

FAU to try to pull power from the sea

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Florida Atlantic University is to get \$5 million to establish a center to look to the ocean to provide the state and the world with abundant renewable energy. Partners include **Nova Southeastern University**.

The Boca Raton-based university said the Florida Technology, Research and Scholarship Board picked it to receive the funds to establish the Florida Center of Excellence in **Ocean Energy Technology**.

This new center is to be FAU's second Center of Excellence. Its first, the Center of Excellence in Biomedical and Marine Biotechnology, began operations in 2003.

The Center of Excellence in Ocean Energy Technology is to look specifically at the Gulf Stream, the most energy-dense ocean current, for power.

"As one of the fastest growing states, Florida's electricity consumption is estimated to increase by nearly 30 percent over the next 10 years," the university said. Because Florida lacks coal mines, oil wells and natural gas, less than 1 percent of the energy consumed in the state comes from fuels found here, leaving it heavily reliant on imported sources of fuel.

FAU predicted ocean generated electricity would could create a new industry and more than 26,500 new Florida-based jobs, changing Florida from an energy importer to a leader in energy exports.

"The major objective of funding these centers of excellence is to stimulate Florida's economy and have a significant impact on creating a highly skilled workforce," FAU President Frank T. Brogan said. "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."

In addition to Davie-based NSU, FAU is to work with the University of Central Florida and **Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution** in establishing the center. Other partners are to include the **U.S. Navy**, the **U.S. Department of Energy**, the **National Renewable Energy Laboratory**, **Florida Power & Light**, **Ocean Renewable Power**, **Lockheed Martin**, **Clipper Windpower**, **Oceaneering** and **Aquantis**.

Rick Driscoll, associate professor in FAU's department of ocean engineering and co-principal technical personnel for the project, said the center will foster the research, design, development, implementation, testing and commercialization of ocean energies cost-competitive with existing power technologies such as fossil-fuel-based power generation.

The Florida Center of Excellence in Ocean Energy Technology is to 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 within the College of Engineering & Computer Science.