

MEMORANDUM

**TO:** University Community  
**FROM:** Mark B. Rosenberg, President  
**SUBJECT:** "The Time is Right"  
**DATE:** March 27, 2014

I write to you today with mixed emotions. Provost Wartzok has announced that he will be stepping down from office effective July 1, 2014. Below is the Provost's letter to me that he has chosen to title as "The Time is Right."

*Dear President Rosenberg:*

*In 2009, when you asked me to continue as Interim Provost, and, in 2010, when you appointed me Provost, I made it clear that should you wish for me to continue in the position, I would do so for up to five years. I made a similar commitment to my wife that the 18/7 work agenda would not exceed five years. Both those commitments intersect in 2014.*

*Fortunately, through the hard work of many faculty and staff, I am able to conclude my tenure as Provost on a very high note. In late 2013 FIU received the highest award for undergraduate education, the APLU MVP (Most Visible Progress) award for our outstanding improvement in six-year graduation rate and the major graduate education award from the Council of Graduate Schools, the ETS/CGS Award for Innovation in Promoting Success in Graduate Education. We are on track to achieve or exceed almost all the goals we established for the 2010-2015 Worlds Ahead Strategic Plan. On a personal note, I was just appointed to the Ocean Studies Board of the National Academies.*

*I have discussed with you that I would like to begin my sabbatical on 1 July 2014. After 42 years as a faculty member, this will be the first sabbatical I have taken and so I am looking forward to it.*

*When I visited Australia in 2012, I arranged for a sabbatical at Macquarie University in Sydney. Macquarie University is similar to FIU. Both are under 50 years old and are ranked among the best universities in the world under 50 years old (Macquarie #36; FIU #84). Both are recognized for their research and national and international engagement. I plan to focus on writing papers in the area of my research, marine mammals and marine policy, as well as learning comparative approaches to research and engagement in undergraduate and graduate education and international responses to the rapidly changing landscape of higher education.*

*I want to thank all members of the university community who make every day a delight to work for FIU. I have been incredibly fortunate to bookend my career at two of the most important universities in the country. The first decade plus was spent at Johns Hopkins University which was founded as the first true research university in America and for the past decade plus I have been at FIU which is the leading example of the future university in America. I hope to be back in a different, post-sabbatical role in 2015 for our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration.*

Time is our most precious commodity, and Doug's time at FIU has been well spent – as Dean of Graduate Studies, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and as our Provost. I am very grateful for his accomplishments throughout.

On one hand, we respect his wishes to take a break from the incessant demands of senior academic leadership. He has been an able and agile steward through profound swings in our operating context – numerous governance changes, significant financial shifts, and an aggressive institutional improvement agenda that has transformed our FIU. As Provost, he provided leadership through our presidential transition, has led us in developing a new strategic plan and growing our institution; he has helped to improve the quality of students, ushered in a new era of engagement, and maintained and enhanced our research even as federal funding has stagnated. During this same period, the quality of our institution has improved, and we are even more respected and appreciated locally, nationally and internationally.

On the other hand, we understand that he and his wife Susan, our very capable Head of Cataloging for FIU Libraries, want to spend more time together appreciating the rewards and satisfactions of two very successful careers, along with the peace and serenity that accompany this well-deserved sabbatical, the first-ever in Doug's long and accomplished career. We hope that their moments in Australia allow for time to enjoy that amazing country, while simultaneously offering the opportunity to reflect on careers dedicated to the life of the mind and making their communities better through their understated, but deep, humanity and decency.

I hope that you will share your gratitude with Doug and Sue for the gifts they leave us and for helping us to improve our institution. I never had doubts that Doug Wartzok would be a great provost. He has exceeded my expectations – so this message is shared with a sense of gratitude and appreciation for his dedication to our university and for his friendship. Please join me in thanking Doug and Sue for their investment in FIU!

I welcome suggestions and ideas that you might have for this transition to new academic and operational leadership for our FIU. I will be consulting with members of our community and welcome your suggestions directly to me at [mark.rosenberg@fiu.edu](mailto:mark.rosenberg@fiu.edu). Given the challenges and opportunities we face, we want to maintain our momentum. At the Town Hall on April 2, 2014 at 9:00 a.m. in the GC Ballrooms, I will make the announcement about the appointment of the Interim Provost.