The Global Development Studies (GDS) Section is excited to report several significant achievements over this year (2016). We are very pleased to report on the following:

**GDS Eminent Scholar Panel:**

The GDS is extremely proud to honor Professor Arturo Escobar as our Eminent Scholar in Baltimore in 2017. Professor Escobar’s contributions to thinking about Global Development are outstanding. He is one of the leading theorists in post-development and decolonial thought and his book, *Encountering Development*, is now a classic in the field and an essential reference for thinking about development. He has long been an intellectual collaborator and often also mentor to many members of the section and it is our privilege to recognize his important contributions. We are very grateful to Professor Escobar for accepting our invitation and for participating in the roundtable devoted to honouring his scholarship and leadership.

*The GDS Section Reception will follow after the Eminent Scholar Roundtable.*

**The GDS Section Graduate Paper Award Baltimore 2017**

The GDS Section approved the establishment of a Graduate Paper Award in 2014. At the Annual Business Meeting of 2015 we established a sub-committee to discuss and finalise the terms and conditions of the Award. We were delighted to inaugurate the GDS Graduate Award, as well as an Award Committee, and our first winner was announced in Atlanta 2016. We are also very pleased to announce that we have linked the award to a publication (subject to any required revisions) in the peer-reviewed and highly reputable journal *Third World Quarterly*.

Our first prize went to Timothy Seidel of American University for his paper titled, “Occupied Territory Is Occupied Territory”**: James Baldwin, Palestine and the Possibilities of Transnational Solidarity”, published in *Third World Quarterly* vol. 37, no. 9: 1644-1660.

The winner of this year’s prize will be announced at the Global Development Section reception in Baltimore.

We would like to register our thanks to the members of the sub-committee (Diyah Larasati, Ami Shah, Martin Weber and Naren Kumarakulasingam) for all their efforts. We would also like to thank the GDS Graduate Paper Prize Awards Committee.
A GDS Book Award committee has also been formed. Thanks to Isaac Kamola (Trinity College), Roni Kay O’Dell (Seton Hill University), Alina Sajed (McMaster University), Mariam Georgis (University of Alberta), and Olivia Rutazibwa (Portsmouth University). They have drafted a call for nominations and we plan to launch this programme with an announcement at the GDS business meeting in Baltimore.

**The GDS Roundtable – A new initiative**

The GDS Section decided to take-up an innovative idea of one of our Graduate Student members to establish the GDS Section Roundtable as an annual event, commencing with the 2016 convention. The purpose of this Roundtable is to bring together senior and early career researchers to discuss a specific theme of interest to the section and its members. The inaugural Roundtable in 2016 focused on the theme of ‘development’. The Roundtable will continue in Baltimore and it will focus on Colonialism, Debt, and Reparations. We would like to register our thanks to Lisa Tilley (University of Warwick, UK) for this initiative.

**GDS at the Baltimore Convention**

We are delighted to announce that we are sponsoring or co-sponsoring over 100 panels at the upcoming Convention in Baltimore. We have an exciting range of panels, reflected in the breadth of our co-sponsorship.

Ongoing efforts by section members to organise interesting panels has resulted in a very diverse selection for Baltimore. We are also grateful to all the ISA sections that have collaborated with us on co-sponsorship.

**Outreach and Communication Strategies**

At the annual business meeting in New Orleans (2015) we established a sub-committee to work on innovative strategies to encourage participation in the GDS Section as well as to publicize our activities and events.

We are delighted to announce that as part of this process we have now established a GDS Facebook page, which now has 575 members. In particular, we would like to register our thanks to Ajay Parasram (Carleton University, Canada) for all his time and efforts with this. Ajay Parasram and Riva Gewarges have formed a social media committee along with our newsletter editor, Meera Sabaratnam, and Jeanne Simon. They are also exploring other initiatives to increase the Section’s presence in social media. They will report on this at the GDS business meeting in Baltimore.

Thanks also to Robbie Shilliam for actively recruiting GDS members to come to our last business meeting, which has been crucial to realizing the new initiatives!

**GDS Newsletter (three per annum)**

We continue to communicate with Section members via the GDS Newsletter (three per annum). This has been fairly well received, with members regularly contributing GDS relevant information for inclusion in the Newsletter.

We would like to thank Meera Sabaratnam for all her commitment and efforts with this.
GDS Membership and Finances
The GDS membership has been consistently increasing since 2005 (except for a small dip in 2014). Our membership as of February 2015 was 499 and our membership at the start of 2016 was 528 in October 2016. Now (January 2017) the membership stands at 537.

The GDS Section finances are also in a very sound state.

Sponsorship Acknowledgement of Third World Quarterly (Routledge)
The Section gratefully acknowledges the sustained support of Third World Quarterly and for the generous annual sponsorship (via Routledge) of our reception. The total sponsorship for our Baltimore Reception is $2500.

Registering our thanks to the ISA Support Team, all of our Section members and to all the sub-committee members for their assistance, time and support.
We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all of the ISA Team: to Jeanne White for assisting with the organization of the Reception; Alexandra Walker for assisting with communication related aspects and administrative help; Melissa Ballard for support with regard to our finances; and to Andrea Gerlak for her assistance.

The section would like to register our thanks to all of our committee members for their time, energy and efforts to make the section so lively and engaging!

Last but not least, the GDS Section would like to register our thanks to all of our members for their continued support!