

# FAU gets \$5 million to seek energy from ocean currents

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by [By Dale M. King](#)

Just weeks after Florida Atlantic University announced that two graduate students, an advisor and an inventor had built the apparatus to desalinate water cheaply, FAU has received a \$5 million grant to tackle another worldwide concern -- energy.

University officials said the grant will be used to establish the Florida Center of Excellence in Ocean Energy Technology. It will seek solutions to Florida's energy crisis by looking at South Florida's ocean currents - specifically the Gulf Stream, the most energy-dense ocean current - as a potential renewable energy source.

FAU was selected by the Florida Technology, Research and Scholarship Board to receive the grant. The Boca Raton-based school is among six Florida universities chosen from 32 proposals submitted to the board.

This new facility will be FAU's second Center of Excellence. The first one -- its Center of Excellence in Biomedical and Marine Biotechnology -- was established in 2003.

"The major objective of funding these centers is to stimulate Florida's economy and have a significant impact on creating a highly skilled workforce," said FAU President Frank T. Brogan. "We are very proud to be among the universities selected for a center of excellence. The great research occurring at FAU will help move us closer to providing a better quality of life for our community, state, nation and the world."

Using its ocean engineering expertise, the center will develop and commercialize ocean energies that are competitive with existing power costs, such as fossil-fuel-based power generation, to provide a clean, reliable and renewable source of energy that can be used to generate electricity, hydrogen and potable water, as well as provide alternative methods for residential cooling or air conditioning.

"This funding will lead to the establishment of a world-class center that will revolutionize future energy production on our planet," said Dr. Larry F. Lemanski, vice president for research at FAU and principal presenter for FAU's new center of excellence. "We are very excited about developing these innovative, energy-producing technologies, and we have put together a strong partnership base composed of industrial, academic and government partners to accomplish our goals and mission for our new center of excellence."

FAU will work with the Navy, the Department of Energy, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Florida Power & Light, Ocean Renewable Power, Lockheed Martin, Clipper Windpower, Oceaneering, Aquantis, the University of Central Florida, Nova Southeastern University and Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution in establishing the center.

"Our Center of Excellence will be a synergistic partnership utilizing our combined ocean engineering expertise to foster the research, design, development, implementation, testing and commercialization of cutting-edge ocean energies that are cost-competitive with existing power technologies," said Dr. Rick Driscoll, associate professor in FAU's department of ocean engineering and co-principal technical personnel for the project.

Driscoll will co-lead the project with Dr. Manhar Dhanak, professor and chair of the department of ocean engineering at FAU and co-principal technical personnel for the project.

"To harness ocean energy for power is a laudable goal for any ocean engineer," said Dhanak. "This is a really exciting opportunity for our department."

The Florida Center of Excellence in Ocean Energy Technology will be housed at FAU's SeaTech—Institute for Oceans & Systems Engineering in Dania Beach. The Institute is part of FAU's Department of Ocean Engineering, located within the College of Engineering & Computer Science.

The six universities selected to receive a center of excellence include: University of South Florida; Florida Atlantic University; University of Florida (two centers); University of Central Florida; and Florida State University.

***Dale M. King can be reached at 561-549-0832 or at [dking@bocanews.com](mailto:dking@bocanews.com).***