

Extreme Events in Central America: Reducing Risk, Enhancing Resilience

“Opening Words of Welcome”



John F. Stack, Jr. holds a joint appointment as Professor of Politics and International Relations and Law and Founding Dean of the Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs at Florida International University. As professor of Politics and International Relations and Law, Dr. Stack serves as an instructor to graduate students of the Green School’s Department of Politics and International Relations and FIU’s College of Law. He specializes in Ethnicity and World Politics, Administrative Law, National Security, and Constitutional Law. Dr. Stack graduated from Stonehill College in Easton, Massachusetts with a Bachelor of Arts with highest honors in 1972. He earned his Master of Arts (1974) and Ph.D. (1977) from the Graduate School of International Studies of the University of Denver and his J.D. from University of Miami’s School of Law in 1989. He was admitted to practice before the Florida Supreme Court in 1990. Dr. Stack is the author, co-author, editor, and co-editor of 16 books and 35 articles and chapters in edited books. His latest book is *Globalization: Debunking the Myths* (2016-17.) *The New Deal in South Florida: Design, Policy, and Community Building, 1932-1944* (2008), co-edited with John A. Stuart, won the 2009 Silver Medal second prize in the Florida Book Awards for Florida Non-fiction.



Mark B. Rosenberg is the fifth president of Florida International University, a public institution of higher education and leader in the production of minority degrees in the sciences and engineering among majority-minority institutions. A political scientist specializing in Latin America, Dr. Rosenberg is the first FIU faculty member to ascend to the university’s presidency bringing over forty years of experience in higher education leadership to this post. The author of seven books and numerous scholarly articles on Latin America, Dr. Rosenberg was one of the principal architects of FIU’s growth and expansion during the past decade. Dr. Rosenberg has provided leadership to grow the institution’s budget, improve student graduation and retention rates, expand internships for enrolled students, and coordinate FIU’s emergence as a leading producer of graduates in priority national and state areas focused on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). From 2005 to 2009, Dr. Rosenberg served as the second Chancellor (first formally selected by the Board of Governors) for the State University System of Florida. Prior to becoming chancellor, Dr. Rosenberg was integrally involved in the expansion and development of FIU into a major public research university. Dr. Rosenberg holds a Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh and a B.A. from Miami University of Ohio, where he was Phi Beta Kappa. He is a Fulbright Research Scholar; a member of the Council on Foreign Relations in New York; a past-Chair of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce (GMCC); and the Co-Chair of the Board on Science Education’s Roundtable on Systemic Change in Undergraduate STEM Education.

“Central American Vulnerabilities: A Systemic Assessment”



Jorge Vargas Cullell is the Director of Estado de la Nación (State of the Nation), a Costa Rica-based center of thought that conducts research on sustainable development. He is also the coordinator for the Citizen Audit on the Quality of Democracy, also in Costa Rica. "We promote the notion that development is about much more than economic growth," Jorge says. "It also involves equity, the environment, democracy, and human rights." Founded in 1994 as a collaborative project with the United Nations Development Program, Estado de la Nación aims to encourage study and discussion of human development in Costa Rica and in Central American countries by improving citizen access to comprehensive, timely and accurate information on matters of public interest. Reports published by Estado de la Nación, which is now sponsored by a group of Costa Rican universities, are used regularly by policymakers, universities, entrepreneurs, labor unions, and community groups. "In a way we are mediating between very diverse groups with different interests," Jorge says. "We try to build a common platform of data and analysis so they can solve their differences."



Gabriela Hoberman is the Assistant Director of Research Programs and Services in the Extreme Events Institute at Florida International University. She is the Faculty Director of the Study Abroad Program on Politics and International Relations in Argentina, at the Kimberly Green Latin American and Caribbean Center. This program is designed to foster an understanding of international relations in Latin America with an interdisciplinary approach to study the region. She collaborates as well, as a Senior Fellow, with the Jack D. Gordon Institute for Public Policy (FIU), in a series of initiatives in public policy and global security and teaches comparative politics courses in the Department of Politics and International Relations at FIU. Dr. Hoberman is a political scientist and researcher in the study of natural disasters in Latin American and Caribbean countries. Her research is focused on public policy, governance, and accountability.



Lenarth Ferrari is the president of FIPADEH (Fundación Integral para el Desarrollo de Honduras), a private development organization that implements environmental and social projects in the biological reserve of MISOCO (central region of Honduras), and in the CUSUCO National Park (northern region of Honduras). Mr. Ferrari is also the president of MOCAPH (Mesa de ONGs Comanejadoras de Áreas Protegidas de Honduras), an organization that brings together 25 civil society organizations in charge of the management and administration of Protected Areas at the National Level (Honduras). Mr. Ferrari has over 15 years experience working in local community development. He focuses on communities located within protected areas in Honduras to work with them on processes related to climate change adaptation and mitigation.



Elizabeth Anderson is a freshwater conservation ecologist based at Florida International University (FIU) in Miami, FL, where she is Assistant Professor in the Department of Earth & Environment. Her work has a strong conservation focus and involves collaborations with other scientists and those in key water resource management roles. Her research has been supported by the MacArthur Foundation, the Tinker Foundation, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and National Geographic. She has since worked for the Organization for Tropical Studies as coordinator of international research and study programs for U.S. and Costa Rican students at La Selva Biological Station, Costa Rica; and as Conservation Sustainability Director at The Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, USA. Dr. Anderson is a three-time recipient of a Fulbright from the U.S. Department of State, including a Fulbright Research Award to Costa Rica in 2001; a Fulbright Scholar Award to Peru in 2014; and a Fulbright Specialist Award to Colombia in 2015.

“Enhancing Resilience to Extreme Events in Central America”



Sergio Lacambra is Principal Specialist in Disaster Risk Management at the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), with 25 years of professional experience in Latin America and the Caribbean. He has been the team leader of numerous policy-based and investment loans in Peru, Colombia, Panama, Bolivia, and supervises natural disasters contingent credit facilities in Peru, Panama, Suriname, and Argentina. He currently coordinates the Disaster Risk Management Cluster in the Environment, Rural Development and Disaster Risk Management Division at the IDB. He was responsible for the team of experts that designed the Index of Governance and Public Policy in Disaster Risk Management (iGOPP) and for its application in the 26 IDB borrowing member countries.



Juan Pablo Sarmiento is a Research Professor and Associate Director for Research at the Extreme Events Institute at Florida International University. He is also Director of the Disaster Risk and Resilience in the Americas program, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Dr. Sarmiento is a Medical Doctor and Surgeon (Universidad del Rosario, Colombia), with a M.Sc. in Public Health, Specialty in Health Promotion and Social Development (Université de Bordeaux, France & Universidad Pública de Navarra, Spain); a M.A. in Project Management (UCI, Costa Rica). He has a Specialization Degree in Medical Education (Universidad de la Sabana, Colombia). Dr. Sarmiento has also post-graduate studies in Disaster Management (Oxford Brookes, U.K.); High Level Public Administration (ESAP, Colombia), and a residence in Nutrition (Tufts University, U.S.A.).



Tania Guillén Bolaños is a research associate at the Climate Service Center in Germany (GERICS) and supports the preparation of the Special Report on the 1.5°C of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). She also supports GERICS activities which aim to enhance the implementation of climate policies, specially planning and implementation of adaptation to climate change, which at the same time can contribute to achieve the sustainable development goals. Previously, Tania was fellow of the International Climate Protection Program of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation at GERICS, where she worked on the development of tools for climate change adaptation planning as part of the climate impacts and economics department. Tania is graduated on Environmental Engineering of the Central American University (UCA) of Nicaragua and holds a MSc in Technology and Resources Management in the Tropics and Subtropics awarded by the TH Köln - University of Applied Sciences of Cologne, Germany.



David Bray is currently a professor in the Earth and Environment Department at Florida International University. He carries out research on community forest management in Mexico and Central America and pursues interests in natural resource and ecosystem management in Latin America and globally. Since 1997, he has received research funding from the Fulbright Program, the Ford Foundation, the Hewlett Foundation, the Tinker Foundation, and the US Agency for International Development. He has also consulted for the MacArthur Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

“The Social and Political Sequels of Environmental Vulnerabilities”



Eric Olson is the Director of Policy and Strategic Initiatives at the Seattle International Foundation. Olson’s primary responsibility is to oversee the Foundation’s engagement with the DC-based policy community. He also provides strategic policy advice to the Foundation’s Central American partners on priority issues such as promoting rule of law and good governance, ending forced migration and displacement, ensuring equity, and strengthening civil society. He oversees SIF’s Anti-Impunity Project and Independent Journalism Fund. In addition to his work with SIF, Olson is a Wilson Center Global Fellow. He served as the Mexico Institute and Latin American Program’s Deputy Director for 11 years. He has published numerous articles and books including, “Crime and Violence in the Northern Triangle: How U.S. policy is helping, hurting, and can be improved.” Prior to his arrival at the Wilson Center he worked with the Secretariat for Political Affairs at the Organization of American States as a Senior Specialist on Good Governance; at Amnesty International USA as Advocacy Director for the Americas; and at the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) as Senior Associate for Mexico.



Randy Pestana serves as Assistant Director of Research and Strategic Initiatives at FIU's Gordon Institute for Public Policy, where he manages the institute's partnerships with U.S. Departments of Commerce, Defense, and State. Mr. Pestana also serves as Director of Education and Training at Cybersecurity at FIU, a designated Emerging Preeminent Program. Additionally, Mr. Pestana serves as an Adjunct Professor for the Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs and Honors College. His technical specialization is in International Relations with focuses on U.S. foreign policy, security studies, and cybersecurity. The majority of his work has been linked to governance and security in Latin America and the Caribbean and cybersecurity workforce development issues

broadly stated. Mr. Pestana has published and assisted on various publications for both academic and defense audiences related to U.S. foreign policy and national security.



José Miguel Cruz is the Director of Research at the Kimberly Green Latin American and Caribbean Center at Florida International University (FIU) in Miami. Previously he was visiting a professor of the Department of Politics and International Relations at FIU. He holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from Vanderbilt University, a Master's degree in Public Policy in Latin America from the University of Oxford and a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from the Central American University of El Salvador (UCA). Dr. Cruz was also the director of the Public Opinion University Institute at the UCA from 1993 to 2006 and has served as a consultant for many regional institutions and international cooperation agencies. Dr. Cruz is a researcher on issues of security, violence,

youth gangs, political culture, and democratization, and has published more than 100 articles, chapters and academic reports, and books in English and Spanish.

“The Role of Extra-Regional Partners”



Saskia Carusi is graduated in social anthropology from the University of Sussex and in integral risk management from the University of San Pablo Guatemala; she has a Master's degree in Development Studies from the institute of Social studies of The Hague with a specialization in local and regional development. She is currently External Relation Officer for the United Nation Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, regional office for the Americas and the Caribbean based in Panama and is the focal point for communication, fundraising and safe schools providing technical assistance partners on the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Her previous professional experience has mainly been with

International NGOS such as Oxfam and Cooperazione Internazionale, with 20 years of experience managing projects and programs in risk reduction, humanitarian response and local development in Latin America and North Africa. Saskia has worked closely with local and national governments, supporting capacity buildings.



Donna Hrinak is a Trustee on the Florida International University Board of Trustees. Hrinak was appointed president of Boeing Brazil in October 2011 and president of Boeing Latin America in November 2014. She is responsible for the development and implementation of the Boeing strategy in Latin America. Hrinak also leads the company's strategy to grow regional market opportunities in Latin America. She is based in Miami and reports to Sir Michael Arthur, president of Boeing International. Prior to this appointment, Hrinak was vice president, Global Public Policy and Government Affairs, for PepsiCo, Inc. Before entering the private sector, Hrinak was a career officer in the U.S. Foreign Service. She is also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Inter-American Dialogue, the International Women's Forum (IWF) and of the Organization of Women in International Trade (OWIT). Hrinak is a graduate of Michigan State University, from which she was also awarded an honorary doctorate of Humanities. She also attended The George Washington University and the University of Notre Dame School of Law.



Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera served as President of Costa Rica from 2014-2018. He is currently the Interim Director of the Kimberly Green Latin American and Caribbean Center at Florida International University. In 1984, he began his service to Costa Rica in the Foreign Ministry, leading Costa Rican delegations to the United Nations, the Organization of American States and the European Union. He was the country's Ambassador for Central American Affairs and for two decades held the office of Secretary General of the governing National Liberation Party. He previously taught at the University of Michigan and in 1999 was a Fulbright Scholar at FIU. Solís is a graduate of the University of Costa Rica and has a master's degree in political science and sociology from Tulane University. He has published more than 10 books and dozens of articles for professional journals.