

LACEA @ 20

It might surprise you to learn that LACEA was conceived and born in Washington DC. It was conceived by Michael Conroy (then at the University of Texas, Austin) during the 1991 meetings of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA). After a series of enjoyable and purposeful dinners at the lovely Tabard Inn on N Street, the Latin American and Caribbean Economic Association (LACEA) was founded in July of 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”. I had the privilege and the pleasure to be present when LACEA was conceived and to lead its creation as chair of the organizing committee, which included --among others-- Guillermo Calvo, Sebastian Edwards, Albert Fishlow, Ricardo Hausmann, Mariano Tommasi, Andres Velasco and myself— all of whom became presidents of LACEA at some point— and Darryl McLeod, LACEA’s first treasurer.

Twenty years later, LACEA can unabashedly boast a remarkably impressive record.

Since 1996 --and in conjunction with LAMES since 2006-- LACEA has organized annual meetings throughout Latin America and beyond. The meetings attract some of the best minds in Economics and in the recent years have convened around 700 participants from all parts of the world. Perhaps one of the most glamorous moments was when James Heckman was notified that he received the Nobel Prize right before delivering a keynote lecture at LACEA’s Network on Inequality and Poverty in Rio in 2000. Speaking of networks, LACEA now has seven thematic networks that meet regularly and foster exchange and mentoring in relevant research on inequality and poverty, the economics of crime, impact evaluation, political economy, trade and growth, international finance, and labor.

Modeled after the American Economic Association, LACEA became a member of the Allied Social Science Association (ASSA) and hosted meetings at its annual conferences. Like the AEA, LACEA also has its own journal, *Economia*, whose first issue came out in the fall of 2000 and which features high-quality research focused on the region. LACEA is also involved in capacity building through courses and its partnership with the Global Development Network (GDN). The most recent initiative—Vox.LACEA—is a web portal and blog intended to become a full-fledged resource center for economists interested in the region.

Yes, indeed, LACEA has come a long way in its first twenty years.

Happy birthday, LACEA!

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President of LACEA 1998-1999 and member of Executive Committee 2012-2014