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Gift To FAU's College of Education from Quantum Foundation Renews Support of Teacher Training Programs

BOCA RATON, FL (December 4, 2009) – The Florida Institute for the Advancement of Teaching (FIAT), a program of Florida Atlantic University, has received a grant in excess of \$100,000 from the Quantum Foundation of West Palm Beach. This marks the second consecutive year that Quantum has supported FIAT.

Providing practical, research-based and scalable solutions for Florida's educational system, FIAT was established in 2002 within FAU's College of Education to recruit, prepare and retain quality teachers in Florida schools. By supplying hands-on training to FAU and community college students who seek careers in teaching, FIAT is making a significant difference in the quality of education at public and charter schools in eight different school districts within the southeast region of the state. Schools are typically located in rural or urban areas and identified as struggling.

Funded by gifts from corporate and family foundations as well as private donors, and through grants from private foundations and targeted school districts, FIAT is an institute comprised of three innovative and over-arching programs — Good FIT, SMaRT and AIT. Each FIAT program is structured to offer institute participants increasing levels of classroom responsibility.

The Good FIT (First Introduction to Teaching) component has been designed to create internships for college freshmen and sophomores who express interest in the field of elementary and secondary education. Paired with a "model" teacher, each Good FIT intern is given the opportunity to work as an instructional aide with children in small group settings or on a one-to-one basis. The internship runs for a 12-week period of time, on a stipend basis.

The second level within FIAT is the SMaRT (Substituting with Mentors and Realistic Teaching) program. Geared for FAU and state college juniors and/or first semester seniors, SMaRT students must have completed at least 60 credits of related coursework and one semester

as a Good FIT intern before being accepted into the program. SMaRT students work in classrooms as paid substitute teachers. These students receive direct support and supervision from master mentors. The SMaRT program has successfully addressed the state's need for competent substitute teachers.

The final and highest level program is AIT (Accelerated Induction Into Teaching) in which students are given the opportunity to jump-start their professional careers by serving as full-time, paid classroom teachers during the last semester of undergraduate study. Students who have progressed through Good FIT and SMaRT are prepared for this expanded, in-depth student teaching experience. Participation in AIT fulfills an FAU education major's one-semester, student-teaching requirement.

With a mission to advance health, education, and community betterment for the residents of Palm Beach County, the Quantum Foundation was impressed by the systemic value of the FIAT program and its influence on generations of teachers and youngsters. Quantum Foundation funds support FIAT program administration in Palm Beach County.

“Quantum's generosity has enabled FIAT administrators to work in tandem with the School District of Palm Beach County in the development of tomorrow's educational leaders,” said Glenn Thomas, FAU's assistant dean of PK-12 schools and educational programs. “By putting the best trained and most qualified students in the most challenging situations, FAU's College of Education is taking ownership of the future.”

Since the Institute's inception, more than 1,000 students from FAU, as well as from Broward College, Palm Beach State College and Indian River State College, have served as instructional interns, substitute teachers and student-teachers. By molding future teachers with valuable classroom experience, the FIAT program has improved the lives of close to 75,000 K-12 students in Palm Beach County alone.

“As a foundation, we are interested in projects that have a high level of direct impact in the community,” said Stacey Amodio, program officer, Quantum Foundation. “We originally invested in FIAT because of its ability to advance educational achievement and promote economic opportunities in Palm Beach County. We also know that our foundation alone cannot address the multitude of health and education-related needs in Palm Beach County. Quantum is pleased to continue its partnership with a diverse group of foundations and individual donors to ensure FIAT evolves into a self-sustaining initiative — one that benefits FAU undergraduates, public school students and faculty, and our county.”

For more information about the FIAT program, contact Glenn R. Thomas at 561-297-0061 or gthomas@fau.edu.

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About Florida Atlantic University:

Florida Atlantic University opened its doors in 1964 as the fifth public university in Florida. Today, the University serves more than 28,000 undergraduate and graduate students on seven campuses. Building on its rich tradition as a teaching university, with a world-class faculty, FAU hosts ten colleges: College of Architecture, Urban & Public Affairs, Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts & Letters, the Charles E. Schmidt College of Biomedical Science, the College of Business, the College of Education, the College of Engineering & Computer Science, the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College, the Graduate College, the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing and the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science.