Building the Future of FAU Ocean and Environmental Sciences

BOCA RATON, Fla. (Jan. 25, 2017) – More than 130 faculty and staff, which included participants from all the colleges and Harbor Branch, gathered at FAU Harbor Branch in Fort Pierce Friday to help shape the future of the university's ocean science & technology and environmental sciences programs. Anton Post, Ph.D., HBOI's new executive director, led the day-long retreat that focused on the most complex and far-reaching research pillar identified in President John Kelly's Strategic Plan for the Race to Excellence 2015-2025.

Post, who started at FAU this month, will lead the development of these research programs that cut across all six of the university's campuses. The research retreat was the first step in "co-creating" and "designing" the pillar with input from faculty, he said.

At the retreat, Dan Flynn, vice president for research, talked about the vision for the pillars, which are areas of research strength for FAU. Regional assets guide the growth of these research areas while the university builds on existing strengths, he said. The four research focus areas are: sensing and smart systems; healthy aging; neuroscience; and ocean science & engineering and environmental sciences.

Michael Minton, chair of the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute Foundation, and First Lady of FAU Carolyn Boltin-Kelly expressed their support for the initiative during introductory remarks. Leaders from the other pillars attended the retreat, as did deans from many of FAU's colleges.

During the retreat, faculty broke out into sessions that covered marine science and oceanography; ocean and coastal engineering; environmental sciences and marine and coastal affairs. The groups discussed pressing research questions, developing interdisciplinary teams and what expertise they need to advance their research. Attendees also focused on the needed resources and support infrastructure that FAU has or needs to acquire. In addition, they covered what is needed to build research centers of excellence at the university. A report of conclusions from the retreat will be forthcoming.

# # #