

Eight to watch

Florida faculty members likely to impact Brevard County.

FACULTY MEMBER, UNIVERSITY	LOCAL IMPACT	FINANCIAL BACKING	QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT RESEARCH
 <p>Robert Swett University of Florida, assistant professor, Dept. of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences</p>	<p>Leads study on boating access and economics in Brevard County. Elsewhere, his research led to proposals for new ramps, mooring facilities that fit manatee rules and high land costs.</p>	<p>More than \$1.4 million in research projects since 2000 for counties, navigation districts and state fish-and-wildlife commission. No consulting disclosed.</p>	<p>What's the difference between boating's economic "impact" and "benefit?" Would all classes of boaters benefit from changes?</p>
 <p>Sandra Robinson University of Central Florida, dean of College of Education</p>	<p>Launched, and continues to oversee, Central Florida's classroom-level effort to study and improve reading education. Could sway school grades.</p>	<p>Twice has topped UCF's "millionaire club" for bringing in most research-grant funding. Includes \$9.6 million in 2005, primarily from state and corporate sources.</p>	<p>Is this approach right for my child? What are the long-term effects?</p>
 <p>James Nicholas University of Florida, professor of law and urban planning</p>	<p>Developed widely-used formula for development impact fees in Florida. Could be called on to calculate higher local fees and raise millions for roads, schools.</p>	<p>As consultant, earns \$15,000-\$28,000 per job with local governments. Has worked for Palm Bay and every county south of Brevard. No grant research.</p>	<p>Why have the shortfalls occurred in the first place? How will this affect housing affordability? What assumptions went into the calculations?</p>
 <p>Llewellyn Ernhart University of Central Florida, biology professor emeritus</p>	<p>Serves as "principle investigator" on research project to measure sea-turtle nesting on rebuilt Brevard beaches. If his team sees decline, projects near condos could be removed.</p>	<p>Ernhart and his staff have received \$429,996 from local, state and federal agencies in Brevard County in the past three years. No consulting disclosed.</p>	<p>How was the data collected? Could other factors, such as storms or racoons affect turtle nesting?</p>
 <p>Douglas Harris Florida State University, professor of economics and education</p>	<p>Leading a four-year study on how to measure teacher quality beyond test scores. Could yield a statistical model or formula for determining local teachers' bonuses.</p>	<p>Landed a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education for current study. Off campus, has been a contributing writer to the nonpartisan Economic Policy Institute.</p>	<p>What qualities does this model weigh more heavily than others? What research or statistics, if any, have lawmakers used up to now?</p>
 <p>Jon Mills University of Florida, law professor and director, Center for Government Responsibility</p>	<p>Chairs state commission to recommend which local court documents will be posted online. Working with UF team to decipher regulatory barriers to new boating facilities.</p>	<p>Center contracts directly with Florida courts, agencies and foundations, including \$466,000 in grants in past five years. Has consulted for law firms, Hospital Association and ballot-initiative groups.</p>	<p>Who sponsored this effort? What's the long-term effect if, as an advocate, Mills wins? What's the precedent for this?</p>
 <p>Julie Harrington Florida State University, Director of Center for Economic Forecasting and Analysis</p>	<p>Center's computer models judge the economic impact of public policy proposals. Work has supported high-speed rail, Medicare prescription-drug benefits and Florida's historic tobacco settlement.</p>	<p>All projects sponsored by outside agencies or industry groups. Harrington, new to job, has not yet disclosed outside work, but predecessor was frequent consultant and expert witness.</p>	<p>How was the data gathered? What are the underlying assumptions? Are any parts of the economic "impact" negative?</p>
 <p>Gary Kleck Florida State University, professor of criminology and criminal justice</p>	<p>His research on firearms, crime and self-defense is repeatedly cited by lobbyists who favor fewer gun restrictions. A bill in Florida Legislature would force employers to let workers keep guns in cars.</p>	<p>Little outside funding aside from a \$80,590 grant from the Charles E. Culpeper Foundation in 1997 to study deterrent-based crime control. No consulting disclosed.</p>	<p>Who's spinning this research? What does Kleck's research actually conclude?</p>