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Introduction

The Linkage Program or Linkages, as it is also commonly referred to, officially began in 1993, when five YLS students traveled to Santiago, Chile. In 2017, six YLS students went to Argentina, three went to Chile, and four went to Brazil, where they were hosted by students from our seven Latin American partner universities.1 Each leg of the program lasts three and a half to four weeks. Occasionally, YLS students combine the Linkage Program with an internship at an NGO or other institution in Latin America for the remainder of their summer. The Linkage Program and all the other Latin American Legal Studies programs at YLS are fruits of friendship and collaboration between YLS faculty and Latin American legal scholars that developed during the transition period from authoritarian regimes and the constitutional reforms that took place in the region from the mid-1980s through the early 1990s.

For the 2018 program, we would like to reinvigorate emphasis the program’s objective of fostering intellectual and personal engagement with leading Latin American legal scholars by drawing out the selection and preparation process. To do so, for example, the application deadline is January 18, 2018, instead of early November, and instead of spending the first weeks of the spring semester hosting Latin American law students, applicants will be expected to devote 25-40 hours (roughly 2-3 hours a week) to developing and preparing for their summer program. The vision for the program is a hybrid between individualized research and small group activities. Although you may be especially interested in learning about the reform of government tenders in the wake of the massive corruption scandals in Brazil, to take a couple examples of activities from the 2017 Brazil program, you might also appreciate visiting and talking with the warden of a federal prison if that is one of the other participants’ primary interests, or discussing the litigation around the eviction of the inhabitants of an area designated for an expansion of Rio de Janeiro’s botanical gardens. Participants will also be expected to assist in the organization of the YLS leg of the program when their Latin American hosts visit New Haven at the start of the spring semester in January 2019.

The Linkage Exchange Program Timetable

While final applications to the program are only due at the start of the spring semester, interested students are strongly encouraged to submit draft applications earlier. The tentative dates for the Argentine and Chilean legs of the program are Tuesday, May 8 – Tuesday, June 5, 2017. The Brazil program will take place during the month of August. The precise dates will vary slightly in function of the participants’ exam and summer job schedules.

Funding

The Linkages program covers travel costs and provides a stipend for daily expenses. YLS directly buys the participants’ airplane tickets and travel clinic expenses and reimburses them for unanticipated program-related costs. In addition, participants receive a daily stipend for meals and incidentals that includes funds for ground transportation and fixed program expenses prior to their trip. This stipend comes in the form

1 The Universidad Diego Portales and Universidad de Chile in Santiago, Universidad de Palermo in Buenos Aires, Universidade de São Paulo, Fundação Getulio Vargas – São Paulo, FGV – Rio de Janeiro, and Universidade do Estado de Rio de Janeiro in Brazil.
of a check prepared by the Financial Aid Office that does count against the total amount of Summer Public Interest Funding that students are allowed.

Program Requirements

Eligible applicants to the Linkages program must be currently enrolled in the law school and proficient in either Spanish or Portuguese. In addition, the students are expected to attain elementary knowledge of the legal and political structures of the country they are to visit. For this the program coordinator can provide reading material and arrange meetings with Latin American students and scholars.

The university requires all students undertaking university-sponsored international travel to attend a travel clinic at Yale Health and fill out an assumption of risk waiver. The university also strongly urges students to register their travel and take advantage of the resources at http://world-toolkit.yale.edu/.

Organization of New Haven Leg (which will only begin on the last day of the add/drop period of the 2019 spring semester and last for three and a half weeks)

Hosting

Just as the YLS students who participate in the program are hosted by Latin American law students at our partner universities, the Latin American students who come to YLS in January 2019 will be hosted by YLS students. Ideally all the participants in the Linkages program would host a Latin American student. Hosting a student from Latin America is highly recommended and is less of a hassle than most people imagine. The program keeps the Latin American students very busy and their excitement for this opportunity for a behind-the-scenes look at legal education at Yale brightens the halls and makes winter more bearable. The Latin American participants eat breakfast and lunch at the law school dining hall and dinner at Grace Murray Hopper College. The law school reimburses hosts for reasonable expenses related to hosting – spare keys, extra groceries, and so on. We try to pair hosts with guests based on country, interests, personality, and lifestyle or dietary preferences, but even with perfect information sometimes imperfect matches are made, in which case it makes sense to switch people around and, on very rare occasions, when the arrangement has proven uncomfortable for either the guest or the host, that is what we have done.

Events at the Law School

Most of the Latin Americans’ time at the law school is spent reading and sitting in on classes, and YLS students are encouraged to invite the guests to shadow them. The vast majority of faculty welcome the Linkages students in their classes and support the program, but the guests should nevertheless be introduced to the professor before sitting in on their class as a matter of courtesy and in case there are circumstances that disallow it (such as the confidentiality requirements of clinics). The Linkages program coordinator also arranges separate meetings between the Latin American students as a group and various faculty members, the Dean, and students involved in clinics and journals. On Friday evenings the Latin American students take turns giving short presentations over dinner on their research or relevant current
developments in their countries. The program of extra activities and meetings for the 2017 YLS program is attached.

Events outside the Law School

Social activities are very important. The Latin American students will spend a lot of time together and form a group naturally, but the more interaction they have with YLS students the more rewarding the program will be. There will be a welcome and/or a farewell dinner at the home of one of the faculty directors (probably Daniel Markovits or Owen Fiss), and we also organize one or two other large social outings – last year some YLS students took the group to the Yale Rep and others to a men’s hockey game. Again, the golden rule of education applies here as well – the more you put into the experience, the more you gain from it.

Side or Field Trips

The Latin American students often come to the U.S. before the program starts to travel alone or with family, and often stay late to attend the student-organized Rebellious Lawyering conference. Many, especially those who are only in the U.S. for those dates, try to visit Boston, New York, or DC on weekends. Sometimes we are able to organize special activities (e.g., private tours of the Supreme Court) through the network of former Linkages students working in those cities. There will also be a visit to a Second District Court of Appeals, an NGO, and a big law firm in New York on the Thursday between the end of the program and the RebLaw conference. Most of these trips are set up without direct involvement of the YLS students simply because of the demands of the average YLS student workload, but YLS Linkages students are always welcomed and encouraged to take part or organize them.

Applying to the Program

To apply to the program, submit to the program coordinator (bradley.hayes@yale.edu) a statement of interest, a current resume, and a law school transcript (1Ls need not include a transcript). The statement of interest should not exceed 750 words and briefly address the following questions:

Generally:

What is your primary motivation for applying to the Linkage Program? What previous experience abroad do you have?

More specifically:

Are there specific issues relevant in Argentina, Brazil, or Chile that interest you? How might participating in the program assist you reach academic, professional, and/or personal goals? How do you think you might contribute to making the program, both the U.S. and South American legs, more rewarding for the other participants?
Some basic information:

What is your preferred country and how strong is that preference? How well do you speak Spanish or Portuguese? How many academic commitments outside of classes (i.e., clinics, journals, T.A., R.A., etc.) do you estimate you will have next semester?

The application deadline is Thursday, January 18, 2018. Do not hesitate to contact the program coordinator, bradley.hayes@yale.edu, with any doubts or questions.

**Next Steps**

1. Schedule a language assessment with the program coordinator. These assessments are conducted in Spanish or Portuguese and take around 15 minutes. You will be asked to explain how you learned the language and what topics relevant to Latin America interest you most. If maintaining the conversation in the target language is difficult, ways to improve will be discussed.
2. Look for events and opportunities to learn more about the civil law tradition and political history of Latin America. The program coordinator can help you find material to read and people to talk to.
3. Consider submitting a draft of your statement of interest to the program coordinator well before the deadline in order to receive comments and advice for revision.