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**September 6, 2012**

**Center for U.S. and Mexican Law undertakes critical study of oil and gas development in Gulf of Mexico**

*Research project at the University of Houston Law Center will analyze widely different practices and recommend changes*

September 6, 2012 – The Center for U.S. and Mexican Law at the University of Houston Law Center is embarking on a binational research project to explore the domestic and international laws that govern development of shared oil and gas fields in the Gulf of Mexico. The goal is to identify potential areas of regulatory conflict that could endanger the environment of the Gulf of Mexico, a vast resource that is shared by the United States, Mexico and other neighbors.

The industry and regulatory cultures in the two countries are widely divergent. The U.S. model is based on private enterprise, market diversity and competition while state ownership of resources and a tightly protected monopoly exist on the Mexican side of the border.

The possibility that there could be shared hydrocarbon resources crossing the U.S.-Mexico maritime border in the Gulf has compelled the governments of the two nations to reflect on their differences and to seek opportunities for joint development and environmental protection strategies. On Feb. 20, the two countries signed an agreement designed to establish a collaborative relationship. The agreement will likely result in significant legal, institutional, and regulatory gaps and conflicts.

The research project is expected to be undertaken in phases over two or three years with the first phase identifying these potential conflicts and subsequent phases recommending future actions and accommodations to ease safe, cooperative production.

The binational project is led by two directors: Miriam Grunstein, professor of law at CIDE University in Mexico City, and Richard McLaughlin, Endowed Chair for Marine Policy and Law at the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies (HRI) at Texas A&M University –

Corpus Christi. The research project is a collaborative effort between the Center for U.S. and Mexican Law and the Harte Research Institute.

The Center for U.S. and Mexican Law is the first research center in any U.S. law school devoted to the independent, critical study of Mexican law and legal aspects of U.S.–Mexico relations. See <http://www.law.uh.edu/mexican-law/>.

**Media contacts:** Carrie Criado, 713-743-2184, [cacriado@central.uh.edu](mailto:cacriado@central.uh.edu); or John T. Kling, 713-743-8298, [jtkling@central.uh.edu](mailto:jtkling@central.uh.edu).

### **About the University of Houston**

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### **About the University of Houston Law Center**

The [University of Houston Law Center](#) is the leading law school in the nation's fifth-largest legal market. Founded in 1947, it is a top-tier institution awarding Doctor of Jurisprudence (J.D.) and Master of Laws (LL.M.) degrees. The Law Center is fully accredited by the American Bar Association and is a member of the American Association of Law Schools.