



ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF THE CUBAN ECONOMY

Dear Friend of ASCE,

Sunday, December 15, 2013

On August 1-3, 2013, the Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy (ASCE) held its 23rd annual conference under the theme “**Reforming Cuba?**” The board chose this theme as we felt it would allow us –together with the many diverse participants at this year’s gathering– the ability to critically understand and evaluate the process of economic reform recently begun in Cuba. Personally, when I am invited to speak on the Cuban economy under Raúl Castro, I pose the following question: “**Two steps forward and one step back: Will Raúl’s economic mambo work for Cuba?**” In other words, while there is general agreement that Raúl’s reforms are a *significant* departure from economic policy under Fidel Castro, analysts are still far from convinced that the reforms enacted to date are *sufficient* even to meet the government’s own stated goals.

The recent reversal of fortune for many of Cuba’s self-employed workers who had been re-selling imported clothing using seamstress and tailor licenses or running 3-D cinemas and arcades with entertainer and food service licenses indicates that while the *quantity* of economic changes and the record number of newly self-employed are significant, the *quality* (the depth and breadth) of those same changes continues to be quite cautious and limited. For this reason, we are currently considering proposals for next year’s conference that highlight this on-again/off-again character of the economic reforms. *Quo vadis, Cuba?* – indeed!

We are happy to report that the August 2013 conference saw as many as 45 new members join ASCE and attend the conference for the first time. This does not include the 15 guests who attended from Cuba or the numerous undergraduate and graduate students who joined us. However, many long-time members were unable to attend and have not renewed their membership. For this reason, we are sending this winter newsletter (along with a holiday card) to a wide array of former members and friends of ASCE urging you all to **join us** or **renew your membership**.

Doing so ***NOW*** will help us cover our always increasing expenses. If you are so moved, an additional donation in any amount to our separate **travel fund** will allow us to continue to sponsor the attendance of students as well as an ever-growing contingent of participants coming directly from Cuba. You can **join, renew, or donate** to the travel fund by following [this link](http://www.ascecuba.org/payments/) (<http://www.ascecuba.org/payments/>) and paying via PayPal, or by sending us a check with the form below (the form is also online: <http://www.ascecuba.org/conference/ASCE2013SingleForm.pdf>). And don’t forget to mark your calendars for next summer’s conference, which will take place from **July 31-August 2, 2014, once again at the Hilton Miami Downtown, 1601 Biscayne Blvd.**

It was with a heavy heart that ASCE received the news of the passing earlier this fall in Madrid of our long-time member and island-based colleague, the valiant independent economist, human rights activist, and former prisoner of conscience Óscar Espinosa Chepe. We share the following note we received from his widow, Miriam Leiva, who returned to Cuba last week:

“Óscar has returned to Cuba. He never abandoned his homeland, though he respected all those Cubans who for one reason or another emigrated somewhere beyond the sea. Though very ill, he traveled to Madrid only with the assurance that he would be able to return home again. I have returned home, now with his ashes. I reiterate my heartfelt thanks to everyone who assisted us during our difficult stay in Madrid, allowing him to die there with dignity.”

As a way of recognizing Chepe’s invaluable contribution to our ongoing work, ASCE has decided to sponsor the publication of a special collection of essays on the Cuban economy in his honor. Ernesto Hernández-Catá, Roger Betancourt, and Jorge Pérez-López have selected papers from past volumes of *Cuba in Transition* for inclusion in this new volume to be entitled, ***Cuba under a Microscope: Essays in Honor of Óscar Espinosa Chepe***. Joaquín Pujol, Chepe’s close friend and



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long-time collaborator, has agreed to write a biographical sketch to introduce the volume. It will be available for sale on Amazon early in the new year.

At this past year's conference, we were honored to welcome **George J. Borjas**, the Robert W. Scrivner Professor of Economics and Social Policy at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, as our keynote speaker. Professor Borjas' address on U.S. immigration policy was enthusiastically received and generated a rigorous discussion. We have transcribed it in order to include it in our annual proceedings. ASCE thanks Rafael Romeu for making videos of many of this year's presentations –including that of Dr. Borjas– available for viewing at ASCE's very own Youtube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/user/ascecuba>.

As part of our mission to “promote interest in the study of the Cuban economy in its broadest sense,” ASCE has long maintained professional contacts with public intellectuals, scholars, and economists inside Cuba –whether independent, dissident, or associated with the Cuban government– who are interested in engaging in serious scholarly discussion and sharing their research and analysis. We will continue this engagement as we begin planning next year's conference. With generous financial support from the **Christopher Reynolds Foundation**, the **Sobel Foundation**, the **Cuba Study Group**, and a number of member donations to our travel fund we were able to extend invitations to the August 2013 conference to a record number of participants coming directly from the island. All these speakers submitted papers that will be included in the published proceedings (available online and in hardcopy in early 2014). ASCE thanks Jorge Pérez-López for continuing to expertly edit the proceedings.

In all, we were able to welcome more than 15 island-based participants to the 2013 conference, including **Lenier González** and **Roberto Veiga** of *Espacio Laical*, **Armando Chaguaceda** of the *Universidad Veracruzana* (the three of whom are pictured with **Carmelo Mesa-Lago** in the holiday card), **Antonio Rodiles** and **Alexis Jardines** of *Estado de SATS* (pictured with **Abel Sierra** and Chaguaceda), and **Laritzta Diversent** of the *CubaLex Legal Information Center* (pictured with her colleagues on the law panel). Their presence immeasurably enriched our gathering. Our conference was also enriched by a record number of students from a wide range of universities, including **Jared Genova** of the University of Texas, **Margarita Giraldo** and **Seth Marini** of the University of Miami, **Daniel Pedreira** of George Mason, **Roberto Armengol** of the University of Virginia (graduate student first prize winner), **Roberto González** of the University of North Carolina, and **Emily Snyder** of the University of Florida (undergraduate student first prize winner). We welcome them into the fold.

Finally, I'd like to announce the opening of nominations for our elections that take place in the early summer, 2014. We will elect a new president, as well as a number of new members of the board. If you are interested in serving or nominating someone, please contact the chair of the nominations committee Roger Betancourt by January 31, 2014, at betancou@econ.umd.edu. The committee has identified current board member **Carlos Seigle** as a suitable candidate willing to accept the nomination for the presidency over the next two-year term beginning August, 2014.

Best regards,

Ted A. Henken,
President, Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy



PS: Don't forget to follow us on Twitter at [@ASCECuba](https://twitter.com/ASCECuba) and “friend” us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ascecuba.org>.



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PO Box 28267
Washington, DC
20038-8267

Join ASCE or renew your membership ***NOW*** using this form:

Name: _____

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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION ¹

- A) Regular member \$90
- B) Contributing member \$91–\$200
- C) Sponsor \$201–\$350
- D) Benefactor over \$350
- E) Student \$25
- F) Lifetime \$2,500

Questions?

Contact us:
asce@ascecuba.org

Conference Dates: July 31-August 2, 2014
Conference Location: Miami Hilton Downtown, 1601 Biscayne Blvd.

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Pre-registration (No later than July 15) ² ASCE Member ³	Non-Member
Conference fee \$75 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$175 <input type="checkbox"/>
Official Lunch (Limited capacity—reserve early) \$45 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$45 <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Cuba in Transition</i> , Vol. 24 Printed (Pre-order) ⁴ \$25 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$60 <input type="checkbox"/>

Registration (Past July 15)	ASCE Member ³	Non-Member
Conference fee	\$100 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$200 <input type="checkbox"/>
Official Lunch (Limited capacity—reserve early)	\$50 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$50 <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Cuba in Transition</i> , Vol. 24 Printed (Pre-order)	\$25 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$60 <input type="checkbox"/>

*Please consider adding a donation to the ASCE travel fund: \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

Please make check to “ASCE” and send registration form to:
ASCE, P.O. Box 28267
Washington, DC 20038-8267

¹ Membership in ASCE is renewed on an annual basis and runs from January 1 through December 31.
² To enjoy pre-registration benefits, payment must be postmarked no later than July 15, 2013.
³ To obtain ASCE members registration rates, dues for 2014 must be paid before the meeting.
⁴ Hardcopies of “Cuba in Transition” volumes are available for \$80 at ASCE’s website www.ascecuba.org.



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Membership in ASCE

Membership is open to all scholars, teachers, students, institutions and other persons professionally concerned with the study of the Cuban economy and in furtherance of the purposes of ASCE as outlined in Article II of the By-laws. Members enjoy updated and exclusive information on Cuba, access a select group of Cuba experts, learn and share information and ideas in a stimulating and collegial environment, and network amongst a highly talented and influential group of individuals.

Member Benefits

- An exclusive electronic clipping service with regular news and comprehensive information on Cuba.
- Reduced fees for the annual conference and other ASCE events.
- Quarterly newsletter with information on ASCE and upcoming events.
- Hard copy of the Annual Volume of Papers and Conference Proceedings for just \$25.
- All member rights afforded by the by-laws.

Our organization offers the following categories of Members:

- Regular Members:** All persons interested in furthering ASCE's purposes are eligible for full membership upon payment of regular dues.
- Student Members:** Bona fide students are eligible to become Student Members upon payment of a special reduced rate of membership dues. A Student Member has the same rights as a Regular Member.
- Individual Sponsor and Benefactor Members:** Individuals may become Sponsor or Benefactor Members of ASCE upon payment of prescribed dues.
- Institutional Members:** Educational institutions, business and law firms, etc. may send one representative to membership meetings who may not run for office and will have voice, but no vote.

All non-institutional members who are current in their membership dues are entitled to:

- Participate at all meetings of ASCE's members subject to registration charges, when applicable.
- Present motions, including motions of no confidence.
- Vote at ASCE members' meetings on the matters that may come before any meeting thereof.
- Become a candidate for office of ASCE (Board of Directors).
- Submit papers to be presented at various ASCE forums, and once such summaries have been approved by the Board of Directors and the applicable fees have been paid, to present such papers at coming forums.
- Publish papers in ASCE publications subject to financial charges & peer review, as approved by the Board.
- Make ordinary and extraordinary contributions to ASCE's purposes.

Note: Membership in ASCE is **renewed on an annual basis**. Because the ASCE fiscal year has been changed to correspond with the calendar year effective December 31, 2013, henceforth all memberships will run from **January 1st to December 31st**. Please contact us if you have questions about this change.