

Vance News
November 2014

Vance Center Co-Sponsors Forum on Colombia's Peace Process

The Vance Center joined **Universidad del Rosario**, **El Tiempo**, and the **Hanns Seidel Foundation** in co-sponsoring the forum **The Havana Peace Negotiations: What will Colombians Be Approving and How?** in Bogota, Colombia this month. The forum discussed recent progress and remaining challenges in the Colombian government's peace negotiations with the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC)*, currently taking place in Havana, Cuba.



(From left to right: Dr. José Manuel Restrepo, dean of Universidad del Rosario; Roberto Pombo, director of El Tiempo and Benjamín Bobbe, director of Hanns Seidel Stiftung foundation)

The forum for the first time since the beginning of the negotiations in 2012 brought together members of the negotiation team, government officials, experts, academics, and political parties to discuss the issues under negotiation: land reform; political participation; the drug trade; and victims' participation. Participants shared their views on the end of the conflict, disarmament, and a potential referendum for approval of the peace accord, and its subsequent implementation. Government representatives affirmed that, although the negotiations will bring about the end of the military conflict, peace is to be achieved collectively and in the long term. They significantly stated that that no impunity will result from the peace negotiations.

Vance Center program director Marie-Claude Jean-Baptiste participated in the planning and conduct of the forum. She afterwards met with civil society organizations and representatives from the international community to discuss how the Vance Center can support the peace process and the subsequent transition. The Vance Center plans to engage with these partners on various initiatives in support of the peace process.



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Vance Center and *Latin Lawyer* Survey Pro Bono Practice in Latin America



The Vance Center for the third year in a row has teamed up with **Latin Lawyer** to conduct an annual survey of pro bono practice in Latin America. The survey measures the level of pro bono work by law firms in the region but also their institutionalization of pro bono practice. The Vance Center worked closely with Latin Lawyer and pro bono clearinghouses in the region to strengthen the content and distribution of the survey. In addition to the type and quantity of pro bono work that the law firms are doing, the survey examined the pro bono systems that have been put into place on a country-by-country basis to do this work more efficiently. Over 100 law firms in 18 countries – 25 percent more than last year – completed the survey. The results of the survey will be published later this week. Please visit our website next Monday to read the results.

Vance Center Chairs Latin America Pro Bono Working Group with Fundación Pro Bono Chile

The Vance Center and **Fundación Pro Bono Chile (FPBC)** recently co-chaired a meeting in Santiago of Latin American pro bono clearinghouses which participate in **Red Pro Bono**. The meeting served to share and discuss plans developed by the Vance Center and FPBC to institutionalize the work of the clearinghouses in what they agreed to rename the Pro Bono Network of the Americas. This work includes participation in multi-jurisdictional pro bono matters that members of the network develop, as well as network-sponsored initiatives. Representatives of network members from Argentina, Colombia, Bolivia, Paraguay, Perú, and Mexico attended the meeting, along with FPBC's leadership and staff and Todd Crider, Vance Center Committee vice-chair, and Dina Stukanow, Vance Center director of pro bono partnerships.

The meeting coincided with the annual gala of FPBC which celebrated the pro bono work of FPBC and its member law firms. Four Chilean firms were specially recognized for their pro bono practice: Alessandri Abogados, Carey, Morales & Besa and FerradaNehme.

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The Vance Center Hosts Georgetown University Graduate



The Vance Center recently hosted Laia Evia-Alsina, an LL.M. graduate from Georgetown University Law Center. During her legal fellowship, Ms. Evia-Alsina collaborated with Human Rights and Access to Justice Program Director Marie-Claude Jean-Baptiste in several projects in Latin America, Africa and the Caribbean. A Mexican-trained lawyer, she previously interned at the **Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL)**, the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** and the Mexican Permanent Mission before the OAS. Ms. Evia-Alsina will soon begin an internship with the **International Service for Human Rights** in Geneva, Switzerland.