

Saturday, March 1, 2008

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Vanderbilt's Latin American Public Opinion Project receives major financial boost 1-31-2008  



Mitchell Seligson (photo by Stephen Barrett)

The [United States Agency for International Development](#) (USAID) has expanded and extended its support for the Vanderbilt University-based [Latin American Public Opinion Project](#) (LAPOP) with additional funding of up to \$9 million.

"This generous support will enable LAPOP, a consortium of universities and research institutes throughout the Americas, to continue its AmericasBarometer surveys through 2014," said [Mitchell A. Seligson](#), the Centennial Professor of Political Science at Vanderbilt and founder and director of LAPOP.

Every two years the organization conducts interviews with random samples of some 1,500 adults in 20 countries in North and South America. As the surveys are completed, research teams write extended analyses of the data and present them to policymakers, citizen groups, scholars and students in the host countries.

"These studies provide the nations an objective look at many important aspects of democracy and governance," Seligson said. "For example, they measure the extent to which citizens are committed to democratic values, participate actively in their democracies and engage in civil society. The surveys also measure the darker side of governance through the corruption victimization index and crime victimization scale that they include."

An important aspect of LAPOP is training the next generation of graduate students to handle the complex tasks of sample and questionnaire design and data analysis. Currently, there are 11 doctoral students in the program, and the USAID has provided fellowship support for several of the students.

Last December senior scholars in the program along with USAID Democracy and Governance officers met in San Salvador, El Salvador, to decide upon the questions to be included in the 2008 round of surveys. Interviews are underway, with more than 30,000 expected to be conducted.

[Elizabeth Zechmeister](#), an assistant professor of political science at the [University of California, Davis](#), will join LAPOP in the fall as assistant director.

LAPOP also has received funding from the [InterAmerican Development Bank](#) and the

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[Midsouth Emmy-Winning Video](#)

Students from four Nashville universities boarded buses last January to retrace history with many of the original Freedom Riders from the 1960s. Watch this rolling history lesson, and hear first-hand from the civil rights leaders.

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[United Nations Development Programme](#). At Vanderbilt, the project is supported by the [Center for the Americas](#), the [College of Arts and Science](#) and [Department of Political Science](#).

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Midsouth Emmy-Winning Video

Rev. James Lawson returns to Vanderbilt as a distinguished professor after being expelled decades earlier for his Civil Rights work.

VU in the News



The Tennessean: [Vanderbilt chancellor search nears end](#)

The 45 voting members of Vanderbilt's Board of Trust will be in Nashville for a full board meeting scheduled for Saturday morning, and are expected to make progress on the search for a new chancellor. Mike Schoenfeld, vice chancellor of public affairs, is quoted. A related story appears in the *Seattle Times: UW's president turns down offer from Vanderbilt*. The story was also reported in the *Nashville Post*.

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