



AAPG LATIN AMERICA REGION PRESIDENT *Victor Ramirez*

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Greetings to the AAPG Latin America and Caribbean community

In my final message as Region president for 2013-15, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all my fellow board and leadership team members for all of their commitment and enthusiasm, which have led our Region to reach a level of recognition and growth projection that we barely dreamed of just a few years ago.

In the past four years, we have hosted 10 Geoscience Technology Workshops in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago, as well as a highly successful AAPG International Conference and Exhibition (ICE) in Cartagena, Colombia. These events would not have been possible without the tireless effort of our volunteer leaders.

I repeat now what I have mentioned several times throughout my term: Our leadership team has focused a significant portion of time and resources on our Region's new and future generations of geoscientists, supporting numerous initiatives for students and young professionals.

For that reason, we have 26 student chapters in eight countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean and Young Professionals Chapters in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago. We maintain contact with them and monitor their activities, particularly those that take place within the chapters.

AAPG programs and initiatives inspire our young people to overcome challenges like industry downturns and political unrest. The 2015 IBA Region champions – students from Universidad Simon Bolivar of Caracas, Venezuela – are prime examples.

Another important focus of this leadership team has been outreach and education about all aspects of the oil industry. Efforts included multiple "Switch" documentary screenings/ future of energy forums, presentations on career opportunities in the petroleum industry, and technical lectures on topics offshore exploration, heavy oil and unconventional resources.

It is very satisfying to see how current Region leaders have been supporting and developing a new generation of leaders who, undoubtedly, will maintain and increase Latin America Region's visibility and position both within AAPG and the global energy community.



Victor with AAPG Student Chapter members from the Universidad of Caldas in Manizales, Colombia – his hometown. Victor helped start the chapter in 2013.

Thanks once again to all. I have nothing but gratitude for AAPG as an institution and even more for the people of which it is composed.

I look forward to working with all of you in the future.

Warm regards,
Victor Ramirez

RECENT NEWS

Telpico Provides “Gift of Knowledge” To Colombia’s National University System



Universidad Nacional de Colombia students and staff gather with Telpico Colombia representatives and AAPG leadership at the Datapages Donation Ceremony in Bogotá on March 12.

March 12 was a historic day for Universidad Nacional de Colombia and AAPG student members in Latin America. Geoscience students, university faculty and administrators, AAPG officers and representatives from Telpico Colombia LLC gathered in a colonial-style house on the university campus to commemorate newfound access to Datapages for 50,000 students and faculty in Colombia’s largest university.

In a signing ceremony held at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia – Bogotá, Telpico Colombia’s legal representative Robert Stewart and national library director Sonia Valencia signed an agreement providing a perpetual AAPG Datapages subscription to the institution.

The donation, valued at approximately US \$15,000 provides access to 145,000 publications from 50 publishers and societies, spanning 100 years. Access is available to student, staff and visitors to Universidad Nacional de Colombia campuses in Bogotá, Medellín, Manizales and Palmira.

Students from the university’s AAPG student chapter organized the ceremony, which included words from Telpico and university representatives, a Datapages demonstration and a reception.

AAPG chapter president Marcela Mantilla attended the ceremony and thanked Telpico Colombia for providing a “gift of knowledge” that will help current and future university students pursue the skills they need to be future leaders.

Mantilla quoted Pakistani teenager and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai saying, “There is no weapon more powerful than knowledge, no greater source of knowledge than of the written word.”

“Day by day, we find ourselves in situations in which we

anxiously wait to be the future engines of development and change in our country, to be the next leaders tasked with ending the problems that plague us,” she said. “We express our enormous gratitude to Telpico for giving us such an invaluable tool for knowledge, both for us and for future students, which represents a direct contribution to the goal we pursue.”

Geosciences department director Luz Amalia Ordóñez expressed appreciation both to Telpico as well as to geoscience students who worked through complex protocols inherent in the public university to make the donation a reality.

One of those geoscience students, Sergio Herrera, provided an



AAPG Student Chapter members organized the ceremony held at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia campus in Bogotá.

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overview of Datapages and showed audience members how to conduct a search.

Catalina Riano, Telpico geologist and a Universidad Nacional de Colombia alumnus who helped coordinate the university's subscription, said the donation was particularly gratifying to her.

"We are proud to support the university's educational mission and make this small contribution to the entire academic community, to encourage the growth of future professionals, benefitting not only students and professors but also the industry as a whole," she said. "We are proud to make this donation, and we hope that you take full advantage of it."

After the ceremony, attendees enjoyed a reception sponsored by Telpico. Stewart chatted with chapter members and said he hoped that the "modest gift" would provide lasting impact to the university.

The Datapages donation was the brainchild of Hans Krause, an AAPG Honorary member, who works as an independent consultant in Venezuela and Colombia.

Krause proposed the idea to Telpico, the Mississippi-based company that arrived in Colombia in 2008 and obtained three exploration blocks in 2010.

"Telpico decided that it would be in the country for the long term," Krause said. "When you're in a long-term relationship you obviously look out for how you can benefit but you also see how you can make sure the other side benefits from you being there."

Krause noted that, while the Datapages donation does not provide an immediate financial return on investment, it represents an important gesture of goodwill and commitment to the future of the industry.

"As long as Telpico is a member of the Colombian oil and gas industry it is in its own enlightened self-interest to help ensure that the Colombian universities graduate well-trained geologists and engineers. Seen from this perspective providing the Universidad Nacional de Colombia with the Datapages access is a relatively low-cost, potentially high-impact investment," he said.

Kurt Bayer, AAPG Latin America Region delegate who assisted student chapter members in finalizing the agreement with the university, said Telpico's donation sets a precedent for other businesses.

"One of the most important long-term investments for companies of the petroleum industry is to support better preparation of students and professionals through initiatives like Datapages and postgraduate studies," he said. This is especially important when oil prices are low."

Krause acknowledged that providing Datapages access to other universities may or may not be of interest to all energy companies, or to all universities with geoscience programs.

"Each company obviously decides what serves its own interest best," he said. "Just as such a donation may not suit every oil company, it also may not be right for every university around the world – especially when among staff and students there's little interest in petroleum geology."

Krause noted that the Universidad Nacional de Colombia was an ideal fit for the donation thanks to an interested geology department, an enthusiastic AAPG student chapter and support from Bogotá-based AAPG leadership.

Region president Víctor Ramirez, past region president Miguel



Former student chapter vice president Sergio Herrera provides a Datapages demonstration.



Telpico Colombia LLC legal representative Robert Stewart, signs an agreement providing a perpetual Datapages subscription to the Universidad Nacional de Colombia.

Ramirez, Kurt Bayer (all Universidad Nacional de Colombia alumni) were present at the ceremony on March 12.

Krause who could not attend, expressed hope that donations like Telpico's could increase awareness of Datapages as a tool, both for obtaining and for publishing information. He is working with universities and institutions across the region, encouraging them to submit articles for publication.

"Hopefully Telpico's Datapages donation will encourage other AAPG members around the world, and especially in Latin America, to find ways for other universities to be able to offer this benefit to their students and teachers and, additionally, to enrich Datapages with publications not yet incorporated into the system," he said.



LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

The Latin America Region Leadership Team is comprised of both elected and appointed positions filled by talented individuals who are passionate about geosciences and the AAPG. This issue features three of the appointed leaders who already are working with the Region but will begin their new roles on July 1.



Juan Carlos Quinto – Region YP Liaison

Juan Carlos Quinto, geologist at BPZ Exploration and Production, will assume the role of Young Professional (YP) liaison, serving as a part of the Region leadership and the Global YP Committee, and providing guidance and support to the Region's five YP chapters.

Quinto joined the Association as a student at San Marcos National University in Lima and later led Peru's YP chapter. As president of the Region's most active YP chapter, Quinto coordinated volunteers to run the AAPG booth at the Peruvian Geological Congress and led student-YP networking sessions at the Latin America Region Student Chapter Leadership Summit (SCLS) in Lima in 2014.

Quinto said he decided to accept the Region YP liaison position because he is passionate about volunteering for AAPG.

"The initiatives and continual learning are invaluable activities that I enjoy. Supporting YP chapters as Latin America Region liaison will help me see their challenges and expectations more closely, and also help develop my personal and professional interests."

Quinto said he is excited about using the experience he gained in previous AAPG leadership positions to assist in the growth of the YP programs across the Region.

When asked what he would like to achieve, Juan Carlos said, "First I would like to position Latin America YPs as some of the most active in AAPG. Then I would like to see a YP chapter in each country in the Region. That would be incredible and fantastic!"



Lizbeth Calizaya Student – YP Leadership Summit

Lizbeth Calizaya, geophysicist trainee at Karoon Peru, will assume the role of Region student chapter liaison, providing guidance to 26 student chapters across the Region and reporting to the Region leadership team and the AAPG Student Chapter Committee.

Calizaya's AAPG experience includes a second place finish in the Latin America Region Imperial Barrel Award Competition in 2014, where she represented the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos.

As a San Marcos chapter and YP Peru chapter member, Calizaya worked with multiple AAPG events and national conferences and now participates as an active part of the Student YP Leadership Summit Planning Committee.

Calizaya said she accepted the position as student chapter liaison because she is very interested in contributing to AAPG in Latin America.

"I have noticed that it's important and necessary to have a better link between the Association and students. I would like to get involved in this position improving the quality of development of

chapters that already exist and to promote the formation of new chapters working with enthusiasm and responsibility," she said.

Calizaya said she is honored to work for such an outstanding Association that has become an important part of her life.

"I am very excited to continue being part of this big family, but what I appreciate most is having the opportunity to give back all the experiences AAPG gives me by assuming this responsibility."

Calizaya said she has two primary goals for her term.

"The first is to help students to keep involved with the Association throughout their careers being closer to their YPs and by communicating all the opportunities they can benefit from.

"The second is to try to harmonize and strengthen the development of the student chapters that already exist, as well as the new ones," she continued. "I know that every chapter is unique and special, but it is also necessary to work as a Region.

"With new ideas and the cooperation of every one, I am sure we will achieve it!"



Melisa Galván – DEG Advisory Board Member

Melisa Galván, a geology consultant with petroleum and mining experience, will represent the Latin America Region on the advisory board of the AAPG Division of Environmental Geology (DEG).

Galván joined AAPG as a student at the National University of La Plata in Argentina, where she served as a chapter leader and member of the IBA team who took third place in the regional competition in 2011. Galván started the Argentina YP Chapter, and later worked as vice student chapter liaison for the Latin America Region. Galván has worked closely with the Region leadership team – providing with information needed to make student and YP programs successful.

Communication will be a key component in her new role as DEG Advisory Board member, which will involve notifying the DEG Executive Committee about environmental workshops, conferences and issues in the AAPG Region, and helping to increase awareness of DEG in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Galván said she accepted the nomination because she understands the importance of environmental geology, both to the Region and to her personally.

"I think that as a region we have a knowledge deficit in environmental issues, and we need to get more involved in this area because it is completely linked with the industry," she said. Additionally, environmental geology seems very interesting to me. It is an area in which few geologists work, but at the same time, it's one of the most important, so I look forward to the opportunity to expand my knowledge in this area."

Galván said the fact that the Region does not currently have representation on the DEG Advisory Board makes her even more excited about the role.

"It is a challenge, with new topics to tackle and explore," adding that she has several goals for her term.

"I hope to learn, generate interaction and efficient communication between DEG and the Region, she said. "I also hope to generate awareness and understanding of environmental issues, and help to make them become more relevant so they acquire the importance they deserve at the regional level."

STUDENTS AND YPs

IBA Semifinals Successful Despite Industry Downturn

The Latin America Region Imperial Barrel Award competition was exciting as ever this year – with 17 teams representing six countries – but the 2015 contest brought some important changes.

Both the industry downturn that reduced corporate sponsorships and the ever-growing number of teams forced IBA coordinators to implement cost-saving measures.

The primary solution came through WebEx, a Web-conferencing software that allows teams, judges and coordinators to meet virtually and view each other, as well as the presentation being projected. AAPG's Asia Pacific Region has used the software for years, since the number of teams participating and the expansive geography of the region makes travel cost-prohibitive.

The Latin America Region opted for a hybrid model, with all teams participating in a virtual competition via WebEx and the top four teams advancing to an in-person semifinal competition in Trinidad and Tobago.

For Byron Solarte, IBA coordinator and geologist at LINN Energy, the strategy allowed all interested teams to participate while also accommodating budget restrictions.

“Overall we are happy to see recurring and new schools participating every year, all the team members and advisers have done excellent work throughout the past six years,” he said.

The virtual competition took place March 2, when the 17 teams were divided randomly into two groups with two judges per group. Teams delivered 25-minute presentations and had 10 minutes to answer questions from the judges and industry professionals with experience evaluating exploration projects.

One of the judges was Peter Goddard, exploration team lead of BG Group Trinidad, who participated in the Imperial Barrel Award competition 10 years ago as a student at Imperial College in London.

Goddard said that, while hosting the competition virtually provided occasional technical challenges, the issues were not unsurmountable and they actually helped to contribute to the



IBA semifinal judges Krishna Presad, Geological Society of Trinidad and Tobago (far left) and Ron Daniel, of BG Group Trinidad and Tobago and the Simon Bolivar team members (left to right): Mizaël Bravo, Clara Braña, Kristian Torres, Victoria Jimenez and Roberto de la Rosa.



Latin America Region IBA semifinal participants, coordinators and judges join BG Group Trinidad employees at BG headquarters in Port of Spain.

“real-world” nature of the event.

“All teams got the opportunity to present their high-quality work, and as a judge I could get a good idea of the merits of their work. Presenting to management virtually, with all the technical issues that are entailed, is part of the real-life challenge that exploration teams in non-head office locations routinely face,” he said.

Judges evaluated presentations based on technical analysis and recommendations, evidence of teamwork and response to the question-and-answer session, and then met privately following the competition to choose the top two finalists from their group.

The Group A judges chose the Universidad de los Andes - Colombia and the Universidad Central de Venezuela - Caracas. Group B selected the Universidad Nacional de Colombia – Bogotá and Universidad Simón Bolívar,

Caracas, Venezuela.

Goddard noted that mentoring from industry professionals might level the playing field for those universities with fewer links with the oil and gas industry.

“Back in the original Imperial based competition, I remember that there were some industry mentors who gave teams some guidance. While watching the presentations it was fairly apparent which universities had a strong oil and gas focus versus a couple of universities that did not,” he said. “Assigning those university teams an industry mentor may have helped them compete with the more traditional oil and gas schools.”

IBA virtual round participants presented to judges from ExxonMobil, Shell, BG Group and the University of the West Indies. Quarterfinalists from the four universities traveled to Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago for the semi-final competition held April 10 held at BG Group Trinidad headquarters.

The semifinal competition allowed students to present in person before judges representing BG Group and the Geological Society of Trinidad and Tobago (GSTT). The format was the same as the virtual round, a 25-minute presentation followed by 10

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minutes of questions and answers.

Ron Daniel, geoscience adviser working with BG's acreage offshore Trinidad and Tobago, said he enjoyed working as a judge at the event.

"I was very impressed by the high quality of work done by the student teams and their very positive attitude, as well as by how close the scores from the judges were, both within the individual elements marked and the total score for each team," he said, "The students were just what our industry needs; upbeat, well presented, curious and keen to socialize and network, both with each other and with the invited industry guests."

When Daniel learned of the competition through his position as director at the Geological Society of Trinidad and Tobago, he approached BG Group about hosting the event.

"We took this opportunity to support an excellent competition, as well as showcasing the company to the participating students," he said.

After all of the presentations were completed, students enjoyed a tour of the facility and met with BG employees who talked to them about company projects, graduate opportunities and career development.

The event finished off finalized with an evening reception and awards ceremony announcing the Region winner, Universidad Simon Bolivar of Caracas, Venezuela. The announcement was no surprise for Daniel.

"Their victory was clear cut and well deserved, based on excellent work which was well presented," he said. "They were also very gracious in victory."

The graciousness was evident in comments from team member, Clara Braña, fifth year undergraduate geophysics student who described her experience in Trinidad as "extraordinary."

"I greatly appreciate the AAPG and all our sponsors for making this experience possible, especially BG Group and the IBA coordinators for their dedication and enthusiasm throughout the competition," she said. "The cultural exchange among the finalists was valuable and fun; and I came away not only with a wonderful professional experience but also with new friends and great memories. Trinidad and Tobago is a very beautiful country, from the Caribbean landscapes to the food, not to mention its people, who are so friendly and hospitable."

Solarte said he and other Region coordinators, Romina Portas with ConocoPhillips and Roderick Perez with Pacific Rubiales, greatly appreciated the support provided by BG group and the GSTT.

"It is always challenging to organize the event in a different place but they made us feel like home, providing not only help with the logistics but also showing us the city and the amazing culture of Trinidad and its surroundings," he said.

The day following the IBA competition, the GSTT staff led an optional field trip to Maracas Bay and Las Cuevas Beach.

For Braña, participating in the IBA provides numerous benefits to participants, including improved teamwork skills and real-world industry experience.

"One of the most important aspects was the teamwork, since the scale of the project demands working together. It



The Latin America Region thanks coordinators (left to right): Roderick Perez (Pacific Rubiales), Romina Portas (ConocoPhillips), Byron Solarte (LINN Energy) and sponsors ExxonMobil, Shell, BG Group, ConocoPhillips, LINN Energy, Stoner Energy and GSTT for making the 2015 competition a success.

was wonderful to see how communication, group dynamics, coexistence, tolerance and respect among us grew as the project developed, and how we managed to appreciate and value the skills that each member brought to the team," she said. "Without a doubt, the most valuable part of this educational program is experiencing how to develop a career in the oil industry. I learned not only about how the exploration phase works from start to finish, but also about other areas of geosciences."

The Simon Bolivar university team will represent the Latin America Region at the global IBA competition held in Denver, May 29-30.

Sary Zambrano, Simon Bolivar faculty adviser, said that traveling to the United States is a great joy for the team.

"Going to the United States to compete represents a great joy for us, Zambrano said.

"It demonstrates that all the hours, effort and dedication given to the development of the project generated a great result, representing not only the university or Venezuela, but also Latin America. It is a great honor and responsibility," she said. She added that Representing Venezuela, a country often named for its recent political and economic difficulties, provided an added bonus for the Simon Bolivar team.

"For our university, this victory represents hope ... welcome news in very difficult times," she added. "As everyone knows, the Venezuelan situation has affected us in different aspects, particularly in academia, where there is a large flight of human capital. But it is rewarding to know that we still have students and teachers who are willing to fight, transcend barriers and to make a good name for our country and our university."

"I know many of us will end up leaving the country anyway, but I have no doubt that in our minds and hearts is the desire to return and encourage new generations," she said.

Congratulations to our new student chapter – the University of Guayaquil.



UPCOMING EVENTS

11-12 May 2015

GTW Argentina: "Extending Mature Fields' Life Cycles: The Role of New Technologies and 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 Trinidad • Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago

19-21 May 2015

Brazilian Petroleum Conference: "From Genesis to Production"
Bolsa Rio Convention Center • Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

31 May – 3 June 2015

AAPG Annual Conference & Exhibition
Colorado Convention Center • Denver, Colorado USA

10-13 June 2015

Mexican Petroleum Congress
Guadalajara Convention Center • Guadalajara, Mexico

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Invest in the next generation:

Represent your company, invest in future geoscientists and enjoy exclusive recruiting opportunities as Latin America Region Student-Young Professional Leadership Summit sponsor. Contact latinamerica@aapg.org for more information.

GTW sponsorship opportunities available!

Promote your company to industry, government and academic leaders as a Geosciences Technology Workshops (GTW) sponsor. Support events in Buenos Aires and/or Lima, and reach a global audience online. Contact latinamerica@aapg.org for more information.

Attending AAPG ACE?

Network with Region leadership and make your voice heard at the Latin America Region all-member meeting. Tuesday, 2 June at 5:30 p.m. in the Capitol Ballroom 6 at the Hyatt Regency Denver at Colorado Convention Center.

STAY IN TOUCH

Region website

latinamerica.aapg.org



facebook.com/aapglatinamerica

Email

latinamerica@aapg.org



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

Phone

+571.485.2338 (Colombia)
+1.281.886.8525 (USA)



linkedin.com/company/aapg-latin-america