Rusk Center hosts international trade conference

In March, the Dean Rusk Center - International, Comparative and Graduate Legal Studies hosted the International Trade Under the Rule of Law Conference, which was also designated an American Society of International Law Centennial Regional Meeting.

The central focus of the conference was the dispute settlement system of the World Trade Organization (WTO), with a view toward exploring the need for a superstructure of international law governing trade and economic cooperation between countries.

With the WTO marking its 10th anniversary last year, this symposium provided a timely venue for the review of one of the most important aspects of the WTO – the dispute settlement system, according to Rusk Center Director and conference organizer C. Donald “Don” Johnson (J.D.’73).

“It is important to look back and to take stock of how the system and its members have fared over the past decade and to address questions related to reform and modification.”

The distinguished group of international panelists assembled for the conference included ambassadors, university professors, legal practitioners and government officials, all of who are intimately involved with various aspects of the WTO dispute settlement system.

Johnson said these guests engaged in dialogue that transcended pure academic discussion by providing true, pragmatic legal and policy debate.

“In this way, conference participants were able to gain practical insight from those who are directly involved in the WTO dispute settlement system process – the decision makers – as well as those who follow and study the outcomes and workings of the system,” he said.

The proceedings of the conference will be published later this year as part of the Rusk Center’s Occasional Papers series.

Annual Red Clay Conference focuses on natural disaster planning

In the wake of last year’s devastating hurricane season, organizers of the 18th Annual Red Clay Conference planned a day of panels and expert commentary to review the lessons learned and to explore how to be better prepared in the future.

The keynote speaker was nationally recognized expert on environmental law and land use Rob R.M. Verchick, the Gauthier-St. Martin Eminent Scholar Chair in Environmental Law at Loyola University in New Orleans. Since the Hurricane Katrina disaster, he has traveled the nation discussing Katrina, what went wrong, what could have been improved and the lessons that can be taken from the experience in preparation for future natural disasters.

At the March conference, Verchick addressed these issues and their implications on both a national scale and as they relate to Georgia.

Panel topics covered included: planning and preparation for emergency response, land use policy to prevent and mitigate against natural disasters, insurance implications, and health and safety issues.

 Authorities from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Small Business Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, the American Bar Association, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Southern Environmental Law Center and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers served as panelists.

Sponsored by the Environmental Law Association, the Red Clay Conference was established to increase public awareness of environmental issues of regional, national and international significance through a series of educational presentations and open forum discussions.