MEMORANDUM

Dear FIU Family:

If I had just one wish for this holiday season, it would be to bottle and share widely the joy, energy, and hope generated during our eight commencements that you helped to make happen earlier this month!

During those magical moments, there we were: celebrating a new beginning for our soon-to-be graduates, thanks to the years of effort put in by so many of you to build the future of each and every graduate. In essence, the commencement moment symbolizes our commitment to the emotional and material uplifting of our students and our community, and it reconfirms the goodness and meaning of our life’s work.

Those ceremonies bind us together in a singularity of purpose. They direct our passions to the positive vectors of hope and opportunity, and the inclusiveness and upward mobility that public universities were intended to provide.

So in this wordy holiday and New Year’s missive, allow me to tell our story, albeit incomplete, because there is not enough time to share all the good stuff - and you really do not have that kind of an attention span. (Or put another way: my son - two degrees from FIU - admonished me that no one wants to read a long letter from the university president over the holidays!)

Graduation and Our Students: The Sky is the Limit

First, relive our most recent ceremonies, on December 13, 14 and 15, when we celebrated the graduation of more than 4,600 FIU students in eight ceremonies - a record for fall! We also recognized 26 Worlds Ahead Graduates for going above and beyond in their studies and overcoming tremendous challenges. Listen to the humbling soft-spoken words of Jesus Garcia: “FIU is like a family to me.” (Kudos to our External Relations team for their awesome work in creating this video.)
Worlds Ahead Graduate Jesus A. Garcia

Jesus A. Garcia, 53, survived a serious accident almost 25 years ago that resulted in the partial loss of his right arm and a permanent injury to his left arm. In 2012 one of his twin sons suffered a traumatic brain injury in a car crash that affected his mobility and his ability to speak. Two years later, his wife, Melanie, battled a ravaging cancer that ultimately claimed a leg. Jesus, a Golden Key International Honor Society member, has chosen to focus on serving as an inspiration to others. He has dedicated himself to art and teaching, and earned a Master of Art in Teaching degree. He hopes to use his FIU degree to help young artists develop their gifts. Artwork created by Jesus and his classmates is on display at the Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum.

FIU is about talent

More and more employers are looking to find a diverse work force that is job ready and prepared to compete. National data tells us that students do see their college education as a means to get a good job. That is why we have ramped up internship options, in part, through the Talent Development Network and expanded career planning and placement initiatives. During this past fall, Career Services offered two career fairs with a total of 207 employers and 1,804 students attending. The College of Business brought in 40 employers and 350 students for one fair, and had 31 other employers and 525 students interviewing throughout the semester. The School of Hospitality and Tourism Management hosted 42 employers and 230 students at another fair and had individual on-campus recruitment of 21 employers interviewing 129 students. The Board of Governors performance funding indicators partly focus on the percentage of our graduates who have a full-time job after one year, so our job placement success matters even more.

Our highest priority is to graduate students in a timely manner. Undoubtedly, support for their studies is crucial. Five of South Florida’s brightest and most promising hospitality students are getting the opportunity to pursue their dream of launching a
career in hospitality management with a $80,000 scholarship from Carnival Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Carnival Corporation.

The Carnival Gold Scholars program, which is in its second year, awards full-tuition scholarships, including room and board, to five students who have demonstrated excellence in hospitality management through programs, competitions and industry-specific internships, such as the Academy of Hospitality and Tourism (AOHT) and Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA).

Forty-four first generation students who live near FIU’s Biscayne Bay Campus (BBC) are now Golden Gift Scholars. This scholarship fund is supported by the Betty G. Reader Scholarship Fund, thanks to the Gidney Family and the BBC Vice Provost’s Council (a group of community and business leaders led by chair Sandra Lansing). The Golden Gift First Generation Scholars Program focuses on juniors and seniors who are on track for graduation, are the first in their family to attend college and have a minimum grade point average of 2.5. Each student receives a $2,500 scholarship, which is matched by the state for a total of $5,000.
Research and Patents

Our research enterprise continues to grow and expand. It is a major source of job creation and innovation. We are particularly proud of three initiatives that have moved forward in the last few months.

No hurricanes in a decade! But that only means that we cannot lapse into complacency. So we are excited about a new grant led by Professors Arindam Chowdhury and Rich Olson from the National Science Foundation (NSF) of $8 million that positions us (in partnership with the University of Florida) to become a national hub for research into making homes and businesses safer in hurricanes and tornadoes. FIU’s Wall of Wind and UF’s Powell Family Structures and Materials Laboratory are now among seven labs in the nation with the designation of “Experimental Facilities” under the Natural Hazards Engineering Research Infrastructure (NHERI) program, and
the only two dedicated to studying extreme wind events. The facilities will attract NSF-funded researchers from throughout the nation who are working on wind engineering projects and are part of a network of scientists who study different aspects of natural hazards.

A second recent grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has awarded FIU $12.7 million as part of a multi-year national landmark study on substance use and adolescent brain development. The award, for the first five-year cycle of the research study, is the single largest NIH award ever received by FIU faculty. Raul Gonzalez, associate professor of psychology, psychiatry, and immunology, and faculty member at the FIU Center for Children and Families (CCF), is leading a 14-member research team from FIU’s College of Arts & Sciences and Robert Stempel College of Public Health & Social Work. This team includes child mental health and social work experts, as well as psychologists and a physicist, who have extensive track records in drug abuse research and cognitive neuroscience. The researchers will also examine the presence of disruptive behavior disorders including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), oppositional defiant disorder symptoms and others.
Our **College of Engineering and Computing** is leading the way in cybersecurity research. Our faculty’s work addresses issues such as **protecting the U.S. power grid from attacks**, as well as **thwarting cybercrime**, and the use of social networks to conduct criminal and terrorist activities. The **School of Computing and Information Sciences**, within the College of Engineering and Computing, has partnered with the **International Forensic Research Institute** (IFRI) to explore better ways to identify criminals and terrorists through improved biometric and digital forensic signatures, such as the use of DNA and chemical inks/printed papers used in counterfeiting. **S.S. Iyengar**, director of the School of Computing and Information Sciences, also is working to develop a Cyberscience/Cybersecurity Center.

**The Smart Grid Testbed**, located in the Energy Systems Research Laboratory, is being employed in research to protect the U.S. power grid.

We are delighted as well with a new neuro imaging grant for Professor **Malek Adjouadi** and a recent grant for Professor **Marianna Baum** to continue her research on the linkages between HIV and liver disease.
Finally, Professor Arif Sarwat just received an NSF Career Award that includes research related to the FPL solar panels to be installed next year at the Engineering Center. These solar panels will usher in a new era for FIU in solar research that promises to make a long-term impact on energy generation.

Rendering of FPL solar parking canopies at FIU College of Engineering and Computing

We now have momentum in an arena of our creative work that gives me even more optimism for the future of our university. The first half of the 2015-16 academic year has produced significant results in patent production through the efforts of Engineering and Computing, and Arts & Sciences faculty. We have placed 30 patent applications, and we are on track to get a double digit number of patents for this academic year! While not all the patents will result in commercial application, this momentum can build on itself and is a credit to faculty and staff collaboration to move research to the market. Our 2020 Strategic Plan target of 20 patents per year is within reach!
Entrepreneurship

Miami is now one of the country’s leading cities for start-up companies thanks, in part, to catalytic initiatives sponsored by the Knight Foundation. In his path-breaking book (Start-Up Communities), Brad Feld points out that “start-ups are at the core of everything we do.” In so many ways, we are aligned with this mentality—after all less than 50 years ago, FIU was just starting up! And many of our academic programs would easily classify as “start-ups!”

Have you visited our Tech Station in PG 6? Wow! What a difference in how we use space compared to the “old days:” state of the art meeting, teaching, and learning space; furniture arrangements that promote “collisions” among students in problem solving assignments or collaborating to develop a new software or hardware or indeed a start-up company; banks of computers to allow students to do collaborative on-line projects; and most of all, a friendly, helpful environment led by our veteran computer scientist and innovator, Steve Luis.

Cushioned chairs in Tech Station’s “Florida Room” allow for privacy and collaboration.

Tech Station was the right location to host our Startup Weekend Miami at FIU in late November, designed to enable developers, designers and entrepreneurs to create, pitch and launch their startup ideas over an intense, 54-hour weekend. More than 200 people attended the three-day event - including developers, designers, coders, investors and entrepreneurs from around the U.S, making it one of the largest Startup Weekends ever held in Miami. A total of 88 participants competed in 17 teams, pitching their ideas to a panel of judges and investors on Sunday evening.
Members of the Headliner team celebrate their win at Startup Weekend@FIU. They went on to compete in the Global Startup Battle, with their app, which enables users to crowdfund for the bands of their choice.

Our efforts did not end there. We have now launched StartUP FIU! Its core mission is to foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship at FIU and beyond. It will be a resource for students, faculty, alumni and community members who are passionate about bringing their ideas to market or are interested in mentoring or assisting startups get to the next level.

Jeff Brown

Our School of Journalism and Mass Communication (SJMC) has named Jeff Brown, an angel investor, serial entrepreneur and founder of Fourth Estate Public Benefit Corporation, its 2015-2016 Entrepreneur in Residence. As the Entrepreneur in Residence, Brown will mentor the student teams that enter the International Scripps Innovation Competition, which began with Startup Weekend on November 20th and
will culminate in PantherCage, a *Shark Tank*-style competition held on March 23, 2016 during SJMC’s Communications Week.

**Expansion**

FIU is looking to expand onto 64 acres currently occupied by the Fair. The plan would return 23 acres of Tamiami Park to the county to use as parkland.

We continue to stand firm on the opportunity and need to expand. We continue to be committed to a win-win-win partnership with Miami Dade County and with the Fair.

We are now working on a job-creating initiative that will move the fair to a site in South Dade that would enable a more robust and diversified agriculture in this community that will help to uplift South Dade and its economy. Our [College of Arts & Sciences](#) and [Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism Management](#) have developed a working concept to make this happen. While we do not have all the answers yet for our neighbors in the South, we are confident that we can bring some long-needed initiatives that could jump-start new opportunities in that community.

We presented our proposal on December 16 to the Homestead City Council. (Special thanks to our new Board of Trustees Chair, Claudia Puig, and SGA-MMC President,
Alexis Calatayud, for their assistance at this important gathering.) We are happy to report that the council members endorsed this economic plan wholeheartedly and enthusiastically, formally giving us their support in a resolution they passed unanimously that same evening. We hope to have more news for you in the coming weeks.

**Leadership and Reorganization**

The New Year brings with it some changes in leadership and organization.

In January, we will officially welcome Tomás Guilarte as the new dean of the Robert Stempel College of Public Health & Social Work. Dr. Guilarte comes to FIU after success as the inaugural Leon Hess Professor and Chairman of the Department of Environmental Health Sciences at Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health. (Special thanks to Interim Dean Mark Williams for his leadership during the search process.)

Dr. Guilarte has gained worldwide recognition over the past 20 years for his research into the devastating effects of environmental lead exposure, especially for children. His efforts recently earned a $2.9 million grant from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. When he takes the reins of the college, Dr. Guilarte will bring with him more than $7.5 million in active grant funding.

As this calendar year closed, we announced reorganizations to bring the College of Education and the College of Arts & Sciences together into a new, yet-to-be-named college; and to bring the School of Journalism and Mass Communication and the College of Architecture + The Arts together into another new, yet-to-be-named college. The faculty of the new colleges will be led, respectively, by Deans Mike Heithaus and Brian Schriner.

We believe that these two initiatives will strengthen the learning and employment opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students in both new units, enhance
faculty collaboration and impact through expanded multidisciplinary research and clinical initiatives, and result in a greater efficiency of operation. (Special thanks to Deans Delia Garcia and Raul Reis for their dedicated leadership of their respective units.)

**Innovation, Creatives, The Arts and FIU**

At FIU, we always finish the calendar year strongly, and what better example than our [TEDxFIU](#) in mid-November! There, eight speakers affiliated with FIU (including students, faculty and alumni) inspired us to always move forward – innovating and giving. We learned how nanotechnology is being used to help treat ovarian cancer; how music is reaching autistic children; how forensic chemistry will help investigators trace counterfeit money; and how an FIU doctor is on the front lines of the fight against Ebola. (Special thanks to the team from External Relations and our multiple sponsors from within the institution who made this incredible program possible.) Look for videos of our TEDxFIU talks at [Go.FIU.edu/tedxfiu2015](http://Go.FIU.edu/tedxfiu2015).

![TEDxFIU participants](image)

*From left to right: TEDxFIU participants Jonathan Wynn-Strachan, Sakhrat Khizroev, Dr. Aileen Marty, Nelson Hincapie, Todd Crowl, Rhett Williamson, Dr. Carolyn Runowicz, Patricia and Chris Kayser*

Expertise at FIU runs wide and deep. Our accelerated bridge construction expert [Atorod Azizinamini](#) and his colleagues in the College of Engineering and Computing hosted another successful [national conference](#) in early December in downtown Miami on the same topic. Attracting nearly 600 highway and bridge officials from around the country, the conference heard from keynote speakers from the federal and state governments, as well as academics, builders and other specialists on bridge
construction. Given the aging highway system and the continually deteriorating bridges in this country, no wonder so many experts attended this state-of-the-art conference.

A new bridge being installed on an interstate in New York using a technique called "slide-in" in which a new bridge is built right next to an old one, and then slid in and hooked up, with a road closure of only a few hours rather than months.

(Courtesy of HNTB Corp.)

Thanksgiving ends, and *boom*, the creative energies of our community come gushing forth with a torrent of programs, exhibitions and arts energy with Art Basel and Art Miami week. We were in it and of it! And sometimes leading it!

At College of Architecture + The Arts | [Miami Beach Urban Studios](http://www.mbus.org) (CARTA | MBUS), back-to-back programs brought standing room only crowds on December 3. A World Class Global Forum on Art + Design + Architecture featured author and visiting FIU Fellow, Richard Florida, and Grammy Award-winning artist, Nelly Furtado, to address the creative future of our cities and to identify elements that promote this creativity. Furtado emphasized the importance of a modern urban transit system as a key to creative collaboration and initiatives.
On the heels of this forum, MBUS opened an exhibition of thought-provoking works by Connie McSilver, a psychoanalyst whose art, “Whoopee,” already graces the east lawn of our School of Architecture at MMC. The proceeds from the sale of her works were donated to CARTA!
The Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU unveiled the Discovery and Recovery: Preserving Iraqi Jewish Heritage exhibit on December 3. The exhibition, which runs through February 14, 2016, details the dramatic recovery of historic materials relating to the Jewish community in Iraq from a flooded basement in Saddam Hussein’s intelligence headquarters, and the National Archives’ ongoing work in support of U.S. Government efforts to preserve these materials. In both English and Arabic, the 2,000-square-foot exhibition features 23 recovered items and a “behind the scenes” video of the fascinating yet painstaking preservation process.

Art world movers and shakers came to the December 4 Art Basel Miami Beach bash at the The Wolfsonian–FIU sponsored by Vanity Fair. The magazine also transformed the museum’s historic building over the course of three days for its first-ever Miami Beach-based Vanity Fair Social Club, activating the first floor with temporary installations and exciting programming featuring Yves Behar, Laurie Anderson and more. Nearly 1,500 people attended – a well-deserved recognition for the Wolfsonian–FIU and its world-class exhibitions.

Our Breakfast in the Park celebration at the Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum on Sunday, December 6, featured Alice Aycock, an American sculptor known for theoretically complex site specific works that are at once emotional and architectural. Our overflowing crowd enjoyed a great presentation by Alice along with a tasty brunch, an exhibit of the murals of Hans Hofman, and tours of our FIU sculpture park. The Fredric Snitzer Gallery loaned one of Aycock’s sculptures to the museum for the breakfast. Alice’s presentation follows in line with a long list of arts luminaries who
have graced our Breakfast - including Daniel Arsham, John Henry, Albert Paley, and Michelle Oka Doner. (Special thanks to our partners, West Kendall Baptist Hospital and the Intercontinental at Doral Miami, for helping to sponsor the gathering.)

From left to right: Javier Hernandez-Lichtl, Fred Snitzer, Alice Aycock, Frost Director Jordana Pomeroy, Patricia Frost, Phillip Frost

What a contrast days later and just blocks away at Sweetwater Elementary. There, students from the school proudly unveiled a permanent new mural at the entry to their school that they designed. It was inspired by the work of Hans Hoffman displayed at the Frost where they visited in anticipation of the project.
We commend the Frost Museum, Sweetwater Elementary and City of Sweetwater leadership for this wonderful mural that engaged the school’s students around the life and work of Hans Hofman.

Imagine a series of presentations by fifth graders on the style and impact of Hans Hofman. It was as meaningful a statement on the power of our partnership strategy as anything I have participated in this year.

This was part of our "Museum Without Walls" initiative, whose primary goal is to create community engagement inspired by exhibitions to promote change. (Special thanks to the Frost’s education curator, Miriam Machado, and to the Sweetwater Elementary principal, Janet P. Olivera, and her arts team. Incidentally, just a few days before, Principal Olivera was at an FIU commencement where her daughter was graduating with her bachelor’s degree.)

**Impact and Recognition**

FIU continues to be recognized for its impact:

- This fall, FIU was named among the top universities in the country by Washington Monthly. FIU placed 17th out of 279 higher education institutions, up from 24th last year. Achieving a top 20 ranking in Washington Monthly by 2020 is one of the goals of the FIUBeyondPossible2020 strategic plan. Washington Monthly’s rankings score universities according to the categories of research, social mobility, and service.
- FIU College of Business’ Hollo School of Real Estate ranked No. 1 in the United States and No. 2 globally for its faculty’s real estate research in a study that will be published in the Journal of Real Estate Literature.
The College of Business also continues to build on its leading role in the development of global business leaders, ranking sixth among the best undergraduate international programs in the U.S. News & World Report’s 2016 edition of Best Colleges. It is the highest ranking to date for the program in U.S. News’ well-regarded survey, and the third time in four years that the college has ranked within the Top 10 in international business. In 2015, the program ranked eighth; in 2013, the program ranked 10th; and in 2014, it held the 11th spot.

FIU College of Law graduates earned the top bar passage rate in Florida for the July 2015 bar examination, with 89 percent passing the exam that allows them to practice law in the state. FIU College of Law graduates exceeded the statewide average bar passage rate of 68.9 percent by more than 20 percentage points.

The College of Education’s Reading Education program was ranked by the Florida Department of Education as the best teacher preparation program in the state. It was the only teacher preparation program to earn perfect scores in the areas of student achievement on statewide assessments, student achievement on statewide assessments by subgroups, teacher annual evaluations, teacher retention, and teacher placement.

FIU’s Model United Nations continues its national leadership, just being ranked fourth nationally, right behind the University of Chicago, Georgetown, and Harvard.
White House Recognition

Several of our faculty and programs were recognized by the White House over the past semester:

- FIU’s bridge expert, Professor Atorod Azizinamini, chairman of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the College of Engineering and Computing, was named a White House Champion of Change by the White House and U.S. Department of Transportation.
• Dr. Aileen Marty, professor in the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine, is an infectious diseases expert who has been on the frontlines of the worldwide war against Ebola. She was one of just 15 nationally recognized experts appointed to the newly created Presidential Advisory Council on Combating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria.

• FIU biology professor Philip Stoddard was appointed by the White House to the Governance Coordinating Committee of the National Ocean Council. He is one of 18 people from across the country who will be making recommendations to the Cabinet-level National Ocean Council.

• The White House also recognized FIU’s Mastery Math model as one of its 150 Commitments to Action for increasing educational outcomes and opportunities for Hispanic students. FIU and supporting foundations have invested more than $5.5 million to improve retention of more than 7,000 Hispanic students annually by redefining the classroom experience for all lower division math courses. Over the next three years, FIU will hire and prepare 12 new full-time mathematics instructors and build a 200-seat computer lab dedicated to learning introductory mathematics and statistics.

Partnerships

FIU has joined forces with StartUp Cuba to offer a summer program designed to foster and support entrepreneurship in Cuba. The program, called InCubando@FIU, will kick off in Miami in May 2016 and run for six weeks. The curriculum will consist of business classes, taught in Spanish, by instructors affiliated with FIU’s College of Business, and intensive English classes by FIU’s English Language Institute (ELI) instructors.

The Patricia and Phillip Frost Museum of Science and FIU have created a partnership to strengthen science education through funding from the State of Florida. As a primary academic partner of the museum, FIU will develop a pilot program in collaboration with Frost Science to provide real-world experience in science learning for Miami-Dade County preschool children based on the museum’s Early Childhood Hands-On Science (ECHOS) program. FIU students will gain first-hand work experience in real classrooms focused on the importance of working with families to introduce science to preschoolers.

In addition, FIU students in FIUteach, a STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) teacher preparation program, will receive training in science communication and complete internships at Frost Science, working with exhibit content developers and education experts in the development of field trip programming for elementary and secondary education students. Students in the College of Education completed ECHOS training and were paired with teachers in preschool centers operated by Head Start, Early Learning Coalition providers, and Miami-Dade County Public Schools’ Early Childhood Diagnostic and Special Education Center. Consistent with our mission to build bridges into the community, these students will commit at least 36 hours toward
working with low-income 3- to 5-year-olds in centers in Opa-locka, Overtown, Liberty City, Little Haiti, Wynwood, and Homestead.

On September 29 we inaugurated the CARTA Innovation Lab. The Innovation Lab, part of CARTA | MBUS, is the result of a partnership with MakerBot, a global leader in the desktop 3D printing industry. Supported by the Knight Foundation, the CARTA Innovation Lab incorporates a MakerBot Innovation Center, a large-scale 3D printing installation designed to empower universities and organizations to innovate faster, collaborate better, and compete more effectively. FIU is the first university in the United States to house a MakerBot Innovation Center in a college focused on design and the arts. Students, faculty and local entrepreneurs will work on creative projects and explore the intersection of art and technology.

We are proud of our partnerships to enhance student opportunities. There is no better example than this: in the past few months FIU and Ultimate Software, a leading provider of human capital management solutions in the cloud, announced a 10-year
extension to our current technology-education partnership. The new commitment will help establish an endowment for the FIU College of Engineering and Computing’s School of Computing and Information Sciences, fund scholarships for students at the university, and support the development of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education throughout high schools in the community.

Ultimate Software’s commitment to FIU also expands the existing Ultimate Software Academy, which provides technology training for high school teachers who are helping students develop STEM-based skills.

Ultimate Software first partnered with FIU in 2007 to create the TechSTARS internship program. Through TechSTARS, Ultimate Software works in tandem with FIU’s School of Computing and Information Sciences to identify promising students and provide them with real-life experience as part of a growing tech company. Since the program’s inception, Ultimate Software has employed more than 100 TechSTARS from FIU as full-time engineers.

**Building a Better FIU**

Our FIU is changing to meet the needs of our entire FIU community. The new Student Academic Support Center will soon open at MMC with a magnificent welcome center and relocated offices that are student-facing. This signature facility has been in the planning for nearly two decades!
We are nearing completion as well of the new Bayview residence hall, overlooking Biscayne Bay. This new housing will have gorgeous views of both the bay, the Atlantic Ocean and downtown Miami.

Finally, we expect to more than double the size of the Wellness & Recreation Center - MMC, as it’s now known, by the fall of 2017. A $26 million infusion from the Florida Capital Improvement Trust Fund, Student Government Association, and FIU’s Department of Housing will allow for a 60,000-square-foot expansion, and also include 15,000 square feet of outdoor recreational space. Construction is set to begin in spring 2016. The new center will finally surpass the national standard for fitness space for colleges - roughly one square foot per student.
Because we treasure our built environment, and because we are inspired by the place our FIU has become, we want to share this unforgettable assessment of our architecture by our friend and colleague Jaime Canaves: **spaces that inspire at FIU**.

**What’s Next?**

[Marian Wright Edelman](http://www.marianwrightedelman.org) is the keynote speaker for our MLK Commemorative Breakfast on Friday, January 15, 2016. The founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund (CDF), our speaker has been an advocate for disadvantaged Americans for her entire professional life. The CDF is the nation’s strongest voice for children and families.
In 2000, she received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation’s highest civilian award, and the Robert F. Kennedy Lifetime Achievement Award for her writings.

We will also be sponsoring numerous other events, including a day of service on January 17, 2016 throughout Miami-Dade County. See the schedule of events for other MLK program initiatives at http://mpas.fiu.edu/MLK_events.html.

We expect a record number of alumni lecturers in classes during the first week of February. Thanks to the initiative of alum and Trustee, Gerald Grant, our Third Annual Panther Alumni Week (PAW) will be bigger and better than ever! PAW establishes a sense of continuity and gives alumni a chance to inspire our current students to succeed by giving them a glimpse of life after graduation.

Panther Alumni Week is a great opportunity for alumni to return as guest speakers to inspire our students and share career advice.

Most of the PAW participants will be speaking to students in First Year Experience classes and/or to students in courses to which they were invited by a faculty member. Those interactions are limited to participating alumni and students in those classes. However, for those alumni who can’t make it to campus, they will have an opportunity to network with students online by connecting in the PAW Virtual Meet Up. Students
and recent graduates will chat with alumni online asking them questions about what they studied, what they do professionally, a favorite memory about campus, and career or job searching advice, all in one online event.

We will close this week with a gala reception on Friday night, February 5, at 6:00 p.m. at the Wertheim Performing Arts Center Rotunda. This will be a great opportunity to network and visit with our alumni.

Shakespeare fever will strike FIU throughout the month of February as we commemorate the 400th anniversary of the author’s death. Our FIU has been chosen as the only site in the state of Florida to host “First Folio! The Book that Gave us Shakespeare,” on tour from the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C. This exhibit will be on display at the Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum. An extensive program of events, lectures, film screenings, and performances have been planned, including an I-CAVE virtual reality with a full immersion experience of Shakespeare’s London c. 1598 at ECS 268. (Special thanks to the teamwork of James Sutton in English, Klaudio Rodriguez in the Frost Art Museum, Karen Wilkening in Advancement and Arts & Sciences, and Shawn Tonner in the Library). You may find further information at https://folio.fiu.edu/.

FIU is the only site in Florida to host “First Folio! The Book that Gave us Shakespeare,” on exhibit at the Frost Art Museum throughout February.

Look for major announcements, as well, in early 2016 about FIU’s designation as an Ashoka University Changemaker Campus; and a new site in Washington, D.C. where we will host FIU student interns, visiting faculty, short courses and certificate programs.
Closing and Looking Ahead

I promised you a lengthy and wordy walk through the end of this year and the beginning of 2016. The energy and enormous commitments of time and vision that you have just explored with me are but small parts of a very large and dynamic institution that insists on being forward-facing and taking responsibility for our community.

Rosalie and I want to wish you and your families a happy, joyous holiday season and look forward to working with you in the New Year.

The best is yet to come for our amazing Worlds Ahead institution!

Sincerely,

Mark B. Rosenberg
President