

# President's Report

by JOHN COATSWORTH | Columbia University | jhc2125@columbia.edu

LASA will enter the second decade (already!) of our new century stronger, more diverse and intellectually vibrant, and larger than ever before. The turnout (over 5,000), enthusiasm, and intensity of the LASA XXVIII Congress in Rio de Janeiro last June exceeded all expectations despite the higher travel costs for some participants and the occasional inconvenience of holding the sessions at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio)—wonderful hosts, but some distance by shuttle buses from the Congress hotels.

The two main reasons for the steady growth of LASA Congresses are the increasing participation of Latin American scholars and LASA's policy of keeping membership and registration costs as low as possible. The LASA Executive Council (EC) reaffirmed

this policy at its meeting in Rio when it decided unanimously not to raise the cost of membership. Membership dues have not changed since they were raised slightly in 2006. As Table 1 below demonstrates, LASA's dues are below those of most other area studies and disciplinary associations.

The EC did decide, however, to revise its dues structure for Latin American members beginning in 2010. Currently, as Table 1 shows, Latin American members are divided into two groups: those earning more or less than the equivalent of US\$20,000 per year. The EC made two changes. First it extended the benefits of the heavily subsidized "Under \$20,000" category to include everyone earning less than \$40,000. Then it created two new income classes with higher, but still subsidized membership dues for those



earning between \$40,000 and \$60,000 and those earning above \$60,000. The old and new dues structure for Latin American members is shown in Table 2.

While membership dues have not risen in the past four years, registration fees have risen for each of the recent Congresses due to increases in meeting costs. In comparison with other associations, however, LASA's registration fees are still among the lowest, as shown in Table 3. No major increase in registration fees is expected for the next LASA Congress in Toronto on October 6-9, 2010.

Relatively low dues and registration fees have undoubtedly contributed to the sharp increases in Congress attendance, along with other factors. LASA is committed to maintaining the scale and quality of its Congresses, both of which depend on the broad participation of members from throughout the hemisphere.

To accommodate increased participation at LASA meetings, the EC decided at its meeting in Rio (reported in the last *Forum*) to explore the feasibility of converting to an annual meeting schedule (like other area studies associations) from its current 18-month cycle. It also decided to consult the membership on this issue, by including questions on this issue in the post-Rio questionnaire sent to all LASA members last August. The decision to change to an annual meeting schedule (or not) will be taken by the EC when it assembles at the Toronto meeting, so if you have strong views on this subject, this would be a good time to start lobbying EC members. However, even

**Table 1: LASA Membership Dues Compared with Other Academic Associations**

## Other Area Studies Associations

Membership Categories	LASA 2009 & 2010	Asian 2009	African 2009	Middle East 2009	Slavic 2009
Under \$20,000	\$35	\$35	\$70	\$55	\$50
\$20,000 - \$29,999	\$45	\$50	\$70	\$55	\$50
\$30,000 - \$39,999	\$56	\$70	\$70	\$75	\$65
\$40,000 - \$49,999	\$68	\$80	\$115	\$90	\$80
\$50,000 - \$64,999	\$81	\$95	\$115	\$100	\$100
\$65,000 - \$74,999	\$95	\$105	\$115	\$110	\$115
\$75,000 and over	\$110	\$125	\$115	\$120	\$135
\$90,000 and over	\$110	\$125	\$115	\$135	\$160
\$125,000 and over	\$110	\$125	\$115	\$135	\$180
Student	\$27	\$35	\$70	\$40	\$35
Latin America under \$20,000	\$27				
Latin America over \$20,000	\$40				

## Other Disciplinary Associations

Membership Categories	LASA 2009 & 2010	APSA 2009	AAA 2009	AHA 2009	MLA 2009
Under \$20,000	\$35	\$90	\$132	\$43	\$40
\$20,000 - \$29,999	\$45	\$90	\$158	\$80	\$50
\$30,000 - \$39,999	\$56	\$90	\$158	\$92	\$65
\$40,000 - \$49,999	\$68	\$134	\$158	\$109	\$75
\$50,000 - \$64,999	\$81	\$157	\$185	\$121	\$85
\$65,000 - \$74,999	\$95	\$170	\$185	\$146	\$95
\$75,000 and over (or - \$99,000)	\$110	\$180	\$210	\$146	\$105
\$100,000 - \$134,000	\$110	\$220	\$245	\$146	\$145
\$125,000 - \$149,000	\$110	\$220	\$275	\$146	\$165
\$135,000 and over	\$110	\$295	\$300	\$146	\$175
Student	\$27	\$42	\$69	\$38	\$20

COATSWORTH *continued...*

if LASA does switch to an annual meeting, the new schedule could not begin until after 2012. Hotel contracts and other arrangements for the spring 2012 Congress will have been made well before the decision to switch, if it is made, at Toronto.

This issue of the *Forum* contains short essays on the causes and impact of the current global economic recession written by three distinguished economists, each written from a distinct perspective. They follow on the keynote address to the Rio Congress by Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz. Presidential panels at the Toronto meeting will explore various dimensions of the crisis, social and cultural as well as economic.

Finally, as this *Forum* goes to press, the de facto government of Honduras remains in place, despite condemnation of the June 28 military coup by every other government in the hemisphere. Latin Americanists know that it was another military coup against in Honduras—in October 1963—that helped to trigger a tragic era of violence and authoritarian rule in Latin America. When the United States and the inter-American community failed to respond vigorously to defend the elected constitutional government of president Ramón Villeda Morales, military coups soon followed throughout the region. Reversing this latest coup, and the long list of arbitrary and illegal actions taken by the de facto government, would help to brighten prospects for continued democratic rule elsewhere in Latin America.

One of the most arbitrary and illegal actions taken by the de facto government was the abrupt dismissal of our LASA colleague, the distinguished historian Darío Euraque, from his post as director of the Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia (INAH). He should be restored to his post and permitted to continue the outstanding work he was doing on behalf of all Hondurans and the community of scholars who work, or will ever work, on Honduras. ■

**Table 2: Old and New Dues Categories for Latin American Members of LASA**

Old Membership Categories	Dues (US dollars)
Latin America under \$20,000	\$27
Latin America over \$20,000	\$40
New Membership Categories	Dues (US dollars)
Latin America under \$40,000	\$27
Latin America between \$40,000 and \$60,000	\$40
Latin America over \$60,000	\$53

**Table 3: LASA Registration Fees Compared with Other Academic Associations**

Other Area Studies Associations	LASA	Asian	African	Middle East	Slavic
Pre-registration					
Members	100	95	160	80	140
Non Members	180	145	200	110	190
Students	55	45	100	40	30
Non Member Students	100	60	120	60	40
On Site-Registration					
Members	180	120	180	100	TBD
Non Members	240	170	240	130	TBD
Students	100	60	105	60	TBD
Non Member Students	145	75	135	80	TBD
Other Disciplinary Associations	LASA	APSA	AAA	AHA	MLA
Pre-registration					
Members	100	170	206	152	175
Non Members	180	305	361	173	225
Students	55	65	88	74	40
Non Member Students	100	305	160	84	65
On Site-Registration					
Members	180	210	258	179	TBD
Non Members	240	395	448	200	TBD
Students	100	95	98	79	TBD
Non Member Students	145	395	196	89	TBD