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Office of Substance Abuse, Mental Health and Recovery Research to be Established in FAU's School of Social Work *FAU to Create Endowed Chair for School of Social Work*

BOCA RATON, Fla. (March 24, 2015) — Florida Atlantic University's School of Social Work within the College for Design and Social Inquiry has announced it will establish an Office of Substance Abuse, Mental Health and Recovery Research at its Boca Raton campus.

Following the recent announcement of a \$100,000 gift from Life of Purpose Treatment, an addiction treatment facility in the Research Park at FAU, several additional companies have joined forces to help. KIPU Systems, Lumiere Detox Center, Sober Living Outpatient, Sober Living in Delray, Guardian IOP, Boca Detox, The Hartman House, and Infinity Behavioral Health Services are working in tandem with FAU and Life of Purpose Treatment with the goal of raising \$3 million to enable FAU to recruit a leading researcher to serve as the endowed chair to spearhead the program.

"We are very grateful to Life of Purpose Treatment and the companies who are supporting our efforts to establish this new initiative at FAU," said John R. Graham, Ph.D., a professor of social work and director of the School of Social Work. "We expect this new Office to serve as a hub for interdisciplinary and collaborative addictions treatment research."

Graham is a renowned author and established researcher who has received more than \$4 million in research funding.

FAU's Office of Substance Abuse, Mental Health and Recovery Research will take a multi-tiered approach to addressing substance abuse combining services in the areas of education and training, research and evaluation, and technical assistance and technology development.

The Office will serve as an important hub of South Florida's research on alcohol and drug abuse prevention and recovery, and will foster internationally recognized research to better understand and reduce the impact of substance use locally as well as globally. The Office plans to provide courses and workshops for social work and allied disciplinary practitioners in addictions. As its work progresses, the Office will offer visits

by internationally renowned scholars and practitioners in the field to promote collaborative research efforts, teaching and knowledge mobilization.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), by 2020, mental and substance-use disorders will surpass all physical diseases as a major cause of disability worldwide. In 2009, an estimated 23.5 million Americans ages 12 and older required treatment for substance use. The annual total estimated societal cost of substance abuse in the U.S. is nearly \$511 billion.

“I am committed to creating support to establish an Office of Substance Abuse, Mental Health and Recovery Research within the FAU School of Social Work,” said Andrew Burki, chief executive officer of Life of Purpose Treatment and an alumnus of FAU. “The establishment of this office together with recruiting a top-notch researcher as the endowed chair will lead to a significant increase in independent research and studies into substance abuse and mental health of our youth.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, each year approximately 5,000 youth under the age of 21 die as a result of underage drinking. Half of all lifetime cases of mental and substance use disorders begin as early as age 14 and three-fourths by age 24. First-year post-relapse rates in this age group range from 60 to 79 percent and within five years, more than 90 percent of treated youths return to substance use. Approximately 1.8 million Americans between the ages of 15 to 24 were admitted for substance abuse treatment (2007).

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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 Life of Purpose

The Life of Purpose program goes beneath the surface of addiction to unveil triggering issues of the addiction process, such as low self-esteem, lack of direction or purpose in life, traumatic events, family turmoil, angst in interpersonal relationships, learning disabilities, physical pain, depression, anxiety and other mental health issues. The addiction treatment facility provides the support people in early recovery need to succeed as students, and to create meaning in life. Life of Purpose Treatment is the only addiction treatment facility on a college campus in the United States and is one of the many successful companies in the Research Park at Florida Atlantic University. For more information, visit www.lifeofpurposetreatment.com