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**FAU's Harbor Branch to Host Scientific Seminar to Address
Toxic Algae Crisis Plaguing Florida's East Coast**
*Scientists to Share Water Quality Data from Indian River Lagoon
Observatory Network of Environmental Sensors*

FORT PIERCE, Fla. (July 22, 2016) – Florida Atlantic University's Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute is hosting a scientific seminar in response to the current algae crisis that has plagued Florida's east coast in the recent months, and has invited important stakeholders including scientists, legislators, community leaders, and agency representatives. The seminar is scheduled on Wednesday, July 27 from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. in the auditorium of the Johnson Education Center on FAU's Harbor Branch campus, 5600 U.S. 1 North, in Fort Pierce.

The objective of the seminar is to share important findings from FAU's Harbor Branch Indian River Lagoon Observatory Network of Environmental Sensors (IRLON), which have been monitoring water quality in the St. Lucie Estuary for approximately one year. The presentation also will include an opportunity to discuss and address both short-term and long-term solutions. Vital scientific data garnered from IRLON will enable FAU's Harbor Branch scientists to provide recommendations to mitigate future risks and to provide solutions to address the current algae crisis.

IRLON consists of Land/Ocean Biogeochemical Observatory (LOBO) units and weather stations at 10 sites throughout the IRL system, including five sites in the St. Lucie Estuary. IRLON provides real-time data that minimizes the often lengthy time between data collection, analysis, and response. This new capability gives scientists, water quality managers and the public the ability to observe present conditions and plan for the future. On an hourly basis, the LOBO units are measuring temperature, salinity, depth (to

measure tidal fluctuations), turbidity (particles in the water), water color, dissolved oxygen, pH (a measure of acidity), nitrate, phosphate, and chlorophyll fluorescence, that is a measure of algal chlorophyll in the water.

Scientists at FAU's Harbor Branch attribute this hydrologic problem to a number of factors including heavy rainfalls, pollution in the water basin itself, and discharges from Lake Okeechobee, all contributing to environmental, health, and economic consequences for the region.

FAU Harbor Branch's IRLON is an estuarine observation network of LOBO units and weather sensors to provide real-time, high-accuracy and high-resolution water quality/weather data through a dedicated interactive website. The network is funded by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the South Florida Water Management District, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute Foundation, the Save Our Seas Specialty License Plate granted through the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute Foundation and FAU Harbor Branch. For more information on the network, click [here](#).

Immediately following the presentation, Ian D. Walsh, Ph.D., director of science and senior oceanographer, Sea-Bird Scientific and WET Labs, Inc.; M. Dennis Hanisak, Ph.D., research professor and director of IRLON, FAU's Harbor Branch; and Brian E. Lapointe, Ph.D., research professor, FAU's Harbor Branch, will be available for media interviews.

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Florida Atlantic University

Florida Atlantic University, established in 1961, officially opened its doors in 1964 as the fifth public university in Florida. Today, the University, with an annual economic impact of \$6.3 billion, serves more than 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students at sites throughout its six-county service region in southeast Florida. FAU's world-class teaching and research faculty serves students through 10 colleges: the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters, the College of Business, the College for Design and Social Inquiry, the College of Education, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, the Graduate College, the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College, the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine, the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing and the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science. FAU is ranked as a High Research Activity institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The University is placing special focus on the rapid development of critical areas that form the basis of its strategic plan: Healthy aging, biotech, coastal and marine issues, neuroscience, regenerative medicine, informatics, lifespan and the environment. These areas provide opportunities for faculty and students to build upon FAU's existing strengths in research and scholarship. For more information, visit www.fau.edu.