

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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University of Houston Law Center establishes Center for U.S. and Mexican Law

As a gateway between two countries, UHLC is a natural setting for nation's first research center for the study of Mexican law and legal aspects of U.S.-Mexico relations

April 3, 2012 – The University of Houston Law Center today announced the establishment of the Center for U.S. and Mexican Law, which is the first independent research center in the United States dedicated to the study of Mexican law and legal aspects of U.S. – Mexico relations.

Houston's position as a gateway between the two countries serves as a natural setting for the Center for U.S. and Mexican Law and its work to improve understanding of each other's laws and legal institutions. Stephen Zamora, Leonard B. Rosenberg Professor of Law at the University of Houston Law Center, will serve as the first director of the center; Ignacio Pinto-León, a Mexican who is licensed to practice law in both Mexico and the United States, will serve as assistant director.

“The creation of an independent research center on Mexican law at a U.S. university is long overdue,” Zamora noted. “Trade and investment between the United States and Mexico continues to grow as our economies become increasingly integrated, thanks to our NAFTA partnership. Thirty-three million persons in the United States are Mexican citizens or descendants of Mexican citizens. Our societies are permanently linked, and yet our understanding of Mexico's laws and legal institutions is extremely limited. The Center for U.S. and Mexican Law will work to reduce the ignorance and misinformation about Mexican law that exists outside of Mexico, and also will undertake projects to promote U.S. – Mexican cooperation.”

In addition to independent research and analysis of the interplay between the U.S. and Mexican legal systems, the center also will promote cross-border education of law students, lawyers, judges and other professionals from both Mexico and Canada. The center will contract with various agencies to fund specific studies and research projects; organize periodic symposia; and participate in collaborative projects to promote cooperation among U.S. and Mexican lawyers, judges and scholars.

In addition to participating faculty at the University of Houston, the Center for U.S. and Mexican Law will sponsor residencies by visiting scholars. At present, the center boasts two affiliate scholars: Dr. José Ramón Cossío Díaz, a Justice of the Mexican Supreme Court, has agreed to serve as the center's first Distinguished Jurist in Residence. Miriam Grunstein, a law professor at CIDE University in Mexico City, also has been named an affiliate scholar. An expert in international energy law, Grunstein will help develop research projects relating to development of U.S. – Mexico energy integration.

A distinguished advisory board composed of lawyers, judges and university professors from both Mexico and the United States will assist the center in its work.

The center also will sponsor activities promoting professional cooperation and legal education in North America through a partnership with the North American Consortium on Legal Education. The Law Center is also party to mutual cooperation agreements with the Mexican Foreign Ministry and with Petróleos Mexicano (Pemex), the national oil company. Under these agreements, UHLC provides scholarships each year toward LL.M. degrees for lawyers from both entities and they in turn accept UH law students as summer interns.

For more information about the Center for U.S. and Mexican Law, see www.law.uh.edu/mexican-law/.

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About the University of Houston

The University of Houston is a Carnegie-designated Tier One public research university recognized by The Princeton Review as one of the nation's best colleges for undergraduate education. UH serves the globally competitive Houston and Gulf Coast Region by providing world-class faculty, experiential learning and strategic industry partnerships. Located in the nation's fourth-largest city, UH serves more than 39,500 students in the most ethnically and culturally diverse region in the country.

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.