayo and Middle Magdalena Basins.

The workshop followed the typical GTW format: Four sessions featuring presentations followed by the traditional IPOD (issues/problems/opportunities/directions) discussions at the tables – but had two novel components.

The first was a digital poster session held the first day of the workshop. Representatives from seven companies and institutions presented their data stations equipped with a 42-inch monitor and computers.

Another component unique to a Latin America GTW was the



GTW Colombia included lectures, discussions and digital poster presentations. Digital poster session are shown to the right (against the wall).

presence of seven students and four young professionals – individuals who traditionally do not attend the workshops due to their high cost.

GTW Organizing Committee members offered deep discounts to seven students – one for each AAPG student chapter in Colombia – and allowed chapters to nominate students who were chosen through a competitive process. Discounted young professional registration was provided to four recent graduates who were looking for work or were unable to obtain company support to attend the workshop.

The workshop brought 140 participants representing 40 companies, seven universities and eight countries in the Americas and in Europe. Event sponsors included Colombia’s Agencia Nacional de Hidrocarburos, HOCOL, Baker Hughes, Emerald Energy Colombia, Amerisur Resources Plc, Petrobras Colombia, Schlumberger, Equion Energía, ConocoPhillips, Nexen and Talisman Energy.



## LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

### Student leaders gather in Lima for the LAR-SCLS

The Latin America Region Student Chapter Leadership Summit (LAR-SCLS) held in early November at the Peru to Sociedad Geológica del Perú (SGP) in Lima, Peru brought together 45 students representing 20 AAPG student chapters from seven countries, plus representatives from Young Professional (YP) chapters in Colombia and Peru.

Special guests included AAPG President Randi Martinsen, Secretary Richard Ball and Executive Director David Curtiss, each of whom delivered presentations and participated in activities throughout the weekend.

Both senior and recent AAPG members participated throughout the program, which included technical, professional development, leadership and networking components.

Technical lectures included an overview of unconventional resources and surface geology studies from Latin America and the United States. Professional development sessions provided practical career advice, explained through the personal accounts of AAPG's global leaders. Leadership sessions involved all summit participants and focused on the importance of mentoring, teamwork and succession planning.

Initiatives announced during the event included the Student Leader Mentoring Program, designed to create a region-wide "leaders of leaders" network to provide support to student chapter leaders and the Sister Chapter Program, which pairs established student chapters with newer chapters and provides a formal mechanism for sharing lessons learned.

Lessons learned were the focus of student chapter presentations in which speakers from the 20 universities represented at the summit shared their chapters' values, activities, challenges and successes.

Chapters also shared creative ideas. Students from Universidad de los Andes, of Bogotá, Colombia, described their *ciclosalida* bicycling field trip and "Geosciences in Photos" photography competition. The Caldas University Student Chapter, also Colombia, shared its *Rock a' Thon* initiative, which encourages students from throughout the university to bring rock samples to add to their department's collection.

Other students shared the importance of moving beyond the technical activities and giving back to the community. Members of the AAPG chapter at the Federal University of Sergipe in Brazil described their work teaching basic geology to children, and students at the University of the West Indies in Trinidad and Tobago discussed their fundraiser to support those affected by autism.

Student presentations highlighted common challenges for AAPG student chapters: finding funding, keeping students engaged and knowing how to deal with criticism from opponents of the energy industry.

They also highlighted common passions – a love for geoscience, for AAPG and for helping others learn about what the Association has to offer students and young professionals.

LAR-SCLS participants had the chance to meet with Young Professionals at a Meet and Greet reception organized by the Peru YP Chapter. During the session YP leaders shared their experience moving from academia to industry, and they provided



YP Peru Chapter President Juan Carlos Quinto (second from left) shares career advice with LAR-SCLS participants at the Student-YP Meet & Greet reception.



AAPG Executive Director David Curtiss (left) and AAPG President Randi Martinsen listened to student feedback about how to make the Association more relevant to younger generations.

tips to students preparing for graduation.

The rotating small group discussions also allowed YP leaders to hear feedback about what they should be doing to encourage recent graduates to stay involved with AAPG and their YP chapters.

The LAR-SCLS provided plenty of formal and informal networking opportunities, particularly during group meals and coffee breaks, where students celebrated their language and cultural differences as well as their common love for geoscience.

The LAR-SCLS was made possible through sponsorships from the AAPG Student Chapter Committee, the AAPG Latin America Region, the Asociación Colombiana de Geólogos & Geofísicos del Petróleo, the Geological Society of Trinidad and Tobago, Tecpetrol, Equion Energía, Gems SA and Endepeer.

Preparations are under way for the 2015 LAR-SCLS event, which will include a parallel leadership summit for YPs.



STUDENTS AND YPs

Young geoscientists benefit from Latin America Region Distinguished Lecture Tour

**A**APG and Shell Distinguished Lecturer Chris Wojick visited Latin America and the Caribbean in November and received an enthusiastic, hospitable welcome typical of the Region.

Geoscientists representing 15 universities, three AAPG Young Professional (YP) Chapters and two AAPG Affiliated Societies attended eight lectures held over a two-week period in Mexico, Colombia, Trinidad & Tobago Peru and Brazil.

Wojick, geophysical adviser with deep water exploration in Shell Americas in Houston, presented "Bright Spots, Dim Spots: Geologic Controls of Rock Properties and AVO Response in the Niger Delta Basin." His lecture focused on strategies for using seismic amplitude anomalies in risk assessment and prospect evaluation, as well as a discussion of how rock properties control most of the changes observed in the seismic signatures of different stratigraphic systems. The lecture included examples and lessons learned from drilling results worldwide.

Antonio Velasquez, geophysicist at Ecopetrol and YP liaison for the AAPG Latin America Region, said Wojick's lecture was helpful to him as well as young geoscientists in the audience.

"Nowadays seismic interpretation is moving toward a more quantitative perspective, so understanding seismic amplitude anomalies from rock physics is the key to address properly the new interpretation challenges in the prospection work," he said. "Bringing examples gave us an interesting comparative vision about what we are doing well and what we still need to improve."

Wojick was well-received by the students and YPs, who appreciated not only the technical content of the lectures, but also the outgoing personality he displayed when having coffee or dinner with student groups following the conferences.

"Chris is a really nice guy and his conference was quite interesting," said Sebastian Alvarado, of the Universidad Politécnica y Tecnológica de Colombia (UPTC) AAPG Student Chapter in Sogamoso, Colombia.

Alvarado and colleagues took Wojick to eat typical regional food following his lecture in the Colombian town – a three-hour drive from Bogotá.

Despite having his phone stolen the second day of his trip, Wojick reported a very positive experience during the tour.

"I am quite happy I was able to tour Latin America and meet a lot of great folks," he said. "I will definitely be coming back as a tourist to



Wojick addresses students from five Colombian universities – attending both in-person and via teleconference – during his talk at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia in Bogotá.



Wojick and students in Cusco, Peru – a city he described as "one of the gem-like places I have to visit with my wife, and for at least a week."

Colombia and Peru."

The Colombian and Peruvian universities brought in some of the largest audiences to hear Wojick speak.

The lecture held at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá campus, convened 100 students from two local universities in Bogotá, from the Colombia YP Chapter, and the Asociación Colombiana de Geólogos y Geofísicos del Petróleo. Students from three universities in Medellín and Manizales participated via video conference.

The lecture held at the Peruvian Geological Society in Lima included students from two Lima universities and Peru's YP Chapter.

Lizbeth Calizaya, of the Peru Young Professional Chapter, said the Wojick's visit provided multiple benefits young geoscientists in the city.

"We consider that the DL program was really beneficial for everyone because of the knowledge and experience shared

by Dr. Chris," she said. "And not only that; [the visit] encouraged joint participation between chapters in Lima."

Students and young professionals throughout the Region hope to repeat the success of the Wojick's tour by holding lectures with increasing frequency. In addition to participating in the DL Program each year, Region leadership is moving to expand AAPG's Visiting Geoscientist Program (VGP) throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

VGP co-chair Robbie Gries said the program has expanded rapidly in recent months and still has room to grow.

"We have made amazing progress in Latin America," Gries said. "A few months ago we had only two VGs in the Region – both in Mexico. Now we have 25, plus two from the United States willing to travel in Latin America. We still need more geoscientists to volunteer for the VG Program in Brazil, Mexico, Ecuador and Argentina."

Velasquez said students and YPs alike benefit greatly from technical lectures provided through programs like DL and VGP.

"Apart from the classroom lectures, a learning experience with people from industry provides an important context on the real world application of the geosciences," he said. "For Latin America, sharing technical knowledge and professional background between students and more experienced people has been the most common and successful strategy to get students closer to the oil and gas industry and AAPG."



**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**3 March 2015**

Latin America Region IBA Competition – Virtual Round  
*Via WebEx*

**10 April 2015**

Latin America Region IBA Competition – Semifinals  
*Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago*

**11-12 May 2015**

GTW Argentina: “Extending Mature Fields’ Life Cycles: the Role of  
New Technologies & Integrated Strategies”  
*Sheraton Buenos Aires Hotel & Convention Center, Buenos Aires, Argentina*

**17-22 May 2015**

20th Caribbean Geological Conference: “A collision of ideas to uplift  
our understanding”  
Organized by the Geological Society of Trinidad & Tobago  
*Hyatt Regency Hotel, Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago*

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Attention DEG Members:**

Latin America Region is looking for a Division of Environmental Geosciences member willing to serve as a liaison between the DEG and the regional leadership team. Interested? Contact [latinamerica@aapg.org](mailto:latinamerica@aapg.org).

**IBA sponsorship opportunities available!**

Represent your company, invest in future geoscientists and enjoy exclusive recruiting opportunities as an Imperial Barrel Award Competition sponsor. Contact [latinamerica@aapg.org](mailto:latinamerica@aapg.org) for more information.

**Going to ACE?**

Meet Region Leadership and share ideas at the Latin America Region All-Member Meeting & Reception!  
Tuesday, 2 June 2015, 5:30–7:00 p.m. Check the event program for details.

**STAY IN TOUCH**

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