



FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

*Public Administration for the 21st Century*

**Legislature of the State of Florida  
Institute for Public Management & Community Service  
Good Governance and Democracy Center**

**First Seminar for Latin America Young Leaders on Governance and Democratic  
Institution Building: the Florida Experience**  
**Miami – Tallahassee, April 1 – 5, 2013**

During the week of April 1 – 5, 2013, Florida International University's Institute for Public Management & Community Service (IPMCS) successfully organized the First Seminar on Governance and Democratic Institution Building: the Florida Experience.

Participants in the seminar were identified by IPMCS based on extensive consultations with national political leaders in Colombia, Mexico, Ecuador, Panama, and Paraguay (bios attached). The structure of the seminar included a three day presentation in Miami on issues of:

- 1) American politics and political thought
- 2) Economic and Governance in Florida and Miami-Dade County
- 3) The role of the media and civil society in strengthening democratic institutions
- 4) Florida culture and society and the immigrant experience
- 5) Trade and Economic Issues between Florida/US and Latin America

Presentations were made by key leaders in these areas and roundtable discussions were encouraged (final agenda attached).

During the Miami portion of the Seminar, participants had the chance to interact with Florida International University's public administration doctoral students and faculty members where experiences on policy reform were discussed and compared. Participants also had the opportunity to visit Miami-Dade County's Commission's session and observed firsthand how policy issues are discussed and presented in Miami-Dade County. Participants were particularly interested by the openness and transparency of the sessions, and by the fact that the general public had access to the sessions and citizen participation was encouraged.

While in Miami-Dade County participants also had roundtable discussions and presentations on the role of civil society in improving communities; the importance of Miami-Dade County Seaport and Airport to the regional economy, as well as presentations on transportation and urban issues.

A visit to Tallahassee, FL took place during the last two days of the week-long seminar which gave the Latin American legislators/political leaders the opportunity to meet with Florida



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legislative leaders to discuss issues of interest. Participants had the opportunity to attend legislative committee debates on education, health, and inter-governmental relations. They also had the opportunity to watch debates on the floor of the Legislative chambers. Participants were again impressed by the openness of the sessions and by the level of citizens' participation in the committee discussions.

Participants had private informative meetings with Representative Erik Fresen and Senator Bill Galvano. They also met with Representative Eddy Gonzalez the Chairperson of the Miami-Dade County delegation, Representative Ricardo Rangel, and many others. Of great interest for the participants was the opportunity to see how the State Legislature works and how policy is discussed and voted upon.

Some comments shared by the participants included:

*“For me some of the benefits of participating in the Governance Seminar included: Getting to know the political organization of the United States, primarily of the State of Florida. Understanding the functioning of the House of Representatives and how to approve the budgets and how to balance the needs of the cities and regions. Understanding the priorities of the State of Florida as a state model, and a progressive city. Interacted with politicians and public servants of the State of Florida who are committed to working to build the future of democracy and the development of the State of Florida”.*

National Innovation and Information Technology Director, Roberto Caballero, Panama

*“I really believe that the seminar was of much relevance for my career, not only political, but as an official of the public service. The opportunity to participate in the seminar allowed me to have a more global view of the economic development of the hemisphere. The sharing of experiences from other countries in the region is, without a doubt, of great help to my professional development, without, of course, forgetting that I have made new friends.*

*From my end, it was of great benefit to better understand the economic, social and political development of the hemisphere considering the part that each country plays and how the United States is the leader of this initiative on the continent”.*

Mayor Tomas Gloria Requena, Mexico

*“I gained new knowledge on the subject of U.S. policy, governance, and political thoughts. I appreciated the access to firsthand information on the managing of ports, airports, ground systems, allowing for knowledge about successful experiences. I particularly enjoyed the strengthening of interpersonal relationships with colleagues from the hemisphere, creating networks of collaboration and support.”*

Ambassador Candice William De Roux, Panama



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Seminar participants met with Miami-Dade County Mayor, Carlos Gimenez, and Miami-Dade County Commissioners



Seminar participants



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Seminar Participants in Tallahassee, Florida

