

FIU News Release

Phone: (305) 348-2232 • Fax: (305) 348-3333 • E-mail: FIUINFO@servms.fiu.edu

FIU To Attract Minorities To Sciences \$1.7 in NASA Grants Help Pave the Way

MIAMI -- Florida International University engineering faculty members have been selected by NASA to receive grants totaling more than \$1.7 million. The grants, which will be in cooperation with Florida Memorial College, have as a common goal to help increase minority participation in the sciences.

"We are glad NASA is committed to join us in our diversity mission," said Gordon Hopkins, dean of the College of Engineering and Design at FIU. "These grants will continue to support our leadership in this area."

Of the 2,000 students in the FIU College of Engineering and Design, 15 percent are women, 53 percent are Hispanic and 13 percent are African-American. These numbers are well above the national average, in fact, the FIU College of Engineering is the number two producer of African American degrees in the state of Florida.

NASA officials will present the grants during a short ceremony at 10 a.m. on Monday, July 7, at the Center for Engineering and Applied Sciences (CEAS), on FIU's Engineering Campus located on the northeast corner of Flagler St. and 107 Ave. in West Dade. The ceremony will include remarks by Florida Memorial College president Albert Smith. The NASA delegation will tour Florida Memorial College following the event at FIU.

The grants are as follows:

The ARISE Center will establish a program to attract and retain women, Hispanics, African-Americans and other minorities to engineering

-- More --

NASA grants/Page 2

and NASA-related career paths. This program provides for college students to work at Kennedy Space Center during the Summers. The principal investigator is industrial and systems engineering professor Martha A. Centeno. The grant consists of \$400,000.

The Florida Minority Institution Entrepreneurial Partnership involves Bethune-Cookman College, the lead institution, Edward Waters College, Florida Memorial College and FIU. The program will introduce faculty and students in existing technology transfer programs that promote entrepreneurship through collaboration with the NASA Business Incubation Center and the NASA Commercialization office at the Kennedy Space Center. At FIU, the lead investigator is Irma Becerra-Fernandez, director of External Programs in the College of Engineering and Design. The grant consists of \$360,000.

Project VISION is a collaboration between NASA Kennedy Space Center, the Dade County Public School System, the Public School System of Puerto Rico, Universidad Del Turabo in Puerto Rico and FIU. The project's goal is to increase the participation of middle school students in science, mathematics and technology. Gustavo Roig, associate dean of the College of Engineering and Design at FIU, is the principal investigator. The grant consists of \$800,000.

For more information about these programs, please call Debbie Planas in the College of Engineering and Design at (305) 348-1635.

#

DATE: July 3, 1997

MEDIA CONTACT: Maydel Santana-Bravo, Office of Media Relations,
(305) 348-1555.