

September 2022

Executive and Operations Team
CLADEA
in care of Sr. Alejandro Freundt
Operations and Membership Manager

RE: Application for Steering Committee Non-Latin American Representative

Position Dear CLADEA Colleagues:

Please consider this as my formal application for the position of Steering Committee representative from a non-Latin American country.

I have many motivations for seeking this position... some very personal and others professional. Let me begin with the personal, but before I do so, in the interest of “full disclosure” I must confess to having nearly no Spanish speaking skills. It is embarrassing to me, but it seems that no matter my attempts I am doomed to be the stereotypical U.S. citizen who is limited to English. This leads into my personal reasons for seeking the Steering Committee position.

My maternal grandfather was from the Balearic Islands – Ibiza. His wife was born in the U.S., but her family was all from the Canary Islands. They met in the U.S. The story is that he was the son in the family who was designated to be a priest, but he was not interested in that and left at 14 to meet an older brother who had left the Islands for Mississippi. I grew up with Hispanic culture on my mother’s side and living in New Orleans (my home town) it was one of the more visible cultures in the city and surrounding area. In fact, I am a member of an organization called the Los Isleños Heritage and Cultural Society of St. Bernard. It is composed of descendants of the approximately 2,000 Canary Islanders that were sent to Louisiana in the late 1700s. To add to this, my mother’s family lived on the banks of the Mississippi River below the city and through my grandfather they were friends with many seamen from Latin America. At that time New Orleans was referred to as the “gateway to the Americas” – a better descriptor for Miami now than for New Orleans. One of the benefits of this was that at my grandfather’s house there was always a McCaw or two that his sailor friends brought to him from the south. I recall one of the parrots who spoke Spanish!

Back to the lack of language skills. My paternal side of the family came from France. My father and his brother and two sisters spoke French with each other, as my mother and her siblings spoke Spanish. Unfortunately, my father spoke no Spanish, my mother spoke no French and so I never picked it up. Also at that time in the U.S. there was little emphasis on teaching children anything but English.

The point of all of this is that I grew up in “cross cultural” family and was always fascinated with both French and Spanish to include Latin American ways, food, and familial ties. Much of my motivation for international relationships comes from that cultural background and growing up New Orleans. Simply stated it is in my blood, especially the Spanish, Latin American, and French influences.

Now on the professional side. In the early 2000s I convinced my then dean that we needed to develop relationships with business schools in Latin America and that we should join CLADEA. I had recently

met Jorge Talavera at an AACSB meeting and enjoyed so much our conversations. This sparked my interest in CLADEA, and I completed and submitted all the documentation required to join. My school was approved as a full member.

We have several exchange partnerships with Latin American schools and I would like to see those numbers grow. I would also like to see relationships beyond student exchanges. Having an official role in CLADEA should help develop such relationships.

Another professional reason is that students at my school are very Euro-focused. I would like to expand their horizons by being able to provide them with more opportunities to study in and learn more about Latin America. In my mind we are all Americans – Latin, South, Central, North. I hope to help tear down some of the barriers between us.

I do hope that this letter has exhibited my motivation for wanting to become a member of the Steering Committee. Please note, however, that if I am not selected for the Steering Committee I stand ready to serve in any other capacity for which I am qualified.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Thomas J. Cossé', enclosed within a faint, hand-drawn oval.

Thomas J. Cossé, Ph.D.
Associate Dean for International Business Programs
Professor of Marketing and International Business
Director, Center for International Business