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## **UCF Launches Energy Research Initiative and Names New Director**

Professor Winston V. Schoenfeld has been named Director of Energy Initiatives at UCF and will be leading the charge to position UCF as an energy research powerhouse.

Earlier this year Elizabeth Klonoff, Vice President of Research and Dean of the College of Graduate Studies, commissioned a 15-member Blue-Ribbon panel to strategize about how UCF energy-related research can help meet the rapidly increasing demand for clean and economical energy. After eight months of work the panel delivered its 32-page report, which outlines several recommendations including naming a director to help move UCF to a leadership position in the field.

“The panel conducted a thorough review that identified UCF’s strengths in this area and a great many opportunities for us to take on a leadership role in energy research,” Klonoff said. “Success does not happen overnight and without effort. Dr. Schoenfeld’s background and extensive experience in this field will help put us on the road to success.”

Schoenfeld, the Director of the Solar Technologies Research Division at UCF’s Florida Solar Energy Center and a Professor of Optics in CREOL, The College of Optics and Photonics, will be organizing university-wide energy research.

“Energy is a field facing significant potential changes in the coming years, bringing challenges ripe for interdisciplinary research efforts. I am excited to have the opportunity to lead the effort to capitalize on UCF’s strong expertise across the Energy discipline, positioning it as a leader in Energy research and education.”

The Blue-Ribbon panel’s report, “Illuminating the Future of Energy Research at UCF” [http://www.research.ucf.edu/documents/PDF/UCF\\_BlueRibbonEnergyPanelFinalReport.pdf](http://www.research.ucf.edu/documents/PDF/UCF_BlueRibbonEnergyPanelFinalReport.pdf) will help guide the initiative. It includes recommendations and provides, for the first time, an inventory of all energy-related research at UCF as of December 2017 as well as identifying several areas of potential growth.

The panel’s recommendations are:

- \*The UCF energy community should receive clear vision and direction from UCF leadership
- \*Create a university-wide coordinating unit around energy
- \*Evaluate current and future energy-related courses and curriculum
- \*Market UCF energy research
- \*Obtain legislative support for a center/institute for research and education in energy and enhanced university/industry research opportunities
- \*Identify faculty needs in economics and policy needed to integrate energy across campus

The panel, led by Associate Vice President for Research and Scholarship, Debra Reinhart, met several times between January and April 2018. The group included a cross-section of researchers and administrators from UCF and industry representatives and met with industry leaders and government funding agencies to talk about the state of energy research in the United States, needs and gaps in energy knowledge, and opportunities in education and research. Schoenfeld served on the panel.