
EDITOR'S FOREWORD

This issue begins the last volume of the twenty years of *LARR* edited at the University of New Mexico. A new team of editors at the University of Texas at Austin, led by Peter Ward, is already at work selecting and editing the articles and review essays that will appear in next year's Volume 38 (2003). The transition offers an appropriate time to reflect on the broader issues involved in the enterprise of academic publishing of a journal such as *LARR*.

The illustrious French sociologist Lucien Goldman was fond of observing that a phenomenon can be viewed from two perspectives: it can be explained in terms of the larger structures of which it is a part, and it can also be understood in terms of the smaller structures of which it is composed. Applying this maxim to *LARR* leads to issues of academic publishing in general as the larger context and to some thoughts on those aspects of *LARR* that constitute its own particular character.

Academic publishing of books and journals is an enterprise integral to the virtuous cycle of the production and dissemination of knowledge that leads from individual research to publication to library collection to employment, promotion, and tenure. To describe the cycle in reverse, universities evaluate faculty to a considerable extent on their published research. Publication is made possible by library purchases. Therefore, library purchases are part of the process that leads to faculty employment and further research.

Unfortunately, academic publishing is no stranger to the forces of globalization and privatization that have transformed so much of the world's landscape in the last decades. Profit-seeking corporate giants discovered that prestigious academic journals could become gold mines. The top journals in many academic fields are monopoly-like in that they are virtually indispensable for researchers and hence must be collected by libraries. Corporations found that by acquiring these journals, they could ratchet up the price of a subscription to unheard-of levels and still increase profits even as total sales fell. Efforts to boycott such price-gouging publishers could be and were squashed by restraint-of-trade lawsuits.

Who loses? All the other participants in the formerly virtuous cycle, which now becomes a vicious cycle. If libraries cannot increase funding by the same magnitude as publisher's price increases, they have to curtail other acquisitions. Book sales and noncritical journal sales drop. Nonprofit publishers bring out fewer books and raise their prices, which increases the pressure on libraries. Ultimately, these publishers go out of business. Faculty then have fewer and fewer publishing outlets. Less knowledge is disseminated. Alternatively, universities can transfer funding out of teaching and research to buy the journals, which leads to the elimination of faculty positions and ultimately the same outcome: less creation and dissemination of new knowledge. This "explanation," in Goldman's terms, of the challenges facing academic publishing in general is disheartening.

LARR's internal character reflects a very different vision of academic publishing. *LARR* was established in 1964 for the express purpose of disseminating knowledge in the newly emerging field of Latin American Studies. The sponsoring institutions, a group of universities joined by the Ford Foundation and the Hispanic Foundation of the Library of Congress, have been listed since on the inside back cover of every issue. Their cash contributions established an operating fund, known today as the *LARR* reserve fund, that allowed the journal to begin publishing at the first host institution, the University of Texas in Austin. The commitment of the founders to making *LARR* as inexpensive and widely read as possible was clearly stated in the opening issue and has been a guiding principle of *LARR* editors ever since. Later, the *LARR* sponsoring institutions also founded *LASA* and merged it with *LARR*, thus creating a professional association with two separate components, the *LASA* Secretariat and *LARR*, each housed by a different university.

Thirty-six years later, *LARR* is affordable and widely read, selling around six thousand copies of each issue (about four times the circulation of the next-most-read journal in the field). *LARR* is read not just by *LASA* members but by many thousands of other readers: those who have access to about two thousand copies purchased directly by institutions around the world (mostly libraries); those who access *LARR* via the Internet; and those who access it through CD vendors or in other electronic formats like J-STOR and Questia. To many of *LARR's* admirers in the academic library community, *LARR* represents the ideal type of the professional journal priced for use rather than profit, and its very existence testifies to the extent of price-gouging by some journals now in the private sector. *LARR's* editors and staff take great pride in the journal's affordability and accessibility, together with the high quality of the research and commentary that the journal has been fortunate enough to publish.

LARR's role in providing wide access to knowledge cannot be taken for granted. During my years as editor, I have repeatedly been approached by commercial enterprises that have offered to take over *LARR's* publishing operations. It is only a matter of time until some corporation offers the Latin

American Studies Association a large sum to purchase *LARR* (a commercial press recently purchased a mathematics journal from a leading university press for the tidy sum of one million dollars). LASA might be tempted if not to sell *LARR*, at least to make more money from it by reducing the modest sums LASA provides in exchange for subscriptions for LASA members, pushing the journal to become more expensive at the cost of its readership. The firewall against such a change in *LARR*'s publishing philosophy has been the editorial and managerial autonomy of the *LARR* editors, protected at first by tradition and consensus and then by the LASA-*LARR* Articles of Understanding, approved by the LASA Executive Council and the *LARR* Editorial Board in July 1982. Those articles are reprinted here as a cautionary guidepost to the future. Those of us associated with *LARR* over the last twenty years are pleased to see the journal pass to the capable and committed hands of Peter Ward and his colleagues in Austin. They now become the new defenders of *LARR*'s unique character against the economic forces that threaten academic publishing.

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LASA-LARR ARTICLES OF UNDERSTANDING

1. *Nature of the Latin American Research Review.* *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 the amount of time 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 Executive 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 on 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, on 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 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 on 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 subscriptions; 3) direct subscriptions from non-LASA members; 4) advertising; 5) sales of mailing lists; 6) grants and contracts; and 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 ensure 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 for all LASA members, on a pro rata basis per subscription. The cost of the subscriptions per member should be reviewed annually by the Executive Council, taking into consideration LARR's reserve fund and projected revenues and expenses for the coming year. In setting the amount of the reduced subscription rate for LASA members on 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 on 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.