Samuel Thomson
May 2022
EDUC 2285

Frankenstein, RoboCop, and Polar Bears: The Changing Nature of Latin American Studies in US Higher Education During the Cold War

The relationship between higher education and American society is a two way-street. Shifts in the status quo often translate to changes in the research goals or curriculum of US colleges and universities. These institutional changes tend to create feedback loops, where graduated students and academics consequently pressure cultural, corporate, and state institutions to change themselves. The economic growth in America after World War II, for instance, allowed the United States government to flood universities with millions of dollars in grants to develop research facilities. The US' goal was to train a generation of scientists and engineers with the best tools America had to offer as the arms race between the USSR and the US accelerated in the late 1940s. For example, California's Bay Area offered a strategic role for the military, positioned to be America's line of first defense in the Pacific Theater. Stanford University's proximity to military bases here motivated the federal government to award Stanford University Research and Development grants to advance nascent technologies like RADAR at the beginning of the Cold War[1]. Beyond STEM, Stanford boasted a renowned Latin American Studies (LAS) program that similarly became of great interest to the US military during the Cold War. During the 1950s and 1960s, America became keen to intervene in socialist, Marxist, and communist movements spreading throughout South America. The fear of Soviet influence and national security concerns led to universities like Stanford becoming factories for policy makers and military experts[2].

[1] Stuart W. Leslie and Robert H. Kargon, "Selling Silicon Valley: Frederick Terman's Model for Regional Advantage," Business History Review 70, no. 4 (1996): 435+.
[2] Russell H. Bartley, "The Cold War and Latin American Area Studies in the Former USSR: Reflections and Reminiscences," Latin American Perspectives 45, no. 4 (July 1, 2018): 115–40, https://doi.org/10.1177/0094582X18773729.

Stanford's LAS program was avant-garde for the 1950s, boasting its own historical publication on LAS, P.h.D. degrees, and a constant stream of visiting LAS experts, together forming a salon-like environment of a rarified stature[3]. Stanford's place in the history of LAS is important, though not unique; across the board, burgeoning LAS programs at US colleges and universities became an extension of the American military, growing in lockstep with the increasing military intervention south of the border[4]. The effects were far reaching: even by WWII, small liberal arts colleges like Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine began to offer lectures and classes on Latin American politics due to American ambitions to expand the US sphere of influence[5]. Undergraduate institutions inherently lack research facilities and graduate programs. Thus, institutions like Bowdoin—small, remote, curricularly conservative, and far from Latin America—offer a litmus test of the historical influence and progress of this field.

The history of LAS in US college and university curricula can be categorized into three different phases: inception and American Imperialism, the effects of the Cold War, and youth decolonization and globalization. The defining period of Latin American Studies and the focus of this historical examination is the second of these, the wide-ranging effects of the Cold War on LAS, particularly the 1960s. Growing self-actualization and desire to be independent of their paternalistic northern neighbor spurred some leaders to adopt anti-West policies and institute socialist rule. The US Government's subsequent militaristic response, fearing a domino effect of Soviet influence in the region, shaped and expanded LAS to align with foreign policy and

---

[3] Ronald H. Chilcote, "The Cold War and the Transformation of Latin American Studies in the United States," Latin American Perspectives 45, no. 4 (2018): 6–41.
[4] Mark T. Berger, "Civilising the South: The US Rise to Hegemony in the Americas and the Roots of 'Latin American Studies' 1898-1945," Bulletin of Latin American Research 12, no. 1 (1993): 1–48, https://doi.org/10.2307/3338811.
[5] Bowdoin College, "Report of the President, Bowdoin College 1940-1941," Annual Report of the President, no. 50 (January 1, 1941), https://digitalcommons.bowdoin.edu/presidents-reports/50.

national security priorities. Overnight, professors and graduate students acquired immense power that saw their influence extend beyond the classroom and into nuclear-caliber conversations.

An important figure in the origins of LAS is historiographer J. Franklin Jameson who established the Hispanic American Historical Review (HAHR) in 1918[6]. Jameson, citing the existence of other European historical journals, argued that the creation of a comprehensive historical journal of Hispanic history was long overdue. In his opening letter of the inaugural issue, Jameson writes that

> when it is remembered that more than a third of the area of United States was once under Spanish dominion, and that the rest has during three centuries had large relations with Spanish and Portuguese America, it seems fairly obvious that Hispanic American History should be largely cultivated among us, and that many able young scholars should arise to devote themselves zealously to it[7]

The founding of the HAHR marks the formal initiation of a review "devoted to the history (political, economic, social, and diplomatic, as well as narrative) and institutions of Spain, Portugal, and the Latin American States".[8] Now, scholars could begin organizing and categorizing strictly Hispanic and Latin American history. The importance of this new journal was not limited to the academic world, either. A message from President Woodrow Wilson lauding the foundation of the journal precedes Jameson's introduction. Just four months before Wilson sent US troops to fight in The Great War, he commended the HAHR, writing,

> I learn with a great deal of interest of the plans for an Ibero-Hispanic Historical review and beg that you will express my very sincere approval of the project. It is a most interesting one and ought to lead to very important results both for scholarship and for the increase of cordial feeling throughout the Americas. Cordially and sincerely yours, Woodrow Wilson[9]

---

[6] Berger, "Civilising the South: The US Rise to Hegemony in the Americas and the Roots of 'Latin American Studies' 1898-1945."
[7] J. Franklin Jameson, "A New American Historical Journal," The Hispanic American Historical Review 1, no. 1 (1918): 2–7, https://doi.org/10.2307/2506010.
[8] Jameson, "A New American Historical Journal."
[9] Woodrow Wilson, "A Letter from President Wilson," The Hispanic American Historical Review 1, no. 1 (1918): 1–1.

Today, HAHR is a peer-reviewed, scholarly journal that is the foremost authority on Latin American History in the United States. However, the HAHR's immediate attention from the federal government foreshadows a half-century long trend of political and private agendas weaponizing the HAHR and research on Latin America. Intended as an interdisciplinary account of Latin America, from 1918 to 1948, one-third of HAHR publications were about diplomatic history between Latin America and the US[10]. This nascent field outgrew the academic world and invited both state and corporate interests to use the HAHR to expand their own plans for the continent. President Wilson's introduction and wish for "cordial feelings" between the US and Latin America marks the beginning of a sixty-year aggressive, interventionist foreign policy agenda[11]. When Wilson annexed and invaded Cuba and Mexico with brute military force, he justified the war under the guise of American Exceptionalism, nationalism, and patriotism[12]. This ethos would become the prevailing US foreign policy agenda until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

In line with this ethos, a league of private research institutions endowed by Gilded Age tycoons emerged in the 1920s, furthering the complexity of this academic subject. Grants from places like the Rockefeller Foundation, Peace at Stanford University, and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace transformed this historical discipline dramatically[13] [14]. The personal agendas these tycoons desired for their economic or philanthropic ambitions led to the

[10] Berger, "Civilising the South: The US Rise to Hegemony in the Americas and the Roots of 'Latin American Studies' 1898-1945."
[11] Ricardo D. Salvatore, Disciplinary Conquest : U.S. Scholars in South America, 1900–1945, vol. [Open access version], American Encounters/Global Interactions (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2016).
[12] Joseph A. Fry, "Place Matters: Domestic Regionalism and the Formation of American Foreign Policy," Diplomatic History 36, no. 3 (2012): 451–82.
[13] Chilcote, "The Cold War and the Transformation of Latin American Studies in the United States."
[14] Berger, "Civilising the South: The US Rise to Hegemony in the Americas and the Roots of 'Latin American Studies' 1898-1945."

coopting of academics to manipulate public policy. This consolidation meant that "having the time and the research facilities to write history and the opportunity to teach history were dependent on gaining a position at a university or college", positions which relied on the contributions of donors with ulterior motives[15]. This moment in time forever changed LAS; commercial, academic, and government interests formed a cycle of federal and private funding for research intended to justify pre-existing goals which far and away meant US hegemony and capital exploitation. The Spanish-American war in Cuba in 1898 highlights this confluence. Following the war, nearby Tulane University in New Orleans established its Center for Latin American Studies in 1924[16]. A benefactor of the Center was Samuel Zemurray, the president of a large fruit company in Central America who made an endowment for research into the regions where his company owned land[17]. At the end of the decade, UT Austin had completed the Institute of Latin American Studies[18], the same year 43% of US overseas investment (roughly $3 billion) went to military or other operations in Latin American countries[19].

Geographic proximity and the resulting imperialist (military and economic) relations prompted private and state funding of American universities to educate the experts they needed as the US became a more prominent global power in the early twentieth century.

LAS research, now predisposed to the whims of policy makers, was methodically funded to support their foreign policy. In the 1930s, the political pendulum changed directions when Franklin Roosevelt put forth the Good Neighbor Policy, a stance that stressed

[15] Berger, "Civilising the South: The US Rise to Hegemony in the Americas and the Roots of 'Latin American Studies' 1898-1945."
[16- 17] SONIA E. ALVAREZ, ARTURO ARIAS, and CHARLES R. HALE, "RE-VISIONING LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES," Cultural Anthropology 26, no. 2 (2011): 225–46.
[17] See above
[18] See above
[19] Berger, "Civilising the South: The US Rise to Hegemony in the Americas and the Roots of 'Latin American Studies' 1898-1945."

non-intervention in favor of trade and cultural exchange between hemispheres[20]. During this time, LAS underwent a more positive change as the Roosevelt and New Deal era ushered in a period of goodwill and patriotism. The Social Science Research Council in Washington established its Joint Committee on Latin American Studies in 1942[21]. The Roosevelt Administration also established the Office for the Coordination of Commercial and Cultural Relations Between American Republics with the goal of educating, respecting, and gaining appreciation for Latin American culture[22]. However, America's entrance into WWII upended these goals because of the time and resources dedicated towards the war effort, as well as significant technological and political developments at home and abroad.

The development of nuclear technology and subsequent proliferation, sudden rise to international superpower, and booming national economy had profound consequences for LAS. If LAS was a Frankenstein-like beast of different societal institutions in the early 20th century, post-WWII morphed the field into a RoboCop-like machine that had the full strength of the American military along with the vast and thorough knowledge of university professors and researchers[23]. The effects of the Cold War shifted LAS from a discipline which examined Spanish and Portuguese colonization and post-colonial development, to an urgent national security agenda, tasked with dismantling and defending against Soviet-influenced communist spread so close to home. While the previous section outlined the framework that established LAS funding, purpose, and ambition, the scale of these factors grew extraordinarily. Now, the stakes for foreign policy in Latin America extended to life-or-planetary death, and professors and young

[20] Paul W. Drake and Lisa Hilbink, "Latin American Studies: Theory and Practice," in The Politics of Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines, by David Szanton (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 34–62.
[21] Drake and Hilbink, "Latin American Studies: Theory and Practice."
[22] Howard F Cline, "The Latin American Studies Association: A Summary Survey with Appendix," Latin American Research Review 2, no. 1 (1966): 57.
[23] Chilcote, "The Cold War and the Transformation of Latin American Studies in the United States."

graduate student adopted an "eminence gris"[24] role with the authority to strategize invasions and oversee coups and government takeovers.

The spread of communism throughout Eastern Europe and East Asia undoubtedly concerned the US. Look no further than the proxy wars spanning decades in Korea and Vietnam. Beginning in 1945, military transgressions the US committed in Nicaragua, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and others, led to political activists doubting the integrity of American economic and political structures. condemning the American capitalist system. In Roosevelt's day, it appeared the days of the US' role as the culturally superior modernizing neighbor were over. The government's anti-communist agenda reignited both the modernising ethos of American establishments, private and public, catalyzing supersonic growth of investments in LAS programs.

In 1958, Congress passed Title VI of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA), a motion that allocated federal grants for the centers or programs of international or area studies[25]. The following year, Fidel Castro and his supporters overthrew Batista's dictatorship in Cuba and aligned their new government with Marxist ideals[26]. The repercussions of this coup were immeasurable: given Cuba's proximity to American soil, rapid social change and potential alliance with the USSR threatened US security on a scale never before seen. Funding for LAS research skyrocketed. Prior to the 1950s, there were only 29 area studies in all of American universities; by 1970 there were over 100[27]. Those familiar with the slow moving institutional change of college curricula must realize how remarkable a development this is. Though these area studies expand beyond LAS, the majority of these investments at many universities went to

[24] A turn of phrase often used at this time to refer to the role of Latin Americanists. See: Chilcote, "The Cold War and the Transformation of Latin American Studies in the United States."
[25] Cline, "The Latin American Studies Association: A Summary Survey with Appendix."
[26] ALVAREZ, ARIAS, and HALE, "RE-VISIONING LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES."
[27] Chilcote, "The Cold War and the Transformation of Latin American Studies in the United States."

LAS programs. In 1964, a Stanford University Professor, John J. Johnson, received a grant from the Pentagon and the RAND corporation (a think tank researching the US military) to research military history in Latin America. Johnson concluded that military intervention was necessary to ensure the "professionalism" of the region. In the following years, the Pentagon sent six officers to Stanford to obtain masters degrees in Latin American Studies. From 1964-1965, these six men led or participated in coups, civil wars, or assassinations in Brazil, Argentina, the Dominican Republic, and Colombia[28].

The US Government selected Stanford University's LAS program as it was known as a hub for discourse on Latin American history and current events, and its advisory board of international and interdisciplinary intellectuals boosted its preeminent status. Founded in 1944, a program for Hispanic studies emerged that covered ties from Portugal and Spain to Latin America, language study, field work (study abroad), and every other discipline from geography to economics[29]. Stanford's substantial private resources and a progressive, open-minded program chair in Ronald Hilton, shielded the program from the corruption peer institutions were vulnerable to[30]. The program attracted speakers and leaders from many backgrounds and perspectives related to Latin America, knowing they would not be cut-off or alienated from their host institution. Some scholars, like Johnson, justified US military intervention through their research, while others like *New York Times* journalist Herbert Matthews interviewed Fidel Castro, presenting their conversation at the Bolivar House[31] and revealed the existential threat Batista's regime posed to the people and culture of Cuba, a threat that necessitated revolution. Matthews and like-minded peers were brave to retort the mainstream dialogue of communist

[28] Chilcote, "The Cold War and the Transformation of Latin American Studies in the United States."
[29] See above
[30] Bartley, "The Cold War and Latin American Area Studies in the Former USSR: Reflections and Reminiscences."
[31] The location of the LAS program at Stanford for many years

takeover. Their bravery is not an understatement. Some graduate students from Stanford, teaching in South America, were vehemently discouraged from teaching anything other than American Exceptionalism. One scholar recalled that, in secret, he attempted to incorporate leftist politics into their university lecture; the next class, officers from the CIA, U.S. Embassy, and the director of the national study abroad commission sitting in the classroom[32]. When scholars deviated from the narrative put forth by media and state institutions they were quite literally silenced. Well-qualified professors recruited to exceptional programs at UCLA, University of the Pacific, to name a few, would find out their offers were revoked after the FBI labeled them a threat to national security or the CIA had put them on a watch list[33]. The Stanford campus was a literal and intellectual haven, providing the first ever meaningful opportunity for LAS scholars to collaborate unimpeded by financial or ideological constraints. Many of the scholars advocating for incorporating left-leaning and anti-US angles into their research were graduate students or green professors. In addition to some scholars' personal encounters with the US military, study abroad programs funded by the Fulbright-Hays act and institutions like the Carnegie Endowment, the Ford Foundation, and others revealed the true nature of US intervention in these countries[34]. Study abroad and Stanford's lecture system contributed to sentiment that was spreading nationwide that US Imperialism was dangerous and the national character had become morally problematic.

Despite being its nextdoor neighbor, Mexico did not experience the same intervention South America or even nearby countries like Cuba and Guatemala received. In border states like

[32] Chilcote, "The Cold War and the Transformation of Latin American Studies in the United States."
[33] See above
[34] Cline, "The Latin American Studies Association: A Summary Survey with Appendix."

California, Texas, and Arizona, immigrant and working-class Mexican-Americans, largely independent of the Cold War, pushed for Chicano Studies programs. Growing parallel to LAS, impassioned college students riding the tide of the Civil Rights movement formed radicalized groups independent of establishment organizations like the Carnegie Endowment or even the HAR at Stanford. The Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO) fought for Chicano Studies at Southwestern universities like UCLA and UT Austin, although the first Chicano Studies program arose at California State College Los Angeles in 1967[35]. Unlike most Latin American Studies programs, these Chicano Studies programs advocated indigenous rights and self-directed study, free of the complex establishment ties burdening its cousin. El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán was a pro-Indigenous document that MAYO and other groups penned to organize the curriculum of Chicano Studies around Indigenous groups' rights to self-determination. This history is reflective of student movements[36] in the 1960s all across the country that began as increased awareness of US and university cooperation in military enterprises deeply troubled students and faculty[37]. The movements unified and put pressure on entrenched college curriculums to modernize.

One of these curricularly conservative schools was Bowdoin College, unremarkable in the national development of LAS, but significant for its stature. That is, Bowdoin College led other colleges in the New England Small Colleges Athletic Conference (NESCAC) in the integration of LAS into its curriculum. Only last year did the NESCAC require LAS to have a joint appointment, whereas Bowdoin has had it since the mid 1990s[38]. In other words, until 2021,

[35] Rodolfo Acuña, Occupied America; A History of Chicanos, 2nd ed. (New York: HarperCollins, n.d.).
[36] Marjorie Woodford Bray, "Latin American Studies in the Twenty-First Century: Why? How?," Latin American Perspectives 31, no. 1 (2004): 23–38.
[37] Chilcote, "The Cold War and the Transformation of Latin American Studies in the United States."
[38] Boyle, History of LAS with Boyle.

the LAS programs at other NESCACs did not have a person in charge of running the program; at Bowdoin, the program has been unified with a joint appointed professor heading the program for nearly 25 years (Currently, it is Professor Margaret Boyle, Associate Prof. of Romance Languages and Literature and the LAS Program Director). A keen passion for Latin American History existed on campus at this time due to student organizations like LASO and the program's architect Professor Allen Wells, who specialized in Mexican history[39].

Unlike the complexities associated with large universities, Bowdoin is an undergraduate institution, meaning its developments in LAS occur in the footsteps of larger institutions. Over time, the evolution of Latin American Studies at Bowdoin can be marked by the arrival and commitment of individuals passionate about the field. Other factors played a part, like student protesting and national sentiment, but the specific transformations emerged from individuals who were keen enough to make a change and at an institution small enough where their impact rippled through the campus consciousness.

In April of 1830, Bowdoin College and The Medical School of Maine published their annual course catalog listings. In the curriculum for freshmen and sophomores were traditional requirements like Latin and Greek, rhetoric, philosophy, and mathematics. For this spring semester and the first time in Bowdoin's history, juniors who opted not to take calculus or an ancient language had the choice to enroll in a Spanish language course[40]. This offering was entirely the result of Henry Longfellow, who, having returned from a five-year sabbatical in Europe, was enamored by romance languages[41]. Due to his father's seat on the board, the college offered a Spanish course for interested seniors, whose material mostly consisted in language

[39] Margaret Boyle, A Conversation on the History of Latin American Studies at Bowdoin with Professor Margaret Boyle, Audio, May 2, 2022.
[40] Bowdoin College, "Bowdoin College Catalogue (1830 Apr)," Bowdoin College Catalogues, Course Guides, and Academic Handbooks, no. 19 (April 1, 1830), https://digitalcommons.bowdoin.edu/course-catalogues/19.
[41] Boyle, History of LAS with Boyle.

instruction, grazing some Spanish literature. However, Longfellow's enthusiasm wasn't reciprocated by the student body or faculty, and it failed to adhere to the curriculum despite sporadic offerings over the next several decades.

The next milestone for LAS at Bowdoin came from the dovetailing of WWII and the Tallman Fund. In 1928, alum Frank Tallman gifted the college $100,000 (roughly $2 million today) for the purpose of bringing in esteemed professors and lecturers, mostly from abroad, to teach one or two semesters at Bowdoin[42]. In the first year of its existence, the Tallman Fund recruited professors from Ireland, Norway, and Turkey. In 1940, the Tallman Fund allowed Bowdoin to recruit a "distinguished South American journalist and writer" from The National University of Chile in Santiago: Professor Ernesto Montenegro[43]. Montenegro taught the first class on LAS at Bowdoin, titled *Latin American Relations,* focusing on the political structures in the Southern continent and their relationship to America. At the end of that year, President Sills wrote on the College's effort to expand Latin American Studies, writing

> [Montenegro's] course for undergraduates has been popular, and he has done much to increase our all too scanty knowledge of our southern neighbors. He pointed out that in the past the relations of South America have been, so to speak, horizontal with European countries, in culture with Spain, France, and Italy; in commerce with Germany and England; and that now we are striving to make those relationships vertical, south and north, instead of west and east…In connection with Sr. Montenegro's stay amongst us…next year we plan, with the generous cooperation of the Pan American League of Portland, to offer a scholarship to a student from Latin America.[44]

The lectures Montenegro gave over the spring semester ranged from history, art and literature, and politics and international relations in Latin America. The Tallman Fund in conjunction with global geopolitical events explains why Montenegro came halfway across the world to teach and why his courses were so popular among students. The growing interest in LAS nationwide was clearly present at Bowdoin, but suggestions for area studies were

[42] Bowdoin College, "Report of the President, Bowdoin College 1928-1929," Annual Report of the President, no. 38 (January 1, 1929), https://digitalcommons.bowdoin.edu/presidents-reports/38.
[43]Bowdoin College, "Report of the President, Bowdoin College 1928-1929."
[44] See above

discouraged by the College, when in the 1950s Bowdoin began publishing "Self-Study Reports". A committee of faculty, undergraduates, alumni, and board members has authored these reports every ten years since 1956. The reports are surveying if the college adhered to its core goals and intentions regarding curriculum, resources, students and faculty, and other aspects of the college since its last issue. The first issue, entitled *The Conservative Tradition in Education at Bowdoin College* reaffirmed the College's firm stance on the commitment to liberal arts. The committee argued that Bowdoin's lack of area studies is justifiable, because "within the scope of its regular courses, the Department of Government and Legal Studies offers semester courses emphasizing the theory and practice of government in Soviet Russia". [4546] The devotion of entire departments to niche areas like "Latin American relations, Canadian history, [or] Chinese civilization" was unnecessary; the Tallman fund allowed samples of these subjects, but whole departments were excessive[47]. Bowdoin's goal as a liberal arts institution is not to offer every subject– one attends a large university for that end. "The central place of [Bowdoin's] curriculum rests upon the premise that a degree of Bachelor of Arts should not merely open the door for specialized, professional training, but should be the mark of a liberally educated man, "at home in all lands and all ages," and "carrying the keys of the world's library in his pocket." [48]Furthermore, due to the slow-moving nature of curricular changes in higher education, it is reasonable to assume that should the college establish a department in a politically relevant topic, it would no longer be the vogue by the time they established it. LAS was seen as a prime case of such a topic.

---

[45] Bowdoin's physical location on the Atlantic coast meant that the focus of their Cold War studies were on the Soviets and Eastern Europe more so than the Latin American theater

[46] Bowdoin College Committee on Self Study, "The Conservative Tradition in Education at Bowdoin College" (1956) *Bowdoin College Committee on Self Study*, no. 1, Brunswick, ME

[47] See above

[48] See above

The economic prosperity enjoyed by Americans following WWII introduced "study abroad" as a necessary step for students studying the new "area studies" disciplines[49]. Study abroad and exchange programs expanded rapidly as the coffers of the NDEA and private foundations overflowed[50]. By the end of the 1960s, Bowdoin's study away programs were thriving, yet the ever-increasing interest in studying in foreign countries concerned the College[51]. Their ability to regulate students' curricular accreditation and language competency was widely unregulated given its novelty, but the administration was reluctant to incorporate area studies and spread themselves too thin. In 1972, Bowdoin was unable to fill the loan needs for all students, the first time in years their aid was insufficient[52]. Already, the majority of Bowdoin students were on some financial aid and to make matters worse, the College projected a rise in tuition over the coming years. Facing internal financial pressure and a soon-to-collapse national economy, President Howell reflected at the conclusion of the academic year in May that, "an institution must question the extent of its resources for developing all of these areas and the value to the individual student of pursuing any one area of study to the exclusion of others at the undergraduate level"[53]. Thus, a formal LAS program would not appear for another 20 years. That same spring, the Chi Psi Fraternity hosted nearly a dozen events about Latin America, adding "a valuable dimension to the College's developing programs in the area of Latin-American Studies"[54].

[49] Bowdoin College, "Report of the President, Bowdoin College 1970-1971," Annual Report of the President, no. 80 (January 1, 1971), https://digitalcommons.bowdoin.edu/presidents-reports/80.
[50] Cline, "The Latin American Studies Association: A Summary Survey with Appendix."
[51] Bowdoin College, "Report of the President, Bowdoin College 1972-1973," Annual Report of the President, no. 82 (January 1, 1973), https://digitalcommons.bowdoin.edu/presidents-reports/82.
[52] Bowdoin College, "Report of the President, Bowdoin College 1972-1973."
[53] See above
[54] See above

Courses in Latin American history, politics, and culture appeared more and more often, but not under a unified program until the 1990s.

In the 1970s, growing frustration nationwide about American Imperialism in Cold War battles, namely Vietnam, led to student unrest on campus[55]. When Brig. Gen. H. B. Hester, a retired general who served in both world wars and Korea, came to speak on campus, he walked on stage only to see only a scattering of students in the crowd[56]. Unsurprised, Gen. Hester remarked that advocates for the Vietnam War "are a pretty pathetic crowd". An Orient[57] journalist concurred, writing that "Our continued presence in Vietnam is a moral outrage and a tactical mistake"[58]. The Cold War and its effects brought about widespread discontent among institutional figures and college students alike began to radicalize an institution that had been conservative for hundreds of years. In the 1963-64 school year, the small college in Maine couldn't argue any longer that conservative education was prudent. President Coles reported observations the faculty and administration made, that

> Since WWII…the beginning of the obsolescence of general education… [was] accelerated by changes of attitude engendered by the Sputnik[59] and post-Sputnik syndrome….Curricular renewal projects in our colleges must be as vast, extensive, and drastic as have been urban renewal projects in our blighted cities. Painful relocations are a part of the price we must be willing to pay[60]

A few years later, these renewal projects took shape. In 1970, Bowdoin dropped all standardized testing requirements and the board voted to begin admitting women[61]. Relatively speaking, the school hadn't changed at its core since its founding in the 1790s. Yet in the mid 1970s the College suggested discontinuing the fraternity system, which had been enjoyed by

---

[55] Bowdoin College, "Bowdoin College Catalogue (1992-1993)," Bowdoin College Catalogues, Course Guides, and Academic Handbooks, January 1, 1993, https://digitalcommons.bowdoin.edu/course-catalogues/274.
[56] Randy Stiffler, "General Hits U.S. Imperialism," The Bowdoin Orient, October 9, 1970, C edition.
[57] Note: The Bowdoin Orient is the weekly student publication and the oldest continuous publication in the country.
[58] Stiffler, "General Hits U.S. Imperialism."
[59] A phenomenon of incessant thought of nuclear threat, particularly a fear of Soviet technical superiority
[60] Bowdoin College, "Report of the President, Bowdoin College 1962-1963," Annual Report of the President, no. 72 (January 1, 1963), https://digitalcommons.bowdoin.edu/presidents-reports/72.
[61] Bowdoin College, "Bowdoin College Catalogue (1992-1993)," Bowdoin College Catalogues, Course Guides, and Academic Handbooks, January 1, 1993, https://digitalcommons.bowdoin.edu/course-catalogues/274.

alumni for nearly 200 years[62]. Other undergraduate institutions, in the face of a cultural and economic crisis, began to reevaluate their curriculum in recognition of rapid modernization in America. The urgency with which they changed speaks to the importance of this establishment identity crisis. Even President Greason reflected in his annual report, that Bowdoin "alumni of the 1940s and 1950s have no problem relating to the memories of alumni of the 1920s and 1930s. That cannot be said for alumni of the 1970s and 1980s"[63]. The Tallman Fund's recruiting of foreign professors, study abroad expanding, and a shift in student attitude towards the ethos of American Imperialism in the Cold War, at Bowdoin and nationally, pushed the College to institute programs that would expose students to new ideas and cultures, seemingly a key to being "at home in all lands".

After nearly two centuries of attempts, with the assistance of student organizations like Chi Psi and LASO and Professor Allen Wells[64], alumni, student, and administrative interest, financial viability, and curricular reform finally converged in the 1989-90 school year when Bowdoin presented its pilot 'Latin American Studies' program[65]. For the first time, a freshman could leave after four years with a degree in Latin American Studies. It is worth noting how crucial Professor Wells was to this budding program: in the first year it was offered, Wells taught half of the seventeen courses in the program[66]. The majority of these initial courses were in history and literature, though they have expanded to cross-list in nearly every department. Thus concludes Bowdoin's struggle to establish LAS, a struggle which concerned generations of presidents, professors, and alumni. Whether it was Wells' boundless ambition to see the success of the program or Tallman's generous grant, Latin American Studies at Bowdoin grew far slower

[62] See above
[63] Bowdoin College, "Report of the President, Bowdoin College 1989-1990," Annual Report of the President, no. 99 (January 1, 1990), https://digitalcommons.bowdoin.edu/presidents-reports/99.
[64] Boyle, History of LAS with Boyle.
[65] Bowdoin College, "Report of the President, Bowdoin College 1989-1990."
[66] Bowdoin College, "Report of the President, Bowdoin College 1989-1990."

than at large universities, but at a rate that allowed undergraduates and professors to develop the field naturally, without the undesirable interference from foreign policy agenda.

There are notable omissions in this account of LAS' history at Bowdoin and nationally. The particular curricular developments nationally, the latter half of the Cold War, and the changes since the Cold War are absent from this narrative. However, the outsized role the 1950s-1970s had in shaping LAS is what is fundamentally important to the field's evolution[67]. In no other era could a professor receive tens of thousands of top secret documents seized from the desk of the Guatemalan president, provided by the Secretary of State and Director of the CIA. This happened to Professor Arthur Whitaker at Penn, who was tasked with synthesizing the documents to defend the US-backed coup in 1954[68]. The Cuban Missile Crisis in 1963 marks the critical mass of LAS' involvement with foreign policy as the US began to reduce their interventionist strategies having come perilously close to nuclear war. This real world impact of graduate work and scholarly research is the goal of this paper. One could write a compelling narrative tracing LAS up to the end of the Cold War nationally and continuing the narrative from the 1990s to the present day just looking at Bowdoin and its program. However, the goal of this paper is to illustrate that societal changes and curricular changes in academia often go hand in hand, and are rarely independent of one another. Bowdoin's history is still being written, and a comprehensive history of the subject at the College will be released next year.

Unlike the 20th century, the growth in the 21st century for LAS is much more progressive with many iterations besides Latin American Studies and Chicano Studies. At Bowdoin, the name of the program was recently modified to "Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies".

[67] Cline, "The Latin American Studies Association: A Summary Survey with Appendix."
[68] Chilcote, "The Cold War and the Transformation of Latin American Studies in the United States."

The change is reflective of demographics in America because the US will be the largest Spanish speaking country in the world within our lifetime. The name change reflects the inclusion of the whole diaspora, not just an "area study" confined to geographic region[69]. By the 1990s, when Bowdoin's program began, LAS entered into a new era nationally where indigenous perspectives supplemented Western histories and Latin American scholars moved to the US to teach, sharing firsthand accounts and stories[70]. This process helped decolonize academia, incorporate silenced perspectives from women and poor citizens, and expand the field beyond foreign policy studies. All of the current LAS professors at Bowdoin identify as part of the diaspora, an identity which has encouraged more students[71] and faculty to join the program[72]. Bowdoin's recent course offerings realized the ambitions of the HAHR, managing to incorporate liberal arts education into a complex topic: the history of Spanish dictionaries, intro to Spanish poetry and theater, and early modern feminism in Latin America[73]. Considering that "Latin American Studies emerged in North America as a faintly ridiculous tail to a political-commercial kite"[74], the national trends from the past 30 years and more current studies at Bowdoin indicate a more progressive mainstream understanding of LAS. The future of LAS is contingent, as always, on interest and relevance, a contingency that will be avoided. The ever-increasing course offerings and coalition of students and faculty of the Latin American and Caribbean diaspora is permanently cementing LAS in the bedrock of college curriculum in America.

---

[69] Boyle, History of LAS with Boyle.
[70] Bartley, "The Cold War and Latin American Area Studies in the Former USSR: Reflections and Reminiscences."
[71] Bray, "Latin American Studies in the Twenty-First Century: Why? How?"
[72] Boyle, History of LAS with Boyle.
[73] See above
[74] Berger, "Civilising the South: The US Rise to Hegemony in the Americas and the Roots of 'Latin American Studies' 1898-1945."