Distinguished Lecture Tour Report
Gabriel Jakobson
Latin American Region
February 26th – March 13th, 2007

Introduction

This was my first DL tour. I visited 4 countries: Brazil, Chile, Peru and Colombia, and gave 6 lectures, 3 in Brazil and one lecture in each of the other countries. The lecture was titled “Situation Management: A New Approach for Managing Complex Networks and Systems”. Depending on the audience request, the lecture was tuned either more to research or to application direction. In addition to the DL program I attended the Latin America RCCC in Lima, Peru on March 6th – 8th, 2007.

From my perspective the trip was successful; I had very attentive audiences and opportunity to learn about the membership development issues at local chapter level. Most importantly, the meeting with students, academic staff, engineers and ComSoc volunteers gave me very pleasant and memorable moments about these dynamic, culturally rich and warm countries. Trip to Cusco and Machu Picchu, the Lost City of Incas in Peruvian Andes was an extraordinary event by itself. Despite covering 12,000 miles and 11 flights, the trip wasn’t tiring.

Tour Itinerary

Mar 26th-27th, flight to from Boston to Sao Paolo, Brazil
Feb 28th Lecture in the University of Sao Paolo, Brazil
Mar 1st Lecture in the University of Campinas, Brazil
Mar 2nd Lecture in the Federal University of Santa Catarina, Florianopolis, Brazil
Mar 5th Lecture in the University of Chile, Santiago, Chile
Mar 6th-8th Latin American RCCC, Lima, Peru
Mar 8th Lecture at Lima Engineering Society, Lima, Peru
Mar 12th Lecture in the Nueva Granada Military University, Bogota, Colombia
Mar 13th Return flight to Boston

Brazil Report

On February 27th after a 10 hour flight from Boston I landed at the Sao Paolo Guarulhos International Airport. Prof Silvio Barbin from the University of Sao Paolo, the ComSoc South Brazil Chapter chair was my host from the very first day and did a lot for organizing the Sao Paolo and Campinas part of my tour. The Brazilian leg of the trip was actually the most extensive one with three lectures in Sao Paolo, Campinas and Florianopolis.
My first presentation was scheduled for 10 am on February 28th at the University of Sao Paolo. With close to 160,000 students, the university is the largest one in Brazil. Most surprising was to learn that Sao Paolo, the industrial hart of not only Brazil, but the whole Latin America, is the world’s 4th largest megapolis with close to 18 million people. Great potentials for ComSoc membership growth!

The presentation was well accepted with many questions on the technical details of the situation management technology.

Few weeks earlier before the trip Prof. Barbin suggested me to include an additional lecture in Campinas. So, on March 1st I had to leave Sao Paolo by 7:15 am for Campinas, a small town about 1 hour drive from Sao Paolo. At arrival I was greeted by Prof. Luiz Carlos Kretly, my host at UNICAMP, University of Campinas. I also met with Prof. Joao Marcos Romano, Vice Chair of the EE Dept. at UNICAMP, who gave me a brief overview of the university and his department. My presentation was quite intensive with many follow-up questions and lasted two hours from 10 am to 12 noon. After lunch with Prof. Romano and Prof. Kretly I left at 1:30 pm Campinas in order to catch my flight from Sao Paolo to Florianopolis.

In Florianopolis I met my old colleague and friend Prof Carlos Westphall from the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), with whom we have spent many good days attending CNOM conferences and meetings on network management. In Florianopolis I met also Carlos’ family, his wife Carla and son. I was glad to host them many years back in Boston

Arriving in Florianopolis, Carlos Westphall picked me up at the airport. My talk at UFSC was scheduled for March 2nd at 2:30 pm. As during the previous two lectures it was a 2 hour presentation with Q/A session. Next day I left Florianopolis with the best feelings about the UFSC, the beautiful city of Florianopolis and the Westphall family.

Chile Report

On March 4th the morning flight from Sao Paolo to Santiago, Chile took exactly four hours. It was a spectacular view on the snow covered peaks of the Andes that opened from the cabin window. At the airport I was greeted by Pedro Aguilera from Switch Communications, the Chair of the Chilean Chapter of ComSoc. As I learned later that the Chilean chapter is a relatively small one, but very active and vibrant.

After settling at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in the center of Santiago, Pedro and his wife Anita were so kind and showed me the city and the San Cristobal hills, from where a beautiful view opens on Santiago

On the next day at 9:30 morning Pedro has organized my lecture at the University of Chile, the largest university in Chile.. Since the school year has just started most of the audience was academic staff, mostly from the Electrical Engineering department of the Faculty of Science, Physics and Mathematics. Instead my usual 1 hour lecture and about
.5 hours for the Q/A session, the lecture took more 2 hours, since quite a lot questions were asked. Prof. Doris Saez-Hueichapan gave me a short tour in the department. During the lunch with the Head of the Electrical Engineering department Prof Pablo Estevez I had an opportunity to learn about the general structure of the university and the higher education in Chile generally.

Later afternoon I was pleasantly surprised that Pedro had arranged about one hour interview for me with the leading Chilean newspaper El Mercurio. The newspaper was mostly interested on the issues of emergency telecommunication network infrastructures and what technological challenges and alternative network management solutions Chile might face. The interview appeared in the March 10th issue of the newspaper.

**Peru Report**

On March 6th morning Pedro and I took together a flight to Lima, Peru, where both of us were planning to attend the Latin American Regional Chapters Chairs Conference (RCCC) scheduled for March 7th and 8th.

My DLT host in Lima was ComSoc’s Peru chapter chair Jorge Reina. The lecture was scheduled after the RCCC at 6:30 pm to allow more engineers to attend the talk. The presentation was in the conference room of the Lima Engineering Society. The audience was mostly engineers and academic staff, since students had a school break. The talk was well accepted with many questions. After the talk I had a lengthy conversation with David Caceres Giron, Commander of the Peruvian Army Telematic Center. David showed great interest in situation management.

Next two days I took time off and spent the most memorable days visiting Cusco, the ancient imperial capital of Peru and Machu Picchu, the lost sacred city of Incas. It takes one hour flight from Lima to Cusco, then 4.5 hour train ride to Aguas Calientes, then a bus ride, and finally a walk to reach Machu Picchu, but the trip is worth 100 %. Machu Picchu is breath-taking.

**Colombia Report**

Despite of the perception that people might have about Colombia, I found my short stay in Bogota very pleasant, exciting and definitely eye-opening. I was surprised to see Bogota so dynamic and youthful. During free hours Jose-David Cely, the Chair of the ComSoc’s Colombian Chapter, and Carlos, the treasurer showed me the city. My trip coincided with President Bush with to Colombia, and naturally the downtown area was full of police and soldiers. There are a significant number of universities in Bogota, and consequently the down-town area was full of young people. This year Bogota was recognized internationally as one of the most “book-reading” capital in the world.

My last presentation of the tour was in the Nueva Granada Military University in Bogota. Although the university has a link to the Colombian defense department, significant portion of the students and offered courses are not related to military at all. Thanks to excellent organization, more than 80 people attended, mostly students from different
Bogota universities. Discussions and meeting with Carlos Lozano, Julio Penaloza, Marcela Mejia, Aldo Gongora, Terney Maldonado, Jose-David Cely, and many others changed my view on Colombia.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Ms Araceli Gomez, Director of ComSoc LA Region and her colleagues in local chapters helping to organize the trip and being so wonderful hosts.

Gabriel Jakobson
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