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Laurier-based council funds research on governance over the Caribbean Sea

WATERLOO – The Laurier-based Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS) is funding a research project on sustainable governance over the Caribbean Sea with a \$100,000 donation from the Arsenault Family Foundation. The Caribbean Sea is a distinct ecological feature of economic, social and environmental importance to the more than 20 countries of the Caribbean.

“This project is extremely important, not only for the people of the Caribbean, but for people grappling with the challenge of regional governance all over the world,” said Dr. Patricia Goff, executive director of ACUNS and a Laurier political science professor. “This is especially true where the environment is concerned because environmental challenges cannot be confined within national borders.”

ACUNS used its global network to secure partners to complete the project, which will evaluate the mechanisms by which national governments in the Wider Caribbean Region are linked to regional organizations and institutions for ocean governance.

Current linkages within and between Caribbean countries appear to suffer from a variety of problems and each Caribbean country has different arrangements, each with a variety of strengths and weaknesses.

“Not every government has mechanisms in place to consult local stakeholders and then coordinate with regional partners,” said Goff, who is also a senior fellow at the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI). “Our project will make important recommendations about best practices in this increasingly important area of regional governance.”

Ultimately, the project will seek to identify best practices with reference to country size and capacity, and develop guidelines for establishing and operating mechanisms that reflect these practices.

Partner organizations include the University of the West Indies, the Dalhousie University marine affairs program and the One Earth Future organization. Findings will be made available on the ACUNS website (www.acuns.org) in early 2010.

The Arsenault Family Foundation focuses on funding projects that lead to peace through new or improved governance mechanisms (<http://www.arsenaultfamilyfoundation.org/>).

Headline / 2