Editor's Foreword: LARR's New Relationship with LASA

Philip Oxhorn

Latin American Research Review, Volume 43, Number 1, 2008, pp. 3-5
(Article)

Published by Latin American Studies Association
DOI: *https://doi.org/10.1353/lar.2008.0011*

For additional information about this article
https://muse.jhu.edu/article/232380

[18.116.15.31] Project MUSE (2024-04-18 11:44 GMT)

EDITOR'S FOREWORD

LARR's New Relationship with LASA

The *Latin American Research Review*'s first issue under the new editorial team based at McGill University marks a historic change for LARR. It is a change that our readers are not likely to notice apart from the new cover. This is because the editorship is firmly committed to maintaining the high standards set by our predecessors and because the basic structure of each issue—articles presenting original research, research reports and notes, and analytical book review essays for which LARR is so renowned—will not change. LARR will also remain open to all disciplines, and as an editorial team we are dedicated to publishing a journal that is both relevant and interesting to all of LASA's diverse membership.

Rather than changing what LARR is—the pre-eminent journal of its kind and the flagship publication of the Latin American Studies Association—this first issue represents a fundamental change in how the journal is physically produced. In a nutshell, the relationship between LARR and LASA has been brought up to date and professionalized in a fashion that best preserves the journal's integrity while maximizing the benefits for LASA.

For the first time in the journal's history, production of each issue will be separate from the editorial process. This will allow the Editorial Committee to concentrate on an area where it has had unquestionable expertise for more than forty years: ensuring that only the highest academic standards are applied in deciding what material is actually published in those issues. All decisions regarding the articles, research reports and notes, and book review essays (including the order in which they appear) remain the sole responsibility of the Editorial Committee based in Montreal, including the commissioning of all book review essays by David Boruchoff, our new Book Review Editor. Manuscripts will be received and the review process will be managed exclusively by the McGill editorial team under the coordination of Valerié Bouchard, the co-managing editor in the Editorial Office at McGill University.

Once the content of each issue is determined by the LARR Editorial Office at McGill, the LASA Secretariat will oversee the detailed process of assembling the final issue that LARR's readers receive. These publication-orientated responsibilities will be coordinated by Ian Downing, the co-managing editor in the Secretariat. This is a new position that will provide the Editorial Committee in Montreal with valuable assistance, particularly given Ian's publishing experience. The Secretariat's responsibilities will begin with the initial copy-editing. To ensure that the standards of presentation match the high standards for substance that we apply to each issue, the Secretariat will also oversee the production process in conjunction

[18.116.15.31] Project MUSE (2024-04-18 11:44 GMT)

with the University of Pittsburgh Press and will coordinate the final proofreading of each issue by the Editorial Committee at McGill, the Secretariat, and UPP. Similarly, the journal's finances will now be overseen by the LASA Secretariat, which employs people who are professionally qualified to do so, ensuring a maximum of transparency and accountability for the financial management of an enterprise that annually involves hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Some might legitimately wonder if the change was necessary—given that LARR has for nearly half a century embodied the highest standards of academic excellence. As the incoming Executive Editor in Chief, I felt it was definitely a good idea because, as my predecessor Peter Ward noted, "LARR has always had a rather unusual and autonomous relationship with the Latin American Studies Association—quite unlike that which usually exists between a professional association and its journal(s)" *(Latin American Research Review,* 41:3 [2006]: 3). The source of that "unusual relationship" was undoubtedly the outcome of a unique history that led the founders of LARR to create LASA in 1964, rather than the other way around. This obviously worked out better than anyone could have imagined at the time, and the result is something we have all come to appreciate deeply. But it also reflected a unique set of historical circumstances, and times have changed. In fact, the impetus for a restructured relationship between LASA and LARR arose when LASA's Executive Committee, which is elected by LASA's membership and responsible to them, recognized that the growing complexity of producing and managing the financial aspects of LARR should be the responsibility of a permanent body with the requisite experience and expertise: the LASA Secretariat. In other words, the new relationship—in which the LARR Editorial Committee is responsible for the academic content and the LASA Secretariat manages production and finances—represents nothing less than a greater professionalization of the journal's administration that is commensurate with the high level of academic quality that has always characterized its content. I believe that the benefits will prove to be quite substantial.

Thus, to maintain LARR's reputation as a respected academic journal, we have created two new co-managing editorships that match expertise with responsibilities. This means that the Editorial Committee can devote its full time and energy to what it knows best: how to produce a first-rate scholarly journal. By clearly delineating responsibilities, the journal's editorial autonomy is reinforced and all possible gray areas eliminated. For LASA, an organization that represents a large constituency, this reorganization means that the economic returns from publishing a major scholarly journal will help support its ongoing activities, which include providing substantial economic support so that Latin Americans can attend the Association's congresses. The new synergy will allow LASA's members to enjoy the benefits of new and worthwhile initiatives. These include a new LARR

Web site with a much improved search engine. They also will include, for the first time ever, special thematic issues devoted to exploring some of today's most important issues from multiple perspectives and a variety of disciplines. The theme of the first special issue, tentatively due out in late 2008, has already been decided; the working title is "Living in Actually Existing Democracies."

As we look forward to a new era for LARR, it is important to recognize the generous assistance we have received during the transition to a new editorial structure from the previous editorial team at the University of Texas, Austin. In particular, we would like to thank Peter Ward and Shannon Haley, the former LARR Managing Editor, for their willingness to share their experiences and provide useful guidance so that the transition would be a smooth one.

Philip Oxhorn
Executive Editor
August 2007