



Address to the Versailles Breakfast Club

**Given by Mark B. Rosenberg
on September 11, 2011**



The following speech was presented to the Versailles Breakfast Club on September 11, 2011 regarding critical issues that confronts education in America.

Good morning.

Like the day John Kennedy was shot, we all remember what we were doing on September 11, 2001. That day, any one of us any one of us could have been in the World Trade Towers, the Pentagon, or one of the four passenger airliners that were used as weapons. That day changed the face of the U.S., I believe, forever. That day must be remembered by all of us; its victims, then and now; its first responders, who were selfless; and of course all those who have tried to do the right thing since then as it relates to our national security.

Today, I have been asked to speak to some critical issues that confront us, focusing, of course, on education. Thank you to the Versailles Breakfast Club for inviting me to speak. I see a lot of friends here, so I feel right at home.

My theme is one of cautious optimism and fresh-eyed realism about the challenges ahead. I was asked why I wanted to become president of FIU in such a period of uncertainty. My response: I am not a business-as-usual guy, and this is not a business-as-usual era.

Let me sprint you though my reasoning. Let's look at context first. Context matters. It is difficult to speak about the future of education unless we can share the same ground on the broader context...

I. The New Normal

- *Significant changes in the global economy*
 - Means lower potential growth for the global economy overall – about 2%
- *Rise of the Rest*
 - BRICS – China and India
 - Countries with low labor costs+ low levels of consumer debt+large internal markets
 - China will have 21% of global consumption in 2020
 - US is now slipping in global consumption from 2007 when we were 30% to below China in 2020

- *Expect the unexpected*
 - Japanese meltdown is a harbinger of things to come
 - Earthquake in Washington
 - Infrastructure failures
 - Lack of will – no major agendas – building a transcontinental railroad, or a major Trans-Isthmian canal, or shooting for the moon, or ending cancer
 - Neil Ferguson – US cannot focus on much or for very long.

II. Noteworthy Trends

- Daniel Pink
 - He says that the future belongs not to the code writers, the lawyers, or accountants
 - Rather, it belongs to a different kind of a person with a different kind of mind: creators, and empathizers, pattern recognizers and meaning makers.
 - He says that “ we are moving from an economy and society built on the logical, linear, computer like capabilities of the information age to an economy and society built on the inventive, empathetic big picture capabilities of what is rising in its place – a conceptual age.”
 - In short, he believes that why right-brainers will rule the future.
- Ray Kurzweil
 - In his book, *The Singularity Is Near*, he writes about the integration of human and machine cognition – the seamless merger of man and machine
- Paul Colliers
 - The third major trend is the endurance of global poverty, and the best statement of this is found in his book, *The Bottom Billion*
 - It is an optimistic statement about transition out of poverty for billions around the world
 - Grinding challenges of inability of about one billion people to extract themselves.
- Final element – taking us directly to our topic – are the growing critiques of higher education
 - Most notable is the recent book by two academics – Hacker and Dreifus – *Higher Education?: How Colleges Are Wasting Our Money and Failing Our Kids---and What We Can Do About It*
 - In short, it states that we are not accountable; we are spending too much on little used research and too much on administration.

III. Education

What does all this mean for the traditional college education and youth of today? I want to share with you six propositions to answer your questions:

1. Out of 20 million students, only 3 million are traditional learners.
 - i. Expect the number of non-traditional students increase as a consequence of the rapidly churning economy.
2. Learning will become life-long.
 - i. Degrees will matter less beyond the bachelors degree; skills and competitiveness will matter more.
 - ii. Arne Duncan – questions values of masters degrees for teachers
3. U.S. will remain competitive in higher education because of diversity and pluralism.
 - i. Remain 80% public
 - ii. 20% private, not for profit
 - iii. For profit will continue to grow
 - iv. Major threat to Pell grants
4. Youth will stay in school longer even though pressure to offer three year degrees.
 - i. US will fall further behind in 24-35 range
5. High touch rather than high tech will determine which institutions prosper.
6. Brand value will continue to matter.
 - i. Emotions matter; emotion drives reason.

So in conclusion:

- New Normal
- Rise of the Rest
- Right brainers will predominate
- Integration of human and machine cognition
- Six implications
 - Non-traditional learners will grow
 - Learning will become lifelong
 - US will remain competitive in higher education
 - Youth will stay longer in school – particularly if unemployment continues
 - High touch rather than high tech will drive institutions of higher education
 - Brand value will become even more important