

For Immediate Release
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FIO Welcomes B-CU and FOA into its Consortium

ST. PETERSBURG, FL. (July 8, 2021) – The Florida Institute of Oceanography (FIO) is proud to announce the induction of two new members into its now 32-member consortium. Bethune Cookman University (B-CU) and the Florida Ocean Alliance (FOA) were approved for membership by the voting members of the FIO Council during its strategic council meeting in late June.

Both of the new FIO members bring unique characteristics, knowledge bases, networks and partnerships to the FIO Consortium.

“The FIO membership, and its representative Council, is the bedrock of our organization. We are pleased to have Bethune-Cookman University and the Florida Ocean Alliance join our ranks as they greatly increase our reach to the breadth of what Florida's ocean science and education community has to offer,” said FIO Director Dr. Monty Graham.

B-CU, a Historically Black College and University (HBCU), has an [Integrated Environmental Science Department](#) focused on large-scale coastal and watershed issues and challenges. B-CU also is leading the Halifax River Urban Watershed Sustainability Initiative and is a member of the NOAA Center for Coastal and Marine Ecosystems (CCME).

“Bethune-Cookman University is honored to be invited to join the FIO community of marine researchers and educators in Florida who not only are helping us to assess and protect our wildlands and aquatic ecosystems, but also to prepare graduates to become change-driven scientists,” said Dr. William Berry, Provost of Bethune-Cookman. “FIO will enable our students to collaborate with their peers at other institutions and prepare them to meet the growing need for talented professionals in ocean and coastal sciences. In addition, FIO will provide our faculty and students with linkages to the extensive wealth of expert knowledge in the field throughout our state. This will help us to equip our students with a thorough understanding of oceanographic and marine issues through classroom education combined with experiential learning in the field.”

FOA, a statewide non-profit organization, is dedicated to bringing together the private marine sector, nonprofit research organizations, and academia. The Florida Ocean Alliance serves as a clearinghouse for information on key Florida coastal and ocean issues and recently developed a [Strategic Policy Plan for Florida's Oceans and Coasts: Securing Florida's Blue Economy](#) to protect living marine resources, the environment, promote marine economic activity and enhance public outreach.

Laura DiBella, Vice Chair of FOA, praised the action: “The Florida Ocean Alliance realizes the importance of joining FIO as a means to increase our outreach to the Florida ocean community and to work with its partners across the state. This is a critical way to share our expertise, working with this diverse group.”

The two new members are the first to join the FIO Consortium in six years, when the organization welcomed the Florida Aquarium. For more information on FIO's newest members, visit the [FIO News page](#) and the [FIO Consortium page](#).

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The Florida Institute of Oceanography consists of 32 members including state universities. Established by the Florida Board of Governors and hosted by the University of South Florida, FIO provides support and shares marine science resources between the state's universities and private, non-profit marine research entities. FIO operates the R/V Weatherbird II, R/V Hogarth and the Keys Marine Laboratory (KML) in Layton, Florida.