



# ASCE Newsletter

ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF THE CUBAN ECONOMY

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Rafael Romeu

Michael Strauss

## *President's Letter*

By Helena Solo-Gabriele, ASCE President 2016-2018

Dear ASCE Members,

First I would like to express that it is an honor to have been elected as President. I am an environmental engineer by training who has a strong interest in understanding the links between infrastructure and public health in all parts of the world but in particular Cuba. I am of Cuban heritage and studying about issues in Cuba is a way of connecting with my heritage and with my research interests. I have a full-time job at the University of Miami. On the academic side I am a Professor and on the administrative side I am the Associate Dean for Research at the College of Engineering. I believe that my service through ASCE is synergistic with my full-time responsibilities at the University. Through my scholarship and service responsibilities at the University I have been involved in activities that promote student-led research on Cuba infrastructure needs. ASCE is a match for me because of its strong history with student competitions. The topic is very relevant to me as I believe that infrastructure and the economy are interdependent, infrastructure that serves the needs of populations requires a viable economy. So from my perspective ASCE is a great fit. I am excited to have been elected as President of this great organization and I am fully committed to seeing the organization grow and prosper.

In order to move the organization forward, ASCE will need everyone's help. We have a committed Board of Directors who have taken on leadership roles. I am happy to state that Carlos Seiglie, our immediate past president, will be organizing the Carlos Diaz Alejandro lecture and will be serving on the conference hosting committee. Ernesto Hernandez-Cata will continue his outstanding work as treasurer and Gary Maybarduk has graciously agreed to serve as secretary. Current and past Board members have been fully involved in specific initiatives including organizing a hosting and fundraising committee (Ted Henken, lead), conference organizing committee (Rafael Romeu, lead), and membership committee (Michael Strauss, lead). My vision for the upcoming years is to have members participate fully in planned ASCE activities and to consider volunteering within the various roles in ASCE. We can definitely use help in recruiting new members and we would greatly appreciate if you could pass along information about ASCE to encourage others to become part of this organization. Information about membership is available on the last page of this newsletter. If you are interested in getting involved please contact us at [asce@ascecuba.org](mailto:asce@ascecuba.org).

On the next few pages of this newsletter we highlight this year's upcoming activities. We are excited about our plans for the upcoming conference scheduled for July 27-29, 2017 at the Hilton Downtown Miami Hotel. Enclosed is the Save-the-date which we hope is shared among all of your professional and social networks. In addition we have plans for a sessions at two conferences, one at the American Economics Association Annual meeting, and another at Florida International University's Conference on Cuban and Cuban-American Studies. I ask that you please pass along this newsletter to colleagues, family and friends who have interests in Cuba's economic issues.

I hope that you find this newsletter useful. If you have items that you would like considered for the next newsletter please let me know. In closing I would like to thank all of you for being part of ASCE.

Regards, Helena Solo-Gabriele, Ph.D., P.E.

**ASCE**

**Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy**

<http://www.ascecuba.org/>

[asce@ascecuba.org](mailto:asce@ascecuba.org)

## ASCE Newsletter Submissions

Newsletter submissions, comments, and letters to the editor may be sent to:

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ASCE Newsletter Editor  
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Letters to the president may be sent to: Helena Solo-Gabriele  
[hmsolo@miami.edu](mailto:hmsolo@miami.edu)

Please send email, telephone, and address changes to:  
Ernesto Hernandez-Cata  
[ehernandezcata@gmail.com](mailto:ehernandezcata@gmail.com)

## ASCE Committees

Membership Committee  
*Michael Strauss*

ASCE Newsclippings  
*Joaquín P. Pujol*

ASCE Blog  
*Luis R. Luis and  
Ernesto Hernandez-Cata*

Conference Program Committee  
*Jorge Pérez-López*

Conference Logistics Committee  
*Rafael Romeu*

Conference Secretariat  
*Maria Urizar of ICCAS*

Student Paper Prize  
*Enrique Pumar*

Conference Hosting Committee  
*Ted Henken*

Carlos Diaz-Alejandro Lecture  
*Carlos Seiglie*

AEA Session Coordinator  
*Luis Locay*

Election Nominations  
*Roger Betancourt*

Election Teller  
*Steve Escobar*

## Need to Renew your Membership?

Go to

<http://www.ascecuba.org/>

On the "Membership" tab click  
"Membership Annual Dues"

## Updates from ASCE Committees

### Membership Committee—Michael Strauss

The membership committee has been brainstorming about ways to increase membership and a number of ideas were put forth. As part of our membership drive we are asking that all current members encourage colleagues to consider ASCE membership. The advantages of membership are listed on the last page of this newsletter. Other possibilities include an institutional membership category (these members may designate someone to participate in ASCE events), publicizing ASCE in relevant places where its existence may not be widely known—foreign universities, commercial seminars for potential investors in Cuba, etc. To further encourage participation, one idea was for brand new members to receive a discount off first-year membership dues and the registration fee for the yearly conference.

### Newsclippings—Joaquín P. Pujol

We will select news related to Cuba's economy that usually are not carried in mainstream media and by the end of the week they are forwarded to members' e-mails. This will spare you the need to track the information in the various media by digging it out by yourself, while at the same time, as an ASCE member, you will be well informed of relevant economic trends and events in relation to Cuba's economic reforms, international relations, economic performance, the sugar crop, tourism, corruption among other issues. This service has been established as an additional benefit exclusively for those members who provide us with their e-mail addresses.

### ASCE Blog—Luis R. Luis

The ASCE blog presents brief articles on the Cuban economy and society. The posts provide original commentary and analysis on topics relevant to gauging social and economic trends in the Cuba. Articles of an analytical nature by members and friends of ASCE are welcome and can be sent to [asce@ascecuba.org](mailto:asce@ascecuba.org) in care of the editors. For examples, visit <http://www.ascecuba.org/blog/>.

### Conference Proceedings and Program Committee—Jorge Pérez-López

The Conference Proceedings Committee is in the process of preparing the 2016 Proceedings. They hope to have the web version of the proceedings ready by Thanksgiving. For the 2017 meeting we are moving up deadlines for abstract submissions to April 1, 2017. Abstracts to be submitted to: [asce@ascecuba.org](mailto:asce@ascecuba.org)

### Conference Logistics Committee—Rafael Romeu

The conference logistics committee has received Board approval to set the 2017 Conference date and venue. The date has been set to July 27-29, 2016 at the Downtown Miami Hilton. This upcoming year we are planning on spicing up the conference with by bringing back activities geared towards the academic community, featuring book sales and commentary. We are also focusing on enhancing our social events to help in building the ASCE community. Please SAVE-THE-DATE of July 27-29, 2017 for the 27th Annual ASCE meeting.

### Student Papers Prize—Enrique Pumar

ASCE Student Award Committee is accepting nominations for the 2017 Jorge Pérez-López Student Award Competition. The award committee welcomes papers from undergraduate and graduate students from all over the world including Cuba and from all disciplines, not just economics. A panel of scholars will judge all submissions on the basis of relevance, originality, quality, contribution, and clarity of presentation. The top papers in the graduate and undergraduate categories will receive travel stipends towards their participation at the conference. Deadline for student papers is May 20, 2017. Contact Enrique S. Pumar, committee chair, at [pumar@cua.edu](mailto:pumar@cua.edu). For more information about the award stipend and expectations, consult the ASCE webpage, <http://www.ascecuba.org/competition/2017-competition>.

### Conference Hosting Committee—Ted Henken

ASCE strives to promote scholarly discussion on the Cuban economy and one key to meeting this goal is to include presentations by economists inside Cuba. To this end we invite speakers from Cuba to engage in discussions focused on the Cuban Economy. The main initiative of this committee is to fund-raise which is a large challenge for us. Given the funds we raise, the committee then provides recommendations for potential invitees from Cuba who can share their points of view on the status and future directions of the Cuban economy. If you have fund-raising ideas, please contact Ted Henken at: [asce@ascecuba.org](mailto:asce@ascecuba.org)

ASCE

Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy



Twitter at @ASCECuba

Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/>

## Book Reviews

### Review by Stephen Kimmerling

The process of U.S.-Cuban rapprochement has spurred intense interest in Cuba on the part of the business community, lawyers, academics, and others the world over. But too many players lack a knowledge, much less an understanding, of the U.S. and Cuban laws and legal structures that will shape how and whether deals get done and ideas come to life. *Cuba: A Legal Guide to Business* provides that critical insight. The book is edited by José R. Cot & Rolando Anillo. The contributors are Robert L. Muse, Peter A. Quinter, Jesus Sanchelima, and Robert R.M. Verchick. This book is a smart, well thought-out, and highly informed survey of relevant Cuban and U.S. laws produced by attorneys with deep experience in their field. This go-to reference work will prove indispensable to businesspeople; attorneys; students of law, business, and other disciplines; jurists; and policymakers—to name just a few! If ever we needed an authoritative resource on Cuban and U.S. law—and we do—this book is it.

## Upcoming Events



ASCE will be sponsoring a session within the 2017 American Economic Association Annual meeting scheduled for January 6 to 8, 2017 in Chicago, IL. The session entitled, “The Cuban Economy” will be chaired by Carlos Seiglie of Rutgers University. Presentations will be provided by Roger Betancourt of the University of Maryland and Luis Locay of the University of Miami. The discussant is John Devereux of the City University of New York-Queens College. More details about this session are available at: <https://www.aeaweb.org/conference/2017/preliminary/1725?page=8&per-page=50>.



ASCE has proposed a panel for the 11th Conference on Cuban and Cuban American Studies organized by the Cuban Research Institute of Florida International University (FIU). The conference will be held from February 23 to 25, 2017 at the Modesto A. Maidique Campus of FIU, Miami, Florida. The panel, which was organized by Roger Betancourt, is titled Multidisciplinary Approaches to US-Cuba Relations. Four papers by ASCE members (E. Hernández- Catá, Silvia Pedraza, M. Strauss and a joint one by E. Pumar and H. Solo-Gabriele) are included. The first two papers provide a broad perspective on US-Cuba relations from the point of view of Economics and Sociology, respectively. The other two discuss more narrowly focused issues (the return of Guantanamo and water quality) from the perspective of international relations and an interdisciplinary effort between a sociologist and a civil and environmental engineer, respectively. Additional details will not be available until the preliminary program is posted at the CRI/FIU website after December 1st. After that date go to <https://cri.fiu.edu/events/2017/> and click on February for details on the conference program.



The Association of Cuban-American Engineers and the Cuban-American Association of Civil Engineers will be hosting their 2017 Student Scholarship Competition on Saturday, March 4, 2017 at Casa Bacardi located at the University of Miami Coral Gables Campus (see: <http://www.aic-ace.com/?q=node/91>). The competition entails that university-level student teams formulate and present a project of their choice on the reconstruction of Cuba’s public infrastructure that relates to the engineering field in transportation, water resources, power, telecommunications, healthcare or agriculture. Any questions regarding the competition guidelines should be directed to the Chair of the CISC Committee by contacting Regina Rodriguez ([reggie17r@gmail.com](mailto:reggie17r@gmail.com)).

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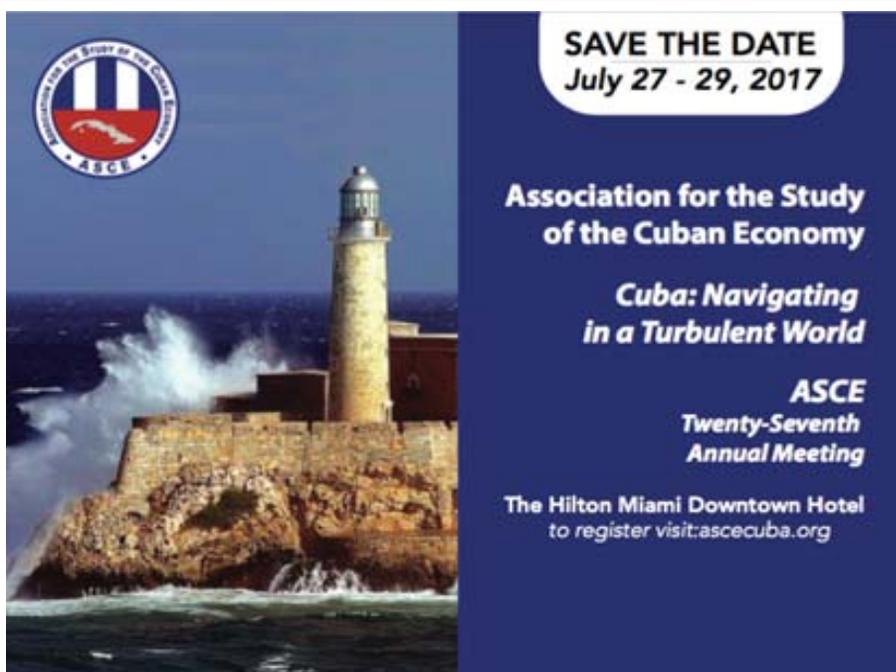


The University of Miami Cuban Heritage Collection (CHC) will host a multidisciplinary conference October 20-21, 2016, to disseminate the work of graduate students and emerging scholars and survey the current status of Cuban and Cuban American Studies. The *New Directions in Cuban Studies* conference is free and open to the public. Registration is required. Please see the link below for more information: <http://library.miami.edu/chc/fellows/conference2016/>



The University of Miami Institute for Cuban and Cuban American Studies (ICCAS) hosted a workshop on October 12—13, 2016 entitled, “Democracy and Free Economy.” Speakers included Carlos Alberto Montanar, Jose Azel, Pedro Roig, Alvaro Alba. For more information call ICCAS at 305-284-CUBA (2822).

## 2017 ASCE Conference



The three-day conference, around the theme “Cuba: Navigating a Turbulent World,” will focus on evaluating the state of the Cuban economy taking into consideration the impending changes in Cuba’s relations with the United States. One key issue remains whether Cuba will implement the economic reforms needed to stimulate the private sector and attract foreign investment to spur economic growth. Another key issue is what will happen to Venezuela assistance to Cuba and to Cuba’ oil supplies if the economy of Venezuela keeps collapsing. Will Cuba seek to develop and modernize its primitive banking system? When will currency reform be implemented? When will the agricultural sector be restructured to increase productivity and output? Can we expect Cuba to develop its banking system and establish well-functioning capital markets? The conference will also include a plenary session on Cuban economic and political trends as well as sessions on social, legal, and sectoral issues related to the economy and a student panel. We also hope to have again a strong presence of scholars and intellectuals from the island.

### Call for Abstracts/Papers/Panels

Abstracts, papers, and/or panel proposals should describe original work related to the economy of Cuba in a broad sense, including legal, sectoral, and social aspects of economic development. Abstracts must not exceed 250 words and must be received via an email to [asce@ascecuba.org](mailto:asce@ascecuba.org) by April 1, 2017. Include the words “ASCE CONFERENCE ABSTRACT” in the subject line. Authors of accepted papers will be required to register for the annual conference. Visit our website: <http://www.ascecuba.org/> for further information.

Deadlines for submitting papers for the conference

- Abstract submission deadline: April 1, 2017
- Notification of acceptance: May 1, 2017
- ASCE XXVII Annual Conference: July 27 – July 29, 2017
- Final papers for proceedings due: July 15, 2017

### Call for Student Papers

#### The 2017 Jorge Pérez-López, Graduate and Undergraduate Student Award Competition

ASCE Student Award Committee is accepting nominations for the 2017 Jorge Pérez-López Student Award Competition. A panel of scholars will judge all submissions on the basis of relevance, originality, quality, contribution, and clarity of presentation. Details about the paper requirements are available at: <http://www.ascecuba.org/competition/2017-competition/>

**Graduate Awards:** First prize: Up to \$600 for domestic travel or \$800 for overseas travel to attend the conference. Second prize: Up to \$600 for ASCE conference travel.

**Undergraduate Awards:** First prize: Up to \$600 for domestic travel to attend the conference or \$800 for overseas travel. Second prize: Up to \$400 for ASCE conference travel.

All participants receive a one year complimentary ASCE membership and may attend the annual meeting in Miami including the luncheon for free. First and second prize winners will also receive an additional two years of complimentary ASCE membership. Deadline: May 20, 2017. For more information contact Dr. Enrique S. Pumar, [pumar@cua.edu](mailto:pumar@cua.edu)

## *Reflections from the 2016 Annual Meeting*

By Ernesto Hernandez-Cata, ASCE Treasurer 2014-2018

From the viewpoint of the quality of presentations this was one of our best meetings. There were some truly excellent performances, notably by Jorge Piñon, Omar Everlany, Emilio Morales, Roger Betancourt, Jorge Perez-Lopez, Luis Locay and Juan Antonio Blanco. Of course I did not attend all the lectures so I am sure there were other good ones. The keynote speaker, Vicente Botin, was great; thanks Maria Werlau for nominating and hosting his visit. The program and the meetings were very well organized. The FIU students at the reception table did a great job. Mario Gonzalez-Corzo's did a fantastic job guiding them. Altogether a very good conference, although the revenues were down compared to last years'.

## *A Note of Gratitude*

From Eduardo López Bastida, Economics Professor from University of Cienfuegos

Ante todo deseo darte las gracias por todas las atenciones tenidas conmigo y de verdad que fue un congreso magnifico donde creo que aprendimos todos a dialogar como hermanos a pesar de las diferencias. Creo que aprendi mucho de las posiciones de todos en relacion a la economia cubana. Pues es totalmente necesario. cualquier cosa que necesites en Cuba aqui estamos para servirte.



Board dinner at Restaurant Habana Vieja to kick off the Conference Activities. From left to right: Lorenzo Perez, Roger de la Torre, Helena Solo-Gabriele, Joaquin Pujol, Omar Everlany, Antonio Gayoso.



Keynote Speaker Vicente Botin



Helena Solo-Gabriele, Nayara Sabrina, Silvia Pedraza, and Frank Martinez



Session on Cuba's Economic Reforms and Party Congresses: Hildebrando Chaviano, Osmar Laffita, Jorge Perez-Lopez, Roger de la Torre, and Domingo Amuchastegui.



# Membership Drive

To become a member or update your membership  
 Visit: <http://www.ascecuba.org/membership/apply-now/>

Enjoy updated and exclusive information on Cuba.  
 Access a select group of Cuba experts.  
 Learn & share information and ideas in a stimulating and collegial environment.  
 Network amongst a highly talented and influential group of individuals.

## Member Benefits

- Receive regular news and comprehensive information on Cuba via an *electronic clipping service exclusive to members*.
- Enjoy *reduced fees* for the annual conference and other ASCE events.
- Purchase the Annual Volume of *conference proceedings* for just \$25.
- Elect the Board, run for office, and enjoy *all member rights* afforded by the by-laws.

## Membership Annual Dues

Regular Member: \$90  
 Contributing Member: \$91-200  
 Sponsor: \$201 - \$350  
 Benefactor: over \$350  
 Student Member: \$25

Membership is renewed annually and runs from January 1 to December 31.

## What is ASCE?

The **Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy** (ASCE) is a non-profit, non-political organization incorporated in the state of Maryland in 1990. Our mission is to promote research, publications, and scholarly discussion on the Cuban economy in its broadest sense, including on the social, economic, legal, and environmental aspects of a transition to a free market economy and a democratic society in Cuba. ASCE is committed to a civil discussion of all points of view. Affiliated with the **American Economic Association** and the **Allied Social Sciences Association** of the United States, ASCE maintains professional contacts with economists inside Cuba —whether independent or associated with the Cuban government—who are interested in engaging in scholarly discussion and research.

**Members** reside in the U.S., Latin America, and Europe and come from many professions -economists, engineers, lawyers, journalists, political scientists, business people, officials from international organizations and governments, consultants, university students, and other professions. Many are Cuba experts.

**Board of Directors.** ASCE's Board is elected by its members for a two-year period. Board members, who reside in different U.S. cities, serve pro-bono.

## Activities

**Annual Meeting**, held in Miami, Florida each August: Specialists present papers and participate in roundtable discussions during the 2½ day conference.

**Annual lecture** and **occasional conferences/seminars** throughout the year in Washington, D.C., New York and other cities. ASCE-sponsored sessions on Cuba at the annual meetings of the **American Economic Association**.

Publication of a volume of **Annual Conference Papers and Proceedings** -Widely used inside and outside of Cuba by universities, research centers, government agencies, and others.

**Dedicated website** containing all **Annual Papers and Proceedings** among other information.

**Annual prize** for a best papers on Cuba by university students.

ASCE's activities are financed through membership dues, event registrations, publication sales, and sponsorship by universities, foundations, private corporations, and individuals.

Go to [www.AsceCuba.org](http://www.AsceCuba.org) to join and also find By-laws, current Board of Directors, activities, and over two decades of scholarly work on Cuba.