



Address at the FIU-FPL Solar Research System Dedication Ceremony

**Given by Mark B. Rosenberg
on April 27, 2016**



This speech was presented to the attendees of the FIU-FPL Solar Research System Dedication Ceremony held at the FIU Engineering Center on April 27, 2016.

Thank you for joining us this morning as we celebrate our groundbreaking research and collaboration with FPL.

We are proud of our longstanding partnership with FPL, which has had a positive impact on our students, our community and beyond.

One of the shining lights of our partnership is the FPL-FIU Student Partnership Program. This partnership gives our students the opportunity to work at an on-campus, FPL Customer Care Center. In 2010, we opened the 19-agent seat, on-campus Customer Care center in the MARC building on our Modesto Maidique campus. In 2014, the facility expanded to accommodate 33 students at a time. This year, FPL plans to hire 34 new students into the program.

Nearly 200 students have been hired since we started the call center; currently there are 44 Interns, 10 part-time employees and 26 full-time employees. FPL has provided extensive career and professional development opportunities to our students. The student employees are part of FPL's team of 475 FPL Customer Care Representatives, handling a total of 30,000 customer calls per day, system-wide.

Our students currently serve in several roles that include Customer Service Representatives, Account Supervisors, Information Systems, Quality Analysts, Customer Care Technicians, Instructors, Engineers and more. This is a win-win-win! Our students get to work on campus. We are helping to provide them with an incredible opportunity with a Fortune 200 company where they can gain skills they need for today's world of work. We are building a talent pipeline for FPL for future management positions.

There are more examples of how we have teamed up with FPL.

FIU Career Services has had a relationship with FPL since 1979. FPL has recruited our students for both permanent positions as well as internships.

The College of Engineering and Computing has had a relationship with FPL for over 3 decades. FPL executives have served on the Dean's Advisory Council, provided scholarships, in-kind donations, cash and energy certificates for land use and some research grants.

FPL has provided financial support to research and initiatives at FIU, dating back to 1987! Currently, FPL funds the research efforts of Dr. Arif Sarwat and Dr. Nezi Pala in Electrical and Computer Engineering.

That brings us to today.

We're happy to be joining forces with FPL again on this solar power facility. This demonstrates how we are partnering with other anchor institutions in our community to address critical issues for our region and beyond. The research our faculty and students conduct will pave a greener future for our Sunshine State.

We hope to soon expand our research partnership and look forward to even more collaboration in the future!