FAU-FIU JOINT CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND URBAN PROBLEMS
2000-2001 ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND PLANNING REPORT

PART I. MISSION, GOALS, AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mission Statement: To work with policymakers and the public in planning livable communities, in promoting strong urban economies while managing growth and preserving natural systems. The Joint Center combines (1) academic support, (2) applied research, and (3) information dissemination/public outreach, using multi-disciplinary staff and collaborating faculty from both FAU and FIU. The goal is to optimize academic expertise in planning, public policy, economics, and social sciences in effective partnerships with local governments, state agencies, nonprofit organizations, students, and professionals.

B. ORGANIZATION, EXTERNAL TRENDS AND STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

1. Organizational Issues
   a) Organizational chart: (See next page).
   b) The position of Associate Director of the FAU-FIU Joint Center for Environmental and Urban Problems (whose incumbent also serves as Director of Research for the FIU Metropolitan Center) was filled by Dr. Ned Murray, AICP in May, 2000. No further changes in administrative structure are proposed, but continuing collaborative endeavors by the FAU Director of the Joint Center and Dr. Rivers, Director of the Metropolitan Center, exemplify their mutual desire to elevate the level of activity and involvement of the FIU office in the entire range of Joint Center projects compared to historical standards. This goal was achieved during the fiscal year as exemplified by the high profile Contracts and Grants (C&G) negotiated and received through the collaborative efforts of the Joint Center and Metropolitan Center.

2. Advisory Board Members
   a) List of members: FIU does not have a independent external advisory board for the Joint Center; this function is served by the Metropolitan Center External Advisory Committee (See Metropolitan Center Accountability Report).

3. External Trends
   The general devolution of authority/responsibility for community planning and development from Federal to State, and from State to local levels continues. Land use, economic development, community development, growth management, and environmental resource preservation planners are beginning to recognize the need to collaborate across disciplinary lines, to be more comprehensive in their perspectives, to build shared resources of data and information, and to coordinate their strategic and operational plans. The Internet, data warehousing, general information technology (IT), and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are increasingly means and tools relied upon by universities, governments, and businesses.

   The Joint Center has been aggressive in addressing these trends by networking with a broad range of community planning and development groups, with a focus on the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County, but with increasing emphasis on projects of regional and statewide significance. Several current grant research projects including the Miami-Dade Economic Development Implementation Plan, the City of Miami FEC Corridor Redevelopment Plan and the 79th Street Corridor Neighborhood Initiative, require extensive GIS applications. The use of GIS, as a planning tool, has been developed through a working partnership between the Joint Center/ Metropolitan Center and FIU’s GIS and Remote Sensing Analysis Laboratory (GISRSAL).
4. Strategic Directions and Areas of Emphasis

Concerted efforts have and are being made to obtain external contracts and competitive grants to expand the operations of the Joint Center. Successful efforts to date are the result of the existing collaboration with the Metropolitan Center and FIU IOG, and in-reach into the FIU community. Significant “project team capacity” has been developed with the School of Architecture, GISRSAL, and the Lehman Center for Transportation Research. The development of FIU project team capacity has enabled the Joint Center/Metropolitan Center to broker urban redevelopment contracts with governmental and non-profit agencies.

As noted earlier, the Metropolitan Center intends to avail itself of all FIU resources for information technology, both as working tools for administrative operations, for conducting grant- and contract-supported research, for marketing our technical assistance services, and for sharing with the FIU community and the general public the
products of our research and opportunities to join our endeavors. We intend for the Joint Center to make major advances and to be a power-user of GISRSAL resources on the University Park campus, and to collaborate with FAU’s Joint Center, with the South Florida Regional Planning Council, with the City of Miami and with Miami-Dade County. Obviously, this area of emphasis supports the Information University Academic Theme.

C. 2000-2001 ANNUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Goal 1: (Addresses University Goal I – To graduate a well-educated, technically sophisticated, and ethnically diverse student body, which can think critically about a changing world; and to continue to enhance undergraduate teaching while broadening graduate and professional programs)

Assessment Criteria (Measurable Outcome): Direct involvement of students in Joint Center research and field projects

Accomplishment: During the past year, graduate and undergraduate research associates and interns engaged in several high profile, urban research projects. Students have provided important contributions to the Miami-Dade Economic Development Implementation Plan ($233,000 C&G), City of Miami FEC Corridor Redevelopment Plan ($372,000 C&G) and 79th Street Corridor Neighborhood Initiative ($25,500 C&G). In each project, students were directly engaged in the community planning processes and participated in community workshops and public hearings/meetings with professional staff and elected and appointed government officials.

Student research associates included: Liga Replogle, doctoral candidate in Public Administration (EDIP, FEC Corridor Plan, 79th Street Corridor Plan), Ines Hernandez-Sequeira, Masters in Public Administration (EDIP, FEC Corridor Plan, COPC), Jill Strube, doctoral candidate in Public Administration (EDIP, Miami River Infill Plan, FEC Corridor Plan), Gus Newell, doctoral candidate in Public Administration (79th Street Corridor Plan, FEC Corridor Plan), Lisa Konczal, doctoral candidate in Sociology (FEC Corridor Plan, 79th Street Corridor Plan), Rocio Davis, doctoral candidate in Public Administration (EDIP), Eva Vela, graduate from the School of Architecture (EDIP, FEC Corridor Plan, 79th Street Corridor Plan), and Rebecca Erban, undergraduate summer intern from Tufts University (79th Street Corridor Plan, FEC Corridor Plan).

Use of Results for Program Improvement: Students are provided applied research opportunities in highly relevant urban plans and studies. Students are exposed to an inter-disciplinary approach to urban policy and planning issues and are rewarded with a first hand learning experience within the urban downtown and neighborhood setting. Grounded, applied research can be expanded to many other urban and regional studies.

Goal 2: (Addresses University Goal III. To solve critical social, educational, environmental, health and transportation problems through applied research and service; University Goal IV. To be recognized as a leading institution for teaching and research in the areas of International, Environmental, Urban, Health, and Information; and University Goal VI. To achieve Carnegie Foundation Research II status by the year 2001 and Research I status by the year 2008).

Assessment Criteria (Measurable Outcome): Obtain grants and contracts

Accomplishment: The FIU Joint Center works in conjunction with the Metropolitan Center in providing a “Downtown” urban presence that enables direct interaction with local governments and various non-profit and for profit organizations. This organizational construct has provided new and expanding grant opportunities within the past year including: The Miami-Dade Economic Development Implementation Plan (EDIP), a $233,000 grant that was completed and submitted to the County in June 2001; the FEC Corridor Redevelopment Plan, a $300,000 grant with the City of Miami that has been on-going since April 2001; the Miami-Dade Empowerment Trust Plan, a $72,000 an-on-going economic market study being completed in conjunction with the FEC Corridor Redevelopment Plan and the 79th Street Corridor Plan.
Neighborhood Plan, a $25,500 economic study and GISRAL grant that has been on-going since May 2001.

Use of Results for Program Improvement: As a result of these studies, the Joint Center, student research associates and affiliate faculty and students (School of Architecture, Engineering and GISRAL) have developed considerable hands-on knowledge and applied expertise on urban planning and development issues in Miami-Dade. Faculty and students have also developed substantial "project team" capacity.

D. 2001-2002 ANNUAL GOALS

2001-2002 Goal 1: Recruit additional graduate students to serve as research associates (addresses University Goal I. To graduate a well-educated, technologically sophisticated, and ethnically diverse student body, which can think critically about a changing world; and to continue to enhance undergraduate teaching while broadening graduate and professional programs)

Measurable Outcome: hiring of new students from various disciplines to work on grounded urban research projects

2001-2002 Goal 2: Increase the number and aggregate dollar value of grants and contracts (addresses University Goal III. To solve critical social, educational, environmental, health and transportation problems through applied research and service; University Goal IV. To be recognized as a leading institution for teaching and research in the areas of International, Environmental, Urban, Health, and Information; and University Goal VI. To achieve Carnegie Foundation Research II status by the Year 2001, and Research I status by the Year 2008)

Measurable Outcome: 1) level of institutional capacity building in developing and implementing public and private partnerships within both the university and larger Miami-Dade communities; 2) number and aggregated total dollar value of grants and contracts

E. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Major Activities - Prior Year

The mission of the FAU/FIU Joint Center for Environmental and Urban Problems is to work with policy makers and the public in their pursuit of options for managing growth and development in South Florida. To provide this public service, the Joint Center FIU office continued to develop its capacity and specialization in economic development, urban revitalization, community development, housing and growth management.

The Joint Center FIU office operates under the umbrella of the Metropolitan Center in the College of Urban and Public Affairs. The Joint Center mirrors its parent as a trans-disciplinary unit that focuses on environmental and urban problems using multi-dimensional and -disciplinary interventions and research designs. The Joint Center has a longer history than its current parent organization and has an established track record of including diverse faculty in the conduct of a wide variety of applied research and policy studies.

Dr. Ned Murray, AICP, Associate Director of the Joint Center FIU office, also serves as Director of Research Programs for the Metropolitan Center. The research function complements both the Metropolitan Center and Joint Center. Continuing collaborative endeavors among Dr. Murray, Dr. Rivers and James Murley, Director of the FAU Joint Center office, have exemplified their mutual desire to elevate the level of activity and involvement of the FIU office in the entire range of Joint Center projects compared to historical standards. Dr. Murray’s professional and academic background in Urban and Regional Planning has enabled the Joint Center and Metropolitan Center to negotiate Contracts and Grants for more “grounded” urban planning studies at the county, municipal and neighborhood levels. These “types” of studies are generally performed by professional planning, engineering and design firms. Dr. Murray has been successful in developing a university-based “project team” that can successfully compete for these studies while still providing “high, neutral ground” perspective on complex urban issues.

2. Major Activities - Coming Year
The Joint Center's proposed activities for the coming year reflect growing in-house and inter-departmental capacity, continuing collaboration with the FAU Joint Center office and expanding involvement in the community and economic redevelopment of Miami-Dade.

Key staff appointments within the Metropolitan Center and FIU Joint Center office within the last eight-(8) months have created significant in-house capacity and direction. The Centers' faculty, research associates and students have the ability to provide specialized economic and community development assistance to local governments, quasi-public groups and community based organizations. With new directors at both the FAU and FIU campuses, the strategic direction of the Joint Center continues to be revised to reflect the pressing planning and development concerns of South Florida. The close working relationship between the two Centers has created newfound synergy that focuses on the joint as well as the separate strengths of the two campuses. This still means a strong emphasis on growth management but an expanded focus on such issues as urban economic and community development. It is expected that this focus will be targeted to Miami-Dade.

The following are the FIU Joint Center’s proposed activities for the coming year:

a. Proposed Research and Scholarly Activities

Proposed research and scholarly activities for the coming year reflect both the university’s goal to be recognized as one of the nation’s top urban public research universities and the Joint Center’s mission to work with policy makers and the public in planning livable communities and in promoting strong urban economies while managing growth and preserving natural systems. The research and scholarly goals of FIU, the Metropolitan Center and the Joint Center also reflect the research and scholarly interests of the new Associate Director. Dr. Murray, AICP has over twenty years experience in professional urban planning practice. His academic research has been devoted to economic development and community development issues including recent scholarly research on sustainable economic development practice within Southeast Florida’s Eastward Ho! Corridor. During the coming year Dr. Murray will be presenting his economic development applied research at the Florida Redevelopment Annual Conference in Miami and the Florida American Planning Association’s (FAPA) Annual Conference in Orlando.

b. Service and Outreach

Significant internal outreach is proposed for the coming year. The Joint Center will continue to work with units within the parent Metropolitan Center and other university departments and centers. Dr. Murray is expected to work closely with the Metropolitan Center’s COPC unit in devising economic development strategies for selected Community Development Corporations (CDCs) in Miami-Dade. He will continue to work with the MC’s Director and faculty within other university departments, including the Schools of Architecture, Engineering and GISRSAL, on local government and non-profit planning initiatives including the City of Miami’s FEC Corridor Redevelopment Plan, the 79th Street Corridor Neighborhood Initiative and the Miami River Infill Redevelopment Plan.

External service and outreach during the coming year will include on-going projects with the City of Miami, Miami-Dade County, Miami-Dade Empowerment Trust and the 79th Street Corridor Neighborhood Initiative Inc. It is expected that the Joint Center and Metropolitan Center relationship with these governmental and non-profit organizations will be expanded to include other planning activities.

The FIU Joint Center’s economic development capacity has continued to create new funding opportunities. Miami-Dade County has requested that the Joint Center and Metropolitan Center submit a funding proposal for FY 2002 to provide a performance of evaluation of the Economic Development Implementation Plan (EDIP) submitted this past June.

c. Opportunities for Students

During the coming year it is expected that substantial opportunity will exist for students to engage in applied and “grounded” research. This estimation is based on existing projects and research and the growing demand being placed on the Joint Center to engage in new, high profile planning and development studies. Research opportunity for students will be determined in part by the availability of new funding sources.