



Annals of the Cuban Academy of Sciences: toward a new stage in its 158th anniversary

Anales de la Academia de Ciencias de Cuba hacia una nueva etapa en su 158 aniversario

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In its history, humankind has turned to all kinds of means to ensure the spread of knowledge that man has acquired in his everyday activities. This practice is ancient. There is evidence in *Ebers papyrus*, written in Egypt near the year 1500 B.C. It continues in the modern digital era because, although communication supports change, the objective has been the same, i.e., sharing knowledge with different generations, so that they can use it to create new knowledge contributing to the development of society.

Between the 18th century and the 20th century, a powerful international industry emerged and dealt with scientific publications as well as communication among scientists and scholars. The Havana Royal Academy of Medical, Physical, and Natural Sciences reflects that necessity in its founding Statutes, approved on November 6, 1860. In that period, the purpose of having their own publication was documenting the main facts related to their work at the Academy as well as disseminating scientific knowledge of interest. Thus, the history of *Annals* is linked to that of the Havana Royal Academy of Medical, Physical, and Natural Sciences. That is why, from 1864 to 1958, the journal worked, first, as a press publication of the Havana Royal Academy and, later, of the Academy of Medical, Physical, and Natural Sciences in times of the Republic.

Annals became indispensable consultation material for scientists of all times, among other reasons, because

it contains the historical contributions made by Felipe Poey, Nicolás José Gutiérrez, Carlos J. Finlay, Enrique José Varona, Arturo Aballí, José Antonio Presno Bastiony, Emilio Roig, Juan Marinello, Fernando Ortiz, and many other outstanding men. Afterward, there was a gap, because the journal stopped being published until May, 2011. Its publication was then resumed, in digital format, in the context of celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Havana Royal Academy of Medical, Physical, and Natural Sciences.

The President of the Academy back then, Dr. Ismael Clark, opens this new period with an editorial in which he declares that *Annals* "... intends to become not only a necessary institutional voice, but also a worthy means of disseminating the best results of Cuban science". From 2011 to 2018, editing the journal was carried out by the workers of the Academy secretariat and scholars. It included the publication of the main results of the research that stood out the most given their contribution to science and the socioeconomic development of the country, acknowledged by granting them the Annual National Prize of the Cuban Academy of Sciences; other contributions by Cuban scientists were also added.

New academic work started in 2018, related to various innovative actions and the struggle against COVID-19. This ushered in a new period for the Cuban Academy of Sciences (ACC in Spanish). On January 11, 2019, the ACC branch in Villa Clara province was created, followed by other new ones, as well as

the reopening of the Santiago de Cuba branch. The academic membership was increased through the election of new scholars of honor all over the country. The status of scientist associated with the ACC was created, thus increasing the number of researchers and professors connected with the institution through the branches. The annual prizes given to the most relevant scientific results have reached higher visibility and importance. Those results are part of a piece of research done by the Academy on the extent to which they are used in different sectors of the Cuban society.

In this period, as the official publication of the ACC, *Annals of the Cuban Academy of Sciences* revolutionizes its work with a professional editorial team. It makes an effort to continue increasing the quality of its publications and to disseminate science of excellence. As a continuation of its work since it was founded in 1864, it accompanies the Cuban Academy of Sciences in its contemporary historical role.

Some of the main achievements showing its development are the exclusive use of an open source platform for editorial management, the constant readjustment of editorial policies for *Annals* to be in tune with the most updated tendencies of scientific communication, the professional management of its contents, and continuously working on better visibility and ranking.

The active participation of the ACC branches in specialized evaluation and peer-review has been a great contribution. Although it resumes the tradition of documenting academic activities, *Annals* embraces the most recent practice of open science and brings more dynamism to publishing according to today's needs in Cuban and world science.

An example is the special issue in record time that the journal offered to the Cuban and world community at the very beginning of the pandemic of COVID-19. Some of the papers of that issue and today's *Annals* as a whole are publications on up-to-date topics relevant for the entire Cuban nation,

such as the publications by Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, Ph.D., President of the Republic.

In this issue, the community of readers are presented with two special contributions. The first, entitled "*Annals of Academy, view on the traditon*", discusses the purposes and original editorial policies; it is also aimed at illustrating some of the transformations, over the different periods, undergone by the journal, which has been a leading editorial project of the Cuban scientific community. The second contribution, entitled "*Annals: history and patrimony*", combines statements by scientists from 1864 to 1958, in order to show what the journal was like in that period. The paper presents the characteristics, projects, anxieties, and results of the publication at that time, thus proposing a different periodization that highlights the patrimonial importance of the journal volumes preserved in the Cuban Academy of Sciences.

In summary, both nationally and globally, *Annals* makes progress as a multi- and transdisciplinary journal, a comprehensive umbrella of open science in the context of Cuban science. It displays the research of utmost excellence carried out by Cuban scientists, in collaboration with foreign colleagues, so as to offer solutions to problems of biomedical, natural, exact, technical, agrarian, and social sciences as well as the humanities.

Annals is an opportunity in Cuba for scientists to show their most relevant research results. It is a publication for science safekeeping in this complex period, impacted by COVID-19 and Cuba's achievements in tackling this serious disease. In its 158th anniversary, the journal has new goals in the fields of scientific communication and open science, so that it can show to the world the scientific work of the Cuban nation. The purpose is continuing overcoming challenges, opening up room for disseminating science, and accomplishing its inclusion in the international data bases of the greatest world circulation.

