Dear FIU family:

Last week, the Florida Legislature began its 60-day session and we are hard at work to make it another successful year for our FIU! As a state-supported institution, we turn to the Florida House and Senate for funding and work with state legislators as they make policy decisions that affect higher education. We want to show our state legislators that we get it! FIU is an important economic and research engine for Florida. We are educating tomorrow’s workforce. Our students, alumni, faculty, and staff are contributing to the economic well-being of our state and their contributions have local and global reach. As always, we thank the Miami-Dade Legislative Delegation for their hard work and dedication as they continue to be a champion for our FIU as a beacon of hope and opportunity for our community and beyond.

We can't do this without you! We invite you to take a moment to read about our work in Tallahassee and support our efforts by becoming an FIU advocate.

If you live or work in Tallahassee area, or plan to visit, please be sure to celebrate FIU Day at the Capitol on March 25.
FIU’s 2015 State Legislative Priorities include:

1. **Campus Expansion & Facilities**: FIU is seeking $20 million in continued funds for campus expansion, $8.1 million for the Satellite Chiller Plant, and $20 million for the School of International and Public Affairs Phase II building.

2. **FIUnique**: One of FIU’s top priorities continues to be strengthening programs that serve students and adults with unique abilities and empower them to learn, work and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Those programs include The Center for Children and Families, EMBRACE, and Panther LIFE. These distinguished programs address the areas of pediatric mental health (including ADHD, depression, anxiety, aggression, obesity, learning problems, substance abuse, and typical development), autism, neurological disorders, and intellectual disabilities. To address the needs of students coming from former foster care and/or homeless backgrounds, FIU has launched Fostering Panther Pride, an initiative to offer appropriate and customized services that will provide these students with opportunities to succeed academically and graduate in good standing from a top-tier public research university. FIU is requesting $7 million for continued research and programming.

3. **The Consortium of Metropolitan Universities**: FIU, UCF and USF are Florida’s urban serving research universities. Together, the three serve 62% of Florida’s population and award 50% of degrees in the State University System. The Consortium is a joint partnership focused on career-readiness initiatives, including targeted advising, academic progress tracking and strategic internship placement, which will ultimately better prepare Florida’s graduates to meet the economic needs of the State. The Consortium has requested $12 million in state support.

4. **Special Projects**: FIU is seeking additional funds for other university projects in the areas of STEM, hurricane research, health, criminal justice and economic development.

5. **Performance Funding**: The Florida Legislature continues moving toward funding universities based on their achievement of metrics established by the Board of Governors. FIU is committed to meeting performance standards while continuing to provide a top quality education to its students and access to the community.

Throughout the legislative session, we will continue to keep you informed about our progress and how you can get involved. We encourage you to use #AdvocateFIU on social media to start the conversation and build support for our FIU!
Federal Update

Last week in Washington, D.C., several snowfalls didn't stop our Panther advocates from presenting this year’s priorities to Congress while celebrating 50 years of federal partnerships. We took the time to update our federal congressional delegation on the impact of federal financial aid and our 2015 Federal Legislative Priorities, which include:

- Graduate Medical Education (GME)
- Accelerated Bridge Construction (ABC) University Transportation Center (UTC)
- Environmental Resilience + Sea Level Solutions
- STEM Education Research

Front and center is the need to increase the maximum Pell grant award and also a return of the second Pell that was available to our students prior to 2011. Currently, nearly 20,000 FIU students are on Pell grants and 50 percent of those are at the level of greatest need. When the second Pell award was eliminated in 2011, FIU students lost over $10 Million in federal aid.

To commemorate our anniversary and celebrate 50 years of FIU’s impact, key congressional champions, our alumni in the White House, national partners, and the D.C. Chapter gathered at a reception overlooking the national mall.

Last week’s federal advocacy provided an added air of electricity on the heels of the historic visit by President Obama to the Modesto Maidique Campus for the MSNBC/Telemundo Town Hall on Immigration. This was the first visit to an FIU campus by a sitting United States president.

Click here to support FIU’s legislative advocacy efforts!

Recently we said farewell and celebrated the career of an esteemed member of the FIU family. Steve Sauls retired in December after a 45-year career in public service. Steve was dedicated to our country, our university and our students. He played an integral role in the growth of FIU and the success of hundreds of students through the years, and for that we are forever grateful. Steve’s lasting legacy provided the pathway for our new Vice President of Governmental Relations, Michelle Palacio. Michelle is an FIU alumna and has been a part of the FIU governmental relations team for over a decade. Her political expertise spans over 20 years and I trust that her leadership will help take FIU into its next horizon. Please join me in thanking Steve and welcoming Michelle!

Go Panthers!

Sincerely,

Mark B. Rosenberg
President