

**MEMORANDUM**

September 3, 2013

Dear members of the FIU community:

We, all of us who are part of FIU, are at a vital crossroads for our university. Dramatically changing models for the funding of public education and increased expectations of students, employers, parents, legislators, donors, and other stakeholders necessitate a re-envisioning of higher education.

As part of our ongoing inquiry into FIU's evolving roles and responsibilities in this new environment, we are undertaking an initial study (**iREAL**) that will pave the way for the university's next strategic plan (2015-2020).

**What is iREAL?**

**FIU iREAL is integrating Research, Engagement, Assessment and Learning.** Across the country, universities are reevaluating fundamental issues such as:

- What is our role in educating students?
- How do we prepare students to be professionally and personally successful in a century that is likely to be defined by rapid and unpredictable change?
- What is the role of research in higher education?
- How will our graduates integrate research, coursework, and field experiences into skills that attract employers eager for adaptable, multi-disciplinary, life-long critical thinkers?
- How do we assess the success of our efforts?
- The FIU iREAL process seeks to investigate these issues and to chart a path that strengthens and enriches FIU's future.

**Context for FIU iREAL:**

**The future of FIU must also be seen within the context of major global changes.**

- Public research universities, including FIU, face profound challenges as state funding declines, technology transforms learning opportunities, and the expectations of state government, students, parents, and employers continue to change.

- Society needs graduates to be resilient and responsive learners who can integrate knowledge across disciplines.
- Miami, a vibrant, unique gateway to the Americas, is at the vanguard of many social, demographic, scientific, and environmental challenges that have national and global relevance.
- FIU is a trusted resource center for higher education. Our students and their families are counting on us to equip them with the skills, confidence, and agility needed for them to prosper.

**Now here's where you come into the picture.**

We need input from FIU faculty, students, staff, alumni, a spectrum of local, regional, national, and international employers, researchers, donors, and other stakeholders. We seek your guidance to craft a meaningful strategic path for FIU which builds on our areas of success.

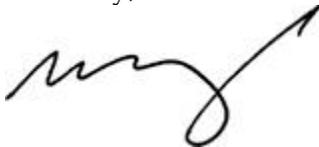
The structure of this process was outlined by the President in his May 2013 memo to all members of the FIU community ([Towards a New Strategic Plan](#)). In addition to the concept papers currently being collected (<http://commission.fiu.edu>), we are also soliciting opinions through a series of discussions in various formats, including the accompanying survey. Once the feedback is compiled, an initial white paper will be drafted to set the context for developing the next FIU strategic plan.

To help guide us in the development of this white paper, we ask you to complete the questionnaire referenced below by September 13<sup>th</sup>.

There is no right and wrong answer; this is the start of a discussion. The survey uses the following scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3=agree, 4= strongly agree. Indicate your level of agreement with each statement.

Please follow this link to the survey: [iREAL](#)

Sincerely,



Mark B. Rosenberg  
President