

---

## EDITOR'S FOREWORD

---

The conduct of a scholarly journal is an extraordinarily complex process. At any given moment, the *LARR* staff is dealing with a broad range of tasks such as corresponding with dozens of referees, entering subscription renewals, finding storage for the two tons of printed matter represented by each issue, copy-editing awkward prose, keeping accounts, soliciting review copies from book publishers, and not least, dealing with authors. For every manuscript that is accepted, we estimate that twenty-one letters are written by the editors to the author and reviewers, exclusive of reminder notices, with a comparable number of communications received. Probably no other publishing venture requires as much attention to detail and procedure. Yet it can also be argued that no enterprise contributes as much to the intellectual life of an academic field as a well-run journal.

The success of all this effort can only be judged in terms of the final product. Nevertheless, readers have a legitimate interest in the procedures followed by a journal, as well as in patterns of manuscript submission. This information may not indicate much about the quality of the material published, but it does contribute to an understanding of the publication process and its relationship to patterns of scholarly activity. Although this is only the second issue to be published by the New Mexico editorial team, we have been reviewing manuscripts since July 1981 and are therefore able to report on events since that time.

The manuscript review procedures followed by the present editors are based on those instituted during *LARR*'s stay at North Carolina. All manuscripts are logged in, acknowledged, and screened by the editors for suitability. A search is then begun for scholars qualified in the manuscript's subject who are willing to commit themselves to provide an evaluation of the manuscript within a month. The editors rely heavily on the expertise of the Editorial Board and colleagues around the country in seeking out reviewers, as well as on records of past evaluations

that reviewers have provided. One Editorial Board member may also be included as a referee for appropriate manuscripts. The number of evaluations commissioned has been increased in some cases to as many as four per manuscript, in the hope that at least three will arrive within a reasonable length of time. This procedure has been adopted in an effort to reduce the length of the review process, a problem of serious concern to authors. The evaluations by referees are "blind," that is to say, all items that might identify the author of a manuscript are removed. The anonymity of the referees is also closely guarded. The editors have been heartened by the care and thoroughness with which most *LARR* referees have carried out their tasks.

Once the evaluations have been received, the editors discuss the manuscript and arrive at a decision based on the peer-review process. Some manuscripts are rejected, some are rejected with an invitation to resubmit, others are accepted pending necessary revisions, and some are accepted in their original form. Once an accepted manuscript is on hand, the process of copy-editing and checking the manuscript begins, frequently involving further consultations with the author. After the manuscript has been set in type, it is proofread four times: once by the University of North Carolina Press, twice by the editorial staff, and once by the author.

Between July 1981 and the end of January 1983, 181 manuscripts were received in the New Mexico *LARR* office. Twelve were book reviews, comments, or reports not requiring external review, leaving a total of 169 manuscripts that entered the evaluation process. The number of submissions per month represents an increase of 30 percent over the period between October 1977 and January 1979, as reported by the former editor John Martz. Of the 169 manuscripts that entered the review process, by January 1983 a total of 30 had been accepted, 117 were rejected, 6 were withdrawn, and 16 were still in process. Of the 147 manuscripts for which the review process reached completion (those manuscripts either accepted or rejected), the rate of acceptance was approximately 20 percent, or one of every five submissions.

The disciplines represented in submissions continue to reflect a high percentage of political science and history manuscripts, but the overall proportion of submissions from these two fields has dropped. Economics is now the third-ranked discipline, replacing sociology, which ranked third in the last Martz report. Overall, the distribution of manuscripts among fields is more even than in previous years, as can be seen in the following comparison across three distinct time periods.

| <u>DISCIPLINE</u>        | <u>July 81–<br/>Jan. 83</u> | <u>Oct. 77–<br/>Jan. 79</u> | <u>Sept. 74–<br/>Dec. 75</u> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Political Science        | 22%                         | 34%                         | 25%                          |
| History                  | 18%                         | 15%                         | 23%                          |
| Economics                | 14%                         | 7%                          | 5%                           |
| Languages and Literature | 9%                          | 10%                         | 6%                           |
| Sociology                | 8%                          | 13%                         | 7%                           |
| Anthropology             | 4%                          | 2%                          | 2%                           |
| Other Fields             | 25%                         | 19%                         | 22%                          |

Forty-three, or more than one-fourth, of all the reviewed manuscripts came from outside the United States. Submissions from Latin America outnumbered those from Europe by a two-to-one margin, with Canada a distant third. The number of manuscripts submitted by authors of Hispanic or Luso-Brazilian origin is actually somewhat higher than these figures suggest, because a number of submissions from Europe and North America reflect such authorship. During the period in question, one-third of all manuscripts were submitted by Hispanic or Luso-Brazilian authors.

The New Mexico editors have a renewed appreciation, thanks to the last several months of involvement in this common enterprise, of the critical role played by a journal in defining and representing a field of scholarly research. Perhaps the most striking thing about the entire editorial endeavor is the extent to which it is a truly cooperative effort involving authors, the editors, the Editorial Board, and the referees. The processing of each manuscript requires a separate and unique collaboration which multiplied by the total number of manuscripts constitutes an impressive network of intellectual activity. The information exchanged, the scholarly standards applied, and the judgments and skills developed in this process are an intangible but nonetheless significant contribution to Latin American research. The publication that results is in a literal sense a collective representation, to use Emile Durkheim's term, through which Latin Americanists view and review their field of studies.

We would like to express our thanks for the important role in support of *LARR* played by the last several Executive Councils of *LASA*, and in particular for the contributions of past presidents Carmelo Mesa Lago and Peter Smith, as well as current president Jorge Domínguez, in defense of the editorial autonomy and fiscal health of *LARR*. These efforts have resulted in the approval of a *Memorandum of Understanding* between *LARR* and *LASA*, passed by the Executive Council at the 1982 Washington meetings, which is printed after this foreword. Relations with the Secretariat in Austin have been highly cooperative and mutu-

ally supportive, for which we thank Richard Sinkin, Ginger Miller, and Jack Lowry.

As Editor, I would like to indicate my own pleasure at being able to work with professors Tamara Holzapfel and Karen Remmer, whose efficiency and judgment are invaluable, and to give my thanks to the remarkable bilingual staff that keep the operation moving smoothly: Dr. Sharon Kellum, the Managing Editor, who deserves the credit for keeping *LARR* prose readable and authors satisfied; Rosa Herrington, *LARR* Secretary, who monitors the manuscripts' progress and types all; and Gordon Odell, our argentinophile Subscription Manager, who has mastered the computer and manages mailings. I also wish to thank Leah Florence, who keeps her imprint on *LARR* as our production consultant at North Carolina, and Theo Crevenna, Deputy Director of the Latin American Institute, who has provided valuable logistical support.

A final statement of thanks is due the administrative officials of the University of New Mexico, especially former President William E. Davis, President John Perovich, Provost McAllister Hull, Jr., and Associate Provost Joseph Scaletti. These persons themselves are not Latin Americanists, but they understand both the importance of scholarly journals and the significance of Latin American studies at this time in history. They are providing the scarce resources needed to support the collective effort that results in this publication.

## LASA-LARR ARTICLES OF UNDERSTANDING

(The following is the full text of the articles of understanding between the Latin American Studies Association and the *Latin American Research Review*, which were approved by the LASA Executive Council in July 1982.)

1. *Nature of the Latin American Research Review.* The *LARR* is a scholarly journal dedicated to the publication of reviews of research on Latin America, original research of general or interdisciplinary interest, research notes, and review essays on books, papers, and articles. Research papers and research notes are subjected to anonymous peer review. As with other scholarly journals, its editors have full editorial autonomy as to content, subject only to the maintenance of scholarly quality, fiscal health, and professional conduct of the affairs of the journal.

2. *Selection of the Editors and the Editorial Board.* The editor and associate or assistant editors of *LARR* are named by the Executive Council of LASA, following a process of open bids from interested institutions and individuals. The normal length of tenure of the editor is five years, although this may be adjusted by the council as necessary at the start of

a new bid period. The Editorial Board is nominated by the editor to the council, which may approve or reject the composition of the board as a whole. If the nominated board is rejected, the editor must submit a revised slate of nominations acceptable to the council. The number of Editorial Board members and their term of office will be set by the council upon recommendation of the editor. The primary function of the board is to review manuscripts and provide advice to the editors.

3. *Removal or Replacement of the Editors and Editorial Board.* The Editors may be removed from office by the Executive Council only for cause, to be specified below, and following due process according to common law, including right to counsel, to hear and rebut charges, to call witnesses, and to present a defense, upon a two-thirds majority vote of the full membership of the Executive Council. Cause is defined as dereliction of duty, misconduct of the financial affairs of the journal, or failure to maintain the nature of the journal as previously defined. Members of the Editorial Board will not be removed from office, given their limited functions and term of office. Should vacancies appear on the Editorial Board through death, resignation, or refusal to serve, the editor is empowered to fill such vacancies for a term not to exceed that remaining for the vacant position.

4. *Content.* As previously specified, the editor and associate or assistant editors have full responsibility and autonomy for journal content. The council may convey to the editors expressions of interest in content, but such statements are to be advisory and not binding upon the editors. By accepting a bid and its accompanying statements, the LASA Executive Council authorizes the implementation of the policies articulated in those documents. It is inappropriate for the LASA Executive Council to intervene in editorial matters unless there is a marked discrepancy between actual policies and the guidelines established in the statement of intent.

5. *Staffing.* Employment of a managing editor, secretarial and work-study assistance, and other needed staffing is the responsibility of the editor, subject to arrangements with host institutions and the state of LARR finances.

6. *Financial Management.* The editor shall be responsible for the sound fiscal management of LARR and shall prepare annual reports for the Executive Council. Sources of income for the journal shall include, but are not limited to: 1. contributions from the host institution; 2. reduced LASA member subscription; 3. direct subscriptions from non-LASA members; 4. advertising; 5. sales of mailing lists; 6. grants and contracts; 7. interest from revenues. The editor will arrange for the production, printing, and distribution of issues, as well as staff salaries and other expenses. The editor is instructed to maintain a reserve fund equal

to one year's printing costs in order to insure survival of the journal in the event of the insolvency of LASA and to cover short-term funding contingencies.

7. *Contributions from LASA.* LASA will pay to LARR a fixed subscription rate for all LASA members, on a pro rata basis per subscription. The cost of these subscriptions per member should be reviewed annually by the Executive Council, taking into consideration LARR's income and expenses from the previous year, the state of the LARR reserve fund, and projected revenues and expenses for the coming year. In setting the amount of the reduced subscription rate for LASA members upon the recommendation of the editor, the Executive Council shall consider all sources of LARR revenue and the implications of actions that may affect those sources.

8. *LARR-LASA Liaison.* The Ways and Means Committee of the council has the responsibility to evaluate and study the data and recommendations provided by the editor relative to LARR affairs. The LARR editors will submit a budget proposal to the LASA Ways and Means Committee in September. This budget will serve as the basis for the review of the subscription rate. The LASA executive director and the editor of LARR, under the supervision of the LASA treasurer, will recommend a subscription rate to the LASA Ways and Means Committee and to the LASA Executive Council.

9. *Payments.* The payments to LARR by the Secretariat of the funds for LASA member subscriptions shall be made in equal quarterly amounts.

10. *In the Event of the Dissolution or Insolvency of LASA.* Should the Latin American Studies Association be dissolved or become insolvent, it is understood that the association will make no claims upon LARR assets. At such time, the journal will revert to the independent status it held before the founding of LASA, and the editors may seek alternative organizational status and explore other sources of revenue to replace LASA member subscriptions.

11. *Executive Council Meetings.* The editor of LARR shall be entitled to attend, without vote but with voice, the meetings of the LASA Executive Council.