Memoir

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I joined FAU in the fall of 1975 in the Department of Computer and Information Systems in the College of Business. In 1998 I left FAU to be dean of the College of Computing, Engineering and Construction at the University of North Florida, a position I held for 11 years before retiring.

While at FAU, I really worked at several universities because of FAU’s dramatic growth in students, academic programs and campus expansion. In 1975 the University had only upper-division and graduate students, with a few lower-division students enrolled in a very limited program. When I left FAU in 1998 the University offered numerous doctoral programs, surging student and faculty populations, several satellite campuses, a greatly expanded list of academic majors and tremendous growth in buildings and related infrastructure.

The extensive high-technology industry in southeast Florida allowed me to interact with professionals at companies such as IBM, Siemens, Motorola and United Technologies. The knowledge I gained from them and the support they gave to FAU were highlights of my FAU years.

Because my faculty position was in computer science at a time when the discipline changed dramatically at FAU and nationally, I participated in numerous organizational changes, new degree planning and implementation, and successful pursuit of specialized accreditation. I served in the College of Business until 1987, in an independent (not assigned to a college) Department of Computer Science during 1987-1989, then in the College of Engineering from 1989 through 1998. I was a department chair four times during my 23 years at FAU, including terms in the College of Business, the independent Department of Computer Science and the College of Engineering. My last chair position was in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, which offered B.S, M.S. and Ph.D. programs in the two disciplines.

My years at FAU were fantastic. My colleagues and students were great. I have enjoyed watching some of my FAU students and faculty colleagues achieve national recognition for their technical and entrepreneurial achievements. Because of the international composition of faculty and students in computer science and in computer engineering, I had friends from all over the world who taught me about other cultures and helped me to understand world events from a diverse perspective.

I miss FAU every day, while I remain thankful for the opportunity to have served there.

Neal Coulter