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FAU Receives Largest Gift in Its History

BOCA RATON, Fla. (December 2, 2014) — In its continued pursuit of excellence, Florida Atlantic University will build a premier facility at the heart of its Boca Raton campus that will allow student-athletes to excel in the classroom and on the field.

This initiative exemplifies FAU’s drive to enhance its stature and visibility nationally and internationally.

The Schmidt Family Complex for Academic and Athletic Excellence will play a central role to elevate FAU’s academic standing and will benefit students in all academic programs, including those not associated with athletic programs.

The facility has received initial funding of \$16 million from the Schmidt Family Foundation, the largest single gift in FAU’s history. The Schmidt Family Foundation’s generosity will help create a national model of academic excellence in athletics to attract the nation’s top coaches and student-athletes to FAU.

Long-time FAU benefactor Dick Schmidt (’70, M.B.A., accounting), said the Foundation hopes this gift will be transformative, not only for FAU, but for Boca Raton and the South Florida region.

“The Foundation believes Florida Atlantic University — our university right here in Boca Raton — is poised for greatness,” Schmidt said. “As a community, we understand that to compete at the highest levels, in and out of the classroom, students must have access to premier facilities.”

The Schmidt Family Foundation has shown a far-reaching, visionary commitment to FAU’s continued growth. Other major gifts from the Schmidt Family Foundation have benefited the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters; the Charles E. Schmidt Science; the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine; as well as the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing and the College of Engineering and Computer Science.

[The Complex](#) will be constructed adjacent to FAU Stadium. In addition to a student-athlete academic and leadership center, the state-of-the-art facilities may include strength and conditioning, sports medicine, and health and wellness centers and an indoor training facility.

FAU President John Kelly said that the Schmidt Foundation's overwhelming generosity will see FAU become a premier academic establishment. FAU will be recognized as this country's next great university, he said.

"With a main campus less than two miles from some of the country's most pristine coastline, FAU has enormous potential and will become an irresistible draw for the best and brightest students," Kelly said. "We're going to play to win — and that means in the classroom and on the field."

FAU Athletics competes in 19 NCAA sports, and two sports not considered varsity by NCAA. The Owls' 29,419-seat football stadium opened in October 2011. In September, the stadium's field was named in honor of legendary coach and "father of FAU football" Howard Schnellenberger.

Pat Chun, FAU's vice president for athletics, said the Schmidt Family Foundation's generosity will lead to endless possibilities.

"We have some of the best student-athletes and coaches in college sports at FAU," Chun said. "This gift will allow us to teach, mentor and develop our student athletes to their highest levels. We thank the Schmidts for this transformative gift."

Renderings, headshots and additional information are [available here](#).

-FAU-

About Florida Atlantic University:

Florida Atlantic University, established in 1961, officially opened its doors in 1964 as the fifth public university in Florida. Today, the University, with an annual economic impact of \$6.3 billion, serves more than 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students at sites throughout its six-county service region in southeast Florida. FAU's world-class teaching and research faculty serves students through 10 colleges: the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters, the College of Business, the College for Design and Social Inquiry, the College of Education, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, the Graduate College, the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College, the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine, the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing and the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science. FAU is ranked as a High Research Activity institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The University is placing special focus on the rapid development of three signature themes – marine and coastal issues, biotechnology and contemporary societal challenges – which provide opportunities for faculty and students to build upon FAU's existing strengths in research and scholarship. For more information, visit www.fau.edu.

About the Schmidt Family Foundation:

The Schmidt Family Foundation is a charitable organization dedicated to helping people help themselves. By providing an appropriate financial catalyst, the Foundation gives individuals the means to alleviate suffering or to make the most of their given abilities, that they may make the greatest returns to society. The Foundation provides funding to local organizations as a way to give back to the community which Charles E. and Dorothy F. Schmidt were a part of for so many years, and is committed to providing grants to non-profit 501(c)3 organizations that meet our guidelines. The Foundation is unable to fund individuals and/or their families.