

Latino Caucus Minutes
2017 AWP Conference & Bookfair
Walter E. Washington Convention Center
801 Mt Vernon Pl NW
Washington, District of Columbia 20001

R 298. Latino Caucus
Room 101, Washington Convention Center, Level One
Thursday, February 9, 2017
6:00 pm to 7:15 pm EST

Moderator: Ruben Quesada

Panel Members: Fred Arroyo, Suzi F. Garcia, Ruben Quesada, Alexandra Regalado, Dan Vera

Agenda

- I. Presentation of the Caucus proposal (Moderator)
- II. Business (Panel Members)
- III. Caucus Discussion

Meeting called to order 6:00pm

1. Presentation of Caucus Proposal

The visibility of Latinos & Latin Americans is growing in the literary community. However, a discussion surrounding systematic, institutional, & aesthetic challenges is needed. Latinos need a space to come together, to address inequalities in access, to meet with writers of varied Latino & Latin American identities, to discuss the obstacles to publishing (e.g. cultural expectations, stereotypes, & marginalization), & to discuss event planning to increase our participation at AWP.

2. Business (Panel Members)

Panel Members discussed work to be done to address inequalities in access and visibility within the literary community. Areas of business included:

- a. Latin American Writers in the U.S. Literary Market, Alexandra Lytton Regalado
- b. Transmute the National Identity, Dan Vera
- c. Media Training and Your Public Image, Ruben Quesada
- d. Transgression Through Teaching, Suzi G. Garcia
- e. Community, Mentorship, and Writing, Fred Arroyo

*Alexandra - We write to examine our ties, to recover, discover, or redefine identities. We write to exorcise our memories, our parents' memories. We need to talk to our mothers, grandmothers, aunts, cousins. Get to know their stories—record them, map our land and our history, research our family trees. We need to plant ourselves in that space—wherever it is, traveling between coordinates, suspended between those strips of land—we need to write it, and be the bridge.

*Dan – Personal narratives are necessary for our preservation in history. The American story includes us; we belong and we must work to preserve the work we do.

*Fred – Community and mentorship are necessary to create a space and a narrative where we can be writers.

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* Ruben – A growing number of publishers, agencies, and literary magazines ask writers to have an online presence. The use of social media as a tool for marketing and promotion is essential today. Use social media and online communities as a supplement to your writing. Think of how you fit into the larger public sphere. Share your work/accomplishments and the work/accomplishments of those in your larger communities.

*Suzi - Three goals to consider for teachers in the humanities. Be more transgressive in the classroom: Be accessible, be transparent, and be a resource for your students. Be excited about what you are teaching, teaching is performance, think about your class contextually and personally, mentor, put yourself at risk for your students. The more power we have, the more risks we should take.

3. Caucus Discussion

Panel members and attendants discussed the needs of its constituents via Q&A.

AWP must demonstrate the need for greater inclusion of Latin American, Undocumented, Latina/o writers by making them featured speakers and presenters at every conference.

AWP must act on the following:

- Featured presenters must be Latina/o and Latin American writers and editors (same request as in 2016)
- Demand that its sponsors and program members (colleges & universities) accept and support undocumented poets and writers for contest submissions.
- Create benchmarks/quota systems in regions of the US to assess how its communities can be further supported by AWP's presence.
- Schedule Caucus staggered throughout the conference to allow crossover attendance.
- More reading and events featuring of Latina/o and Latin American writers.

Meeting adjourned by Ruben Quesada, Moderator, at 7:15pm