



Address at the Freshman Convocation 2018

**Given by Mark B. Rosenberg
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Office of the President
FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

*This speech was presented to attendees of Freshman Convocation 2018
on August 19, 2018.*

Good afternoon! So, is FIU in the house? Make no mistake Class of 2022 and family – this is your house! We are proud that you and your families have chosen us for this very special journey that you are on!

Among you are future teachers, engineers, scientists, poets, soldiers, entrepreneurs, architects, lawyers, writers, journalists, broadcasters, technology experts, hospitality professionals, diplomats, leaders – maybe a mayor, governor, a senator, legislator, city or county commissioner, nurses, doctors, psychologists, coaches, health practitioners, clergy, police, intelligence officers, public administrators, maybe a university professor or president... or a President of the United States!

This outstanding Class of 2022 has an average high school GPA of 4.1! You are our best incoming freshman class in FIU history! Give yourself a round of applause! Now, some of you might be wondering if this is the right place for you to continue your education. Let me assure you that you belong here at FIU.

Let me assure you that you have the ability to succeed right here at FIU. How do I know? We have studied your applications. We have studied your academic success. You would not have been admitted had you not demonstrated that you were ready for prime-time – FIU prime time. We are committed to your success!

What should you expect of us? Expect a quality education and adventures in learning. Expect courses offered so that you can graduate on time. Remember: Four years, 30 credit hours a year; that's the "Finish in 4, Save More" plan! Expect motivated and challenging faculty with courses here and abroad.

Expect conscientious staff and advisors to help you navigate your path to a career. Expect internship and career opportunities that are second to none and help our students gain the relevant skills they need to succeed. Expect a safe and beautiful environment where you can learn, stay fit and grow. And expect a university that gets better each day because we believe in your future.

So, what are our expectations for you? We expect you to graduate timely – in four years, taking 30 credit hours a year. Class, when you graduate in 2022 – you will be our 50th graduating class! You really are making history!

We expect you to meet with your advisors – they'll help you stay on track with your academic and career goals. We expect you to work hard in your studies. The life of the mind – you will take your degree and the education wherever you go. Your education is for a lifetime!

We expect you to engage – attend a football game or women's volleyball event. We want you to support and cheer on your fellow FIU Panther student-athletes. Their success helps build the FIU brand. The better the brand, the more respect.

Some of you have been cheering on our Panthers since you were children. The little girl on this billboard with her face painted is Adriana Trueba. And, now, she's a part of the FIU family! She's a Panther! We expect each and every one of you to make a difference. We know that your success is a function of your resilience, dedication and perseverance.

You may fall behind or lose your way, it can happen to any student for lots of reasons – it could be a health issue, difficult classes, relationship breakup, family responsibilities or need to change your major. Remember, if and when, this happens – You are not alone! Falling is not failing. But not getting up is. Ask for help! FIU is here to help! Then you can help someone else when it happens to them. It's the FIU Way.

We also expect you to get involved in the university. There are incredible learning experiences here at FIU outside the classroom, and we hope (and expect) that you will get involved through one of our organizations: a club, Model UN, student government, the Marching Band, Greek life, Alternative Break, ROTC, Dance Marathon, Relay for Life, Homecoming, Peer Advisors, Panther Camp, an internship, study abroad, guest lectures, intramural sports, intercollegiate athletics, -- we have it all!

Your education here at FIU will prepare you for the challenges ahead – regardless of your major. By the time you graduate, you will develop amazing powers of invention, resilience, character, and confidence as we work together to create our future! To help you create the future! A future that enables you to make the difference that you want to make – for your families, your community and the world.

And last, we expect you to never stop learning! Today, the pace of change has never been faster. Technology is rapidly transforming society and revolutionizing everything – how we communicate, work and play. The Internet of Things, automation, virtual reality, augmented reality.... There is a lot going on out there! And the world will not wait for you! In order to be – and remain – successful you must never stop learning!

FIU is here to be with you every step of the way on your journey as lifelong learners. We're here to help you – and your families – get another degree, certificate and

competency! Over the years, we have had countless lifelong learners cross our commencement stage.

Tomas Suarez Jr. and his daughter, Yanelle, recently graduated together with a master's degrees in architecture! They caught my attention when Yanelle leaned in for the obligatory graduation photo on stage. She then asked for a photo with a man behind her. I asked, "What's up?" I wasn't sure who he was! Then she proudly said, "He's my dad. He's graduating, too." I will never forget this moment! Two generations graduating side by side! Ladies and gentlemen, moments like these confirm and validate our work - and all that is good about our FIU! We help families be lifelong learners!

So here is some advice for you! Meet new students – be curious about who they are and what brings them to FIU. No matter their background, if you work hard enough you can find commonalities that bind. Right now, take two minutes and introduce yourself! Tweet, Snap, Instagram, and post pictures! Remember to use the hashtag #FIU22! And you can keep up with me on Facebook, Instagram or Snapchat by searching FIUpres5.

Get to know your faculty. Make connections with the professional staff. They want to help. Give them a chance. Find out now about career opportunities now. Visit our career and talent development offices to learn more!

Cookies! Try our chocolate chip cookies in the Breezeway at the Towers Residence halls! Go to Starbucks located inside the libraries at each campus; or Bustelo inside Graham Center; and don't forget about Vicky's in the Frost Museum! And also be sure to check out the new dining options at both MMC and BBC! We have so many new choices coming your way... like Panera Bread and Chipotle!

Panther Parents: Save the Date for our Annual Parent/Family Day on Saturday, September 15. You can sign up on the orientation website!

Freshmen: Read your Common Reading Book, *A Stone of Hope* by Jim St. Germain. He will be visiting MMC on Wednesday, October 10 at noon in the GC ballrooms. And at BBC on Thursday, October 11 at 2 p.m. in the WUC ballrooms. Get inspired and be ready for a meaningful discussion with your classmates and professors!

Cheer on all of our FIU athletics teams! Enjoy a football game, men's or women's soccer, women's volleyball game, our champion diving team! FIU football's opening night game is right around the corner... We kick off our new season at home against the Indiana Hoosiers on Saturday, September 1. We need you there!

Freshmen: at the home opener, each one of you will have the opportunity to be on the field and welcome the 2018 football team during Freshman Frenzy! If you'd like more information or want to sign up, visit FIUsports.com!

Get ready to roar! Homecoming Week 2018 starts Saturday, October 6 and runs through Saturday, October 13. That night we take on Middle Tennessee for our big Homecoming game! Throughout the week, there will be rallies, parades, concerts and other exciting events that highlight our traditions and student-athletes. You're not going to want to miss a minute!

Have pride in FIU – Wear your FIU gear! Get an FIU license plate. I am tired of all these Gator plates on the Palmetto, yo! Hashtag sorry not sorry!

We built this house for you! You are part of something very important at FIU and something that will be with you forever - your education. Have pride, work hard, you will succeed. When you graduate, in four years, you will be ready for the career that you desire, and equally important, you will be ready for a good life, one that is ethical and committed to making the world a better place!

Congratulations, Class of 2022!