

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FORMER COSTA RICAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE IS APPOINTED UF'S BACARDI FAMILY EMINENT SCHOLAR IN LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

Ottón Solís, founding president of Costa Rica's Citizens Action Party, has been appointed the UF Center for Latin American Studies Bacardi Family Eminent Scholar for Spring 2008. Solís has twice been a presidential candidate, losing the 2006 elections by less than one percent of the vote. He led the opposition to Costa Rica's signing of the Central American Free Trade Agreement with the United States in the fall 2007 referendum in that country.

An economist, Solís has been Costa Rica's Minister of Planning and Economic Policy and a congressman. He is the author of two books on ethics in government and scores of newspaper articles and opinion pieces on this topic as well as on national development policies. His current research is on the impact of free trade agreements on development and democracy. This spring he is teaching a graduate seminar on this topic at the Center for Latin American Studies.

Solís will deliver the 2008 Bacardi Family Lecture on Wednesday, February 27, 4 pm, Presidents Room, Emerson Alumni Hall. The title of his lecture is "Winners and Losers in Free Trade Agreements: The View from the South." Dr. Mark Rosenberg, Chancellor of the State University System of Florida and an expert on Central America, will be the commentator.

The Bacardi Family Eminent Scholar Chair in Latin American Studies was established in 1991 through the leadership of Bacardi Imports, Inc. and the collaboration of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the state of Florida. The endowment allows the Center for Latin American Studies to invite distinguished scholars and public figures to teach, lecture, mentor students and carry out research at the University.

Founded in 1930, the UF Center for Latin American Studies advances knowledge about Latin America and the Caribbean and its peoples throughout the hemisphere. With over 170 faculty from colleges across UF, the Center is one of the largest institutions for interdisciplinary research, teaching and outreach on Latin America, Caribbean, and Latino Studies. Programs include Tropical Conservation and Development, Law and Policy in the Americas, and Latin American Business Environment, among others.