

MEMORANDUM

September 24, 2016

Dear FIU family,

What a week...the lows and highs of the adventure called life.

Sadly, a student passed away in his on-campus residence – our thoughts and prayers are with his family and his friends in this moment of grief and reflection. Police are still investigating, but whatever the cause of his untimely passing, we are not alone in grieving a young person.

Throughout our nation and community, the senseless violence continues. Shootings and other senseless acts continue to abbreviate lives before their time, bringing an end to hopes and dreams for the future.

But as I have had to reassure us before, so I want to do this again. Our bright weapons of hope and opportunity were especially noticeable this past week! Even in these difficult times, our community continues to excel--sending a strong message that we can and will persevere through timely academic performance, engagement and research.

Let me share a few examples from the last couple of weeks.

This week we're celebrating an FIU Law "threepeat!" For the third time in a row, [FIU College of Law graduates have earned the top passage rate on the Florida bar exam](#), with 87.5 percent passing the exam that allows them to practice law in the state. That's almost 20 percentage points higher than the statewide average of all Florida bar exam takers. Our graduates previously earned the top passage rate for both the February 2016 and July 2015 bar exams. Congratulations to our hard-working alumni!



FIU Law graduates

Some of our Worlds Ahead students are turning their FIU education into Worlds Ahead jobs! Two of our recent grads have earned great jobs with the federal government: [Adam Silvia](#) at the Library of Congress, after completing an archive of Haitian history; and Tiffany Roman Biffa, former SGA-MMC vice president, is helping manage international postal negotiations at the U.S. Postal Service.

Our theatre students are making FIU history with the first-ever production entirely in Spanish (with English subtitles)! It's one of the most popular modern South American comedies – Roberto Cossa's "[La Nona.](#)" This is what our multicultural community is all about! I encourage you to check it out! You can buy tickets at go.fiu.edu/nona.

In the last week, at [FIU in Washington, D.C.](#), Professors Raul Gonzalez and Angie Laird hosted their research collaborators from across the country involved in [NIH's historic Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development \(ABCD\) study](#). Provost Kenneth Furton and CFO Kenneth Jessell also hosted a dialogue of [Ashoka Changemaker campuses](#) focused on how to better leverage policy tools to foster social innovation in higher education and research. The dialogue was attended by Obama Administration officials.

Also in our nation's capital, [we convened employer hosts who have made it possible for over 70 of our students to obtain internships.](#)

Here in South Florida, our faculty are bringing together key thinkers and decision-makers for conferences that are tackling some of the most critical contemporary issues. On September 14, our [Kimberly Green Latin American and Caribbean Center](#) co-sponsored a conference with the Universidad de los Andes, on "Security and Post-Conflict in Colombia," attended by policy makers, scholars, as well as think tank and NGO leaders. Also this week, eight mayors from across the nation gathered at the [College of Communication, Architecture + The Arts Miami Beach Urban Studios](#) to find solutions for urban design challenges in their cities during the [2016 East Regional Session of the Mayors' Institute on City Design](#). The Mayors' Institute is funded by a National Endowment for the Arts grant that was awarded to CARTA Associate Dean Marilys Nepomechie.

Earlier this week, the [Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine](#) teamed up with the George Washington University School of Medicine & Health Sciences to host the [Beyond Flexner Conference](#). This annual event brings together people in the health industry – practitioners, educators and executives – to discuss how to integrate a social mission into the teaching, learning and practice of healthcare. Why did they pick FIU? Because we're pioneers in preparing the next generation of compassionate health professionals who are working to heal all members of our community.

As an example of our commitment to our community, the College of Medicine also hosted the fifth annual Herbert and Nicole Wertheim Community Healthcare Conference in Opa-locka. This conference is aimed at providing a hands-on, interactive experience where K-12 students can learn about different healthcare professions. This year we live-streamed part of the event to students in Haiti so they could participate as well. These are our future FIU students in medicine, nursing, public health, and other science and health disciplines! We're impacting lives, one child at a time!



Wertheim Conference

Our researchers are also Worlds Ahead!

The National Science Foundation just awarded a five-year, \$5 million collaborative grant to FIU and its Metropolitan Consortium partners, UCF and USF. We are the lead institution and Mark Weiss, associate director for academic affairs at the School of Computing and Information Sciences, within the College of Engineering and Computing, is the principal investigator with Zahra Hazari from the STEM Transformation Institute and Department of Teaching and Learning in the College of Arts, Sciences & Education as co-principal investigator. This grant provides \$1 million in scholarships for FIU students, along with support to conduct computer science education research. This is meaningful work!

Last week, we announced [the results of the latest FIU Cuba Poll](#) – the longest running research project measuring Cuban-American public opinion. The poll, the result of the hard work of Professors Guillermo J. Grenier and Hugh Gladwin of the Department of Global and Sociocultural Studies in the Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs and Jorge Duany of the Cuban Research Institute, revealed important insights into the Cuban-American community and views on U.S.-Cuba relations. The news was picked up by media outlets around the world, resulting in the equivalent of buying \$3.9 million of advertising to promote the great research being done here at our FIU!

On the entrepreneurship front, [StartUP FIU](#) is recruiting the Spring 2017 cohort of South Floridians with a great idea and the passion to launch the next successful venture.

We expect similar accomplishments over the next few days:

Tonight, at 7 p.m., come down to FIU Stadium to watch our [Panthers take on the UCF Knights](#)! Our FIU Marching Band will have their own “battle of the bands” with UCF’s boisterous band. You don’t want to miss this classic college confrontation either!

On Tuesday, we're celebrating a partnership whose goal is to assist adults with intellectual disabilities and those on the autism spectrum by hosting a ribbon-cutting for the Dan Marino Foundation at MMC. This came about thanks to FIU Embrace, a university-wide initiative aimed at improving the overall health and well-being of adults with autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disabilities and other neurodevelopmental disorders.

Throughout this coming week we're also celebrating our faculty's accomplishments with a number of events, culminating in our [Faculty Convocation award dinner](#) on Thursday.

Finally, let me remind you about our caring community by repeating what a Freshman student volunteered to me yesterday in the Graham Center food court: "Here at FIU, everybody helps each other out!"

I was so pleased to hear this spontaneous declaration about who we are and what we do.

So even with the difficult setbacks of this week, it's a great time to be hopeful about our future and it's a great time to be a part of FIU. We are focused on student success – recruiting top students, retaining them, supporting them so they can graduate in four years, and preparing them with the skills they need to take and create great jobs.

We are blessed with committed professional staff, and dedicated faculty who are tops in their fields. We have a passion for bringing together leading experts in their fields to find solutions, and we are conducting groundbreaking research that will pave the way for a brighter educational future for our students, their sons and daughters, and countless others who will follow them to FIU!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark B. Rosenberg', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark B. Rosenberg
President