

*This is President Rosenberg's seventh annual blog chronicling the TUC-FIU partnership, the annual China Commencement and our students in China. This is his second blog post of this trip. Click [here](#) to read his first blog post.*

### Graduation Day: Hopeful Constants

Today is graduation day in Tianjin for 160 or so hospitality majors. I'm happy to report that the new Tianjin University of Commerce leadership has heard us – the graduation ceremony is being held in a spotless auditorium that is bedecked with TUC-FIU banners and the flags of China and the United States.



*Class Valedictorian Zhou Xin.*

No matter where graduation occurs, there are some constants. Parents and other family members cluster anxiously in the balcony, searching for their son or daughter. Among the would-be graduates, gaggles of students snap selfies, nervously coming to grips that this will be the last time they are all together. Then musical fanfare, the banner marshalls, anthems of both countries, and wide-eyes, dark-robed students peering at us on the stage, with the look of bewilderment that this phase of their lives is really coming to an end.

For the first time in many years, TUC-FIU founder and advocate – the voluble Vice Mayor Wang – is not with us. His absence, however, is more than filled by the diminutive and ever-smiling Class Valedictorian Zhou Xin. She could have another job as a comedian because her valedictory speech to her fellow graduates was punctuated by joyful one-liners that had us all laughing. The one-liners offered on-point observations of FIU faculty professors, advisers and mentors to the graduating class: “Dude, answer this question!” (Professor Song) or “Are you with me, my friends?” (Professor Danqing).

As the final graduate humbly crossed the stage for the obligatory photo with TUC's President Ge and me, students were subdued, somewhat weepy, and intensely cognizant that the end was in sight. Then they were reminded by Dean Mike Hampton that, yes, it was so, but not to worry because our Alumni Association was there to channel their separation anxiety.

And so, another graduation, but this one was accompanied by additional benefits. We were graced with leadership from the City of North Miami, who had overlapped a visit to key Chinese cities to promote a new Chinatown development near Biscayne Bay Campus. I was so pleased to be able to spend some time with City of North Miami Vice Chair Alix



*The City of North Miami delegation.*

Deslume and veteran city commissioner Carol Keys. Most importantly, they got to witness the moving graduation and meet with many students who were on their way next to North Miami to resume their hospitality studies with our Chaplin School.

Given that all politics is local (and personal), and given that cities are keys to community well-being, it was great to have local elected officials from our community witnessing in and participating in the graduation celebration.

So this was not just another graduation. This was a moment that marked a milestone transition for scores of high-potential young people. I could not be prouder of our amazing university and to otherwise be in the moment so far away. At the same time, I've never felt closer to our FIU and our zeal to offer a Worlds Ahead education to our friends – wherever they may be!