

## Ensuring Faculty Excellence Grant \$1,734,750

The Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute Foundation recognized that the hardest thing for any nonprofit organization to fundraise for was personnel dollars. Government, foundations, corporations and individual donors prefer to see their contributions go to directly support activities, programs, and special initiatives. However, these activities, programs, and special initiatives cannot be done without the expertise of the individuals who steward these programs and, in addition to physical plant expenses, payroll is typically the single greatest line item expense to any nonprofit or educational institution. This has long been a Catch 22.

In the case of the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute, the salaries of its Faculty scientists are a combination of institutionally-supported funding and what is commonly referred to as “soft” money. Soft money is the term used to refer to funding that is not part of FAU’s state-supported base budget and comes through grants, usually from federal, state, and/or private sources. These grant monies are allocated for a specific program or project (e.g., research study) for a specified period of time. In the case of research projects, when the study is completed, the funds stop, and staff may be non-renewed or even laid off unless other sources of funding are secured. At FAU Harbor Branch, attempts are made to provide “bridge funding” until a new source of grant funding is awarded. However this can be challenging to the budget, time consuming and stressful for both Faculty and management alike.

Florida Atlantic University provides approximately 30% of institutionally-supported funding to Faculty positions through “E and G” (Education and General) state funding of HBOI. In exchange for this “guaranteed funding,” Faculty are required to (and evaluated on) their service to the Institute and FAU overall and to compensate for their grant writing time to secure future funding (Faculty cannot be writing for a potential grant while on a grant.) In some cases, due to the nature of the programs being run or additional duties being assigned, some HBOI Faculty receive a higher percentage of institutional funding.

The purpose of this grant was to create the most positive impact on ongoing Harbor Branch operations by granting an additional up to 20% (salary and fringe benefits), to be awarded through the development of specific criteria, as an increased reward and incentive to Faculty. This grant was contingent upon an understanding that any freed up dollars from the Harbor Branch E & G budget be reallocated within the Institute’s budget and not reabsorbed by the University for non-Harbor Branch budget use:

- a) attract and retain Faculty of the highest caliber;
- b) provide Faculty a keen edge in the competitive grant area by being able to demonstrate an outside “match” of funding for their salary. This cannot be underestimated in these times of the highly competitive landscape for grant dollars;
- c) provide a greater sense of security. This would not mean a substitute for tenure or a guarantee of a position. Faculty would still be required to work in collaboration and conjunction with the goals of the HBOI Strategic Plan and their work and performance would be monitored and evaluated according to peer-developed and generally accepted evaluation tools;
- d) have Faculty spend more of their time on program advancement -- doing the work and not the search for funding; and
- e) be freed up to partner with HBOI external relations in a more meaningful and targeted way such as community outreach and development efforts.

HBOIF also expected that by providing this funding, the management of FAU Harbor Branch would have a greater ability to ensure the success measurements of implementation and performance against the Strategic Plan, allowing the Institute to achieve its Strategic Plan goals as well as continue to attract, retain, and promote the very best in the field.

Based on a three year projection, it is currently anticipated this grant support will end in FY19.

### OUR COMMITMENTS: YESTERDAY, TODAY, TOMORROW

HBOIF looks forward to continuing to serve FAU Harbor Branch by realizing the founder's vision of fostering meaningful oceanographic research and ensuring FAU Harbor Branch remains the premier leader for  
*Ocean Science for a Better World*®