

MEMORANDUM

January 2, 2013

Dear FIU Family,

“That’s how I roll!” The blue-robed student was responding to my private and admittedly frivolous comment about his tie being “on fire” as we momentarily posed for his graduation photo at one of our seven graduation ceremonies just a few weeks ago at US Century Bank Arena.

So how will we roll in 2013? Renewal is upon us and we have an unprecedented opportunity in 2013 to make the world a better place – one student, one class, one research project and/or one creative initiative at a time.

This past December does offer some clues about what is afoot for this new year. We hit major targets: first for our eligible students, we raised more than \$1.4 million in scholarships for First Generation Students. We exceeded our United Way target of \$200,000 for our community. We also concluded the best-ever Children’s Christmas Party that helped needy children from throughout the community to celebrate the joys of the holiday right at our Graham Center.

Our commencement ceremonies gave us the opportunity to congratulate happy graduating students and their families and loved ones. We also heard from our own doctoral student – Alexandre Lopes, who was named both Miami-Dade County Public Schools Teacher of the Year and Florida Teacher of the Year. Alexandre reflected the gratitude of our students in thanking our faculty and staff for all that they have done to ensure a quality education at FIU.

We hosted spectacular concerts to close the year, featuring our talented music students and faculty who offered their rendition of “Messiah.” We then gave a unique “Classically Cuban” concert, playing music in honor of the Cuban patriot Jose Marti. Art Basel- related events included lectures by philanthropist and collector Leonard Lauder at the Wolfsonian, and renowned metal sculptor Albert Paley at our “Breakfast in the Park” Sunday gathering.

We initiate this new year with the long-awaited unveiling of our Panther monument – now shrouded and fenced awaiting an unforgettable ceremony outside the U.S. Century Bank Arena on January 10 at 1:30 pm. We hope that you can all be there to witness a new focal point for our Panther Spirit, and what will certainly be a destination point for all visitors to the MMC. We will also soon be unveiling a Panther monument at our Biscayne Bay Campus. Both have been made possible by support from the Student Government Association!

The new year will bring many opportunities to improve our students’ university experience. Our Graduation Success Initiative remains the centerpiece of student-centered initiatives to improve time to degree and retention. Investments in new major maps, expanded advising, and internships are helping us to reach our goal of earlier graduation and better job placement. In the past year, we made

great strides in the state's high priority STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), including the establishment of the Mastery Math Laboratory, aimed at improving student performance in college algebra. The results so far are encouraging. The pass rate for Fall 2012 for College Algebra was 54 percent with a final cumulative exam average of 68 percent. For Intermediate Algebra, the pass rate was 55 percent and the final cumulative exam average was 60 percent. This puts us close to achieving our goal of a 57 percent pass rate for 2012-13.

Our partnership with Miami-Dade County Public Schools continues to bear fruit. We now have 15 working groups –specialists from both FIU and the schools who are focused on improving student achievement among students who will likely enroll in FIU or in other institutions of higher education.

We are particularly proud of our Golden Scholars program – students from Miami Senior Northwestern High and Miami Southridge High. These are 39 freshmen who participated in our summer bridge program, through which we support students making the transition from high school to university life. Some of our Golden Scholars are already standouts. Ana Saint Louis made the Dean's List in her first fall semester, which requires a GPA of 3.5 and above. Angie Fleurissant, Sarah Acado, Darius Allenye, and Ashley Perez all earned scholarships to support their studies. Shaquila Thomas is in the Academy of Leaders program, the premier emerging leadership development program for FIU students. Rene Maurice and Marcus Ghent have secured positions on our track team, along with scholarship support. Great job! Congratulations to all of our Golden Scholars and thank you to our Engagement team and everyone at FIU who has gone above and beyond to make sure our Golden Scholars succeed.

FIU students and faculty go to great depths for their research. Soon, that will be truer than ever. Aligned with our strategic commitment to environmental studies, we have submitted a proposal to assume operations of the Aquarius Reef Base, the world's only operational underwater research center.

Owned by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Aquarius was scheduled to cease operations at the end of December. Situated 60 feet below the surface, a few miles south of the Florida Keys, this unique facility offers unparalleled research opportunities to study coral reefs and the ocean; test state-of-the art undersea technology; train astronauts and specialized divers; and to engage the imagination of students and the public across the globe in ocean science, coral reefs, conservation, and underwater technology. Stay tuned this spring for more details on this groundbreaking (or perhaps surface-breaking) venture.

We recently appointed Michele Ciccazzo as dean of the Robert Stempel College of Public Health. While serving as interim dean of the college, Dean Ciccazzo led the recent successful accreditation of the College by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), a significant milestone in the history of the college. It is now one of only 50 CEPH accredited schools of public health and one of only three in Florida.

Our new dean has been working to obtain support from the community for the college and the new building, now under construction, that will house the college, the Department of Earth and the Environment, and the Institute for Extreme Events. Under her stewardship, I know the college will

continue to conduct problem-solving research while preparing the next generation of public health, social work and dietetics professionals.

Just a few days ago we received official notification from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) that our College of Nursing and Health Science has been successfully reaccredited. Please join me in congratulating Dean Ora Strickland and her entire team on a job well done!

For the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine, final accreditation this spring will be the culmination of a long journey that began with our vision for a public medical school in South Florida that would educate a new kind of doctor. The Wertheim College of Medicine, along with the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, and the Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work are the keys to the success of our Academic Health Center. By working together, the students and faculty of these colleges and the professionals they educate will contribute greatly to the health of our community and the world.

We congratulate College of Education Dean Delia Garcia on her appointment to the Board of Directors of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE). In this role, Dean Garcia will be representing the interests of Hispanic Serving Institutions.

FIU's researchers also continue to develop innovations and initiatives that impact the well-being of the community and advance the frontiers of science. Scientists at the Institute of NeuroImmune Pharmacology (Madhavan Nair and Sakrat Khizroev) have developed a magnetic nanotechnology technique for delivering drugs directly to the brain for the treatment of AIDS and drug addiction in patients, and they are also in the early stages of development of a non-invasive, cost-effective nanotechnology to recover brain activity in patients with Parkinson's and neural system disorders.

In collaboration with the NIH Molecular Libraries Probe Production Centers Network, Dr. Irina Agoulnik's lab (in the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine) has identified the first known series of small molecule compounds that have relaxin-like properties. Relaxin has been linked to the maintenance of normal blood pressure and has anti-fibrotic properties. Several clinical trials are currently underway analyzing beneficial effects of relaxin treatment in various human diseases. Among them, the most successful results have been reported in the management of acute heart failure.

FIU researchers in the College of Engineering and Computing, led by Dr. Shekhar Bhansali, are engaged in pioneering nanotechnology. Partnering with North Carolina State University, Pennsylvania State University and the University of Virginia, Dr. Bhansali's team won a prestigious NSF Engineering Research Center (ERC) award of \$18.5 million over five years. The ERC focuses on nanoscale systems that integrate self-powered electronics for the advancement of personalized medicine.

FIU's Center for Research on U.S. Latino HIV/AIDS and Substance Abuse received a National Institute of Minority and Health Disparities (NIMHD) P-20 Center of Excellence grant which focuses on the development of innovative programs and interventions in collaboration with local communities to reduce health disparities in HIV/AIDS and substance abuse.

Naphtali Rishe in the School of Computing and Information Sciences was a recipient of an NSF “Accelerating Innovation Research” (AIR) award. The AIR program brings together the academic and commercial worlds to form a vibrant and groundbreaking partnership through which cutting edge technologies in Data Intensive Applications can be translated from the laboratory to viable products.

The Perkins+Will Planning Team continues to work on updating the 2010-2020 Campus Master Plan for FIU, to create a sustainable vision for the future. Thank you to everyone who has participated so far in assisting us by providing feedback and helping us map out the future of our campuses, keeping in mind our goals to integrate academic planning, accommodate enrollment projections, improve facilities, conserve open space, provide adequate utilities, and improve circulation. We need your continued participation.

This spring, you will see the results of our MMC Open Space Student Design Charrette with the newly renovated DM Building Courtyard. More than 80 students from our Architecture and Landscape Architecture programs worked alongside faculty and industry leaders to design concepts for open spaces on our campus. The courtyard redesign will provide the flexibility to be used for quiet study, conversation, gathering and occasional presentations. It also will be a model for other courtyards on campus.

We are also planning a major renovation of the Wolfe Center – to make it even more student-friendly and supportive of our anticipated growth on the Biscayne Bay Campus.

We continue to meet with representatives from the Miami-Dade County Fair & Exposition, Inc. and Miami-Dade County to explore the possibility of finding a new location for The Fair so that FIU can expand into the location that currently is the fairgrounds adjacent to the MMC. This spring, we will be conducting a market demand and economic impact study on several sites currently being considered and will keep you posted on our progress.

We have formed the UniversityCity Alliance with our neighbors, the City of Sweetwater, to enhance our relationship with the city and to develop a unique and collaborative partnership that will create an innovative community for us, the residents of Sweetwater and anyone who visits FIU or the city. The first phase of this alliance begins with a coalition of public and private participants and will launch with a student-oriented residential complex that will provide us with 542 beds in the City of Sweetwater. Construction begins this month with an anticipated grand opening in Fall 2014.

Throughout January we will be celebrating and commemorating the legacy of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. with a number of events, including lectures, a series of exhibits at the Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum, a Day of Service in which our students will participate in community clean-up projects, FIU’s participation in the Liberty City MLK Day Parade and the annual MLK Commemorative Breakfast at FIU. This is the 22nd annual FIU MLK celebration and that is a testament to the dedication and hard work of the students, faculty and staff who volunteer their time as part of FIU’s MLK Committee. For more on these events, please click [here](#).

On Jan. 23, we are teaming up with the Betsy-South Beach to present a lecture with bestselling author and journalist Bob Reiss, from 9-11 a.m. in the Graham Center Ballrooms. There will be other exciting, thought-provoking lectures throughout the year. We'll have more information in the weeks to come.

Early this year, our students will be involved in the Aim Higher campaign, an effort spearheaded by student leaders and joined by Florida university presidents, to ask the legislature to fund higher education this legislative session. Our students will participate in a postcard writing campaign to let Tallahassee know that we need them to invest in us. Please join Aim Higher and support our students.

So how do we roll? With purpose. With pride. And with a sense of mission to improve our community.

During his Wolfsonian lecture, philanthropist and collector Lauder reminded us about the need to appreciate and show respect for the everyday occurrences and surroundings that privilege us. I recommend that you read our thought-provoking story on the "Graham Center piano" that is an excellent illustration of how we roll at FIU. This story can be found at [here](#).

I commend you for your continued passion for FIU and challenge you to allow these special moments of renewal on this New Year to revitalize you, your families and our community! Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark B. Rosenberg', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark B. Rosenberg
President