

B·A·L·A·S

The Business Association of  
Latin American StudiesPRESIDENT'S  
NEWSLETTER

2009 Incoming President, Esteban R. Brenes, with Former BALAS President, Patricia Marquez, at the 2007 Conference hosted by INCAE.

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## 2009 Conference a celebration

**25th Anniversary of BALAS**

This year's conference, "Innovation and Wealth Creation in Latin America" is marked as an opportunity for us to celebrate and reflect on the first 25 years of BALAS. It is fitting that the conference is being held in Guadalajara, the second largest city in Mexico, where there is a wonderful blending of the traditional and the modern, which together create a vibrant, entrepreneurial and commercial Latin American city.

BALAS has been marked as well by traditions while evolving to become the premier international association fully dedicated to fostering a better understanding of Latin American business. Emerging out of the 1980s, when Latin American countries were just opening markets and political systems, BALAS began from a small group of academics, residing the United States, to an organization today with a diverse membership from 27 countries. The traditional goal of networking and sharing ideas across disciplines has always remained. Out of BALAS many friendships and professional partnerships have been created and blossomed to help foster greater linkages and knowledge creation across countries.

Today Latin America is a source of innovation and wealth creation. The 2009 Conference generously hosted by Tec de Monterrey, Campus Guadalajara, highlights the successes and future opportunities of the region. Challenges, however, remain. The importance of sharing information and developing innovative solutions is ever important. BALAS, as an organization, can continue to be at the forefront of this dialogue,

bringing attention and focus to the challenges and opportunities of the region. It is exciting to imagine the possibilities for the next 25 years.

I would like to thank Raúl Francisco Montalvo, BALAS Conference Chair, for hosting and organizing the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference. Victoria Jones, as BALAS Executive Secretary, who works all year to keep things running smoothly and provides support for all aspects of the organization also deserves our gratitude. I look forward to continuing to support BALAS and Esteban R. Brenes, incoming BALAS President, as he moves the organization forward.

Denise Dimon  
BALAS President 2007-2009  
University of San Diego

**Innovative Business Leaders Featured  
25th Anniversary of  
BALAS**

**April 1-4, 2009  
Guadalajara, Mexico**

The 2009 BALAS Conference will discuss **Innovation and Wealth Creation** in Latin America as a source of integration, development, aggregate value, and creation of new markets to generate income and wealth. The creation of new products, services and processes; the implementation of new organizational models; the development of new distribution channels; and many other innovations are ways to create impetus toward the development in Latin America.

## SPECIAL 2009 CONFERENCE GUEST SPEAKERS

### LEADERS OF INNOVATION FEATURED

- Ricardo Salinas Pliego, President and CEO Grupo Salinas and Grupo Elektra
- Antonio Fernández, Chairman of the Board and CEO FEMSA
- Sergio García de Alba, Former Ministry of Economics of Mexico with President of Vicente Fox's Administration

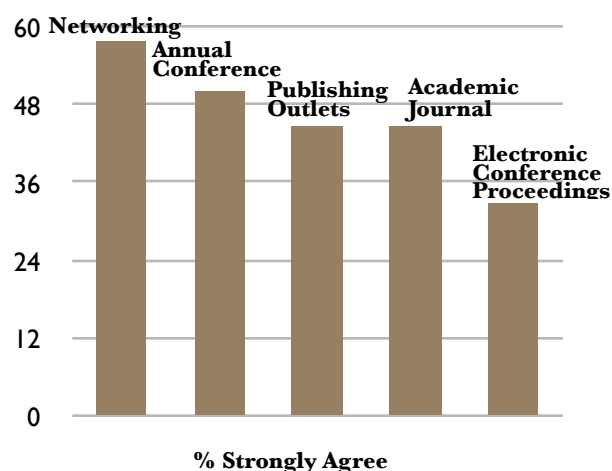


### View of the Past and Looking Towards the Future

## BALAS Membership Survey Results

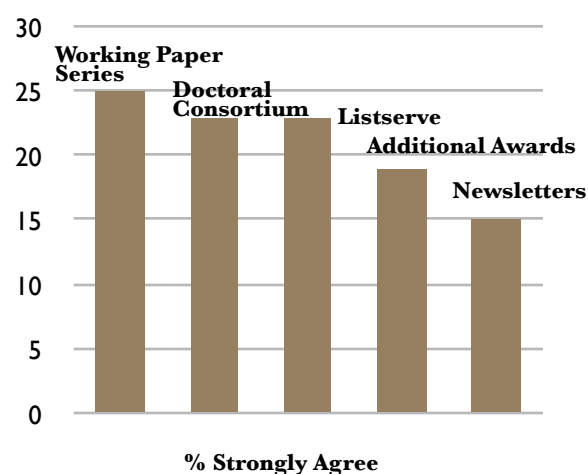
In Fall 2008, the BALAS Executive Committee conducted a survey of the membership to help determine some of the future directions for the organization. Below are some of the results.

**BALAS Should Provide to the Membership:  
(top five choices)**



These results are consistent with previous surveys that have found that one of the greatest strengths of BALAS is the networking opportunities, particularly those provided at the annual conferences. Members also want more publishing outlets, something that will be expanded.

**BALAS Should Provide to the Membership:  
(least popular five choices)**



Individual comments from the membership did indicate that one area in which BALAS could improve service to the membership is via more regular communication. So although the membership did not indicate a strong interest in a periodic Newsletter the President would start to send one to members.

## View of the Past and Looking Towards the Future

**Past BALAS Presidents**

1985- Charles S. Madden – Baylor University  
 1986- William E. Renforth – Texas A & M Intl University  
 1987 - Bert Valencia – Thunderbird  
 1988 - Dennis Guthery – Thunderbird  
 1989 - Fernando Robles – George Washington University  
 1990 - Robert A. Lenberg – University of New Mexico  
 1991- Gary Dicer – University of Tennessee  
 1992- Melissa Birch – University of Virginia  
 1993- Juan M. Rivera – University of Notre Dame  
 1994- Joan B. Anderson – University of San Diego  
 1995- Arturo Z. Vasquez-Parraga – FIU  
 1996- Tom Becker – University of South Alabama  
 1997 - William Renforth – Queensland University of Technology  
 1998 - Ricardo P.C. Leal – COPPEAD/UFRJ  
 1999 - Angela la Rocha - COPPEAD/UFRJ  
 2000 – Joseph Ganitsky - Loyola University of New Orleans  
 2001 – Paul Esqueda - IESA  
 2002 – Jorge L. Urrutia – Loyola University of Chicago  
 2003 - Jaime Alonso Gómez - EGADE/Tec de Monterrey  
 2004 – Gaston Labadie – Universidad ORT Uruguay  
 2005 – Robert Grosse – Thunderbird  
 2006 – Patricia Marquez - IESA  
 2007 – Denise Dimon – University of San Diego  
 2008 – Denise Dimon – University of San Diego  
 2009 – Esteban R. Brenes - INCAE

**Past BALAS Conferences**

1985 Washington, D.C. USA (George Washington University)  
 1986 Estes Park, CO USA  
 1987 Glendale, AZ USA (Thunderbird)  
 1988 San Diego, CA USA (University of San Diego)  
 1989 Boca Raton, FL USA (Florida Atlantic University)  
 1990 Albuquerque, NM USA (University of New Mexico)  
 1991 Boston, MA USA (Northeastern University)  
 1992 Mexico City, Mexico (Universidad de las Americas)  
 1993 Malibu, CA USA (Pepperdine)  
 1994 Miami, FL USA (Florida International University)  
 1995 Washington, D.C. USA (George Washington University)  
 1996 Monterrey, Mexico (EGADE-Tec de Monterrey)  
 1997 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (PUC-Rio)  
 1998 Padre Island, TX USA (Texas Pan American University)  
 1999 New Orleans, LA USA (Loyola University)  
 2000 Caracas, Venezuela (IESA)  
 2001 San Diego, CA USA (University of San Diego)  
 2002 Tampa, FL USA (University of Tampa)  
 2003 São Paulo, Brazil (FGV)  
 2004 Wellesley, MA USA (Babson)  
 2005 Madrid, Spain (Instituto de Empresa)  
 2006 Lima, Peru (USIL)  
 2007 San Jose, Costa Rica (INCAE)  
 2008 Bogota, Colombia (UniAndes)  
 2009 Guadalajara, Mexico (Tec de Monterrey)

**2008-2009 BALAS Executive Committee**

President – Denise Dimon, University of San Diego  
 Immediate Past-President/Nominations – Patricia Marquez, IESA and University of San Diego  
 VP of Membership and President-Elect – Esteban R. Brenes, INCAE  
 Central America & Caribbean – Luis Sanz, INCAE  
 Brazil – Maria Theresa Fleury, FGVSP  
 US/Canada – John Sargeant, UT Pan Am  
 Northern South America - Virginia Lasio, ESPAE  
 Europe - Xavier Mendoza, ESADE  
 Mexico - Anabella Davila, EGADE-Tecnológico de Monterrey, Campus Monterrey  
 Southern South America – Alfonso Gómez Morales, Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez  
 Treasurer – Jerry Haar, Florida International University  
 Executive Secretary – Victoria Jones, UT San Antonio  
 Chair, Program Committee 2009 – Raúl Francisco Montalvo Corzo, Tecnológico de Monterrey, Campus Guadalajara

**Dr. Victoria Jones, BALAS Executive Secretary**

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## **BALAS: An Early History and Folklore (The first ten years and before)**

The main purpose of this article is to share the early history of our association for the benefit of newer members. The second purpose is to provide a sense of roots and tradition.

BALAS has a unique character because the activities of its members add such an unequaled flavor. This element of Balas is described as folklore. It includes traditions and tales about BALAS members. At this point you may ask if the author is qualified to discuss these topics. I have asked myself the same question and concluded that I couldn't by myself. Therefore, I contacted several founders and old-timers who added their thoughts to this note.

Details are sketchy and not necessarily precise. Some people may prefer it this way. The main thrust, however, is on target.

### **BALAS Origins**

Balas originates in RMCLAS, the Rocky Mountain Council on Latin American Studies. RMCLAS is an academic organization that emphasizes social studies in Latin America. It is based geographically in the Rocky Mountains where their annual meetings are held.

For one reason or another the founders of BALAS gravitated into a RMCLAS meeting. It seems that professional interests and unique meeting locations guided their first decision to attend.

However, the RMCLAS conference experience is what guided attendance after that. RMCLAS fostered camaraderie and academic support for Latin American scholars. RMCLAS does this so well that is the oldest on-going academic organization on Latin American studies. As such, it is a precursor organization to LASA.

Bob Lenberg may be our earliest participant in RMCLAS in 1973. He wanted to network with non-business faculty on behalf of the dual degree (MBA-MA in Latin American Studies) he was launching at the University of New Mexico. Bob has remained active in BALAS through today (and served as president 1990-1991).

John Brasch, an international marketing professor at Nebraska, attended his first RMCLAS meeting in the mid-seventies. His reasons for attending the first time were probably curiosity and location. He liked the meetings so much that he volunteered to edit the RMCLAS Proceedings. In return he persuaded the RMCLAS leadership to let him organize a business track for RMCLAS. Persuasion was not really necessary because RMCLAS welcomed the opportunity to add more faculty interested in Latin American studies. Prior meetings on RMCLAS only had a few papers on economics.

As Business Track Chair, Brasch proceeded to spread the word to business faculty about this regionally-focused association. Among those who heard his conference calls are several BALAS Past Presidents such as Bill Renforth (first attended in 1978), Bert Valencia (1979), Stan Madden (1980), Fernando Robles (1981), and Dennis Guthery (1982). He also attracted two other noticeable participants to the Business Track.

Bob Vichas attended his first meeting in El Paso (1979). His interest in Latin America stems in part from earning a masters at the Universidad de las Americas in Mexico. Bob became so involved with the organization that he earned the job of BALAS Executive Secretary until 1989. He was the first editor of the BALAS newsletter called "On Target." The name was later changed to "BALAS Update" in the early nineties because the former name with the logo (a bull's eye) was an explosive combination for some Latin American members. By virtue of his salesmanship

and dedication in nearly all positions of the organization, some people considered Vichas "Mr. BALAS" in the early days. This title may well be deserved since he claims to have come up with the name BALAS in 1982. Just as Bob, the name is to be taken seriously, but not too seriously.

Sion Raveed was also a notable early participant. He was a very enthusiastic supporter and organizer who did a lot to increase awareness of the Business Track of RMCLAS. Sion, unfortunately, passed away in 1982, weeks before that year's meeting in Santa Fe. In his memory, several friends endowed an award for the outstanding professional paper presented at the annual BALAS conference. The winner of the Raveed Award is our current President Juan Rivera.

John Brasch, however, became progressively more involved in an international trading company and he left academia in the early eighties. Before leaving academia, Brasch wanted to insure that the Business Track would continue. According to Stan Madden, then a doctoral student at Nebraska, they ran into each other in an airplane by coincidence. He sat across from Brasch and they talked about RMCLAS. Brasch persuaded him to carry on the Business Track.

As a first step, Stan Madden coordinated the 1980 meeting and quickly established himself as Brasch's replacement in RMCLAS. He then led the group toward independence from RMCLAS. In the late eighties Stan drifted away and into leadership positions in Southern Marketing, ASBA, AMA, and AAA.

### **The Move Toward Independence**

Under RMCLAS support, the Business Track grew fast and participants came repeatedly. By 1984 the Business Track had more papers than the rest of the program.

Early Talk about independence probably surfaced in 1982 at the



Thunderbird meeting and continued in Park City, Utah the next year. By 1984, it was evident to most Business Track participants that changes were needed.

Some business Track members wanted to aggressively pursue business research agendas. Others wanted to create a national and international organization. To accomplish these goals it was necessary to leave RMCLAS. Nonetheless, RMCLAS provided an umbrella of services that would be difficult to replace quickly. Also, there were those members who doubted the Business Track could make it on its own without funding.

The right opportunity came in Tucson in 1984 when RMCLAS announced that it was advancing the 1985 annual meeting to the fall of 1984. Manny Machado, "1985" RMCLAS Conference Chairman, argued that Sealey Lake, Missoula, Montana, would not be an attractive site in early Spring. Winter weather conditions could also present unforeseen problems.

The change left an open window of time in 1985. The Business Track members wanted to continue meeting annually and seized the chance to meet in 1985. Fernando Robles proposed a meeting in Washington, D.C. sponsored by George Washington University.

The opportunity was ideal because it gave the Business Track group a trial run at independence without losing its ties to RMCLAS if things didn't work out. RMCLAS accepted BALAS' terms. As it turned out, BALAS formally met with RMCLAS one more time in 1986 in Estes Park, Colorado. Since then, BALAS has met on its own, but kept organizing a few sessions in the RMCLAS meeting for a couple of years. Some BALAS members still hold close ties to RMCLAS.

### Folklore

There are many traditions and tales about BALAS members. They are a

serious and colorful group. There are many incidents that reflect this.

Unlike many other academic meetings, BALAS members come to learn and share their research. The paper sessions are normally well attended and discussions are constructive. BALAS members also work hard at networking. There are few distractions, such as faculty recruiting and power plays. All individuals are encouraged to be themselves and enjoy the camaraderie. Moreover, BALAS is unique because many members keep on coming year after year.

Since the beginning, BALAS leadership has worked hard at attracting Latin American scholars because they add "on site validity" to the research of foreign scholars. These efforts are reflected in BALAS joining CLADEA and sponsoring a joint meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1989. Denise Dimon and Melissa Birch organized this meeting and developed the first Proceedings for CLADEA, largely the research of the BALAS attendees. BALAS had about 50 members represented at this meeting. Moreover, this was BALAS' first overseas meeting. Mexico City followed in 1992.

There are many colorful tales about BALAS members and the meetings in which they participate. What follows is a selective sampling of tales.

For many old timers the meeting in Missoula (1984) stands out. It was held in an isolated location, a dude ranch near Sealey Lake. The place is so out of the way that Fernando Robles claims that his chairman questioned if he was serious about meeting in Missoula.

This informal location created a very intimate association among the members because there were no distractions. It is also infamous because of "special" awards given. There were awards for the shortest title of a paper (Peanut Award) and longest (unmentionable) title. There was even an award for the Two-in-One paper (e.g. two unrelated topics with no apparent connection). Rumor also has it that this

writer, lacking experience in such affairs, tried to start a fireplace by lighting the biggest logs first.

Another meeting that stands out is the Estes Park (1986) meeting. We met at the Stanley Hotel. For the first couple of days everyone had an eerie feeling about the place. We learned later that the book **The Shining** had been conceived there. Although the movie was shot elsewhere, we could all feel it in the air. The Colorado weather was also uncooperative. Some of our members who flew into Denver in the early evening were caught in a blizzard and did not arrive until early morning.

The Tucson meeting also stands out because of Stan Madden's incredible story. This is how he relates his "By God Shoot Me" story. Stan had arrived in Tucson after a long and exhausting day. It was late and the conference hotel did not have available rooms, so they put him up at a nearby hotel. He waited a long time for a taxi. After giving up on the taxi he decided to walk rather than wait any longer. As he walked to his hotel a mugger came from behind planters in a dark alley. The mugger was holding a gun and demanded his money. Stan threw his bags down and proceeded to tell the mugger about the cab that did not arrive, his confirmed but unavailable room, being so tired, and all of his other troubles that day. He closed by saying, "By God shoot me" as he walked toward the mugger. The mugger was startled, put his gun away, laughed and walked the other direction. Stan did not realize what he had done until he reached the alternate hotel. He was scared and shaking.

Another standout meeting is the Boca Raton extravaganza. Bob Vichas, the Conference Chair, did not spare anything, including marching band, baton twirlers, and dinner theater. Another highlight was a keynote address from Hernando de Soto. All of this, along with the largest attendance at a meeting so far: over 100 participants.



The support of several schools is also noteworthy. A short list includes the University of New Mexico, Thunderbird, and the University of San Diego. The latter is home to the current Executive Secretary, Denise Dimon, and our incoming President, Joan Anderson. Nonetheless, in large and small ways, all schools that have hosted meeting and sent participants to BALAS have contributed as well.

Joan and Denise also earned the credit for taking BALAS cross the border for the first time when we crossed to Tijuana to visit maquilas and have a few sessions at Universidad Autónoma de Baja California in 1988.

Through the years our members have distinguished themselves in unique ways. Mike Wieninger is our first BALAS member because he made it a point to pay his dues in return for such a privilege. As a historian, only he could appreciate the significance of his request. Also of a historical nature is Lee Duffus' compilation and analysis of past

RMCLAS/BALAS Proceedings articles published in 1989.

Other anecdotes are trivial but nevertheless memorable. Pepe Colina (alias Joe Hill) is known for always opening the dance floor. Bob Lenberg is remembered for a "mile long" presidential address. Dennis Guthery is credited with conceiving the salute for people with no (visible) neck. It is hard to describe, so you better ask him for a personal demonstration.

In closing, remember that details are sketchy and history is meant to be rewritten. Viva BALAS!

Humberto Valencia  
Thunderbird, AGSIM (now Thunderbird  
Global School of Management)  
1994

*Note: The article was originally published in an earlier BALAS Newsletter and is being "reprinted" here in the launching of a new BALAS Newsletter series in honor of the 25th Anniversary.*

## Improving Connections and Networking

### President's

### Newsletter Launched

In the early years BALAS had a Newsletter that was distributed (via snail mail) 3-4 times annually. In an effort to improve communication and contact with the members, the President will send to the members (via email) a Newsletter. Help make the Newsletter something that can improve communication. Send your ideas to the 2009 BALAS President, Esteban R Brenes (Esteban.Brenes@incae.edu).

## Institutional Membership Support BALAS

Is your University or Organization an Institutional Member of BALAS? Did you know that Institutional Members receive special discounts, benefits and recognitions? For more information, please contact any of the BALAS Executive Officers or check the web page.



# ESADE

View to the Future

## The 2010 BALAS Annual Conference Host by ESADE in Barcelona

BALAS is pleased to announce that the 2010 Conference will be hosted by one of the leading business schools in Spain and the World, in the exciting city of Barcelona

### ESADE

ESADE, was founded in 1958 as an institution and currently has campuses in Barcelona, Madrid and Buenos Aires. Their Business School was one of the first to earn the "triple" crown of accreditation from AACSB International, EQUIS and AMBA. It is consistently ranked as one of the top business schools in the world and is particularly well-known for their internationally- focused, entrepreneurial and socially-responsible programs.

### Key Date to Remember:

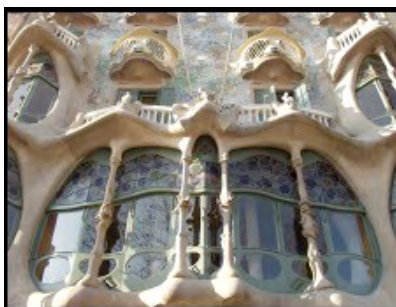
**November 1, 2009**

**Paper Submission Deadline**

### Contact information

For updated information please check the BALAS web site:

[www.balas.org](http://www.balas.org)



## BALAS

Balas is the premier organization focused on the business and academic environment of Latin America and the Caribbean with members from over 27 countries.

### 2009-2011 PRESIDENT

**Esteban R. Brenes**

INCAE

### EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

**Victoria Jones**

UT San Antonio

**2010 BALAS  
CONFERENCE  
Barcelona, Spain  
ESADE**

### 2010 Program Chair

Xavier Mendoza, ESADE

2010 CONFERENCE

PAPER SUBMISSION  
DEADLINE

NOVEMBER 1, 2009