

MEMORANDUM

May 31, 2016

Dear members of the university community,

We have now completed 12 commencements in this Spring cycle. We just graduated nearly 5,000 students, and once we complete our August graduations, more than 13,000 in total for this academic year!

The joy of our commencements is uplifting. So many animated students, happy and relieved family members and friends, all in one place focused on the singular milestone accomplishment of their loved one with an FIU degree!

I have learned that every graduation ceremony takes on its own personality, and that every graduating student manages their respective emotions differently for their special moment. Because of this, there are many, many memorable interactions during graduation that are meaningful.

On the graduation stage in particular, I draw strength in believing that you are all up there with me, and from the happiness and emotional catharsis projected by each student who has entrusted their future to us projects. Their physical presence on that stage in front of 5,000 others gives witness to their belief in our hard-working faculty and staff – our institution.

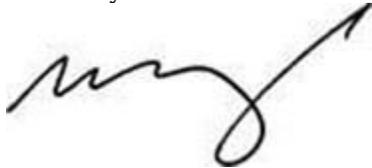
So it is in this context that I want to tell you about one such moment on the stage Wednesday afternoon May 11, 2016: in the midst of the stream of graduating students, a young lady leaned into me for the obligatory photo. Camera flash. It's done. Abruptly, she turns and says, "I want to take a picture with him too," pointing to the berobed and anxious gentleman up next. I thought perhaps her fiancé, a brother, a bestie? I asked, "What's up?" She then flashed an enormous smile: "He's my dad. He's graduating too!"

I will never forget this moment. It confirms and validates our work, it confirms and validates all that is good about FIU!

So I want to thank you, our faculty and staff, for making this happen. You may be one person in our large university, but your vocation and passion are making miracles happen for thousands of families, many of whom believe deeply in the American dream and just want a shot at a university education to enable their aspirations.

Thank you for another academic year filled with consequence, purpose, and impact. Now, on to the 16-17 academic year and the highest grade point average ever of any starting Fall Freshman class – 3.9. Classes this summer will enroll over 35,000 students and for Fall we are expecting over 56,000 students. All of these students share something in common – their quest for a purpose-filled life under your stewardship. This is priceless! Let's go!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark B. Rosenberg', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark B. Rosenberg
President