

**MEMORANDUM**

March 2, 2016

Dear FIU Family,

Many of you have expressed interest in a project that seeks to build two new recreation and practice fields for our students on the Modesto A. Maidique Campus.

In a context of important multiple competing priorities, we are focused on making plans that address student needs and align with our broader commitment to environmental stewardship. There is a long-standing need – for over one decade – for more athletic fields for our growing intramural and recreational sports programs. With only one intramural field, our students often compete deep into the night in their matches with fellow students. There is also intense competition for use of the single field for club sports – men’s and women’s rugby, and for soccer. There are no extra practice fields for our student athletes either, putting us at a competitive disadvantage in our conference.

We are proposing a win-win solution that will actually result in a slightly larger and more environmentally sound preserve. The preserve will grow from 10.8 to 10.93 acres. Under this proposal, the practice fields will take 2.82 acres on the northern part of the preserve and 2.95 acres will be added on the south and west sides of the preserve. We will fill in the pond – created in the early 1970s to provide fill for the baseball field. We would then fund and build a new pond in the expanded southern area. We believe that the environmental value of the preserve will be enhanced by returning the new land to a living laboratory under the direction and coordination of faculty and student specialists with whom we have consulted.

According to one colleague (Dr. Philip Stoddard) who has reviewed the proposal, “The high value native forest and interesting limestone formations are in the tract to the south that is not on the table. The pond is OK as campus borrow pit ponds go, but, give us construction funds and faculty can direct the creation of a much better wetland on the new southern crescent to be added (I already have a design in mind that I’m eager to construct).”

We have carefully sought solutions for adequate practice fields for over six years. In December, the Board of Trustees approved a practice site west of FIU stadium, along Southwest 17th Street. At that time, the BOT also authorized me to consider and implement alternative lower-cost opportunities that might achieve the same objectives.

We have considered all possible sites on campus. We also talked to the Miami-Dade County Parks Department about sharing fields in Tamiami Park. The park option

proved not feasible due to high cost, and the fact that such use would require approval by the Miami-Dade County Commission, and voter referendum. The Southwest 17th Street location presents safety issues. The road would run perilously close to the baseball stadium, the practice fields, and the organic garden, leaving students vulnerable to passing cars and trucks. We would also lose parking lot 7 and a significant number of mature trees.

We have consulted with county and university stakeholders. Here is a list of the meetings that we have held:

- Jan. 5 and Jan. 19 Senior Vice President and CFO Kenneth Jessell met with Miami-Dade County Parks and Recreation Director Jack Kardys to discuss the Tamiami Park location for the practice fields. It was determined that was not a feasible option.
- Jan. 29 and Feb. 26 Dr. Jessell met with the Faculty Senate Environment and Planning Committee to discuss the proposal. The committee drafted a resolution in favor of the proposal to be presented to the full Faculty Senate on March 1.
- Feb. 25 Dr. Jessell met with the sustainability committee to hear and discuss issues and concerns. During this period, he also met with faculty specialists to hear their concerns.
- Feb. 29 Vice President of Student Affairs Larry Lunsford met with student groups.
- March 1 the Faculty Senate met and tabled a resolution; there will be further discussion on Tuesday, March 8.

We want to have the best possible facilities and opportunities for our students, faculty and staff. Through the years, we have made consequential strides working together to improve the preserve and quality science and environmental education and research throughout the university community. We value the preserve as a permanent feature of our unique learning environment.

As a university community we are committed to research and development as well as stewardship that is good for our community and protects our environment. This project is consistent with that commitment.

I appreciate your interest in this matter and thank you for your efforts in making our FIU Worlds Ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark B. Rosenberg', with a long, sweeping flourish extending upwards and to the right.

Mark B. Rosenberg  
President