science connect

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WELCOME!

The College of Science is pleased to welcome **Dr. Janet Blanks** as Interim Dean of the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science. The California native joins us after eight years serving as the Director of the Center for Complex Systems and Brain Sciences. Under her leadership, the Center initiated a Neuroscience Certificate for graduate students, as well as became an "institutional" member of the Society for Neuroscience (the major society for Brain Sciences in the US and worldwide).

Together with Dr. Rod Murphey, Chairman of Biology at FAU, she received a $500,000 grant from the Division of Research to promote Neuroscience research at FAU. Several of the pilot projects they funded resulted in external grants.

Just before leaving the Center, she worked with the other members of the Center (especially Drs. Scott Kelso and Steve Bressler), Provost Gary Perry and Dan Flynn, VP for Research to develop access to brain imaging on campus in collaboration with University MRI, under the direction of Dr. Fred Steinberg

Dr. Blanks received her Ph.D. from University of California (Los Angeles), and subsequently received post-doctoral fellowships at the Max Planck Institute for Brain Research in Frankfurt, Germany and Children's Hospital, an affiliate of Harvard Medical School. She accepted her first faculty position in the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Southern California School of Medicine in 1978. She has a long history of funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Early in her career, she received a Career Development Award from the National Eye Institute (NEI), as well as R01 funding from the NEI and the National Institute of Aging.

She came to FAU in 2002. Her current research is in the following areas:

- Gene Therapy to Inhibit Neovasularizaiton in Animal Models of Diabetic Retinopathy and Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD)
- Testing of drugs (primarily Sulindac) to treat animal models of AMD

She is a past recipient of FAU's "Teacher of the Year Award" in the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science and received the "Degree of Difference Award" from FAU's Alumni Association. In 1997, she was elected Executive Vice President for the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO), a 5-year appointment in the largest basic science and clinical science research organization in the field of vision in the US (the organization also includes international members) .

She holds one patent for Materials and Methods for the Treatment of Pathological Neovasculatrization in the Eye and has a patent pending for Use of Sulindac to Treat Retinopathy.

What might people be surprised to know about you? I grew up in a remote area along the Northern California coast in the redwoods and across the street from the Pacific! A highlight of my scientific career was a six month sabbatical in Paris (at the CNRS, the French equivalent of the NIH) where I learned a technique to grow photoreceptor cells in a dish!

If you had some spare time, how would you spend it? It would be a hard choice between visiting my grandchildren in the San Diego area and finally making it to the beach with the Sunday New York Times.

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW COLLEGE LEADERSHIP

Dr. Evonne M. Rezler has accepted the new positon of Associate Dean for Student Services and Director of Program Assessment.

The College of Science will miss **Dr. Jennifer Peluso**! She leaves the position of Associate Dean for Student Services to become the Associate Vice President for Public Service. Congratulations!

Dr. Steven Bressler is now acting as Interim Director of The Center for Complex Systems and Brain Sciences.

ON THE COVER: COLLEGE OF SCIENCE REPRESENTATIVES MEET ON CAPITOL HILL

FAU IN TALKS WITH SK TELECOM

FAU representatives meet on Capitol Hill, description below.

Tuesday, September 8, FAU representatives met on Capitol Hill with representatives from SK Telecom to discuss entering into a non-binding MOU. SK Telecom demonstrated two core quantum cryptographic technologies: Quantum Cryptography System and a small-sized, low-cost true random number generator (QRNG) based on quantum physics. The demonstration, co-hosted by Representatives Walter Jones, Joe Wilson, and Robert Aderholt (*pictured below*), took place in the Gold Room of the Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C., and was attended by senior government officials from the Department of Defense, Department of Energy, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Joint Quantum Institute, International Transportation Innovation Center, and FAU representatives. In the challenging environment of modern communications, governments around the world are actively promoting the development of strong cryptographic algorithms to protect their national security, and create a safe and secure communications environment. In particular, the United States' Government has recently announced preliminary plans for transitioning to quantum algorithms. This meeting represents a significant opportunity for FAU.

Pictured Above: ***Dr. Warner A. Miller****, Associate Dean of Research and Professor of Physics,College of Science,* ***Dr. Nurgun Erdol****, Department Chair and Professor, Department of Computer & Electrical Engineering and Computer Science,* ***Dr. Christopher (Chris) Beetle****, Faculty Senate President and Associate Professor of Physics,* ***Dr. Spyros Magliveras****, Professor of Mathematics,* ***Dr. Koray Karabina****, Assistant Professor of Mathematics,* ***Dr. Mihaela Cardel****, Associate Professor, Department of Computer & Electrical Engineering and Computer Science.*

Congressman Joe Wilson (blue Tie) pictured with SK Telecom Manager Mr. Sean Kwank (light-colored suit) and Mr. Van Hipp (red tie) showing the Quantum Key Distribution Communication device.

Read More.

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE NEWSMAKERS

ANCHORAGE EVENT A GREAT WARM-UP FOR FORT LAUDERDALE

Dr. Colin Polsky, Director of FAU's Florida Center for Environmental Studies, is published in a blog for Union of Concerned Scientists Read it here. At a time when the White House has highlighted global environmental issues, in particular how ice melting in the Arctic raises sea levels and affects people, infrastructure, and ecosystems worldwide. The Florida Center for Environmental Studies at Florida Atlantic University is continuing its mission to research and educate about the issue. This spring, the Center is holding its third Sea-Level Rise Summit in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT ON SEA TURTLES, FAU BIOLOGIST FEATURED ON PBS NEWS HOUR

PBS News Hour recently featured the work of **Dr. Jeanette Wyneken,** FAU biology professor, and **Alex Lolavar, Ph.D.** student. The national news program focused on their turtle-saving efforts at local beaches at FAU's Marine Research Lab and the Gumbo Limbo Nature Center.

Climate change is threatening sea turtle nests and reducing the number of prospective male mates. If this trend continues over multiple generations, sea turtle diversity may be diminished, along with their ability to reproduce.

Wyneken explains that this "sex ratio bias" occurs because environmental climate determines the sex of a turtle. Hot weather produces more females, while cooler climates result in more males. Wyneken points to another significant problem for the turtles: an increase in storm surges that suffocate and/or completely wash out their eggs.

Watch and read PBS' coverage here. This story is part of the station's series The Wild Side of Sea Level Rise.

LIVING WITH LEWY BODY DEMENTIA

The Lewy Body Dementia Association estimates the condition affects more than 1.4 million individuals in the U.S. alone. It's the second most common type of progressive dementia after Alzheimer's disease, yet it's often underdiagnosed. "It's the most common disease you've never heard of," says **Dr. James Galvin**, a neurology and psychiatry professor and associate dean for clinical research at the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine at Florida Atlantic University. Read more.

EARLY MATURING GIRLS AT GREAT RISK OF ALCOHOL ABUSE WITHOUT CLOSE PARENTAL SUPERVISION

Dr. Brett Laursen, professor and graduate studies coordinator in FAU's Department of Psychology in the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science, and Daniel J. Dickson, lead author and a Ph.D. student at FAU, and their colleagues at Orebro University followed 957 girls in a small city in Sweden for four years, across the ages of 13 to 17. The girls were classified as early maturing (menarche before age 12), on-time maturing (menarche at age 12 or 13), or late maturing (menarche at age 14 or older) on the basis of their age at first menstruation. Read more.

DOES THE PITCH OF A CANDIDATE'S VOICE SWAY YOUR VOTE?

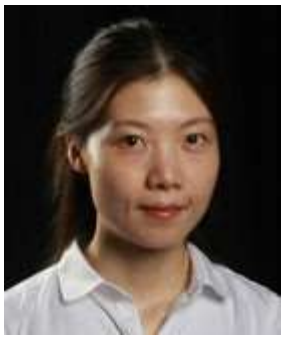
Congratulations to **Dr. Rindy Anderson**, Assistant Professor of Biology, for being interviewed by MSNBC, Georgia Public Broadcasting and WLRN in the last few weeks. Her primary research focuses on birdsong, but she's done a number of studies with her husband, a political scientist at the University of Miami, looking at the differences in men's and women's voices and how the higher pitch of women's voices puts off voters. Listen to the pieces here.

SUPER MOON

After the appearance of a Super Moon last week, FAU's astronomer was proven right again. "The world is not going to end," said **Eric Vandernoot**, coordinator of Florida Atlantic University's astronomy and physics lab. The eclipse was the fourth in a tetrad — four full lunar eclipses that occur in a row. The next tetrad won't happen

until 2032. To the scientific world, Sunday's eclipse is mostly humdrum because the lunar sojourn through the Earth's shadow is well understood today. But in ancient times, lunar eclipses were revolutionary.
Read more.

NEW GRANT FOR STUDY OF CELL PHONES TO MONITOR BLOOD DISORDER



A researcher from Florida Atlantic University has come up with a unique way to monitor sickle cell disease - a serious blood disorder - using a smart phone. **Dr. E. Sarah Du,** has received an NSF grant to develop a portable smart sensor and a phone application for patients to analyze and store the results of their blood tests on a smart phone. This technology will enable them to keep a close watch on any abnormal activities in their blood cells and take important steps to manage this disease with early intervention.

Integrating microfluidics with communication technologies like a smart phone, Du and her collaborators will create a disposable testing platform much like a glucometer that is used by patients who have diabetes. There are currently no such field sensors available for patients with sickle cell disease. Read more.

JUPITER NEUROSCIENTIST AWARDED FOR KEEPING HER MIND ON WHAT MATTERS

Dr. Tanja Godenschwege was just awarded $447,587 from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, NIH for three years to study the function of L1-type cell adhesion molecules (CAMs) in the fruit fly's nervous system. CAMs are proteins that link the inside of one cell to the outside of a second cell. They adhere cells together. But some CAMs have additional functions in activating signaling pathways within the cell, resulting in turning other genes on or off. In particular, mutations in genes for human L1-type CAMs underlie problems in both neurological disorders and cancer. Studies gaining insight into the functions of these proteins may lead to novel therapeutic avenues for treating Alzheimer's disease, spinal cord regeneration and cancer.

Godenschwege studies the fruit fly's only L1-type CAM using fluorescent imaging that tracks the protein's location. She actually visualizes the protein moving up and down the axons of a fly's neuron while the fly's nervous system is still alive. Her innovative techniques have shown that in the adult nervous system, surprisingly, the L1-type CAM moves backwards (from a neuron's synapse back to the cell's soma or center), suggesting that the CAM has a different and unknown function in the adult brain versus that in the developing fly brain.

Tanja Godenschwege knew since high school that she would study genetics. After completing her graduate studies at Universitaet Wuerzburg in the Department of Professor Heisenberg, well known for its research in Drosophila (fruit fly) learning and memory and genes involved in synapse formation, it wasn't surprising that Godenschwege emerged as a geneticist specializing in neurobiology. She came to the USA to do postdoctoral training at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Godenschwege rejected an offer from the University of Miami to pursue an Assistant Professor position at FAU in 2006 due to FAU's enthusiastic support for young faculty to establish research programs, particularly in neuroscience. She has mentored three Ph.D. students and two M.S. students to successfully finish their degrees and currently has a bustling lab churning out data. She plans to use the newly acquired NIH funds to pay for undergraduate internships, graduate student stipends and a part-time postdoctoral fellow.

On the side, Godenschwege enjoys scuba diving (both privately and as a member of FAU's scientific diving program assisting marine biology students), cooking Indian food and downhill skiing. Although her family remains in Germany, her parents enjoy vacationing with her in sunny South Florida. Having previous success in

obtaining both NIH funding as well as FAU internal grants, when asked what her immediate thoughts were on obtaining her most recent NIH grant, Godenschwege replied, "Now I have time to write my next grant."

STUDENTS IN PRINT

COMPLEX SYSTEMS AND BRAIN SCIENCES STUDENT IN PRINT

Graduate Student and Philly native, **Michael Mannino** earned his Bachelors in astrophysics from Florida Institute of Technology and also has a Masters in philosophy from CSULA. In the past, he worked as a full time professor of philosophy for Miami Dade College, but is currently a full time graduate student earning his Ph.D. in Complex Systems and Brain Sciences, with a focus on large scale brain networks. His expected graduation date is fall or spring 2016.

Michael and his advisor **Dr. Steven Bressler**, are published this month in Physics of Life Reviews. You can read their paper, *Foundational Perspectives on Causality in Large-Scale Brain Networks* here.

GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH TO BE PUBLISHED IN PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE

Psychology Ph.D. student, **Amy Hartl**, recently had her M.A. thesis accepted for publication in *Psychological Science*, the leading peer reviewed general psychology journal publishing empirical research. The title of the paper is *A Survival Analysis of Adolescent Friendships: The Downside of Dissimilarity*. Coauthors are **Dr. Brett Laursen** (Florida Atlantic University) and Antonius Cillessen (Radboud University of Nijmegen).

The goal of the paper was straightforward: to identify characteristics that predict the dissolution of adolescent friendships that began in grade 7. Amy found that friendships that began in the 7th grade were followed across middle school to the end of high school. The success of a friendship depends on the similarity of the participants and not the presence or absence of a particular individual attribute. Other-sex friendships were much less stable than same-sex friendships. Differences in the degree to which friends resembled one another on physical aggression, school competence, and the extent to which they are liked by other children also predicted friendship stability; individual levels of these attributes did not.

The study was also published in Real Simple Magazine.

PSYCHOLOGY STUDENT TO BE PUBLISHED IN THE JOURNAL *PEDIATRICS*

Congratulations to **Daniel Dickson, a Ph.D.** student in psychology, who just received word that his paper, *Parental supervision and alcohol abuse among adolescent girls* based on his M.A. thesis was accepted for publication in the prestigious medical journal *Pediatrics*.

SUCCESS IN PHYSICS

Dr. Theodora Leventouri reports that FAU Physics is progressing research in the Professional Science Master in Medical Physics (PSMMP) program hosted by the Department of Physics. There have been promising results in accelerated dose calculations for particles radiation therapy. In particular, **Dr. Georgios Kalantzis** presented his paper *A GPU-Based pencil beam algorithm for dose calculations in proton radiation therapy* at the 16th SNPD international conference in Japan. His study exhibited the potential of GPUs for fast dose calculations in proton radiation therapy utilizing Matlab. Preliminary results of the proposed method, on a homogeneous phantom, achieved a speedup factor up to x110 compared to CPU-based calculations. The article was selected by Springer

for publication in the Studies in Computational Intelligence (vol. 612). The project is part of ongoing collaboration with the Lynn Cancer Institute of the Boca Raton Regional Hospital (partner in education of the PSMMP students) and the National Cancer Center Hospital of Chiba, Japan.

Dr. Leventouri is a Professor of Physics, the Director of both the Medical Physics Program and The Center for Biomedical and Materials Physics (CBAMP).

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

CHRISTINA FALK, M.S. '12, ALKALI SCIENTIFIC

Christina was not even sure that she wanted to go to college, but then, "I figured I should major in the subject

I liked the best: Biology. I graduated with a Bachelor of Science in 2010 with a major in Biology, and I enrolled in the Biotechnology Certificate program because I hoped it would be useful for the future. Because my dad owns his own business, and I felt I was lacking in knowledge in that area, I graduated with a Master's in Business in 2012. Until finding the job that I wanted, I worked retail. In 2013, I was hired at Alkali Scientific, a laboratory supply/ life science supply company, as an office assistant and the next year I became the Operations Manager. My boss said that the one thing that made my resume stand out was that I included my Biotechnology Certificate where I had described the lab classes I had taken. I use my biology and business knowledge every day and I love it. Right now I am getting ready to send qPCR reagents to a customer." The company sells benchtop machines, qPCR reagents, molecular Biology Reagents, Tissue Culture products and general laboratory consumable products. http://alkalisci.com/.

NICOLE HERNANDEZ HAMMER, M.S. '07, UNION OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS

Nicole Hernandez Hammer is the Southeast Climate Advocate for Union of Concerned Scientists and also works to mobilize the Latino community to better understand and address climate change. She is co-author on a string of papers on sea level rise and has extensive fundraising and grant managing experience. She has given numerous interviews in English and Spanish for local and national media, including the Miami Herald, Telemundo News, Univision.com, The Huffington Post, The New York Times, Al Jazeera America, The Washington Post, Grist, and NPR. A recent highlight for Nicole was her attendance at the 2015 State of the Union as the guest of First Lady Michelle Obama. She presented on a panel called "The Next Big Idea" at the Environmental Grantmakers Association last spring and recently participated on a panel along with Eva Longoria and Henry Muñoz at the 2015 Latino Victory Project gala.

ROBIN O'BRIEN RECEIVES PRESIDENTIAL AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE TEACHING "I always wanted to be a teacher …" she said. After going into the business world she began tutoring a co-worker who was struggling with math. "I started to realize how much I love it," said O'Brien. She told herself: "Life is too short, I'm going to give this a shot. If I don't like it I always have my business degree to go back to." Read more.

DR. MARK DEAN, THE BLACK INVENTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MODERN PC, FAU '82.

Mark Dean (March 2, 1957) started his career at IBM as an engineer working on the very first personal computers in the 1980s. Dean should be as famous as Steve Jobs, Bill Gates and Steve Wozniak for his outstanding contributions to the modern day PC, laptop and other devices. In 1996, Dean was named an IBM Fellow, making him the only Black employee of the company to achieve the honor. For his incredible achievements, he also was inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame and awarded the Black Engineer of the Year President's Award in 1997. In 2001, he was elected as a member of the National Academy of Engineers (NAE). Read more.

AWARDS

$1.8 MILLION TO FOCUS ON STEM

Dr. Donna Chamely-Wiik, Ph.D. reports that a recently submitted NSF proposal was recommended for funding. It is a collaborative grant between FAU, UCF and WCU, focused on STEM retention of FTIC and transfer students (emphasis on women and minority to some degree) through undergraduate research, mentorship and community building. The proposal will provide $1.8 million, split between the three partners, over five years to from the LEARN Consortium.

DISTINCTION THROUGH DISCOVERY CURRICULUM GRANTS AWARDED

Dean Blanks is pleased to announce that the following faculty from the College of Science have been awarded *Distinction through Discovery Curriculum Grants* for the 2015-2017 academic years. A special thanks to all of the faculty who submitted proposals and our college liaison for their assistance. Thanks to you and the chairs for your continued support of the Undergraduate Research and Inquiry initiative.

For Mathematical Sciences, **Dr. Necibe Tuncer** is the author of *Mathematical Sciences Undergraduate Level Introduction to Mathematical Epidemiology Course*. Introduction to Mathematical Epidemiology is the course that will be impacted.

In Chemistry and Biochemistry, Authors **Dr. Jerome Haky** and **Tito Sempertegui** submitted *Honors Program in Chemistry and Biochemistry: an Integrated Novel Approach*. Honors compacts in a variety of courses in Chemistry will be impacted.

GRANTS AWARDED*

Dr. Dale Gawlik received a $183,290 grant from the USGS to study "Habitat selection models for wading birds in coastal South Florida. He also received $212,857.00 from the US Army Corp of Engineers to study *Dry Season Prey Concentrations.*

Dr. Tanja Godenschwege received $447,587 from NIH to study *Nuclear function of L 1-type CAMs in the drosophila nervous system.*

Dr. Alex Keene received $397,896 from NSF to study *Localization of dopamine function in aversive taste memory.*

Dr. Marguerite Koch received $47,656 from the South Florida Water Management District for her work on the *Synthesis and Modeling of Seagrass Studies in the Everglades Transition Zone and Florida Bay*.

Dr. Rodney Murphy was awarded $252,011 by Max Planch Florida Institute for Integrative Biology and Neuroscience (IBAN); a joint graduate program between Max Planck Florida Institute and FAU.

Dr. Tanja Godenschwege was awarded $447,587 from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke to study the *Function of L1-type cell adhesion molecules (CAMs) in the fruit fly's nervous system.*

Dr. Jeanette Wyneken received $5,872.90 from the Sea Turtle Conservancy for her work on, *Mating system determination of imperiled marine turtles and an assessment of operational sex ratio.*

Dr. Gregg B. Fields received $294,875 from NIH to study *Mechanism and Inhibition of Collagenolytic Activity.*
Dr. Deguo Du received $290,220 from NIH to support his work, *Role of the N-terminal Region in Abeta Oligomer and Fibril Formation.*

Dr. Scott Markwith received $10,000 from The Curtis & Edith Munson Foundation to support his study of *Game Fish and Ecological Restoration in South Florida.*

Dr. Anton Oleinki was awarded $13,330 from Mote Marine Laboratory, Inc. to support his work on *Long Term Coral Skeletal Records of Ocean Acidification from the Southeast Florida's Nearshore Reef Tract.*

Dr. Colin Polsky was awarded $5,000 from University of Florida to support his *Precipitation Downscaling Technical Meeting.*

Dr. Erik Lundberg received $940 from University of Central Florida for the *Hybrid Motor High Powered Rocket Competition 2015-15 Maximum Altitude and Precision Against Categories - FAU Ballistic Dynamic Owls (UCF).*

Dr. Necibe Tuncer received $51,498 from NSF for *Collaborative Research: Linking Within-Host and Between-Host Infectious Disease Dynamics.*

Dr. Jonathan Engle received $55,000 from NSF to study *Dynamics and Symmetry in Quantum Gravity.*

Dr. Nathan Dorn received $7,900 from the South Florida Water Management District for the *Analysis of White ibis chick diets in Lake Okeechobee.*

***To include your grant in this section, please forward the information to Mary Beth Mudrick, mmudric1@fau.edu.**

GRANT FACILITATOR SERVICES

The Division of Research announces grant facilitation services for FAU investigators. Grant facilitators can assist investigators in a number of ways, including:

- Finding Funding
- Building a Team
- Strengthening Your Proposal
- Identifying Peer Reviewers

Grant facilitators are assigned to individual colleges/units. If you are interested in assistance, please contact the Division of Research to find the appropriate facilitator 561.297.0777 or fau.research@fau.edu

UNIVERSITY-WIDE ANNOUNCEMENTS

JOIN THE FUN! FAU EXPO 2015 FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

This open-to-the-public event is geared to High School students. If you are not participating (and why aren't you?) it's a great chance to meet your colleagues and see the exciting work across multiple disciplines. The event will be held in the football stadium and the offerings include:

- Admissions Decisions on the Spot
- Scholarships
- Campus Tours
- Undergraduate Research Showcase
- Meet and Greet with Deans, Faculty and Students

To volunteer, contact Mary Beth Mudrick @mmudric1@fau.edu. For more info, visit http://expo.fau.edu/ .

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY PROGRAM

Pre-proposals due: Oct. 12

This Department of Defense Comprehensive Universal Prevention/Health Promotion Interventions award targets risk factors and negative outcomes such as risky behaviors, aggression, sexual assault, suicide prevention, depression, anxiety, and sleep dysfunction. Interventions that decrease risk factors and the likelihood of negative psychological and physical impact are sought. Full proposals will be submitted by invitation only. If you plan to submit a pre-proposal, contact Camille Coley, ccoley@fau.edu. To read the RFP, click here.

AGING RESEARCH ON STRESS AND RESILIENCE TO ADDRESS HEALTH DISPARITIES IN THE U.S.

Letter of intent due: Dec. 13, applications by Jan. 13

The purpose of this R01 is to stimulate interdisciplinary health disparities research related to aging that considers the role that stress plays in differential health outcomes among aging populations in the U.S. Click here to read the solicitation.

INTEGRATIVE NEUROSCIENCE INITIATIVE ON ALCOHOLISM CONSORTIA RESEARCH RESOURCE CORE

Letter of intent due: Feb. 10, applications by March 10

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism seeks integrated, multidisciplinary, collaborative research projects studying neuronal mechanisms of excessive alcohol intake associated with alcohol dependence. To read the RFP, click here.

Don't miss a single announcement from The Division of Research, join the mailing list by contacting Luis Perez, perezl@fau.edu.

COMING NEXT MONTH

Visiting professor **Dr. Rory Conboye** and his students build drones to learn Physics fundamentals and become “conscientious members of society” in the process.

If you have any news you would like to include in future editions of *Science Connect*, please email Mary Beth Mudrick, mmudric1@fau.edu.

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