



**Freshman Convocation 2016**

**Given by Mark B. Rosenberg  
on August 21, 2016**



*This speech was presented to attendees of Freshman Convocation 2016  
on August 21, 2016.*

Good afternoon! S'up? Is FIU in the house? Make no mistake Class of 2020 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.

Class of 2020, before we get started, we have some special guests in the audience, who are here to celebrate YOU – and the start of your successful journey at our FIU! State senator Dwight Bullard, State representative Jose Felix Diaz, Miami-Dade commissioner Pepe Diaz, and a representative from Congressman Carlos Curbelo's office. We're honored you could join us. Lidia Tuttle is also here. Before she retired, Lidia was the Associate Vice President of Undergraduate Education, as well as Deputy Director of the School of International and Public Affairs. Today, she's come home to FIU – to support her granddaughter, who will be participating in today's torch-bearing ceremony. Please join me in giving a warm welcome to all of our guests!

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. The Class of 2020 has the highest average high school GPA in FIU history – 3.9! This is huge! Give yourself a round of applause! 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.
- Internship and career opportunities that are second to none.
- A structure to support your entrepreneurial spirit like that of one of our recent graduates, Janet Garcia, who is already an entrepreneur and business owner at 22! She formed a company called “We Have You Covered” that provides mobile lab services for patients who need bloodwork done but can’t get to a lab!
- 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, taking 30 credit hours a year. 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 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.

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 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, 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.

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.
2. Tweet, post, upload pictures, and remember to use the hashtag #FIU20!
3. Get to know your faculty. Make connections with the professional staff. They want to help. Give them a chance.
4. Find out now about career opportunities. Visit our career and talent development department. They offer help in choosing a major, resumé writing and critiques, practice interviews, career transition and assessments, and much more! Understand your options at the beginning of your education, not at the end.
5. Major key alert! Try the chocolate chip cookies in the Breezeway at the Towers Residence halls.
6. Go to Starbucks located inside the libraries at each campus or Bustelo inside the Graham Center.
7. 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 during Homecoming on Saturday, October 22, 2016. You can sign up on the orientation website.
8. Read your Common Reading Book, *In Order to Live: A North Korean Girl's Journey to Freedom* by Yoenmi Park. She will be visiting our Biscayne Bay Campus, Tuesday October 4, at the Wolfe University Center, and on this campus, Wednesday, October 5, in the Graham Center ballrooms. Get inspired, and be ready for a meaningful discussion with your classmates and professors!
9. Parking—first two weeks, get here early and take the first spot you find.
10. Cheer on all of our FIU athletics teams! Enjoy a football game, men's or women's soccer game! Or check out a women's volleyball game! The FIU football team opens the 2016 season vs. the Indiana Hoosiers on Thursday, September 1 at 7: 30 p.m. and we need you there! Big ten in the house!

11. Have pride in FIU – Wear your FIU gear!
12. 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 2020!