Américas Research Center Mission Statement

Launched on July 1, 2007, the Américas Research Center draws its logic and mission from recognizing the importance of geography. Rice University is situated institutionally in ways that mirror the ever-increasing regional and global dimensions of the city of Houston, Texas. As Rice develops meaningful partnerships with institutions in Latin America, it will do so in the wake of historic trends that have made Houston one of the largest sites for immigration from Mexico and Latin America, as well as a major cultural and commercial port of call for exchanges through the Américas.  Like the city, Rice University is in a unique position to explore local and global processes that are constantly making use of our proximity to the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean, or our proximity to the U.S.-Mexico border and points further south.

The Américas Research Center (ARC) seeks to promote interdisciplinary research on the broad topic of Latin America.  By exploring the intellectual intersections of fields as diverse as Latin American studies, Chicano/a studies, Borderland studies, studies of the Local/Global American West, and American Studies, the ARC means to foster multidisciplinary research and collaborative projects that pursue innovative inquiries, and thus bring together scholars from Humanities, Social Sciences, the Baker Institute, the Jones School of Management, and others. The Center will underwrite these projects by way of lectures, conferences, seminars, research monies, and visiting scholars. The Center aims to encourage scholarly and public debate about issues and concerns that effect the Américas, but primarily those that arise from or are linked to historical or current trends found south of the United States, including the Caribbean. An important feature of this Center will be its overt attention to geographies of power, economics, culture, language, and gender. Finally, the Center will also address matters local to the city of Houston, the state of Texas, and the U.S.-Mexican border. Implicit here is the Center’s commitment to outreach and engagement with the larger public dimensions of policy, education, human rights, and cultural production. The activities of the ARC will thereby also service the research needs of Rice’s undergraduate and graduate student population.