OUR LIVING OCEANS

RESEARCH, PARTNERSHIPS & STEWARDSHIP FOR THE FUTURE

OVERVIEW OF THE 2012–2017 STRATEGIC PLAN
FOR FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY’S
HARBOR BRANCH OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTE
Introduction

The FAU 2012-2017 strategic plan identifies three signature themes: Marine and Coastal Issues, Biotechnology and Contemporary Societal Challenges. The critical role that Harbor Branch plays in the first of these themes and the contributions we can make to the others are reflected in our strategic plan, OUR LIVING OCEANS: Research, Partnerships & Stewardship for the Future.

The first section, Our Living Oceans, describes the four themes of our research and some of the initiatives that will help guide our progress.

The second section, Stewardship of Our Living Oceans through Partnerships, outlines priorities that strengthen our institution and extend its reach, including education and external engagement, and initiatives that bring them to life. Taken together, these sections express our commitment to our vision: Ocean Science for a Better World.
THEME | Ocean Exploration

New medical treatments, discovery and protection of vital fisheries spawning grounds and deeper understanding of our changing planet are just a few of the benefits of ocean exploration. We focus on continental shelf frontiers and deep water coral reefs, and with up to 95% of the oceans still unexplored, the potential is vast.

INITIATIVE | Ocean Exploration Platforms for the 21st Century – We are committed to advancing the rich Harbor Branch legacy of ocean exploration technology development by collaborating with partners in academia, government and industry on a plan to create next-generation platforms.

THEME | Understanding Marine Ecosystem Function

Understanding relationships between the organisms and other components of marine ecosystems is critical to identifying and conserving the full range of benefits the systems provide. Studying these also helps us to recognize and predict the effects of human activities and of climate change, and to determine how marine habitats might be restored.

INITIATIVE | Indian River Lagoon Observatory Program – This long-term, multi-disciplinary effort will employ a sensing network and collaborations with multiple organizations to address emerging issues of environmental health by determining the Lagoon’s primary ecological functions and how they are impacted by stressors such as population growth.

THEME | Wise Use of Marine Resources

Food, energy and medicines are among the many resources the oceans provide. As human reliance on these products grows with the global population, so does the need to develop sustainable ways of obtaining them, which requires study and innovation.

INITIATIVE | Land-Based Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture – We continue to advance seafood farming sustainability through development of a system that cultures fish, shellfish and plants separately and recycles the nutrients in the system as a food source.

THEME | Innovative Technology Development

Critical to all our research plans is the development of technologies that enable us to observe, quantify, sample, cultivate and conserve the ocean’s diverse organisms and habitats.

INITIATIVE | Advanced Undersea Technology – We are working to improve the range, resolution, bandwidth and speed of data acquisition and processing in undersea habitats through laser and sensor system research and industry partnerships that enhance this research.

INITIATIVE | Core Laboratory for Integrative Molecular Biosciences – We are committed to advancing our genetic capabilities by developing a facility with leading-edge molecular research technologies, thereby enhancing several of our programs and our collaborative potential.
THEME | Training the Next Generation of Ocean Scientists and Engineers
Involving students in our research is pivotal for the people and the work, and we will continue our long tradition of immersive experiences for students considering their academic and/or professional futures.

INITIATIVE | Graduate Degree Programs in Marine Science – We will work with FAU’s colleges to develop nationally recognized interdisciplinary M.S. and Ph.D. degree programs in Marine Science.

THEME | Partnering in Public Education and Outreach
By engaging the public in our research and advancing ocean literacy, we show how terrestrial life depends on healthy oceans, and we provide opportunities for people to benefit from the Institute’s activities.

INITIATIVE | Mission: Ocean Discovery – We will consolidate and create a branded presence, Mission: Ocean Discovery, for our informal education and outreach efforts, yielding an integrated, sustainable program.

THEME | Cultivating Partnerships for Research & Development
We interact with a wide variety of entities locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, which enriches and extends the reach of our work. Advancing our mission and fostering regional economic development will continue to drive these efforts.

INITIATIVE | Fostering Life Sciences Collaborations on the Research Coast – Renowned research entities are located minutes away from Harbor Branch and on the FAU Jupiter campus, and we will leverage this potential by seeking and pursuing common interests.

THEME | Accelerating University Integration
Harbor Branch became a research institute of FAU in 2007, and the complementary expertise of the institutions is a primary strength of the union. The integration of these assets will produce more robust research and education opportunities.

INITIATIVE | Face to Face: Connecting With Our FAU Partners – We will enhance our connections with FAU colleagues through more face-to-face meetings and workshops, to advance collaboration in research, education, operations and community engagement.

THEME | Enhancing Harbor Branch Community
Workplaces that foster creativity, cultivate innovation and encourage imagination depend on a culture that both honors the individual and empowers the working group, which requires continuous stewardship and a pervasive commitment to accountability.

INITIATIVE | My Harbor Branch – We will build upon workplace mechanisms and customs that promote individual and group accomplishment and a welcoming and inclusive culture.

THEME | Wise Use of Harbor Branch Resources
Pursuing our mission requires a wide variety of resources, and conserving and wisely using them will enhance our environmental and operational sustainability.

INITIATIVE | Resource Stewardship to Enhance Our Campus – We will study energy use, waste generation, operational processes, and the purchase and use of physical assets to identify and optimize efficiencies.