



**Address at the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce Meeting**

**Given by Mark B. Rosenberg  
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*This speech was presented to the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce  
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Good morning! Thank you for that warm introduction. Welcome any members of the FIU Board of Trustees Foundation, Presidents Council, or Alumni Association I appreciate the opportunity to spend some time with you! Thank you Penny and Barry! What a great way to spend the opening days of 2012: with one of our community's leading organizations! You are some of the most optimistic and community-minded people anywhere.

We are in a new year! Politically, eyes are focused on Washington: the Congress, the presidential race, reapportionment. Truth is, the major issues are not so much political as much as they are economic and financial. Can this country get back to work? Can we close the gap in educational achievement that widens every day between our country and other newly emerging economies? Can we address the structural issues surrounding the competitiveness of our economy? Can our institutions, public and private, become engines of change? Will our educational system adapt to the changing needs of the millennial generation?

I cannot answer all these questions today, but surely the Chamber and the Beacon Council and our other Chambers must play key roles in answering these questions. I can tell you what we are doing at FIU to address these challenges! Let me start with an anecdote. Two weeks ago I was in St. Pete. You see, FIU played Marshall in the Beef O Brady's Bowl. I met with the editorial board of the St. Pete Times, which as of January 1 became the Tampa Bay Times.

One of the questions was: are you worried that there is too much pressure on you and the university from the business community? My reaction was immediate: quite the opposite! My concern is that there are not high enough expectations from the business community! Why do I say this? No doubt, knowledge will be a key driver of 21<sup>st</sup> century change and progress.

It is the knowledge economy where we must compete to generate the high value added necessary for job creation and global competitiveness. Indeed, the Beacon Council's One Community One Goal Assessment identifies as a community strength the role of our educational institutions. At FIU, we see ourselves as a key community asset, one that is critical for our long term competitiveness. We have just finished a new strategic

plan. It has been approved by our Board and is being reviewed by the Board of Governors.

Here is where we are as an institution: we have a student body of 48,000, by 2019, we will be 62,000 students. We had 10,000 graduates last year. By 2019, we will have graduated into this economy nearly 100,000 students, about 85,000 from our community. Last year, 38 companies came to campus interviewed 850 graduate and undergraduate students, and hired 136 of those students. FPL itself established a major partnership to recruit our graduates. Another 41 companies selected over 100 students to participate in internships. Nearly 25% of all Dade County Public High School Teachers are FIU graduates. This will not change during the next seven years. We have a budget that is \$1 billion, one hundred million which could be 50-60% higher by 2019.

This is what we do, you should expect this. Many of you are FIU graduates or rely upon our graduates. Indeed, from a job creation perspective our growth means the following for our community: We will hire about 1200 new faculty during the next eight years. Each new faculty member will bring on average about 180,000 dollars in grant funding. We will hire another 1200 new staff professionals, with an average salary of 60K with benefits. You will see fundamental change on our two campuses, Modesto Maidique and Biscayne Bay. And we just opened 60,000 feet on Brickell and 16,000 feet in on Lincoln Road. For us, this is not business as usual. Our hope and expectation is to align our hiring with community issues.

So let's step back and examine the philosophy behind this. We firmly subscribe to the notion that we must build a new American university. One that is benchmarked forward, against future challenges rather than backward, against metrics that were for an earlier time or era. When we benchmark forward, we firmly believe that we must engage our community, understand its challenges, and develop win-win partnerships with public and private organizations in the community who are confronting similar challenges.

Let me give you an example:

Superintendent Carvalho asked me at a football game in Fall 2009 to waive the costs of dual enrollment partnerships. Then, there were less than 500 students from MDCPS enrolled in FIU classes, in their schools or at FIU. I felt good about an immediate yes; then, after I made the decision, I wondered if I had the authority to do this. This request from Superintendent, has led to the formation of ACCESS, simply stated we meet four times a year with our entire leadership teams to find ways to enhance student achievement and completion. And yes, today dual enrollment has mushroomed, then,

we had fewer students than in this room. Today, we have over 3,000 students taking dual enrollment, nearly ten times the number than just three years ago.

We understand that the better MDCPS gets, the better we get as a university and community. Forward facing also means that we are working closely with sister institutions to create a new Life Science Florida alliance. UM, FAU, FGCU, MDC, BCC are sitting together with economic development organizations, including Beacon Council, to develop a larger life sciences activism for South Florida. WE have developed a state of the art partnership with MDX. We are working to develop bus rapid transit along the East-West corridor and to understand how to reduce traffic bottlenecks in our community. And we also understand the importance of being more firmly anchored around the production of degrees that are directly needed in the workforce, particularly in the STEM area. Nationally, we have been confronting for some time that our nation is losing its competitiveness in science, technology, engineering and math! At FIU, I am pleased to tell you that our faculty understands this. They have restructured curricula in each of these areas with dramatic results. More majors, higher learning gains, and now we are the nation's leader in the production of minority graduates with STEM degrees. How have we done this? Our faculty have developed new approaches to teaching STEM. They are getting our best undergraduates involved in teaching through peer-led cohorts. We are seeing positive learning gains through this innovative approach. National associations are starting to look at what we are doing as a possible model for other institutions. Best indicator of success: just a few years ago, we had fewer than 10 majors in Physics; today, we have 130!

So, as you can plainly see, I am excited about the role that we are playing at FIU in getting this country back to work. We can close the gap! It will take hard work, but working with other educational institutions, we can get this done. Can we address the structural issues surrounding the competitiveness of our economy? We do not have to cede our leadership in science. Can our institutions become engines of change? We see FIU as an engine of change, but we can do more and better if you will raise your expectations about how we can work together more efficiently and effectively to address the most challenging issues of our times.