

COLIN POLSKY, PHD

Associate Vice President, Broward Campuses;
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Dr. Colin Polsky is Professor of Geosciences, and Founding Director of the Florida Atlantic University School of Environmental, Coastal, and Ocean Sustainability (FAU ECOS) which launched in the fall of 2023. The mission of this multidisciplinary and multi-unit School is to elevate environmental research, teaching, and community engagement across the university. Dr. Polsky is a climate social scientist examining how people create, perceive, and respond to climate challenges. His training is in mathematics, humanities, French, geography, and science & international affairs (from U. Texas, Penn State, and Harvard). As ECOS Director, Dr. Polsky also leads program-building, fundraising, staffing, and communicating efforts to benefit students, faculty, and community.

Dr. Colin Polsky joined the Florida Atlantic University faculty as Professor of Geosciences in August 2014. His primary responsibility was to direct the Center for Environmental Studies, an on-going role that he continues to fulfill. Under Dr. Polsky's leadership, CES has embraced a new vision that builds on past successes while expanding into new domains. The vision of CES is to improve Florida's sustainability through research, education, and community engagement, on wetlands ecology, coastal resilience, and energy innovations.

Dr. Polsky is trained as a geographer, specializing in the human dimensions of global environmental change. He has completed four degrees with majors in four disciplines, plus a two-year postdoctoral training in a fifth field. This academic background has led to a sustained interest in advancing knowledge of U.S. climate vulnerabilities, in both methodological and applied terms.

As part of several inter-disciplinary teams, Polsky has received NSF grants totaling close to $18M of which $1.7M has been directed to his stewardship. His publications include 26 peer-reviewed articles, 2 co-authored books, 17 book chapters, and 11 other reports; he has delivered close to 100 public presentations in 8 countries. Polsky has served as co-convening lead author for a chapter in the 2013 National Climate Assessment, served on NRC, NSF, and USGCRP committees, and prepared reviews for several IPCC reports.

Polsky's administrative experience includes service for 10 years as Center Director, 8 years as director of a university undergraduate research program, 1.5 years as associate dean, and 1 year on an elected governance board. These experiences have led to significant experience with leadership and program-building, both within and across university departments; fund-raising from public and private foundations; staffing of diverse and multi-generational teams; and communicating with varied audiences, for both persuasive and reporting purposes.