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Local News

FIU, FAU partner on research project with $2.3 million grant

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by Dale M. King

Two South Florida universities will use a $2.3 million grant in a joint effort to advance global partnerships in information technology research, innovation and education – and possibly increase the number of minorities working in the computer field.

Florida International University and Florida Atlantic University will work together on a proposal entitled "A Global Living Laboratory for Cyber-infrastructure Application Enablement" from the National Science Foundation's Partnership for International Research and Education (PIRE) program.

The School of Computing and Information Science at FIU and the College of Engineering and Computer Science at FAU will launch the five-year grant, which will support travel abroad for computer science faculty and students to do collaborative research at top universities in Mexico, Spain, Argentina, China, India, Japan and France. Students may also work at the IBM International Research Labs and the supercomputing center in Barcelona.

"We are very excited about receiving this very competitive grant," said FIU Computer Science Dean Yi Deng, principal investigator for the project. "This partnership, with the support from NSF, will not only help to advance the state-of-the-art in computing research, but also make a major impact in further enhancing the quality and competitiveness of our students, particularly Hispanic students, in computer science."

Experience Abroad

"This award will allow our students to have a great experience abroad and bridge the cultural gap in the United States and other countries, which is very important in the current global economy," said Borko Furht, chair of Computer Science and Engineering at FAU.

The research conducted under this grant will flow from a central question: How to better utilize the cyber-infrastructure to solve complex societal problems?

This partnership will allow researchers to work together and explore ways to harness the computing power of thousands of computers around the world to solve problems. The PIRE project will focus on areas such disaster mitigation, healthcare and life sciences. For example, one of the problems at hand, according to Deng, is the localization of weather forecasting down to the zip code.

When a hurricane approaches we have a general idea of what it will bring," said Deng. "We are looking to answer questions like how will it impact a specific location and at exactly what time."

The Global Living Laboratory for Cyber-Infrastructure Application Enablement will be based at FIU and work in collaboration with FAU in Boca Raton. The project was one of 20 selected by PIRE from more than 500 proposals submitted by the nation's major research universities.

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