



Address to the Beacon Council

**Given by Mark B. Rosenberg
on July 31, 2009**



This speech was presented to members of The Beacon Council, Miami-Dade County's official economic development partnership, on July 31, 2009.

Thank you, members of the Council. It is appropriate that we have a strong partnership, given the critical role that FIU plays in the county's economic development.

FIU is a major engine of economic development. I would like to have a conversation with you about three important issues: major trends that inform our work, education in our community, FIU's new era

I. Major trends

- a. Entering an era of extreme competition globally. World of work is being rapidly transformed – driven by globalization.
- b. Three great trading blocs – each with its own style and each with its own competitive advantages.
- c. Our community – as a world class city – needs how to benefit from each.
- d. Driver of this new era however is a major opportunity for improvement – that is knowledge and innovation through education.

II. Education: How are we doing?

President Obama recently set a goal that all Americans should have at least one course of post high school education. This is a laudable first step but hardly sufficient – particularly for Florida.

~ Show tables on educational attainment ~

Take away-to be competitive with OECD countries – we will need to improve significantly our levels of educational attainment. Education leaders in this community – under the auspices of the Chamber – are building a coalition to develop a strategy for how we can get there.

III. What is FIU's role?

First, our competencies line up very well with the Beacon's nine target industries: FIU is the major supplier of undergraduate and graduate talent to our community – we graduate nearly 8,000 students every year into our economy. Wherever you go in S. Florida, you are one degree of separation from an FIU graduate.

I have promised our Board of Trustees that I will hit the ground running when I assume the presidency on Monday. In doing so, I want to acknowledge that I have very big shoes to fill – Dr. Maidique himself led the Beacon Council.

In this new era, I will lead a process that assumes the following:

- FIU is a major anchor institution in this community
- Every student counts – we must be more student friendly; we must do a better job of finding student internships and quality jobs for our graduates
- Research and high quality teaching are critical components of FIU's value added
 - We must be better at linking our research to community problem solving and job creation!
 - We must do a better job of aligning our plans to the community's future and where we can leverage our resources against those of the community.
- The University must be more engaged in the community in problem solving through win-win coalitions with key governmental agencies and non-profits.

In ten years, you will see a University that goes from 39,000 students to nearly 50,000 students.

You will see a University that is:

- helping to spearhead an expansion of the economy in the life sciences,
- in applied problem solving related to improving health care access for the underserved,
- in state of the art thinking and policy in international affairs, particularly related to Latin America and the Caribbean, our backyard,
- and in environmental issues, particularly related to water quality and supply.

We will also be a major player in improving our urban transportation system, in improving our schools, and in adding to the quality of the arts in our community.

Finance will be a key driver of our success. I will spend a great deal of time in fund-raising and in telling the story of our great institution.

In summary, in an era of extreme competition, we have significant challenges to improve our overall level of education attainment and per capita income. FIU is a major driver of success and opportunity for our community. It will be more engaged locally and globally in this new era, and will have to do so by seeking resources outside of the traditional state budget!

I want to thank you for your time. I am looking forward to working more closely and more intentionally with the Beacon Council to foster an improved quality of life in our community!