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**MacArthur Foundation Joins With UF Law School To Benefit
Latin America Environmental Conservation**

GAINESVILLE, Fla -- The University of Florida Levin College of Law has been awarded a three-year \$100,000 grant from the MacArthur Foundation to continue funding for international environmental conservation programs in Latin America.

The grant will support a UF/University of Costa Rica joint summer program in environmental law as well as international projects pursued by the College of Law's Conservation Clinic in Latin America and the Caribbean. Part of the funding also will be used to bring Latin American lawyers and professors into both programs as instructors.

"This is the latest in a series of MacArthur grants bringing total support for our conservation law initiative from that foundation and other sources to well over one million dollars in the last 10 years," said Thomas Ankersen, director of the law school's Conservation Clinic and the joint UF/UCR program.

Ankersen, with UF law graduate and Costa Rica resident Steve Mack, collaborated eight years ago to develop a regional environmental law network in Central America and Mexico. They obtained a series of small grants that led to bigger ones and soon after obtained the initial MacArthur grant that started the programs that evolved into the UF Conservation Law Program.

The MacArthur Foundation, with offices in Chicago and Palm Beach, is a private foundation dedicated to providing funding for social and environmental causes.

"Part of the theory behind this grant is transferring the concept of clinical environmental law within the Latin American region," said Ankersen. "To reach out beyond the University of Costa Rica and and develop a regional environmental law education program in Latin America and the Caribbean."

The grant also provides fellowships to beginning Latin American environmental law attorneys and advanced law students allowing them to participate in the Costa Rica summer program and work on Clinic projects. Last summer, clinic students from UF, Belize and Brazil submitted a petition to UNESCO to declare a protected area in Belize an international biosphere reserve.

With the renewed grant, the McArthur foundation and the UF College of Law also hope to build environmental law capacity in the insular Caribbean, a geographic priority of the foundation.

"This will be a special challenge, because of the insular nature of the Caribbean and its ethnic and linguistic diversity," Ankersen said.

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