



Address at the 2012 Employee Holiday Celebration

**Given by Mark B. Rosenberg
on December 5, 2012**



This speech was presented to FIU Employees at the President's Annual Employee Holiday Celebration on December 5, 2012.

Welcome and thank you for joining me as we celebrate another festive holiday season at FIU! We have much to celebrate this season. Your hard work and dedication is pushing our students to reach new heights, inspiring them to exceed expectations, make a difference - to be Worlds Ahead: At this year's Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students, three FIU undergraduate students won prizes - two for "Outstanding Scientific Poster Presentations" and one for "Outstanding Scientific Oral Presentations." Two of these presenters received additional recognition and awards for their interdisciplinary research.

Just last month, the FIU Law Trial Team took Washington, D.C. by storm, winning first place at the 16th annual White Collar Crime Invitational. This is a three-day mock trial competition hosted by the Georgetown University Law Center Barristers' Council. Not bad for a first appearance at the prestigious tournament where twenty of the top trial advocacy programs across the country competed. Another example is the Phi Alpha Delta Pre-Law Fraternity. This year, the group earned the "Don Hutson Most Outstanding Chapter in the Nation Award" and its former president was named the "Best President in the Nation."

You see, these students are making things happen and very quickly. Today, out of the 302 Phi Alpha Delta chapters in the world, ours is the top chapter in the nation due to our splendid professional and academic programming, and overall quality of membership. Their great work and dedication serve to motivate other students and I'm proud to say that they are truly Worlds Ahead. But that's just a glimpse of the strides our students are making. Our Model United Nations team, known for its history of success, continues its tradition. It is the fifth ranked Model UN team in North America. Among their victories this semester, they won "Best Small Delegation" at the Columbia Model United Nations session in New York and then repeated with a similar triumph in the Boston Area competition a week later. And you, our faculty and staff, also continue to shine.

Just this week, our faculty and administrators at the College of Nursing and Health Sciences received \$7 million in federal grants for several programs to promote nursing and health science degrees to students in underserved areas. Through these grants, we'll provide scholarships to disadvantaged students to pursue Doctor of Physical Therapy degrees, we'll provide support to students seeking a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy degree, we'll recruit more minorities into the adult nurse practitioner program, and we'll educate more students in cultural competence.

And this year we also received the American Heart Association's "Fit-Friendly Workplace" award for making healthy lifestyles and wellness a priority and making them more accessible at FIU. Thanks to your commitment, we are a more health-conscious workplace. You, our faculty and staff, also impact our community in so many ways.

Thanks to your generosity, for today's celebration we collected about 1,500 toys that will put smiles on many children's faces this holiday season. Many of us have been blessed throughout the year and during this holiday season. Sadly, many of our colleagues and FIU retirees have fallen on tough times this year. Fortunately, we are able to help through our TLC Brigade Food Bank and the University Hardship Fund. To date, the TLC Brigade Food Bank has received more than 900 food bank items donated by faculty and staff to help co-workers in need. In addition, acts of compassion and support have been extended to more than 484 faculty and staff who are experiencing hardships or are in distress. Your willingness to give your colleagues a hand when they most need it has been instrumental in helping make a difference in the lives of many members of the FIU family. And I thank you for that. I am proud to be a part of this large, wonderful, caring FIU family. We pull together as a family, in good times and in bad. Just ask Alfredo Fernandez-Morrel. He's a receiving manager in the purchasing department and he's been a part of the FIU family for 40 years. It is the hard work and commitment of faculty and staff, like Alfredo, that keep us moving forward as an institution. Alfredo knows and anyone who has been a part of the FIU family for any length of time knows, that we go the extra mile for all members of the FIU family - our students and our colleagues. I'd like to share with you a story that shows how far some of our colleagues have gone for their co-workers.

Earlier this year, a faculty member became concerned when a co-worker did not show up to work and did not call in, which was uncharacteristic behavior for him. FIU police officers Sergeant Allen Low and Detective David Suarez went above and beyond their call of duty to follow up on this concern. They alerted local police and fire personnel and they themselves went to the employee's home in Downtown Miami to check up on him at 1 in the morning, well past their shifts and well outside their jurisdiction. They tried the door several times. No answer. Fearing the worst, they persuaded a reluctant building manager to let them force their way in. When they did, they found their co-worker, lying on the floor, barely alive. Thanks to their training and their insistence that something was wrong, that man received the treatment he needed and he is alive today.

Thanks to their professionalism and devotion to the FIU family, Sgt. Low and Detective Suarez saved the life of one of our own. Their heroic and selfless act is an example

of what we all aspire to here at FIU - the institutional values that you, our faculty and staff, embody. We value Sgt. Low and Detective Suarez for going beyond the call of duty. And we value all of you, our faculty and staff, for all that you do each day.

We pull together. We go the extra mile. We work hard to make FIU better and we work hard to make each other better. We are all blessed to be a part of this FIU family. I wish you all a wonderful holiday season. We pull together. We go the extra mile. We work hard to make FIU better and we work hard to make each other better. We are all blessed to be a part of this FIU family.
I wish you all a wonderful holiday season.