

## Latin American Fellowship Committee

**Committee Members:** S. T. Álvarez-Castañeda (Chair), K. A. Ernest, M. M. Diaz, M. A. O'Connell, M. Ortega, T. E. Lacher, Jr., J. Salazar-Bravo, S. Solari.

### Mission:

The Latin American Student Field Research Award is made annually to support field research projects by Latin Americans in Latin America. Eligible students must be citizens of Latin American countries (excluding Puerto Rico) and currently enrolled in a graduate program. Projects must be field-oriented investigations of natural history, conservation, ecology, systematics, wildlife biology, biogeography, or behavior. The selection committee, whose membership reflects these diverse fields and has field experience in Latin America, considers each of these areas of research equally important. Several \$1,500 awards are typically granted each year. The Oliver P. Pearson Award supports a young professional who holds an academic position in a Latin American institution within 5 years of receiving a Ph.D. or equivalent degree. A single \$5,000 award is granted each year. In addition, up to \$2,000 is offered for the recipient to attend the Society's Annual Meeting the year following the award.

### Information Items:

(1) In 2014, we reviewed four applications for the Oliver Pearson Award, and selected **Dr. Hugo Mantilla-Meluk** (Colombia), Professor of Biology at Universidad del Quindío (University of Quindío, Armeria, Colombia).

(2) In 2014, we received 21 applications for the Student Field Research Grants. Each committee member reviewed and ranked all applications. We awarded 5 grants (according to the budget approved) to the applications with the highest average ranks:

**Carola Cañón Valenzuela** (Chile): *Phylogenetic relationships of akodontine rodents (Sigmodontinae: Akodontini) with emphasis on their morphological diversity and biogeography*. Ph.D. Program in Natural Sciences, National University of la Plata, Argentina; advisor - Ulyses Pardiñas.

**Melquisedec (Melqui) Gamba-Rios** (Colombia): *Anti-predation strategies of tent-making bats, Costa Rica*. Ph.D. Program in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Tennessee; advisor – Gary McCracken.

**Constanza Pasian** (Argentina): *Effects of mammalian based trophic cascades on populations of threatened grassland birds in Subtropical South America (NE Argentina): testing the meso-predator- release hypothesis*. Ph.D. Program in Biological Sciences at National University of Córdoba, Argentina; advisor - Dr. Mario Di Bitetti.

**Willy Pineda Lizano** (Costa Rica): *Diversity and distribution (spatial and temporal patterns) of bat communities in a tropical altitudinal gradient in Costa Rica*. Ph.D. Program in Natural Sciences, Technological Institute of Costa Rica; advisor – Dr. Gloriana Chaverri.

**Julio Torres** (Paraguay): *Systematic revision of the marsh rats of the genus Holochilus Brandt, 1835 (Cricetidae, Sigmodontinae)*. Ph.D. Program in Natural Sciences, National University of la Plata, Argentina; advisor - Ulyses Pardiñas.

(3) Last year's budget request for 5 Latin American Student Field Research Awards was approved, so we anticipate awarding 5 this year.

(4) We have received 21 applications for the 2015 Latin American Student Field Research awards and 2 applications for the Oliver Pearson award. Committee members are in the process of reviewing applications, and recipients will be announced at the 2015 Annual Banquet in Jacksonville, Florida.

(5) Committee Membership: Former member Joseph A. Cook, has stepped off the Committee. We thank him for his service. Morty Ortega was added as a new member.

**Action Items:**

(1) 2015 budget request

Latin American Student Field Research awards 5 x \$1500	\$ 7,500
Oliver P. Pearson Award (1) award \$5000 + travel \$2000	\$ 7,000
Total Request	\$14,500

(2) Request to consider moving to an online application process for both the Pearson and the student field grant awards. This may require additional funds.

**Respectfully submitted,**  
S. T. Álvarez-Castañeda, Chair  
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