



**Address at the 2013 CEOs for Cities**

**Given by Mark B. Rosenberg  
on October 1, 2013**



*This speech was presented by President Rosenberg at 2013 CEOs for Cities National Meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan after he was honored as a “City Changemaker.”*

It is a pleasure to be here today with my fellow distinguished “City Changemakers,” all of whom are providing the forward-looking, 21<sup>st</sup> Century leadership and vision that our communities need. FIU is an urban-serving, engaged university that is committed to the community and urban problem solving. As such, we are proud of our longtime relationship with CEOs for Cities. We’re an example of the importance of partnerships such as the one CEOs for Cities and the Coalition of Urban Serving Universities have launched.

In Miami, we are doing our part to carry out the CEOs for Cities mission of building, advancing and sustaining the next generation of great American cities. And like much of the research sponsored by CEOs for Cities tells us: like our partners in Miami, we know we are in the business of talent retention, civic-engagement and place making. CEOs for Cities has inspired us. That inspiration and relationships formed here have led to positive collaboration in our community that includes the Miami Foundation’s innovative Match 305 project. This project is focused on keeping our best and brightest in Miami. We are working together to turn the tide on Miami’s “brain drain” and improving civic engagement. CEOs for Cities has also challenged us.

So when CEOs for Cities City Vitals report tells us we’re ranked 51 out of 51 in engaged citizens, we know there’s work to be done. I would like to thank CEOs for Cities for recognizing the great work that we are doing at FIU, in collaboration with other anchor institutions, to foster innovation and take our community to the next level.

Our goal is to be a solutions center for our region. We are fulfilling that goal through strategic partnerships. Before I talk about some of our groundbreaking partnerships, I want to share a video with you that shows these partnerships in action.

As you can see, our vision for FIU goes beyond the walls of FIU. It begins blurring with what a vision for South Florida should be. So our vision can’t be ours alone. By joining forces with public school, transportation, and government officials, we are helping transform South Florida; in real ways. The real impact is in the lives that we’ve changed. The video introduced you to the Education Effect, a partnership between FIU, Miami Dade County Public Schools and JPMorgan Chase. Through this partnership, we are creating a college-going culture at Miami Northwestern Senior High. Let me tell you about one of our Education Effect students. Her name is Shaquilla (shah-KEE-lah) Thomas. Shaquilla went to Northwestern, against her mom’s advice. Shaquilla wanted to attend the school’s medical magnet program. Her mom worried about the school’s reputation for violence. Northwestern, you see, is in Liberty City. Liberty City is a

neighborhood where many residents struggle with challenges such as poverty and crime. In fact, many of Shaquilla's fellow students had little hope of graduating from high school at all. But Shaquilla was determined.

She made the most of her experience at Northwestern, here our faculty is supporting the college dreams of students like her. Through the Education Effect, she was able to take FIU courses while completing her high school degree. Shaquilla's hard work paid off when she earned a full scholarship to FIU. As part of the Education Effect, we continue to support students after they graduate from Northwestern and come to FIU. Shaquilla was one of our very first "Golden Scholars." These are students from Northwestern and other high schools who participate in a summer bridge program to help them make the transition to college life. We know that transition is crucial to a student's ability to succeed in college and graduate. Now a sophomore at FIU, Shaquilla has impressed her fellow students, as well as our faculty and staff, with her determination, hard work and involvement in university activities. And Shaquilla is determined to pay it forward.

She often goes back to talk to other kids at Northwestern about college life. The Education Effect changed Shaquilla's life by supporting her in high school and in her transition to higher education. Now she is changing the life of each student she speaks to. When you ask Shaquilla why she goes back she will tell you: "I've experienced so much. I have grown so much. I want to give back. I want to be a mentor to others." That is the true measure of success. Let me share with you some of the other incredible successes of the Education Effect: Under our state's school accountability grading system, schools are assigned a grade based on student achievement data. This is meant to reflect how well a school is performing, relative to state standards. Miami Northwestern had historically received grades of D's and F's. It was failing. With our support, Miami Northwestern is now a "B" school. Since we launched the Education Effect, the percentage of students earning a 3.0 GPA or higher went from 15 percent to 45 percent. The graduation rate increased from 64 percent to 83 percent. The number of students who continue their education past high school has grown by 10 percent. We have empowered 150 students with financial literacy skills. We tripled the number of college credit courses available to Northwestern students and quadrupled the number of students participating. Our work in Liberty City goes beyond Northwestern high school. We have also created a network of more than 40 community partners in Liberty City to address school and community needs.

By working with our partners, Miami-Dade County Public Schools and JPMorgan Chase, we are bringing hope to a neighborhood that had given up hope, one young person at a time. The Education Effect is just one part of a larger collaboration strategy with Miami-Dade County Public Schools called ACCESS - Achieving Community Collaboration in Education and Student Success. Through this achievement-oriented partnership, we have leveraged the know-how of our faculty to enhance education in

South Florida, from K to 12: Since Fall 2009, dual enrollment in FIU by high school students has expanded from 425 students to almost 6,000.

Back in 2009, we offered 16 courses; today we offer 127. In Fall 2009, students from only six schools participated; today 38 schools are represented. In August, the school system opened MAST@FIU on our Biscayne Bay Campus in north Miami-Dade County. This is the only four-year high school on a university campus in the county. MAST@FIU builds on the successful Maritime and Science Technology magnet school model. And it takes it a step further since our world class marine sciences faculty will play a role in the education of these students. Through ACCESS, teachers and administrators are able to pursue advanced degrees at FIU.

Faculty at our Center for Children and Families – leaders in the field of mental health and learning difficulties of children – train school district counselors, psychologists and staff. We are supporting STEM education in the public schools. We provide teachers with the training and education they need to teach STEM disciplines and give students the tools they need to succeed. For example, we have opened our Mastery Math Lab – through which we have improved the performance of our own students in College Algebra – to struggling high school students. ACCESS and the Education Effect serve as models for the type of problem-solving collaborations we seek.

As you saw earlier, one of our public-private collaborations is UniversityCity. We can move forward with this pioneering project, thanks to an \$11.4 million-dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation known as the TIGER grant – Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Program. These funds will help us and our partners connect our Modesto A. Maidique Campus to our neighbors in the city next door, Sweetwater; and to other parts of Greater Miami. In effect, our UniversityCity unites us to create our future, together. The UniversityCity coalition represents an intentional effort following the principles of sustainability to work with community partners such as the City of Sweetwater, Miami-Dade Expressway Authority, Miami Dade County and the Florida Department of Transportation.

We also joined forces with private sector partners such as IBM, TY Lin Engineering and a local developer who is building a 15-story student housing tower across the street from our main Maidique Campus. Students from our Honors College also provide community services to residents of Sweetwater. By working together, we are literally walking the walk. We want South Floridians to get out of their cars. We want them to live and play near where they work. We want them to explore other transportation options. Those options include walking in pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods, cities and streets. UniversityCity shows how stakeholders in our community are partnering with our university to develop specific economic development solutions to revitalize our neighborhoods. Our hope is that our comprehensive and innovative approach will be a model for the region and the country. We are leveraging our best academic thinking and experience. The goal is to serve as a catalyst to create a new urban place

that will involve Advanced Transit-oriented Development, Smart Streets design and cutting edge technology applications that people can use to evaluate and choose their transportation options. This integrated, innovative approach to urban place making will result in great transportation options, easier inter-modal shifts, reduced highway congestion, and improved walkability and safety for pedestrians who walk between our campus and the new urban place we are creating in the City of Sweetwater.

UniversityCity will be a shining example of how FIU, through strategic partnerships, can improve our community for the better, can retain talent, and can revitalize a neighborhood. And by connecting communities, it will solidify FIU and its surrounding neighborhoods as an innovation, cultural and athletic center.

All of this means improved transportation, jobs and economic development. It is a win-win-win for our community. We're thankful for the honor of being named a "changemaker." And we realize that these are just some examples of what so many of you are also doing in your own communities, and the work that still remains alongside our partners in Miami, like the Miami Foundation. As a university, we are proud to play such an important role in the revitalization of our communities.

We look forward to the many successful collaborations ahead.