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## Center News

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## CENTER NEWS

The Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law jumped into the new academic year with a flurry of activity, sponsoring several conferences, lectures, and panel discussions. In September, the Center sponsored a lunchtime presentation by Lauren Gilbert, Director of the Women and International Law Project. Ms. Gilbert's presentation, **"Integrating Gender into Legal Education: Perspectives on Women, the Family and the Teaching of Family Law in Latin America,"** explored the structural issues that affect women's experience with the law in Latin America. Latin American civil law judges are reluctant to interpret existing law in innovative ways that would change the current disadvantaged position of women before the law. Judges are also unwilling to utilize new laws, such as prohibitions against domestic violence. This reluctance is especially discouraging to human rights advocates who successfully lobbied for national laws based on the 1993 Vienna Conference on Human Rights, recognizing domestic violence as an international human rights issue. As a result of this conservative legal approach, Latin American feminist scholarship has had little impact on legal education, adjudication, or doctrine.

In order to combat structural barriers in Latin America, Ms. Gilbert stressed the need to educate judges, attorneys, and law students about the role that law should play on behalf of women. Feminist legal thinking that reflects this view should also be included in mainstream legal doctrine. To facilitate these goals, Ms. Gilbert organized the **Pan American Conference on Transforming Women's Legal Status** held at WCL on November 3 through 6. This event brought together Latin and North American scholars and attorneys who strategized ways to influence legal education in Latin America, incorporating feminist scholarship into civil law legal doctrine.

In October, the Center sponsored a panel, **"The Role of Law in the**

**Promotion of Sustainable Development"** as part of WCL's weekend symposium on **"The Fifth Annual World Bank Conference on Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development: Partnerships for Global Ecosystem Management: Science, Economics and Law."** The Center's panel explored the contribution that law can make to the achievement of sustainable development. Toward that purpose, the panel analyzed the links between international and domestic legal systems, as well as the relationship between the law of international organizations, environmental law, human rights, and economic development. Panelists also discussed the roles of government, academia, society, and the legal profession. Speakers for the panel included: The Honorable Christopher G. Weeramantry, Vice-President of the International Court of Justice; WCL Professor Durwood Zaelke, President, Center for International Environmental Law; Professor Daniel Bradlow, Director, International Legal Studies Program, WCL; and Ms. Barbara Bramble, Senior Director, International Office, National Wildlife Federation. Dean Claudio Grossman, WCL, moderated.

The Washington College of Law, Georgetown University Law Center, and the Alliance for Justice sponsored an evening discussion and reception entitled **"With Liberty and Justice for All: Access to Justice for Immigrants."** The discussion featured WCL's own Dean Claudio Grossman, Dan Griswold of the CATO Institute, WCL Professor Michael Maggio, John Miller of the Center for Equal Opportunity, Asylum and Immigration attorney José Pertierra, and ABA Director for the Center for Immigration Law and Representation, Carol Wolchok. This event brought together students, lawyers, activists, and community groups to discuss new United States immigration laws that have dramatically affected thousands of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

The International Legal Studies Program Annual Fall Reception was

held in mid-October to honor the students of the LL.M. Program at WCL. The Program invited ambassadors from the respective countries of the LL.M. students, lawyers who are practicing international law in the Washington, DC area, alumni, and other friends of the Program to participate. Also at the event, the Program awarded the First Grossman Scholarship to an LL.M. student, Kawino Kabahuma from Uganda.

The Center's Lunch Series continued in October with a discussion of **"The Inter-American Human Rights Digest Project: Contributing to the Role of Law in this Hemisphere."** Presenters included Claudia Martin, Project Director, and Diego Rodriguez Pinzon, Research Director. The presenters discussed the development of the Digest, its implications for the Inter-American System, and its potential for improving human rights prosecution in the Western hemisphere. Funding from the Dutch government established the Digest Project at WCL in 1996. The purpose of the Digest is to develop the first jurisprudential repertoire of the Inter-American System. The specific goals of the Digest are to provide legal research for improving the consistency, efficiency, and accessibility of the Inter-American System, to help ensure uniformity and transparency in the jurisprudence of the Commission and the Court, and to assist in raising awareness of the Inter-American System internationally. The Digest itself consists primarily of excerpts from decisions, reports, and resolutions from the Inter-American Commission and Court.

The Center concluded its lunchtime series with a discussion of **"The International War Crimes Research Project."** Senior Research Associate, Brian Tittmore, discussed the origins and functions of the War Crimes Office. Additionally, he discussed current developments of the International Criminal Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. 🌐