

## Responses to Questions on Academic Publishing

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Electronic publications are not a major factor in the sales equation for most scholarly books at this time, because buyers do not yet purchase them in large enough numbers, so their sales numbers do not significantly contribute to the overall revenue stream for the book (this may well change in the next decade or so). Cost recovery has become a most critical metric in determining an academic list's viability. In fact, some presses have moved out of publishing in Latin American studies entirely precisely because they felt they had to publish in paperback even when it was not fiscally responsible for them to do so. If an academic book is written in such a way that it has a paperback audience, it will be released in paperback eventually, and maybe even made available as an e-book if that is cost effective. The optimal choice for the initial printing remains hardback.

To conclude, scholarly publishing's balancing act between its intellectual mission and its financial obligations seems unlikely to abate any time soon. Because of this, authors in Latin American studies should give greater consideration to the sorts of books they are writing, and develop relationships with editors to create books that are at once important to the field and also generate enough revenue to recoup the publisher's costs in a timely fashion. ■

*What is your view toward publishing edited collections, and how if at all has this evolved in recent years?*

We have traditionally held to the view that, for most discipline areas, there is a limited market for edited volumes and therefore our resources were better reserved for more coherent works by an author or two. There have been some notable exceptions, however, and we have used one work in particular, *The Idea of Race in Latin America* edited by Richard Graham, as a model for how a multi-author work can succeed. In general, if the edited volume is for a very new or emerging field or if it is on a topic so broad that a single author would be unlikely to be able to cover it, we'd be more inclined to consider a collected work. Ironically, looking toward a future of increased re-purposing and re-packaging of content, we have considered that eventually edited volumes might actually become *more* attractive in the long run than monographic works, but that has not yet encouraged us to accept more collections.

*How important is prospective course adoption for determining whether a manuscript is accepted for publication? How do you make decisions about cloth or paperback release of your books?*

We almost always consider course adoption potential when we are doing a preliminary evaluation, but that is not a make-or-break issue for acceptance. Our basic business model for scholarly works has moved away from a list with many simultaneous cloth/paper editions toward initial publication in cloth only, followed by either a traditional offset paperback or a print-on-demand paperback within a year or less. This means that almost every book can be considered for classroom adoption, even if the classes are very small and/or aren't taught every year. Occasionally, there are still

cogent reasons for doing simultaneous cloth/paper runs or paperback only, but those are the exceptions these days.

*Under what if any conditions might you agree to review a manuscript that is also being sent for consideration by other publishers?*

We rarely do this because we simply don't have either the staff or the resources to invest significantly in a manuscript that we may not get. Instead, in return for a modest period of exclusivity, we try to offer an expedited turn-around time, or we offer the author an advance contract.

*What is your approach to on-line availability?*

Experiments with simultaneous online and print publication at other university presses suggest that, in certain cases, an online edition may actually stimulate sales of the print edition, but we have very little first-hand experience with online publishing.

*What are some of the key issues on the horizon that will affect the future directions of scholarly publication in our field?*

The open access movement is one of the most significant new developments everyone is watching for the moment, and, of course, emerging technology is a constant blip on all our radar screens. Another interesting dynamic is the repositioning of academic libraries as publishers or publishing partners. ■

## LACEA, The Latin American and Caribbean Economic Association

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*Editor's note:* The Summer issue of the *Forum* included a section devoted to the activities of a number of professional associations that serve Latin Americanists around the world. For the most part these focus on sub-regions of the Americas, or draw on experts on the region from different parts of the world. Another sort of professional association is discipline-based, and we are pleased to present here two examples: the Latin American and Caribbean Economics Association (LACEA) and the Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers, both of which are described in this section in brief accounts by their officers. ■

The Latin American and Caribbean Economic Association was founded in July 1992 to encourage greater professional interaction and foster increased dialogue among researchers and practitioners whose work focuses on the economies of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). Since its inception, LACEA has grown to an organization with an annual average of 800 active members. Besides organizing activities of interest for economists in general, LACEA sponsors four specialized research networks: the Network on Inequality and Poverty (NIP); the Political Economy Group (PEG); the Regional Integration Network (RIN); and the Workshop on International Economics and Finance. Information about LACEA's history, bylaws, and activities can be found at [www.lacea.org](http://www.lacea.org).

Every year, LACEA and its associated networks organize meetings attended by economists and social scientists with an interest in LAC. Starting from 1996, the Association has held annual meetings in Mexico City (2), Bogotá (2), Buenos Aires, Santiago, Rio de Janeiro, Montevideo, Madrid, Puebla, San José Costa Rica and Paris. These meetings have been joint with the Latin American Chapter of the Econometric Society since 2006. The 2007 Annual Meeting was held at the Universidad de Los Andes in Bogotá. That meeting gathered close to 800 participants; the program featured over 300 contributed papers and several invited sessions and lectures by recognized economists. Besides the Annual Meeting of LACEA, each of the associated networks organizes regular meetings focusing on the specific areas of interest. The programs of these meetings feature a few papers chosen, through competitive processes, from a pool of submitted documents. These meetings allow lengthy and detailed discussion of each of the papers presented, contributing to the quality of research by LACEA members.

Since 2000, LACEA has been publishing its own journal, *Economía*, that has recently released its fourteenth issue. Modeled after the Brookings Papers on Economic Activity and published by the Brookings Press, *Economía* is a policy journal, that is, one in which new theories or techniques are applied to policy questions. The journal seeks papers on issues that are both at the forefront of the policy agenda and of broad interest to countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. *Economía* aims for the highest standards of theoretical and statistical rigor, but only publishes papers that are written in a style and language that make them accessible to policymakers.

LACEA also provides other services to its members. All LACEA members currently have access to JSTOR's Economic and Business Collection. They also receive LACEA's monthly Newsletter, featuring job postings, calls for papers, and other announcements of interest to our membership. In 2008 LACEA organized a short course on Applied Microeconomic and Panel Data techniques, as part of a broader reaching training program sponsored by the Global Development Network.

In sum, the Association is already playing a leading role in the Economics profession in the region. Its annual meetings are considered world class in terms of size and quality. Also, LACEA is considered one of the most active regional partners of the Global development Network, an international organization based in Delhi, India. ■