

Electric Power Research Institute Donates \$1.35 Million to Establish Laboratory on International Law and Regulation at UC San Diego

Lab will identify criteria for effective international law

November 23, 2009

Amy Robinson and Laura Margoni

The University of California, San Diego's School of International Relations and Pacific Studies (IR/PS) today announced receipt of the first installment in a three-year, \$1.35 million gift from the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI). The gift will establish a laboratory on International Law and Regulation (ILAR) to examine when and why international law works. EPRI is a Palo Alto-based non-profit, nonpartisan research organization.

A laboratory to address the criteria of effective international law emerges at a critical juncture as the global community grapples with such difficult issues as climate change, resource management, human rights, economic stability and security. Governments manage all of those issues with international legal instruments, but often their efforts fall short.

ILAR will be directed by professors Emilie Hafner-Burton and David Victor. Both recently joined the UC San Diego faculty. Victor formerly managed a similar program for several years during his tenure at Stanford University.

"This issue of why and what makes international law effective has long been debated," said Victor during a recent interview.

"Our goal is to provide better theories and evidence so that policymakers can craft more effective treaties to solve global problems, such as curbing greenhouse gas emissions and ensuring the sustainability of the planet for future generations," remarked Hafner-Burton in the interview.

Victor added: "In a few areas, such as opening borders to promote trade, international law has been extremely effective, offering models for new efforts to design treaties and other legal instruments."

ILAR is expected to produce a series of scholarly and policy-related papers and articles, as well as publish three books - one on global warming policy, one on human rights, and a major new book on the design and operation of international law. ILAR research results are expected to draw significant public and policymaker attention to UC San Diego and further enhance the university's reputation as a center of innovative thinking and analysis of critical issues.

The launch of ILAR is the realization of a goal to establish UC San Diego as a center of critical analysis on issues of importance to the nation as well as the global community. ILAR commenced in September 2009. "Starting in 2010, a course will be offered to our students that will tie directly into the research conducted by the lab," said IR/PS acting dean Peter Gourevitch. He added: "The role of law and regulation lies at the heart of our mission in understanding how business and government interact in the global arena, so ILAR will contribute strongly to our activities." Students will survey the ever-growing pool of literature on why some international laws and regulations are highly effective while others fail.

"We are pleased to initiate and support such a vital research project that will examine the various components that make international law effective," said Steve Specker, president and chief executive officer of EPRI.

Media Contacts: Amy Robinson, 858-822-5737 or amrobinson@ucsd.edu Laura Margoni, 858-822-2485 or lmargoni@ucsd.edu