

Physical growth a metaphor for hope

We live and work in a world of contrasts. Regrettably, dark weapons and grim acts of violence are drivers of discourse. Yet, at FIU, we believe it is important to keep hopes and dreams alive for so many from our community who desire to get their education and take, or create, a great job.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of FIU. Our hometown public university stands for the bright weapons of great teaching, learning, research, innovation, and creativity. We see ourselves as a force for good and a solutions center. Nothing is more important than putting our talent to work for all those in our community who want a better tomorrow for their families and neighbors.

The last five decades, the only real constants at our university have been change and growth for the benefit of our students and our community.

The last 10 years alone have seen the establishment of signature programs such as law and medicine and the dramatic escalation of our research enterprise, all the while graduating more and more sons and daughters of this community and providing 200,000 alumni a passport to success.

Just in the last few months we have inaugurated several new facilities. In October, the Academic Health Center 5 building came on line. It is now home to our Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work, among other programs.

This building includes state-of-the-art active learning classrooms that are enhancing the way we teach STEM courses. This allows students to take a hands-on approach to learning, which improves their chances at success in these challenging courses.

November, in partnership with Broward College, we inaugurated FIU@I-75, cementing our presence in Broward County. At FIU@I-75 we have master's and bachelor's programs from our colleges of business, engineering, education, and arts and sciences. We also offer certificate programs in community development as well as homeland security and emergency management.

In the last few weeks we inaugurated our new Management and New Growth Opportunities building, known as MANGO. MANGO is home to our School of Accounting and Department of Management and International Business, which are part of our College of Business.

The reach and impact of our College of Business also has been enhanced with the construction of MANGO. In MANGO, undergraduate advisers for the College of Business

work with about 6,000 students a year, keeping them on track to earning their university degrees in a timely manner and launching successful careers that will allow them to contribute to the prosperity of our community.

We have also dedicated more than 17,000 square feet within MANGO to our online programs. FIU Online is bringing a high quality education to students all over the world by meeting our students where they are – online – and providing a more flexible way to earn their degrees. More than 1,000 undergraduate students are currently pursuing their degrees completely online. Last year more than 28,000 students attended at least one FIU class online.

And there's more on the horizon!

FIU recently broke ground on our Student Academic Support Center. With its advanced technology and ample space, when this building opens it will allow us to serve our more than 54,000 students more efficiently.

We will streamline services such as admissions, financial aid and registration under one roof so that our students experience better customer service.

All of our students will benefit, including 64 percent of the student body who receive financial aid.

FIU's physical growth is a metaphor for the hope and opportunity that is our university.

That is why last fall we asked Miami-Dade voters to support FIU's expansion into county land adjacent to our Modesto Maidique Campus. Sixty-five percent of voters said yes to FIU. Yes to new jobs and educational opportunities. Yes to more research and support for entrepreneurship.

Even as we work with Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez, commissioners and their teams to operationalize the mandate voters gave us in November, we continue to look for opportunities, ways to increase revenues and grow the economic engine.

We have just announced a partnership with the Creative Class Group, headed by Richard Florida, to help harness the vast creative talent in our community to spur economic growth.

This past weekend the FIU Arena played host to the Miss Universe Pageant. This event produced more than \$150,000 in scholarship money for us, in addition to other revenues. It brought more than a hundred members of the international media to our campus and provided FIU valuable exposure in 190 countries.

Thank you for supporting FIU's growth because the success of FIU has been inextricably tied to the success of our community for the last 50 years. Here's to another 50 years of turning the impossible into the inevitable.

-MARK B. ROSENBERG

President, Florida International University