MEMORANDUM

To: FIU Community

From: Kenneth G. Furton, Provost and Executive Vice President

Date: December 22, 2014

Re: Restructuring of the Division of Research

As we get closer to finalizing the next strategic plan for FIU, we must be prepared to swiftly move into the implementation phase. This is particularly important in the current era of performance funding from the State of Florida and increased competition for diminishing Research and Development funds. Thus, I am announcing structural and personnel changes in the Division of Research to better align with the research goals of the strategic plan.

Central to these goals is the continued expansion and support of FIU’s research enterprise. These goals align with our overall student success initiatives, as research expands opportunities to our students to engage in meaningful work while providing direct support through stipends, fellowships, training and many other opportunities. Additionally, as we strive towards Carnegie Very High Research classification, the Division of Research will need to focus on the multiple elements within the VHR classification, like postdoctoral researchers, PhD productivity, research faculty, per capita research productivity, and interdisciplinary research.

To achieve our goals, FIU’s research portfolio needs to become more diversified, with more partnerships with industry and greater focus on innovation and technology transfer. In order to be in an optimal position to reach our goals, the Division of Research will become the Office of Research and Economic Development, and the Vice President for Research will become the Vice President for Research and Economic Development. While this change aligns with the ongoing progression that has occurred in the Division of Research over the past few years, it also aligns with the national trend among Very High Research universities, in which Offices of Research have become Offices of Research and Economic Development or Research and Innovation or Research and Commercialization. Some examples include the University of South Florida, the University of Central Florida, and Arizona State University.

With this change, I expect the Office of Research and Economic Development to dedicate more resources to innovation, technology transfer, start-ups, economic partnerships in research, and research development support. To accomplish this, I have, in consultation with President Rosenberg and Vice President Gil, restructured the Office of Research to include the creation of new units and shifts of key personnel. I also expect that more large, interdisciplinary and preeminent research centers and institutes will centrally report to the Office of Research and Economic Development.
To this end, I am pleased to announce that Emily Gresham will join the Office of Research and Economic Development effective January 1, 2015 as Assistant Vice President for Research leading the new Innovation and Economic Development unit. This unit will encompass the strategic initiatives, innovation and economic development efforts of the Office. In her current role as Vice Provost for Strategic Initiatives and Implementation, Emily has focused on the strategic planning efforts for the University with an eye toward implementation. In this transition to the Office of Research and Economic Development, she will continue to work with the focus committees to complete the strategic plan, while developing the strategy and infrastructure for the Innovation and Economic Development unit. Once the strategic plan is completed, Emily will facilitate the implementation of the strategic plan, mainly in the areas pertaining to research and economic development.

I am also pleased to announce that Vice President Gil has initiated a series of restructuring changes to the Office of Research to succeed in its expanded role, as well as to address the departure of Associate Vice President Joseph Barabino. As announced last month by Vice President Gil, Joe is departing FIU after nine years of accomplished service at FIU. In his absence, Tonja Moore, who recently joined the Division of Research as Associate Vice President for Research, will assume several of the roles that were under the purview of Joseph Barabino.

- Through internal personnel shifts, the Office of Research will create a new unit of Project Management Services & Training. This unit will focus on improving and providing direct support to researchers and colleges in areas pertaining to managing grants, such as purchasing, personnel hiring and other needs. The unit will also serve the interdisciplinary centers and institutes that currently report to or will report to the Vice President for Research and Economic Development.

- Director of Pre-Award, Robert Gutierrez, will be promoted to Assistant Vice President for Research. Robert will continue to manage Pre-Award while taking on a larger leadership role within the Office, assuming some of the roles Joseph Barabino had. The Research Development Unit, directed by Maureen Pelham, will report to Robert Gutierrez. As we move into the implementation phase of the strategic plan, both Vice President Gil and I expect Maureen to rapidly expand research development by increasing mentoring of faculty, beginning to provide grant writing support to colleges, and developing a cadre of senior mentors to assist faculty in developing more competitive grants to external sponsors.

- Associate Vice President Luis Salas will continue to oversee Research Integrity, International Initiatives and Student Training, and Laboratory Animal Research. He will have the added oversight of Research Space and Core Facilities, which is currently under Director of Research Operations and External Partnerships Henry Artigues.

- Assistant Vice President Emily Gresham will lead Innovation and Economic Development which will encompass Technology Management and Commercialization (Peter Hernandez, Director), and Partnerships and Economic Development (Henry Artigues, Director). Henry’s new role will be focused on expanding research funding opportunities with industry and federal agencies. He will also coordinate efforts with Governmental Relations in Washington, D.C. This unit will also focus on the
establishment of incubators connected to FIU research and on communication and marketing of FIU’s major research accomplishments.

- Two key research recommendations coming from the Strategic Planning Committees that require implementation are the identification of Preeminent Programs and the creation of Organized Research Units (ORUs) reporting to the Vice President of Research and Economic Development. The criteria and process to identify Preeminent Programs are still being finalized but ORUs have been nationally defined by other universities as centers with defined periods of existence that promote multidisciplinary research and provide a supportive infrastructure complementary to the academic goals of departments of instruction and research. The Innovation and Economic Development Unit will have the major responsibility for strategic planning support of the ORUs and Centers and Institutes reporting to the Vice President for Research and Economic Development.

- Finally, David Driesbach will be promoted to Assistant Vice President for Research. David currently leads the Research Information Systems unit in the Office of Research; which reported to Joseph Barabino. In addition to the roles he currently performs, this unit will take on wider responsibilities assisting Innovation and Economic Development, and Research Development efforts.

It is my expectation that these changes will better position the Office of Research to implement and manage the research related goals of the strategic plan as well as create a foundation and plan to jumpstart FIU’s research and economic development efforts. As the research funding environment becomes more competitive and complex, concomitantly, with research being conducted in an increasingly transdisciplinary, multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary way, research offices need to provide comprehensive, integrated, team based services to support researchers and achieve institutional strategic priorities.