



Address at the Miami Lakes Chamber of Commerce Luncheon

**Given by Mark B. Rosenberg
on June 10, 2015**



This speech was presented to the attendees of the Miami Lakes Chamber of Commerce luncheon on June 10, 2015.

Good morning! It's great to be in Miami Lakes sharing great news about FIU!

We see our university as a solutions center for the community. Our mission is intimately linked to our geography and our demography - indeed our geography and our demography are our destiny. We understand that we are a beacon of hope and opportunity for this community. We see ourselves as a force for good! That has been true since the beginning.

You see, 2015 is a very special year for our FIU. It marks the 50th anniversary of the legislature's creation of FIU. The seeds of what would become our university were planted in 1965. That's when Florida Senator Robert M. Haverfield introduced Senate Bill 711. Senate Bill 711 proposed a plan for a state university in Miami. Senator Haverfield worked tirelessly to get 24 co-sponsors for his bill. In May 1965, the bill was passed with no dissenting votes.

Our founding president was Chuck Perry. His first official statement on August 1, 1969 recognized that there was "no more challenging assignment in higher education than the creation of a specifically urban university which must be equipped to serve the needs of an already large and steadily expanding metropolitan area." Boy, was he right!

For those of you who don't know, FIU is a university that sprung out of the ground on an abandoned airport. FIU only received 340 acres, even while they were giving other public universities (opened during the same period) twice and three times as much land or their main campuses. Our first building - the control tower - had neither running water, electricity, nor furniture. In October 1969 we were victims of a burglary - \$10,000 worth of equipment from the university's humble offices. The wheels and tires were stripped off of four university cars, money was taken, and a large amount of office equipment was stolen. It was a great setback. But we were not deterred. Within the next two years, the first campus building, Primera Casa, was being built.

Every decade since then we have had a cause, an obstacle to overcome: The 60s - to get the university chartered and funded. The 70s - to get the university staffed and opened. The 80s - expand the university, and initiate housing and graduate programs. The 90s - to build a research university. The 2000s - the law school and medical school. And we did it the hard way - "from the ground up"!

Today, we have taken off, and built a university we can be proud of and our neighbors can be proud of. Let me share some of our most recent accomplishments:

We celebrated 9 commencement ceremonies this spring and graduated more than 5,000 students – an FIU record!

Forbes named FIU one of "America's Best Employers." We ranked 64th out of 500 employers. We were first in the education category in Florida and ninth in the nation in the same category. Among the 19 Florida-based employers on the list, we ranked third.

President Obama visited our Maitique Campus in February. He addressed the topic of immigration during a nationally-televised town hall. And then he came back again, on May 28, to tour the National Hurricane Center on the Maitique Campus.

U.S. News & World Report placed FIU's College of Business at No. 15 among the top business schools for the International MBA in its 2016 edition of the Best Graduate Schools.

FIU's Graduate Nursing program was ranked No. 54 by the U.S. News & World Report 2016 Best Graduate Schools Guidebook, marking the highest-ever ranking for the 23-year-old master's program.

Design Intelligence ranked the FIU Department of Interior Architecture among the top 10 interior architecture degree programs in the nation, and first among universities in Florida.

MAST@FIU was recognized as one of the top high schools for STEM education in the U.S.

This past March, FIU and Royal Caribbean Cruises unveiled a 130,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art rehearsal and production studio on our Biscayne Bay Campus. We also announced details of a new partnership that will include collaborative research, talent development and real-world experience for FIU students.

We recently launched the FIU-Miami Creative City Initiative in partnership with the Creative Class Group. This project engages political, business and cultural leaders, as well as FIU faculty, students, and alumni. It was created to harness creative and entrepreneurial forces that can help accelerate Greater Miami's transformation into a creative economy.

FIU has also partnered with the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce to promote research, economic development and advocacy.

Nearly 1,300 students from FIU provided managerial and logistical support at the 2015 Food Network and Cooking Channel South Beach Wine & Food Festival presented by FOOD & WINE in February. The event made \$4.9 million in sponsorship and corporate revenue and \$5.3 million in ticket sales.

Teams from more than 110 U.S. and Canadian law schools competed at the 2015 American Bar Association's National Negotiation Finals. FIU Law was the only Florida law school to compete in the finals. The FIU team took second place, missing out on the championship title by just ONE point to the University of Manitoba. FIU Law also received a \$620,000 grant – the largest grant amount ever received by our law school - to educate defense lawyers handling capital cases.

For the second year in a row, FIU's Model United Nations team captured the Outstanding Large Delegation award at the Harvard National Model United Nations. The program is now ranked fourth in the nation – being beat out only by Chicago, Georgetown and Harvard!

Dr. Marianna Baum, professor at the Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work, was selected by the American Red Cross as the recipient of the Cervera Real Estate Ambassador Award for her work in the field of HIV. Dr. Aileen Marty, a professor at the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine who has been on the frontlines of the worldwide war against Ebola, was one of 10 outstanding women honored during Miami-Dade County's recent "In the Company of Women" awards. Dr. Marin Gillis, associate professor at the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine, was appointed to the Board of Directors of the Global Bioethics Initiative– an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to improving quality of life in vulnerable populations around the world. Sea level rise is an urgent problem facing South Florida. We're proud that two members of the FIU family were recently named the winners of the Knight Foundation's first Global Impact Competition–Miami, a contest seeking innovative sea level rise solutions.

Alumna Ana Benatuil, who works for Zyscovich Architects, and Carlos Tamayo, an engineer and FIU Ph.D. candidate, were the winners. Their prize? They'll attend the 10-week Singularity University Graduate Studies Program at NASA Research Park in Silicon Valley.

Ladies and gentlemen, those are just a few of the Worlds Ahead accomplishments of our students, faculty and staff. We understand that we have a sacred obligation to prepare our students to make a good living - to either take a great job or to create a great job. But we also understand that we must prepare our students to make a good life. That the life of the mind is also about aesthetics, ethics, civic engagement and social responsibility.

As an anchor institution, we are willing to take responsibility for our community. We are committed to providing access to higher education and to provide high quality educational opportunity to all young people in our community who have the preparation, drive and determination to pursue a university degree. There are 45 high schools in Miami Dade County; we want graduates from each of these schools. We cannot turn our backs on some students because of the accident of birth in zip codes that have low income populations.

So what does FIU look like today in terms of students? We enroll nearly 54,000 students. We are adding 2,000 students a year. By 2020, we project we will have 65,000 students. We predict almost 4,000 of those students will be from Miami Lakes! We are the country's fifth largest public research institution in terms of enrollment. We are the country's largest majority-minority university. We are the shape of things to come for public universities in the U.S. We graduate nearly 12,500 students annually. In the next ten years, nearly 130,000 students will graduate from FIU.

Those are just some of the ways FIU is having a positive impact on our community and our workforce.

As members of the Miami Lakes Chamber, you are committed to the economic well-being of this community. At FIU, we also are committed to the well-being of our neighbors in Miami Lakes. Let me tell you how we're having a positive impact right here in Miami Lakes.

During the 2013-14 academic year, 3,209 of our students called Miami Lakes home. That's an increase of 43 percent since 2009. During that same academic year, 735 graduates from the high schools that serve Miami Lakes studied at FIU. Additionally, 606 students from these high schools participated in dual enrollment at FIU during 2013-14. They earned college credits before their high school graduation. That's 5 times as many students as 5 years prior! During the 2013-14 academic year we awarded almost \$23 million (\$22.9 million to be exact) in financial aid and scholarships to Miami Lakes residents. That's a 61 percent increase in a five-year period! During the 2013-14 academic year we awarded bachelor's degrees to 512 Miami Lakes residents and graduate degrees to 128 Miami Lakes residents. More than 5,800 FIU alumni live in Miami Lakes. We know of 20 businesses in Miami Lakes owned or operated by FIU alumni. And we know of 37 alumni entrepreneurs who live in Miami Lakes. We have about 200 Miami Lakes residents who work at FIU as faculty and staff. They spend their hard-earned money right here in this city! As a university, we've spent over \$150,000 in the last year on goods and services from 13 Miami Lakes businesses.

Our university's success is our community's success. And that is true of Miami Lakes. That's important as FIU looks to our next horizon. The next horizon for us is next door to the Modesto Maidique Campus.

In November, 65 percent of almost 500,000 Miami-Dade voters demonstrated their confidence in FIU and our future. Despite what you may have heard, they gave us a mandate to expand to the 64 acres contiguous to our Mardique Campus. We are talking about more and better job and educational opportunities. The expansion will allow us to enhance teaching, research and creative endeavors in areas such as engineering, the sciences and entrepreneurship. Doing so can only increase our standing among the great universities of this nation. This initiative is important for our institution and our community, especially our neighbors in Miami Lakes. I hope to have more news for you in the coming months as we continue to work with the county and The Fair on a win-win-win solution for relocating the fair.

FIU is proud to mark 50 years of making an impact on our community. I know I can count on the support of the leaders in this room so that we continue to be a beacon of hope and opportunity for many decades to come. The consensus in our community is that world class cities deserve world class universities. Help us build a world class university! I'd now be happy to take any questions from the audience!