

MEMORANDUM

January 18, 2012

Dear students, faculty and staff:

I know that many of you have heard that two students and five individuals who are not students were arrested on Thursday, January 12 for disrupting school functions. One of the most fundamental characteristics of the academy is the free and open expression and discussion of all points of view and FIU has a rich history of allowing and supporting individuals and groups to express their beliefs and opinions without hindrance.

Some of the individuals who participated in Thursday's event have taken part in several other on-campus demonstrations throughout the fall semester without incident. A group demonstrated on the Graham Center lawn during the two days in mid-September when we hosted the Board of Governors meeting. All the previous demonstrations were without incident because the participants held their events in locations identified for such activities and followed operational requests of the University.

As a university dedicated to education and free speech, we have established guidelines that allow both of these essential activities to occur simultaneously. Individuals and groups wishing to demonstrate on our campuses may do so in areas designated for this purpose and must follow university guidelines, including prior approval, when required. Please [click](#) here to review our guidelines on demonstrations.

On Thursday morning, we learned that an unscheduled art and music festival would be taking place that afternoon near the DM building on the Modesto Maidique Campus. As the group started to assemble at 1:15 pm, Student Affairs staff and police advised them of the areas identified for such activities and the fact that amplified sound could not be used in an area that would disrupt classes. Seven times over the span of three hours, police advised the group of their options, which included moving the event to a nearby area, where classes and other university activities would not be disrupted. The group refused to move the event and they insisted on using amplifying equipment, despite repeated requests by police to disconnect the equipment given its proximity to classrooms where 39 classes with 1,325 enrolled students would be meeting that afternoon and evening (between 1:00 pm and 6:00 pm). When it became clear that the group was intent on continuing activities that would disrupt classes, the police notified the group that if they didn't leave in five minutes they would be arrested. After waiting for fifteen minutes, the police arrested seven individuals.

We look forward to working with our students and our community to continue to provide an environment where both free speech and high quality education exist and are respected.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Rosenberg', with a long, sweeping flourish extending upwards and to the right.

Mark B. Rosenberg  
President