Dear FIU family,

Welcome to Fall 2016!

If this is your first semester with us, welcome to the FIU family! To our returning students, faculty and staff, we’re so glad to have you back!

Together, we’re beginning an exciting journey – a new academic year full of fresh focus and renewed energy. This year looks brighter than ever!

We’re expecting over 56,000 students, including 9,359 new freshmen and transfer students and more than 150 new faculty members. We’re also welcoming a freshman class with the highest average high school GPA in FIU history — 3.9!

Now, these are difficult times. The grim weapons of violence overshadow the bright weapons of ideas and hope. Exclusivity and divisiveness outshout collaboration and compromise. This summer, we faced far too many incidents of senseless violence.

Today, Zika continues to present serious public health concerns for our area. And, in our own community, gun violence is a plague that is cutting short many young lives.

Our FIU stands strong and undeterred. We embrace hope – it prompts our action, our vision and our commitment to building a better world. We refuse to throw up our hands in defeat. Instead, we roll up our sleeves and ask what we can do, how we can help.

FIU’s accomplishments are many and our impact has been huge. Before we get to work, I’d like to share some of our recent accomplishments, which go hand in hand with the ambitious goals of our FIUBeyondPossible2020 strategic plan and the performance funding metrics from our Florida Board of Governors, which oversees the State University System and has set high standards for FIU and other State University System institutions.

Performance Funding

FIU’s efforts to improve graduation rates and prepare students for high-paying 21st century careers will translate into $25 million in performance funds for the 2016-2017 year.
This is FIU’s latest award for excellence or improvement on the metrics put forward in 2014 by the Board of Governors. The Governor and Legislature codified the Board’s metrics into law in 2016 and directed $500 million toward the model, including a $225 million state investment that universities matched with $275 million.

Earning 76 out of 100 points, we made the most gains in areas that included the six-year graduation rate for first time in college students, academic progress rate and median wages for bachelor’s graduates working full-time in Florida.

The funds will go toward university initiatives that improve performance success for students, which include graduation and retention rates, as well as post-graduation success.

By 2020, we want to achieve a six-year graduation rate of 70 percent and to reach this goal, we’ve created new student support programs – investing in enhanced academic advising and in assisting students secure internships and jobs.

We are redesigning 17 gateway courses, infusing many of them with technology. One of the most promising initiatives is the Mastery Math Lab. It has resulted in a dramatic improvement in the pass rate of college algebra – a course which has traditionally challenged many students.
ComPASS

Recently, we started ComPASS (Communication Protocol for Accountability and Strategic Support), which allows our university leaders to examine and use data to make decisions around outcomes that impact the critical performance goals detailed in our FIUBeyondPossible2020 strategic plan.

We’re always working to improve, because we know every year there is a new round of funding and rankings. Our work is never done, but we take strength in this. It makes us more determined. So, let’s continue working together to build a world-class university!

Student success – timely graduation and skills for the workplace

Our success as an institution depends on our success in making sure our students graduate in a timely fashion, earn internships, and within a year of graduation are either building on their skills in graduate school or in the workplace.

This message begins with our freshmen. Today, we officially welcomed the class of 2020 at Freshman Convocation.

As I told them – every FIU student has the ability to succeed! That’s because we foster a culture of success and provide the resources that our students require to excel and to graduate on time - by taking 30 credit hours a year.

We also have caring and conscientious advisors who help our students navigate their educational path and achieve their career goals, as well as internship and career opportunities that are second to none.

This is our message to our students: 30 credit hours a year, four years, find an advisor, take advantage of internship opportunities and you will be in the best position to earn a job upon graduation.

Worlds Ahead Graduates

Let me tell you about some of our recent summer graduates and the great things they are doing:

During every commencement ceremony, a group of inspiring, standout students are recognized as Worlds Ahead graduates.
Orestes Mirabal and Staff Sergeants Charmaine and Jean Fortune

- **Orestes Mirabal** is one of these outstanding grads. He grew up in a household where domestic abuse, violence and illegal activities were all too common. After dropping out of high school, Orestes joined a gang. His determination to lead a meaningful life, and a combination of mentoring and education, changed the course of his life. Orestes earned his GED, got married, and has worked at UPS for over 15 years. He has established a non-profit mentoring organization designed to help low-income Miami-Dade youths get into college. Orestes received his MBA – and is proof that anyone can turn their life around and become an inspiration to others.

- **Staff Sergeants Charmaine and Jean Fortune** met at the Robins Air Force Base in Georgia, got married and pursued a shared dream of becoming nurses. As a teenager in the Philippines, Charmaine cared for her terminally ill grandmother. This experience inspired her to pursue a career in nursing, so she enlisted in the U.S. Air Force to pursue a health care career. While juggling full-time jobs as military medics, they were also full-time pre-nursing students. Excelling in their studies, they joined FIU’s [Medic to Nurse program](https://www.fiu.edu/medic-to-nurse/). Charmaine and Jean will both be stationed at Fort Sam Houston Joint Base as 2nd Lt. Air Force nurses. Read more of their story [here](#).
This fall, you will notice a new building on campus – the Student Academic Success Center.

Student success is in the name and it is also at the heart of this building. Located near GC and the Gold garage, it houses all of our student-focused offices and departments.

It also features classrooms and a 733-seat large lecture hall – the largest at FIU.

**Impact**

Respect for our FIU is growing. Let’s use these recognitions to propel us forward – and take us to number one!

**Carnegie Research designation**

In the newest edition of the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education FIU moved into the top tier of research universities – R1: Doctoral Universities – Highest Research Activity.
Joining the top Carnegie category for research universities is one of the goals of the \textit{FIUBeyondPossible2020 strategic plan}. This distinction helps FIU recruit faculty who are at the top of their fields and top students from around the nation and world.

**Workplace recognitions**

This year, FIU received two workplace recognitions!

In March, FIU made \textit{Forbes “America’s Best Employers”} list and was named the second best Florida employer after Publix.

Recently, \textit{The Chronicle of Higher Education} recognized FIU as one of the nation’s \textit{“Great Colleges to Work For”} in its annual report on The Academic Workplace. FIU also made the Honor Roll, which recognizes stand-out institutions for creating exceptional work environments.

Like our Carnegie designation, these recognitions help us recruit top-notch, diverse faculty and staff who will propel FIU forward and help us make an impact.

**Advancing access to higher education**

\textit{The Department of Education} recognized FIU as one of the top institutions in the nation for incorporating strategies to increase college access for lower income students. This is an important recognition for us – because 58 percent of our enrolled students are Pell Grant recipients.
Fulbright Scholars

The U.S. State Department recognized FIU as a top producer of Fulbright U.S. Scholars for 2015-16. We’re one of 16 research universities with the most faculty and administrators who are Fulbright Scholars!

Our faculty are putting the ‘I’ in FIU. Six scholars or administrators from FIU were awarded Fulbright grants for 2015-16 to travel abroad and share their expertise.

STEM and Research

FIU is a leader in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education and research. We’re always working to provide solutions to this community’s most pressing problems. Here is how we’re tackling everything from prevalent health issues to the economic health of Miami, shark conservation, and more!

Engineering expansion

In April, we unveiled plans for the future of FIU: a new 225,000 square-foot, LEED Certified Gold engineering building that would be located just south of the Modesto A. Maidique Campus in land currently occupied by the Miami-Dade County Fair and Exposition.

The expansion is a win-win-win. It’s about uplifting our community.
It would mean the graduation of an additional 350 engineers each year and the creation of 550 jobs in South Florida. The additional space would also increase research expenditures by $30 million annually and allow for the submission of 27 additional patent applications.

NIH

The National Institutes of Health’s National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities awarded FIU a $9.5 million endowment over 5 years, which will establish a preeminent program of research.

Led by co-principal investigators Mario De La Rosa and Andrés Gil, the goal of the FIU-HDI is to prevent and more effectively treat chronic diseases, such as diabetes, substance abuse and HIV/AIDS, which are prevalent in South Florida and the Caribbean.

Researching the economic health of Miami

FIU understands “prosperity” is about overall community well-being, opportunity and mobility. In response to the growing disparity in income and prosperity in Miami-Dade County, FIU’s Metropolitan Center and Citi Community Development launched a “Prosperity Agenda for Miami-Dade.”
A roadmap for how we can improve the economic landscape for businesses and families, the plan identifies strategies to improve economic opportunity and self-sufficiency. The two-year pilot program is expected to impact as many as 2,300 low-income families.

The FIU-Miami Creative City Initiative also recently released a report showing that Miami is a city on the rise. It included a detailed, data-driven analysis of Miami’s economy and talent base, and unveiled key areas of opportunity for building a greater economy. This data will allow Miami to help retain talent, advance opportunities, foster further entrepreneurship and innovation, and also create a new narrative for our changing economic landscape.

Shark conservation efforts

Our FIU researchers are moving the needle in conservation efforts through the largest-ever attempt to survey the world’s shark populations.

The lack of comprehensive and up-to-date data on species abundance and distribution is hindering efforts to protect and replenish these ecologically important marine animals. The survey project, dubbed Global FinPrint, is focusing on coral reef habitats worldwide.

Researchers have reached their first 100 reefs, collecting exciting footage along the way. Deploying baited remote underwater video (BRUV) equipment, researchers are catching the ocean’s top predators, including sharks and rays, on camera in their natural habitats.
So far, the researchers have experienced a few surprises. In some regions of the world, they are seeing more sharks and rays than ever expected, leading the researchers to start a friendly competition on Twitter — #BRUVbattle — for the most sharks in a single screen grab. Currently, FIU researchers hold the record with 16 sharks in one frame.

**Nationally recognized ADHD research**

FIU researchers have determined behavioral therapy — when used first — is more effective in treating children with ADHD than medication.

These findings gained national attention when *The New York Times* published a story about the benefits of early behavior therapy, highlighting two research studies by our faculty.

One study led by [Dr. William E. Pelham Jr.](#), a pioneer in the field of ADHD research and treatment and director of [FIU’s Center for Children and Families](#), looked at the sequence of treatments — implementing behavior first compared to medication.

![Dr. William E. Pelham Jr. at the Center for Children and Families’ Summer Treatment Program.](image-url)
The second study addresses the cost-effectiveness of behavioral interventions as first-line treatment for ADHD. Led by health economics expert Tim F. Page in the Robert Stempel College of Public Health & Social Work and co-authored by Pelham, this study compared the costs of the different treatment sequences, evaluating the cost of medication as well as the time invested by parents and doctors.

Wall of Wind

**IMAX recently visited FIU!** They’re working on a film on hurricanes, and will be showcasing FIU’s Wall of Wind’s engineering researchers and the important work they do to ensure buildings and other structures are built to withstand hurricanes and keep the people who live in them safe. The Wall of Wind also was recently featured in Science magazine.

Community/Solutions Center

FIU never turns its back on our community. For the past several months, we have worked hard to form new partnerships, strengthen and grow old ones, and find innovative ways to better Miami – and beyond.

FPL and FIU’s solar research partnership

*FIU and FPL celebrate the new solar research facility at the College of Engineering and Computing*
Our longstanding partnership with FPL continued with the unveiling of a new solar research facility at the College of Engineering and Computing. Made up of 4,400 solar panels, it will provide clean electricity and shade to about 400 parking spaces.

This opportunity also opens up countless research possibilities. Engineering faculty and students from the Energy, Power & Sustainability (EPS) program will be using the installation to conduct important research that will help advance solar energy in the state.

**FIU FAST**

Crisis and disaster situations are all too common. Many times, everyday citizens are the first to respond and lend a helping hand.

But here is some good news! The FIU-Florida Advanced Surgical Transport (FIU-FAST) team is trained, ready and equipped to treat and evacuate critical care patients right here in our area!

This all-volunteer team officially joined the FIU family through a partnership with the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine and FIU’s Department of Emergency Management. The only civilian team of its kind in the nation, they’re made up of highly trained medical professionals and support personnel.

**Education Effect expands**

FIU remains committed to providing access to higher educational opportunities for every child in our community.
Recently, Rose Ellen Greene, a longtime volunteer at Jesse J. McCrary Jr. Elementary School, donated $2 million to help The Education Effect expand in Little Haiti.

This marks the first time the program will be implemented at an elementary school. It will also incorporate researchers, faculty and staff from FIU’s Center for Children and Families.

The program has had a positive impact at Miami Northwestern and Booker T. Washington – supporting both high schools in achieving a “B” grade from the state, while also raising graduation rates.

**Startup FIU**

Innovation and entrepreneurship is at the core of what we do at FIU. We want our students to be able to find good jobs – and create jobs. Our community needed a place to bring their ideas and then launch their ventures.

That’s where **StartUP FIU** comes in.

This new initiative is aimed at enabling the creation of new startups, the acceleration of early-stage startups, as well as development and commercialization of new, ground-breaking technologies.

Additionally, the initiative will leverage FIU’s many existing entrepreneurship resources including the Small Business Development Center, Pino Entrepreneurship Center, AshokaU, Tech Station, and Miami Beach Urban Studios.
InCubando

Last summer, the U.S. renewed diplomatic relations with Cuba.

And now – only a year later – FIU welcomed a group of young entrepreneurs from Cuba, as a part of InCubando@FIU, a program designed to boost independent business and innovation on the island.

For six weeks, the participants took basic business and intensive English classes. They also had an opportunity to spend time with local business leaders who served as mentors during their time in Miami.
Police De-escalation Trainings

Police and community relations are a topic of national importance.

That is why FIU’s College of Communication, Architecture + The Arts teamed up with the Miami-Dade Police Department. They coordinated a series of dialogues between high school students and police officers, aimed at de-escalating tensions and promoting positive relationships. The dialogues covered topics such as cultural diversity, establishing common ground, and police involvement in the community.

The City of Miami also partnered with FIU to organize “Cultural Diversity and Conflict De-escalation Training” workshops, designed to build cultural awareness and also provide tools for de-escalation, so that officers can better communicate with the diverse communities they serve.

Zika

When South Florida became the first place in the U.S. to report locally transmitted Zika cases, the eyes of the nation turned to our area and found several FIU experts with deep knowledge and a willingness to help the community navigate the Zika outbreak.
Dr. Aileen M. Marty, who is a world-renowned expert in infectious diseases, has been at the forefront of the local response. She led teams of Florida Department of Health officials, along with other members of the Medical Reserve Corps and volunteer medical students, going door-to-door in Wynwood and other neighborhoods in Miami to test residents for the Zika virus.

FIU biologist Matthew DeGennaro studies mosquitoes, the world’s deadliest animal and the carrier of Zika. He is the first scientist in the world to create a mutant mosquito, a feat that has enabled him to study mosquito behavior. He hopes his work in understanding why mosquitoes prefer humans will lead to better repellents. DeGennaro conducts his research as part of the Biomolecular Sciences Institute in the College of Arts, Sciences & Education.

In February, FIU also hosted “Zika Watch: What South Florida Needs to Know.” Panelists discussed the biology of mosquitoes, transmission of Zika, trends in mosquito-borne illness, medical implications, travel concerns and more. If you missed it, click here!

At FIU, we take the threat posed by Zika seriously. FIU colleges, schools and units across the university have been proactive about raising awareness and preventing Zika infections.

Students with concerns about Zika may contact FIU Student Health Services at 305-348-2401. Faculty, staff and other members of the community, may contact FIU Health at 305-348-3627 (DOCS).

For additional information and resources, please visit the CDC’s Zika Homepage the Florida Department of Health Zika Homepage or the FIU Emergency Management page.
First lady Michelle Obama has worn his dresses. Now, Narciso Rodriguez’s designs are coming to FIU.

The Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum will present Narciso Rodriguez: An Exercise in Minimalism from Sunday, October 9, 2016 through Sunday, January 8, 2017 – headlining the Museum’s lineup of stellar exhibitions for Art Basel season this year.

This is the first solo museum exhibition of his work. The debut couture exhibition at the museum will feature designs by the Cuban-American fashion star, plus never-before-seen archival materials, original sketches, video, and works of art selected by Rodriguez to showcase the influence of the visual arts on his fashions.
• On the heels of renewed diplomatic relations and travel between the United States and Cuba, The Wolfsonian–FIU just wrapped up the summer exhibition Promising Paradise: Cuban Allure, American Seduction. It explored images of pre-Revolution Cuba and its influence on American culture, from rumba and cha-cha-cha to Afro-Cuban jazz, cigars, and Latin nightclubs. Many of the works, featuring the talent of such famous Cuban tastemakers as Olga Guillot, Celia Cruz, and Miguelito Valdés, were on public display for the first time in the U.S.

• Now, leading up to Election Day, The Wolfsonian–FIU is presenting three months of election-themed programming. Thoughts on Democracy: Freedom to Vote 2016 is a collaboration with contemporary designers to create a graphic response to the 2016 presidential race, while The Politics of -Isms takes a look back at the historical context of contentious terms like socialism, communism, and fascism. For a full list of upcoming exhibitions, please click here.

Experts

Brexit

This summer, after the United Kingdom’s vote to leave the European Union (EU), FIU brought together a panel of experts for a Brexit teach-in to address the possible implications for the U.K., our global economy and international relations.
Election
As we prepare for this year’s political season, FIU’s Green School also hosted a teach-in on presidential politics and the convention process to shed light on this year’s historic presidential election, as well as the Democratic and Republican national conventions.

Next Horizon
FIU in the nation’s capital

FIU has a new center in the nation’s capital!

FIU in DC aims to provide a competitive advantage for our students, faculty and alumni, greater access to thought leaders, as well learning and research experiences. It will also catalyze opportunities for FIU and amplify our advocacy and voice in the national dialogue. Our presence is critical to forming federal, corporate and international partnerships.

We invite you to visit - to use the co-working spaces, host a conference, attend a lecture, and more! Our staff would be interested to learn of any interest to offer academic programs in the metro D.C. region.

For more information or to support FIU in DC, visit http://washingtondc.fiu.edu.
Bayview Student Housing

There is also something new on our Biscayne Bay Campus – Bayview!

This new nine-story state-of-the-art apartment complex overlooks Biscayne Bay and is just steps away from the Wolfe University Center. For more information, visit http://www.bayviewfiu.com.

Building Bridges

This is our bridge to the future and a symbol of our commitment to collaborative regional transportation and economic development solutions.
Earlier this year, FIU and the City of Sweetwater moved the first rock for our pedestrian bridge that will link Sweetwater to the northern entrance of FIU over Southwest 8th Street.

Also known as the University City Prosperity Project, the bridge is a major step toward creating a connected innovation district by clustering our anchor institutions, companies and start-ups near multi-modal transportation options.

Construction is scheduled to start soon and will be completed by June 2018.

**What’s next?**

FIU never slows down. We never stop.

There is no better example of this than our summer commencement, where 3,800 FIU students graduated during seven ceremonies!

"Be strong, be flexible, love yourself, love others and keep moving forward."
There is no more touching, poignant reminder of the importance of what we’re here to do, of our mission. All of the smiling faces of our graduates and their families confirms our work.

We’re building futures. We’re making an impact. Thank you for joining us on this journey.

Every fall we welcome back our students with an energetic video. This year, the tables have turned. One of our students created a song to welcome back his fellow students. Reggie Baril (ToBy) is a theater major and he made this song with his band, KUDA.

We encourage our students to make the most of their time at FIU while they make a plan to graduate in four years, but we also know it's important for our students to enjoy their experience as they work hard toward their academic goals.

Welcome to fall!

Let’s go!

Sincerely,

Mark B. Rosenberg
President