

## **FIU grads unburdened by debt**

Re the Aug. 3 story No-debt college not real option anymore: Nothing is further from the truth. Graduating from Florida International University with no debt not only is an option, it's the norm. Seventy percent of FIU students receive some form of financial aid, and less than half graduate with any debt at all. Those who do borrow take on an average of \$17,705 in loans, which is about \$10,000 less than the national average. The amount of debt, though not ideal, should be manageable given that college graduates make \$1 million more during their careers than non-college graduates.

In addition to financial aid, there are programs such as dual enrollment, which allow high school students to take college-level courses at no cost to them. Last year our dual-enrollment program saved local students \$3.8 million. We work hard to ensure our students get the support they need to graduate on time and get the internships they need to compete for jobs. And we are proud that FIU graduates are among the best paid from Florida public universities.

This week we sent a new class of 3,360 fresh college graduates into the world. They join 200,000 FIU alumni, most of whom live in South Florida. College degrees change lives, families and communities. Let us make sure we support those who chose to pursue a college education because the children of college graduates are more likely to be college graduates themselves and have a better shot at realizing the American Dream.

**-MARK B. ROSENBERG**

**President, Florida International University**