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**ACUNS at 30
2017 Annual Meeting
Plenary Panel I**

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It is a great privilege and honor for me to join colleagues and friends today on this panel to mark the 30th anniversary of ACUNS. As John Holmes so aptly titled his talk that subsequently became the first Holmes Lecture, we are Looking Backwards and Forwards. For this Annual Meeting, we are looking forwards as we celebrate the future with a new host for Global Governance and the announcement of a new headquarters for ACUNS. So, for them and for all others gathered, we appropriately take a few minutes to do a bit of stocktaking so that we can appreciate the progress made, but also reflect on the work yet to be done. As you have heard, by agreement, each of us took on one aspect of ACUNS work. For me, it will be the ACUNS Workshop.

ACUNS and the ACUNS Workshop have been a big part of my professional life although it may not be so obvious to those outside of a small circle. Let me start from the beginning. In early summer 1987 in Cabell Hall at the University of Virginia, I was on my way to teach a summer class on international organizations. On the way, I bumped into my senior colleague, Inis Claude, who asked me about summer plans. I told him about my latest writing project and asked him about his summer. He said, "well, I am heading to Dartmouth to have a talk about something that might interest you, the future of international organization studies. He then paused and said, perhaps you should have been asked to come along." In any event, we went in our separate directions. When I saw him again at the end of the summer, I asked him what came of the talk. He said, it was an interesting gathering, but he was not sure what would really come of it. Still, he noted that there was important support for the work including from the UN and foundations and many good people were involved with the project. As I got more

deeply involved with ACUNS, he and I would share a laugh recalling this conversation.

My second personal connection came in 1990. I had just joined the staff of the American Society of International Law as Programs Director. Just prior to one of the very first public occasions I would attend as a staff member of the ASIL, the then Executive Director of the Society, Larry Hargrove, called me into his office. He said that two individuals, who turned out to be Gene Lyons and Ben Rivlin, were on their way to Tillar House, the ASIL headquarters, to talk about a possible collaboration. However, he said that he did not have time to see them because of the event plus he said, "I think this is something more up your alley anyway." When asked what that would be, he said it had to do with a workshop idea for international organizations. I had no time to prepare, but was enthusiastic since, as a junior academic, I had taken part in two such workshop programs and thought them a very effective way to focus on a subject and to develop a network. The one that particularly struck me as achieving the right balance of teaching and learning for teachers and other professionals was a series of MacArthur Foundation funded workshops on arms control that were held at MIT.

After Gene, Ben, and I managed to squeeze out a little lunch from the lunch line, we went to my office where they told me that they came to visit the American Society of International Law at the behest of the Ford Foundation. As it turned out, our two organizations shared a program officer who felt that the workshop would benefit from a collaboration with an international law organization in order to bring lawyers and law into the discussion. Given my personal academic background of focusing in international law, but through an international relations lens, I was not only enthusiastic, but also realized that this would be an important opportunity to provide renewed focus on international institutions and to introduce the techniques of social science research to the legal academy. We ended the conversation by agreeing that I would talk to the ASIL Executive Director about the project.

Soon after the conversation, I talked with Inis about this idea. By happy coincidence, he was serving on the Society's Board of Review and Development that at the time oversaw all of ASIL's grant-related activity. Not surprisingly, he could see the possibility and was enthusiastically supportive. Another key figure in the ASIL's decision-making was Louis Sohn, the esteemed Bemis professor of

international law at Harvard for many years and then at the University of Georgia. In the meantime, my enthusiastic presentation of the concept to Executive Director Larry Hargrove – himself a person who had worked at the US Mission to the UN prior to coming to the Society – yielded a response that I then would be the right person to spearhead this for the Society.

Armed with that charge, I got back to Gene and to Ben and work began in earnest to get the first workshop underway. With that, I was happily involved with participant selection and general design of the workshops from the first in 1991 until I left the Society in late 2006. As many of you know, I subsequently became Executive Director of ASIL and Chair of the ACUNS Board of Directors.

I am now happy to report that the Workshop Program remains a vibrant and important feature of ACUNS. Its alumni both in terms of faculty and participants have generated not only ACUNS leadership, but also dedicated ACUNS members. Significantly, participants have gone on to do what the workshops set out to accomplish – to strengthen and to invigorate the study of international institutions and cooperation. The list of participants is filled with names whose work are now as standard to us as the names of those like Inis Claude were at the ACUNS founding conference. As with all such activities though, there was a learning curve and I will take the balance of my time to highlight that.

The stated purposes of the workshops were three:

- To enhance the professional development of younger teachers and scholars in international organization studies;
- To renew the links between international lawyers and international relations experts; and
- To build working relations between university-based scholars, members of the secretariats of international organizations, and staff of nongovernmental organizations.

ACUNS and ASIL benefited from the support initially of the Ford Foundation and subsequently of the Pew Charitable Trusts and MacArthur Foundation. The subject matter interests of the foundations guided the selection of workshop topics, but were always cast in broad enough terms to allow flexibility. This partnership model has now evolved into the very robust program developed by

Alistair Edgar and Wilfrid Laurier where the workshop moves from location to location in order to expand the diversity of participants, viewpoints, and subject matter. The partnership is a financial one to be sure, but it is also one of an intellectual collaboration in which the ACUNS Executive Director plays a key role. While I was at ASIL, it was one of the more rewarding responsibilities that I had as I participated in these planning discussions.

Several key developments in the evolution of the workshops:

1. The first was to recognize the rich resources participants themselves represented. From the very first workshop, we realized that participants were drawn to the program because of a desire to connect with others working in the area and to find ways to strengthen and to disseminate their work. Our former Chair, Abi Williams, was a participant in that first workshop as was Jose Alvarez with whom I can still recall a conversation we had at Dartmouth. It was about suitable texts to use for teaching international organizations or institutions in law schools. I encouraged him to do one which has now given us the magisterial International Organizations as Law-Makers. Time does not allow me to recount other such discussions.

Recognizing this rich resource led us to build in more and more time for participants to discuss their work and less for set presentations by invited speakers. The role of the workshop directors quickly became one of discussion facilitator and moderator. This evolved to a system where participant papers were submitted in advance; a discussant assigned to raise key questions; and discussion with discussant and paper writer would ensue without a formal presentation of the paper. For IO and NGO staff, they were asked to prepare an outline or paper on a project they were working on.

Over time, this has generated a dynamic and open environment of exchange and dialogue with participants gaining greater insight and perspective into their work. If you looked at the schedules of the workshops over time, you will see more working session time and less presentation time as the workshops evolved. So, lesson one was to build on the resources of the participants.

2. Second point of evolution and perhaps one of the most significant was how to “renew the links between international lawyers and international relations experts.” Early workshops began by talking about “bridging the gap.” Yet, it became clear even from the very first workshop, that the more we talked about bridging the gap, the wider the gap appeared to be. In those early years, I would attend each workshop and typically arrive late in the first week. What I observed was that lines seemed to be deeply drawn between the IO and IL camps with our practitioner participants somewhat in between or trying to avoid the academic divides. My observation was confirmed by participant assessments that consistently rated efforts to “bridge the IO and IL gap” as the least satisfactory portion of the workshop.

In 1997, having once again encountered this phenomenon, I told then ACUNS Executive Director Tom Weiss that we should talk about this. Over a couple of hours, we concluded that ironically the conscious efforts to bridge the gap clearly were widening it and that this was getting in the way of the good work that participants could do. We came to a conclusion that I believe was significant for the workshop’s development.

We realized that in two weeks time, it was not possible for participants or resource staff to undertake a comprehensive review of all methods and approaches in either international law or international relations. As a result, we ended up with a false dichotomy between two disciplines while excluding other disciplines with relevance to an understanding of international politics, organizational dynamics, and institutional design. With this in mind, Tom and I embarked on a shift in emphasis for the workshop.

We concluded that we would have all participants focus on a common problem area to which they would bring their professional experience and perspective. We therefore shifted focus to the area under study rather than on the methodology employed to conduct that study. The change in tone and spirit at the first workshop in 1998 when this occurred was palpable. The initial subject we chose was global governance because this was not a term that either field could lay claim to, but yet was relevant to both. Under ACUNS auspices, Tom and I published “Toward Understanding Global

Governance: The International Law and International Relations Toolbox,” that was used as basic reading for the workshop on a number of occasions. Lesson 2 then was to focus on a problem rather than on methodology.

3. The networks that the workshops have produced are perhaps one of the strongest contributions the workshops have made to our present state of study and understanding of the UN, international cooperation, and international institutions more broadly. At ten years, Gene Lyons recounted ACUNS early days in “Putting ACUNS Together.” He concluded by reflecting on the legacy of the summer workshops as follows:

Global governance projects a highly decentralized and pluralistic, non-hierarchical picture in the world. It brings together a number of intellectual orientations and has the capacity to draw together scholars from different disciplines. ACUNS is still largely dominated by international relations specialists of the political science variety. But they are working increasingly with international lawyers, UN practitioners to bring their experiences to bear, often as not embedded in a background in economics or sociology and the international spread of membership provides cultural and historical diversity to the work that gets done.

For me personally, association with the workshops has been an amazing intellectual experience and journey made all the richer by the friendships and connections that I have made over the years. For those of you who will now follow, I commend the organization and the work to you and very much encourage your continued active support and participation. Thank you.