



Freshman Convocation 2015

**Given by Mark B. Rosenberg
on August 23, 2015**



*This speech was presented to attendees of Freshman Convocation 2015
on August 23, 2015.*

Good afternoon! Is FIU in the house? Make no mistake, 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, technology experts, hospitality professionals, diplomats, leaders – maybe a mayor, governor or president, a senator, legislator, city or county commissioner, nurses, doctors, psychologists, coaches, and other health practitioners, clergy, police, intelligence officers, public administrators, maybe a college professor or president.

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:

- Quality education and adventures in learning.
- Courses offered so that you can graduate on time.
- Motivated and challenging faculty with courses here and abroad.
- Conscientious staff and advisors to help you navigate your path to a career.
- Incredible variety in on-campus food selection and some of the best Cuban coffee anywhere!
- Internship and career opportunities that are second to none.
- A structure to support your entrepreneurial spirit like that of fellow Freshman, Gabriela Vilar, who formed a non-profit called “Social Solutions” that provides pre-fabricated homes to underdeveloped countries.
- A safe and beautiful environment where you can learn, stay fit and grow
- A university that gets better each day because we believe in your future.

What do we expect of you?

- We expect you to graduate timely, in four years. We expect you to meet with your freshman advisors; they’ll help you stay on track with your career goals.

- We expect you to work hard in your studies. The life of the mind – you will take your degree and the education behind it wherever you go. Your hashtag might change, but your education is for a lifetime!
- 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.

You see, your education is not just what you learn in the classroom. 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 Advisers, an internship, study abroad, guest lectures, the Beacon – our student newspaper, intramural sports or intercollegiate athletics. We have it all!

When the Secretary General of the United Nations broke ground for FIU in 1970, he could not have imagined the world as it is today. On one hand, significant promise for hundreds of millions of people living in poverty and illiteracy, but buoyed by economic hope and prosperity of their countries. On the other hand, dozens of small and large conflicts, significant religious strife, large movements of migrants seeking a better life, and often spotty civil rights and health care; right here at home. We can do better!

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, and resilience, and character as you challenge us 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.

This university first opened its doors in 1972, long before most of you were born. It is a young university that like you, is full of energy and hope. Full of opportunity and lifelong connections. This is a university with a soul. We take responsibility. We seek win-win partnerships. We see ourselves as a solutions center. We celebrate innovation and improvement, and we expect it!

In just a moment you will meet fellow students who sat where you are now last year. No doubt, next year or the year after you can tell the same or a similar story that they will tell you shortly! This incredible World's Ahead journey begins right now!

So here is some advice for you:

1. 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. Tweet, post, upload pictures, and if you're on Vine, make a video introducing yourself to your fellow freshmen. Do it all with the hashtag #FIU19!
2. Get to know your faculty. Make connections with the professional staff. They want to help. Give them a chance.
3. Find out now about career opportunities. Visit career planning and placement. Understand your options at the beginning of your education, not at the end.
4. Try the chocolate chip cookies in the Breezeway at the Towers Residence halls. Go to Starbucks located inside the libraries at each campus or Bustelo inside the Graham Center
5. Panther Parents, stay up to date on the latest FIU news by signing up for the parent newsletter; and Save the Date for our Annual Parent/Family Reunion on October 24th. You can sign up on the orientation website.
6. Read your Common Reading Book, *The Prince of Los Cocuyos* by Richard Blanco. Richard is an FIU alumnus and inaugural poet. He will be visiting our Biscayne Bay campus on October 6th, at the Wolfe University Center, and our Modesto Maidique campus on October 7, in the Graham Center ballroom. Get inspired, and be ready for a meaningful discussion with your teachers and classmates!
7. Parking – first two weeks, get here early and take the first spot you find.
8. The FIU football team opens the 2015 season vs. North Carolina Central University on September 19th, and we need you there! All students can enjoy the Panther Beach Party Deck, featuring DJ M Dot. Best of all – this is your chance as freshmen to become a part of Panther tradition, by participating in the “Freshman Frenzy” where you will form a human tunnel. Don't miss your only chance as an FIU student to lead our team onto the field. Sign up at FIUSports.com today.
9. 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!

Go Panthers! 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 2019!