



# FIU News Release

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## **FIU Biomedical Engineering Institute Receives \$10M Grant from Wallace H. Coulter Foundation**

**MIAMI, Fla. (March 12 , 2000)** – Florida International University’s College of Engineering is the recipient of a landmark grant worth \$10 million from the Wallace H. Coulter Foundation to support the Biomedical Engineering Institute, school officials announced today. This is the largest grant received from a private foundation in FIU history.

The grant will be matched by the State University System of Florida’s Trust Fund for Major Gifts and create a \$10 million endowment. The endowment will support an Eminent Scholars Chair in Biomedical Engineering; a Distinguished Professorship in Bioinstrumentation and Biomeasurement research; fellowships and scholarships to recruit and retain outstanding students; a lecture series that will bring nationally recognized scientists to South Florida; a research competition for young inventors, engineers and scientists; as well as programs in support of research excellence.

“The impact that The Wallace H. Coulter Foundation grant will have cannot be overstated,” FIU President Modesto A. Maidique said. “It provides the framework for a major biomedical engineering program in South Florida and supports one of our most important industries.”

The relationship between The Wallace H. Coulter Foundation and the Biomedical Engineering Institute represents a continuation of Wallace Coulter’s own contributions to the field. The late Mr. Coulter was a visionary inventor and a pioneer in biomedical engineering who believed that technology holds the promise to advance medicine. His invention, the Coulter Principle, not only revolutionized health care but also had a significant impact on industry. In healthcare, the Coulter Counter is used to perform medicine’s most often requested and informative diagnostic test, the complete blood count or CBC. In industry, the Counter is utilized as a quality control

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## **FIU Biomedical Engineering Institute Receives \$10M from Coulter Foundation/page 2**

instrument for cosmetics, chocolate, wine, paint, and numerous other products. Wallace and his brother Joe established Coulter Corporation, one of the largest employers in South Florida and the world leader in automated cell analysis.

The grant from the Coulter Foundation will allow the Biomedical Engineering Institute to quickly advance a number of innovative programs and secure the necessary resources to support high-level research. The College of Engineering understood the importance of implementing a program in biomedical engineering, a cutting-edge discipline which is still in its infancy and is only available at a small number of universities. "The rapid progress of technology is yielding great advances in medical research, making bio-technology one of the fastest growing industries and creating a great interest in and demand for the degree," said Gordon Hopkins, dean of the College of Engineering. However, in the past engineering programs have needed the resources of a medical school to implement the biomedical degree, keeping many great engineering schools in institutions without a medical program from offering the degree. As the result, the profession experienced limited growth and industry is often burdened with the cost of converting engineers in other disciplines into biomedical professionals.

In a uniquely innovative and unprecedented collaboration, FIU, Baptist Health Systems and Baptist's world-renowned Miami Cardiac and Vascular Institute, joined forces in 1998 to create a biomedical engineering degree. The partnership between a university and clinical hospital is the first of its kind and will become a model for the implementation of new programs throughout the country.

Baptist Health Systems of Florida is ranked among the top 100 hospitals in the nation, and through its Miami Cardiac & Vascular Institute (MCVI), is a leader in clinical research to develop more cost-effective ways of diagnosing and treating cardiovascular disease. Each year MCVI's commitment to comprehensive cardiovascular care attracts more than 100,000 patient visits, providing FIU engineering students with unrivalled access to outstanding clinical medical education and research opportunities.

"The Biomedical Engineering Institute has created a very important program for South Florida," reflects Hopkins. "It has the potential to ignite the spirit of innovation in our community and strengthen collaboration between engineers, industry and physicians. We believe that the program and its values will be a lasting tribute to Wallace Coulter's incredible legacy. "