



**Address at the 2018 Faculty Convocation**

**Given by Mark B. Rosenberg  
on September 27, 2018**



*This speech was presented on September 27, 2018 to the attendees of the 2018 Faculty Convocation Awards Ceremony.*

Congratulations to our faculty awardees!

Your accomplishments are praiseworthy; they inspire us! They beckon us to raise the bar on ourselves! They set a high standard for a university that insists on ascending that is poised to do even greater things that is always searching for...and finding...the next horizon.

I too want to welcome family members – spouses, companions, loved ones.

What a difference a year makes! Let me share with you what I said last year at this gathering: “Wow what a month – three major hurricanes; significant damage and despair, a horrible mass shooting, (59 dead, 413 wounded in Vegas) and now deadly wild fires out west.

Many of you or your students and or family members may be suffering from disaster fatigue, empathy dry-up or uncertainty because of the seeming unending calamities befalling this country and our friends elsewhere in the world.”

Little did we know what was still ahead; our very own calamity. A tragic bridge collapse; loss of lives, national visibility, and intense questioning. Soul-searching. Tears. Mourning. Sadness. A university united in grief.

But more resolved than ever to do the right thing. To do right by our community. Our first responders were heroic. Their story still needs to be told.

Thousands in our community and around the country found the inner resolve and grace to demonstrate their humanity, their brotherhood and sisterhood, their sense of decency and to offer comfort.

This gave us strength – that endures. A renewed sense of purpose – that drives us forward. That enables us to understand even more deeply and profoundly how special our mission is. How deeply-needed learning and renewal are to the human spirit.

What's remarkable about this last year is that you – our faculty – even with the unforgiving and forever painful drama, you excelled. #2 in the state in performance funding! Movement into the top 100 of public universities! Chronicle of Higher Education's "Great Colleges to Work For" Honor Roll! Forbes Magazine, a top ranking for best large employer! More sponsored research than ever before! More graduates than ever before! Highest ever fundraising through IGNITE! And the best Freshman class as a result!

Thank you for your resilience, professionalism, and dedication to our mission. Thank you for your love of life, and passion for students. Thank you for allowing us to demonstrate to the world that yes – we were down, but never out!

Three years ago, we had a discussion during our convocation. A point then that now more than ever needs to be reinforced: our environment is not static. To sustain our work in this complex era, we must continually reframe - who we are, what we do, and how we do it! Put another way – if we are to be disrupted, I want us to do the disruption!

So during this year you will participate in a new strategic workplan process. Yes – we have set a very high goal for this new plan: a 60% four-year graduation rate for our Freshman class. But we must also get on with planning for the future. We must look to the next horizon!

In his book *Robot-Proof*, Joseph Aoun expresses optimism that we in higher education have a role to play in the digital, exponential world of artificial intelligence, augmented reality, blockchain, and just-in-time learning. He identifies three new literacies and three new competencies that we all will need.

Literacies – data literacy, technological literacy and human literacy; and cognitive capacities – systems thinking, entrepreneurship and cultural agility. All of which is to say that we have work to do. We have mountains to climb; we have new horizons to discover.

There is an aphorism that rings in my ears: "If the highest aim of a captain were to preserve her ship, she would keep it in port forever". This year, this FIU ship sails on a new learner-centric voyage with high goals.

And there is no better crew to get us to our destination, that next horizon, than you – our faculty. Nowhere in this country do you find a sitting President and Provost who believe so deeply in the faculty that they sent all their children to be taught by that faculty. Let us use these special moments to rededicate ourselves to the life of the mind, to student success, and to a better, more human world.

Your achievements speak to the excellence inherent in our community, and give us confidence that our future will hold much brighter days for all who are lucky enough to be affiliated with our amazing institution!

Congratulations. Let's go!