

**State University System  
The Florida Institute of Oceanography  
2008-2009 Budget**

**Note:** On August 27, 2007, the State University System Council of Academic Vice Presidents met and discussed this potential budget issue. Notwithstanding the support expressed by the host institution, the CAVP expressed minimal support for the Florida Institute of Oceanography's budget request. While the general idea of having a floating research platform is considered desirous, the Council expressed its reluctance to deem this an SUS priority given the current fiscal climate. The Council recommended that either the FIO or some other organization should first conduct an analysis of Florida's current and future fleet responsibilities, capabilities and capacities, and opportunities.

**Total Budget Need: \$1.5M**

The Florida Institute of Oceanography (FIO) was established in 1970 to provide the necessary infrastructure to survey and support Florida's coastal marine science and oceanography programs in education, training, research, public outreach and marine resource management. This centralized approach minimizes expenses by avoiding duplication of research and facilities infrastructure.

The FIO is based at the St. Petersburg Campus of the University of South Florida and co-located with the Florida Marine Research Institute (FMRI). Collectively, the FIO consortium generated \$15 million in outside grants and contracts in the last five years. The Research Vessel Suncoaster is the primary ocean platform for grant and contract research programs involving member institutions. The Suncoaster is a 40-year old "drug boat" that was acquired and renovated by the FIO in 1980. The vessel has become increasingly unsustainable in this supporting role because of its hull limitations, lack of scientific storage space, lack of laboratory spaces and a limited number of scientist accommodations. The Suncoaster lacks the capacity for modern multi-disciplinary oceanographic science and technologies.

The FIO is seeking funding for a replacement for the Suncoaster. It is estimated that after the initial planning and design phase, the actual construction of the research vessel can be accomplished for an estimated \$13.5 million.

As indicated, the FIO is an essential component of the marine research capability of several entities besides the State University System, including the Florida Marine Research Institute, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Department of State, Environmental Protection Agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Mote Marine Lab, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the SRI-St. Petersburg Marine Research Facility.