



**Address at the FIU Community Leaders Summit**

**Given by Mark B. Rosenberg  
on October 25, 2011**



*This speech was presented to attendees of the Community Leaders Summit on October 25, 2011. Here, Dr. Rosenberg spoke about the progress on the group's input from last year's meeting.*

It was about 40 years ago that our founders stood on an abandoned airfield looking out from the stairs of the Tamiami Airport Control Tower with only a vision and a dream. At the time, they had nothing and yet their resilience was enough to build the foundation for FIU as we know it today.

Thanks to the vision and determination of our founders, the faculty and staff that helped make their vision a reality, and the thousands of graduates who have since shown that an FIU degree is the key to success, FIU is the 21st Century Worlds Ahead institution that it is today.

Just two years ago, we convened this group so that I could gather feedback on my "Hit the Ground Running" vision for FIU. With your recommendations, we established the Office of Engagement and launched our Worlds Ahead branding campaign, to name a few of the accomplishments we've achieved with your collaboration.

Then, last year, with the help of your recommendations and those of the entire FIU community, we developed our five-year Worlds Ahead Strategic Plan to implement FIU's mission and our new vision. This plan has four strategic areas of focus: arts, environment, globalization and health and we have identified the steps to achieving our goals:

- Revitalizing and expanding
- FIU's infrastructure and financial base;
- Achieving enhanced student learning
- and academic excellence;
- Enhancing the quality, quantity and impact
- of research and creative initiatives;
- And engaging with the community
- in collaborative problem solving.

This vision for FIU's future is more important than ever. The way out of our current economic crisis is through higher education. Yet, when it is needed the most, the value of higher education is being questioned across the nation. Notably, two academics, Hacker and Dreifus, have written a book about "How Colleges are Wasting our Money

and Failing our Kids.” At the state level, the value of a university education also is being questioned, whether we are producing graduates that our state needs, graduates who can fill the jobs of our 21st century global economy.

At FIU, the answer is yes. Our goal is to educate students across all disciplines with the skills they need to compete in the 21st century world of work. An FIU education is a tremendous value. Let me share with you how we are using our recent 15 percent tuition increase to fund a high quality education for our students.

That increase translates into:

- \$2.3 million in additional need-based financial aid. This means that each FIU student with an expected family contribution of \$0 will receive a tuition differential scholarship of about \$640.
- We have hired 80 additional faculty, such as Instructor Karl Kint, teaching 4 classes in English with 109 students enrolled.
- We also have hired 18 additional advisors, eight additional police officers, and 59 additional staff to support our students and faculty. These additional people are meant to improve the educational experience of our students and make sure they are learning in a safe environment.

By investing in a high quality education for our students we are educating engaged global citizens who are making a difference in their communities.

I'd like to tell you about one of those students. His name is Jairo Pava. He was born in Ibagué, a small town in Colombia. In the early 1990s, his parents fled the drug-fueled violence in Colombia and brought three-year-old Jairo to the United States, so that they and Jairo could have more opportunities. Although his parents had humble jobs here in Miami, his father is a school custodian and his mother is a housekeeper, they always told Jairo that higher education would allow him to achieve his dreams. Jairo came to FIU completely undecided about his future career. But he took a computer science course where a professor opened Jairo's eyes to the possibilities of research. Jairo's newfound interest led him to make significant contributions to storm surge visualization research at FIU, under the mentorship of Professor Shu-Ching Chen of Computing and Information Sciences. Jairo quickly became project leader and won awards for his research. This research led to the creation of computer simulations that will help people decide whether to evacuate when a hurricane is approaching. Miami-Dade County already has made this technology available to residents and it could help other areas affected by hurricanes, as well. Jairo, who wasn't sure what he was going to do when he came to FIU, completed his bachelor's degree in computer science. And he, his family and the entire FIU family will celebrate his accomplishments during our fall commencement. But he already has a job. He works at IBM as a software engineer,

writing software for mainframes, while he applies to some of the nation's top graduate schools. Jairo's journey highlights the continuing importance of higher education and how it can change lives.

To continue changing lives and making a difference in our community, we are again asking for your support to ensure that FIU continues to be an anchor institution serving our students and the diverse population of South Florida while remaining committed to collaborative engagement with our local and global communities. Working together, we can provide solutions for our community's most critical problems.

Since we last met, FIU has accomplished much and our students, faculty, staff and alumni continue to show us daily how FIU is truly Worlds Ahead. Let me share some highlights with you:

- We celebrated our first summer commencement in August and awarded degrees to 3,400 students, including a Ph.D. in history to our oldest graduate ever, 87-year-old Richard M. Smith. A war veteran and successful businessman who was born when Calvin Coolidge was president, Dr. Smith also has inspired many of us with his passion for education and his determination.
- The FIU team that participated in the 2011 Solar Decathlon in Washington, DC, placed first in the energy management category, and 11th out of twenty entries overall. Their entry, known as PerFORM[D]ance House, brought together faculty and students in the fields of architecture, landscape architecture, interior design, engineering, construction management, and journalism.
- Last month, we announced the Education Effect, FIU's partnership with Miami Dade County Public Schools at Miami Northwestern Senior High School. With help from a \$1 million grant from JP Morgan/Chase, our goal is to create a college-going culture at the school, while engaging, empowering and serving the local community.
- And we are reaching beyond FIU's traditional borders to be where our students are and to expand opportunities for our students. In September, we had the grand openings of FIU Downtown on Brickell and FIU's Miami Beach Urban Studios on Lincoln Road. FIU Downtown on Brickell is giving our students and alumni who work in the nerve center of Miami's business community the ability to further their education with graduate classes near their offices. At Miami Beach Urban Studios, our students are surrounded by the talented artists that have made South Beach their home, as well as the many exhibits, performances, and other cultural activities that define the arts scene on Miami Beach and in South Florida.

- We also are breaking new ground in our Worlds Ahead engagement through the newly-formed Office of Engaged Teaching, Scholarship and Creative Activities.
- And in the next several years, FIU will continue to grow, by 2,000 students a year, and the university we love will undergo some incredible changes.

Here's what FIU will look like in 2020:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3pdPTB8uORc>

And now it is my pleasure to introduce a Principal from our campus master plan team. Gene Kluesner is an Associate Principal with Perkins+Will overseeing the Higher education market sector strategies as well as management of the Perkins+Will Miami office. Gene is a registered architect with twenty eight years of national and international architectural experience. He participates in education focused advisory councils, leads a firm-wide initiative on collaborative learning environments, and believes in forward thinking on society's need for lifelong learning.

FIU commissioned Perkins+Will in 2007 with the Academic Health Center Master Plan and subsequently the Campus Master Plan Update (2005-2015) in 2008. Perkins+Will was retained this year to be FIU's strategic planning partner (along with community leaders & partners such as yourselves) in leading the update to the Campus Master Plan for 2010-2020. This engagement over the next two years will plan for the impact of FIU's vision and growth along with the intrinsic link between higher education and our community's economic future.