

Message from the Editor

A week after the 2007-2008 executive staff for the *Whitehead Journal* had been selected, our first task was to determine the theme for the next issue. As the executive staff soon learned, it would be a deceptively simple undertaking. While there were many issues worthy of discussion and many opinions from the academic forum to be heard, we found ourselves searching for something distinct and penetrating: we were searching for something more particular.

In this endeavor, we surveyed past issues and, to little surprise, found a wide range of topics within the study of international relations had been explored by past volumes of our publication. Despite the perennial importance of regional analyses, there had never been an issue of the *Whitehead Journal* focusing solely on a single geographic area and its social, political and economic challenges. Moreover, the executive staff desired this issue of the *Journal* to present a debate from distinctly forward-looking perspective. Rather than have the authors survey the outcomes of past policies, why not look to the future? After some research, the staff unanimously agreed that the majority of the questions rest in Latin America. Unable as a group to categorically define the region's current status or to forecast future developments, the staff decided an evaluation of the Latin American region would be the focus of the next issue.

While forming the parameters of the dialogue we wished to incite, there were only distant rumblings in the media and academia about the upcoming role of Latin America. Nevertheless, a plethora of literature had been published evaluating and explaining the region-wide shift in economic ideology in the 1970s and 1980s. Governments had abandoned import-substitution industrialization, instead to adopt the neo-liberal trade policies of the Washington Consensus, only to further impoverish the region. However, in the past six months, we have seen a serious rise in the necessity to be well informed about the Latin American region, whether concerning Fidel Castro's successor in Cuba or President Hugo Chavez's assistance in resolving Columbia's attempt to neutralize the FARC.

Our keynote authors, Peter Hakim, President of the Inter-American Dialogue and Jennifer McCoy, the Director of the Americas Program at the Carter Center, begin our discussion on the Latin American region. While Mr. Hakim addresses the future of the region's relationship with the United States, Dr. McCoy discusses the democratic transition that Latin America is once again experiencing.

I would like to conclude by thanking the faculty of the Whitehead School for their continued support and assistance in the production of this issue. I further thank Dr. Benjamin Goldfrank, for lending his expertise in the region and guiding our staff during the initial stages of conception, and our advisor, Dr. Phillip Moremen, for his dedication to the *Journal's* staff and unwavering support and guidance throughout the entire process of publishing this issue.

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