

To: all members of the Cervantes Society of America
From: Steven Hutchinson, CSA President

I'm writing about the possibility of holding a joint conference between the Cervantes Society of America (CSA) and the Asociación de Cervantistas (AC). This event would presumably be held in the United States in September of 2021. The CSA and the AC are the two most important Cervantes associations in the world – the CSA was founded a few years before the AC, which in turn has a more global reach – yet, although there have been some gestures of collaboration in recent years, there has never been any joint conference or symposium between them. Isabel Lozano-Renieblas, president of the AC, and I have been speaking about this possibility for some months now, and we have both discussed this with the Executive Council of each society. We believe that a conference of this kind could lead to fruitful dialogue and valuable personal contacts among us.

We are therefore asking for proposals from potential organizers and hosts.

— *Where?* Isabel and I would prefer that the conference take place in North America. The Executive Council of the CSA favored any attractive major city that's not too hot in September, particularly in the northeast or midwest, basically New York, Boston, Philadelphia, or Chicago. This list is not exclusive: other cities such as Montreal might work well. The west coast (e.g. Seattle, Portland, San Francisco-Berkeley, Los Angeles) is also attractive, but less accessible for most AC members. New York and Chicago have an Instituto Cervantes, which could collaborate financially and also serve as one of the venues for the conference; New York also has the Hispanic Society. All of these cities have other viable venues, especially universities.

— *When?* The consensus opinion is that September would be a good month. Most North American universities begin classes early in this month, but have few events programmed, while European universities often start sometime later. Therefore, something like the third or fourth week in September would be ideal. Depending on the number of participants, three or four days should be sufficient.

— *Why 2021?* The AC has major conferences every three years, so this would fall within its cycle. The CSA held a national conference in Chicago in 2014; another North American conference is programmed for Calgary in September 2018. 2021 is therefore an appropriate time for a third event. It is understood that each time such a national or continental conference is held, the regional conferences of the CSA are suspended for the year, with the budget normally allotted to the latter going instead to the national or continental conference.

— *Costs.* Lodging, meeting rooms, excursions and other local expenses should be integrated into any proposal for hosting the conference, as should support for students, especially from outside the U.S.A. The CSA and the AC would presumably contribute equally yet modestly to the conference. Other sources of funding will therefore need to be sought, e.g., from institutions such as the Instituto Cervantes, universities, local sponsors, and any other groups or individuals that might contribute.

— *How many participants?* This is a complicated question that affects conference organization in terms of venues and whether to have concurrent sessions, not to mention lodging, meals, transportation, etc. The 2015 AC conference in São Paulo had just under a hundred participants. The 2014 national CSA symposium in Chicago had about 40 participants, which meant that concurrent sessions could be avoided. Rachel Schmidt, organizer of the CSA North American conference in Calgary, is initially planning on 50-60 participants for a three-day event (which includes an excursion to Banff). The number and the quality of abstracts submitted also play key roles in determining the size of the conference.

— Feel free to consult with Isabel Lozano or with me about any of these considerations.

— Proposals should be submitted to me via email (shutchin@wisc.edu) by April 1, 2018. The CSA Executive Council will evaluate these submissions in May and then convey its preference to the membership of the AC for consideration at its conference at the Universidad Complutense in early September.