The Department of Conflict Analysis and Dispute Resolution marked the launch of the new Global Peacemaker Lecture Series with a prestigious guest speaker of international caliber, in the person of Christopher Mitchell, Ph.D, Professor Emeritus at the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University.

With an extensive, hard-won experience of decades in the field of conflict resolution, Dr. Mitchell's topic, ***Mediation in the 21st Century***, gathered a significant audience of students, academia and general public. The lecture was constructed around three main questions, namely: *What is mediation? Who can act as mediators in a conflict*? *What contributions can be made in order to achieve peace?* To answer the first question, Dr. Mitchell proposed a theoretical definition of the concept, according to which, mediation should be viewed and understood as a complex process that various entities can participate in, at different levels and with degrees of involvement, simultaneously or consecutively. He furthered his explanation by encouraging the audience to envision mediation as a conglomerate of functions to be performed, or "jobs to be done", not by a single individual, as it is all too commonly believed, but rather by an interwoven network of intermediaries. Dr. Mitchell distinguished between the various roles that people can have in the mediation process (convener, decoupler, unifier, envisioner, etc.), along with their corresponding tasks and functions, exemplifying how one person can play one or several roles throughout.

In regards to the second question, Dr. Mitchell brought up several concrete examples, of individuals who, in the midst of tumultuous conflicts, ended up successfully performing mediation functions and, ultimately, making notable contributions in the de-escalation of conflicts. In addition, he also explained the circumstances which favor the emergence of ad-hoc mediators, as it happened in Northern Ireland, and how one's reputation, prestige, and background factor in, resulting in certain roles being an adequate fit for some, while entirely inadequate for others.

Dr. Mitchell also addressed the role of different types of leaderships (grassroots, middle, and top level) in the highly complicated "conflict system"; the ability to think creatively and willingness to work collaboratively, as was the case of Sudan in the 1970s. The lecture ended with questions from students which Dr. Mitchell answered candidly, giving more insights and sharing examples from his reputable professional experience.