

MEMORANDUM

August 24, 2015

Dear FIU Family:

Here we are—ready to go into the new academic year full of optimism about what lies ahead. The Roman philosopher Marcus Tullius Cicero wrote that, “The beginnings of all things are small.” But for our academic community, the only thing bigger than the first week of the new fall semester, is graduation day for our students.

Fall at FIU is a very special time. Our campuses come to life as parking lots and garages are jammed, students hurry to classes and our Graham and Wolfe University Centers fill with music, laughter, and the fellowship of a community reunited in a common purpose. Renewal is in the air. There is so much to look forward to.

This year we are welcoming nearly 9,000 new freshman and transfer students and more than 200 new faculty members. You can easily identify them around campus. They are our new residents who may look slightly disoriented or lost in the tumult that is our beginning. If you see them, ask them if they need some assistance—an understanding gesture and warm smile can go a long way to send the message that we are a special caring community and that we get it!

In true Panther fashion we are continuing our tradition of kicking off the academic year with a video that embodies and represents our FIU spirit. Here is your official welcome to fall:



2015 is a very special year for our FIU because we had another beginning just 50 years ago, when our FIU was chartered.

On June 22, 1965, Florida Governor W. Haydon Burns signed Senate Bill 711, introduced by Senator Robert M. Haverfield, paving the way for the creation of our FIU.



Since our first president, [Charles E. Perry](#), arrived on an abandoned airfield, FIU has spread its wings and taken off.

From our opening day enrollment of less than 6,000 students our Panther family has grown to more than 55,000 students and more than 200,000 alumni strong. We have prepared generations of students not only to take good jobs but to create good jobs; we have grown into an anchor institution and are a beacon of hope for our community and beyond.

Performance Funding

Higher education is in the midst of a profound transformation. Every facet of education – what is delivered, how it is delivered, to whom and at what cost – is under scrutiny and impacting change within and throughout every university. This has opened up unprecedented opportunities for universities to rethink how best to educate the next generation of leaders.

Florida’s public university system, like in other states around the country, operates under a Performance Funding Model, marking a definitive move toward increased accountability and efficiency.

This new approach to funding is output based. The Board of Governors (BOG) [Performance Funding Model](#) has nine metrics on undergraduate student success outcomes and one metric on percentage of graduate degrees in areas of strategic emphasis. Universities are ranked and can potentially receive (or lose) funding based on their score using the BOG model.



I am happy to report that in the latest round of performance based funding results, FIU tied for third among the other SUS institutions, earning 39 of a maximum of 50 points. FIU made particular gains in both the number of bachelor's graduates employed full-time or continuing their education (up 5 percent) and increasing the percentage of students who enter their second year with a 2.0 GPA or higher (up 4 percent).

But every year, there are new rankings and fresh funding based upon the performance of the previous year. We cannot rest on our laurels because we expect continuous improvement and funding is driven by how well we do in this improvement! That means that we must take ever-more seriously the delivery of our product and the progress of our students!

Preparing Students for the World of Work

To be competitive in this state, and to do right by our students, we are committed now more than ever to building a strong culture of student success here at FIU. We believe that every one of our students is poised for greatness, and that their victories are our community's victories.

And that starts with making sure that our students find meaningful employment upon their graduation.

We love the fact that our FIU graduates command higher salaries than graduates of any other university in the State University System! And they are employed or attending graduate school at higher rates as well.

We are giving our students the skills they need:

- Ten of our students that participated in the Miami-Dade County [Mayor's Executive Internship Program](#), under the direction of a Deputy Mayor or a Department Chair are now with working with the county thanks to the program. The partnership offers juniors and seniors the opportunity to meet the County's leadership and get a first-hand look at County government. Learn more about the program here:



- [Rebecca Desir](#), a graduate from our [Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work](#), is starting her dream job as a health promotions manager with the American Lung Association. She says the guidance and support our faculty and staff gave her were essential to her success!
- Recently the Florida Department of Transportation recognized FIU for providing the greatest number of students of any university for their summer internship program.
- Our Spring Career Fair hosted 320 recruiters from 132 companies who were vying for FIU talent! 1,485 FIU students and alumni attended the event, and 45 interviews took place in the Career Services Office the following day. Be on the lookout for the career fair this upcoming semester!
- This year, a record 60 students held competitive internships in our nation's capital, half of which were thanks in part to our partnership with The Washington Center and the State of Florida. Like our local interns, these students

are destined for greater responsibility and opportunities upon their return to South Florida.

Impact

Our FIU continues to receive national recognition and accolades. Here are some highlights from the past year:

- FIU is the top university in the continental U.S. in graduating Hispanics with bachelor's and master's degrees in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), according to [Excelencia in Education](#). In fact, we award more bachelor's and master's degrees to Hispanics than any other institution.
- Three programs, Nursing, Engineering and Journalism and Mass Communication renewed their full national accreditation this year.
- FIU was named one of "[America's Best Employers](#)" by Forbes. FIU is ranked third among the 19 Florida-based employers recognized, and ninth in the education category. On the overall list of 500 employers, FIU is ranked 64th.
- Our Model United Nations team is the highest ranked team from a public university, continues to be the highest ranked team in Florida and is ranked number four in the nation.
- Our College of Business is widely recognized for its quality and impact. Recently U.S. News & World Report placed the College of Business at No. 15 among the top business schools for the International MBA in its 2016 edition of the Best Graduate Schools. The College of Business' Online Corporate MBA program also was ranked No. 14 in the Financial Times 2015 edition of the Online MBA Rankings.

Metro U

We are also partnering with other Florida universities to help more students graduate from college while boosting economic development across our state.

Along with the [University of Central Florida](#) and the [University of South Florida](#) we have created the [Florida Consortium of Metropolitan Research Universities](#) (Metro U), which aims to produce more career-ready graduates with lower debt, better training and adaptable skill sets.

Combined, our universities currently enroll about 162,000 students, which is 47 percent of the enrollment of the 12 institutions of the SUS. We serve 63 percent of the state's population – including 70 percent of the minority population, and 25 percent of the state's first-generation students.

Our FIU is also deeply involved locally. We see ourselves as a force for good.

For the South Florida economy to continue to grow and thrive, talented and highly skilled college and university graduates must be able to find the quality, high-paying jobs they desire.

To retain the region's "intellectual capital," we have teamed up with local academic and economic development institutions to provide students with meaningful work experience in key, targeted industries.

Talent Development Network

The [Talent Development Network](#) (TDN) is based on the Beacon Council's [One Community One Goal](#) Targeted Industry Strategic Plan and focuses on creating paid internship opportunities for high school and college students.

Here's a video on the work we're doing with TDN:



We know small businesses that learn to compete effectively and globally pay better wages and are better equipped to deal with the rapidly changing marketplace.

FIU has partnered with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to create a Small Business Development Center, housed at FIU Downtown on Brickell.

The [Florida SBDC at FIU](#) team has assisted more than 900 entrepreneurs and small-business owners, has helped launch more than 21 companies, and given local businesses access to more than \$8.6 million in capital.

The SBDC at FIU also has helped create or retain more than 200 jobs.

FIU as a Solutions Center

At FIU we are helping build our community, and finding solutions to our community's most pressing issues. The work we do has an impact and makes a difference.

Let me share some of our recent initiatives:

- On the morning of April 1, 2011, FIU Law student [Dannette Willory](#) was shot and killed by her longtime boyfriend. He then turned the gun on himself. That tragic moment put Dannette among a growing number of women who have experienced physical violence by an intimate partner.

In her memory, our [FIU Law Clinic Program](#) and the Liberty City Advocates (LCA), a legal services organization, recently launched a clinic to give victims of domestic violence access to justice, education and empowerment through free counseling, legal consultation and representation.



Dannette Willory

- We are leading the way in helping mitigate and develop technology in order to better prepare our South Florida communities for extreme weather events.

Recently, our International Hurricane Research Center (IHRC) in partnership with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Hurricane Center (NHC), launched a [new Spanish language website](#).

Hosted by FIU, the website includes information on hurricane science, residential mitigation strategies, preparedness and descriptions of NHC information products, including tropical cyclone advisories. The goal of the website is to help the Spanish-speaking community be better educated, informed and prepared for hurricanes, including safe-guarding their families, homes and businesses.

- [FIU Researchers](#) are also part of a National Science Foundation (NSF) funded network to support the development of infrastructure that can survive hurricanes and other extreme weather events.

Sea Level Rise Solutions Center

South Florida ranks as one of the world's one of the most vulnerable urban region in terms of assets exposed to the effects of sea level rise.

This is why FIU has launched the Sea Level Solutions Center to help people understand, adapt and persevere.

The center combines expertise in the natural, physical and social sciences, along with architecture, engineering, computer sciences, law, communications, business, health and tourism management to develop long-term strategies in the face of rising seas. Without question, FIU's Miami location will be key in advancing the center's mission.

Here is some of the work they have already done:

- Our [School of Journalism and Mass Communication](#) (SJMC) in conjunction with the [Geographic Information Systems](#) (GIS) Center has developed a web app, known as the [Sea Level Rise Toolbox](#), which helps Miami-Dade residents visualize the possible impact of rising seas in South Florida on their neighborhoods.
- In addition, the Coral Gables Museum featured an exhibit on sea level rise put together by FIU students and faculty. A major feature is a 3-dimensional map of Miami-Dade County that lights up to show which areas of the county will be flooded at 2 feet, 4 feet and 6 feet of sea level rise. South Florida's topography is primarily low and flat, this could put nearly two-thirds of Miami-Dade County under water in 2100
- Video production students at SJMC filmed and produced a documentary titled South Florida's Rising Seas: Impact, which premiered on [WPBT2](#). The documentary is a compilation of stories about South Florida's future environmental challenges related to sea level rise. You can watch the documentary here:



- The [White House's Council on Environmental Quality](#) named FIU as the host for its first Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) seminar on developing locally relevant exercises supporting community resilience to climate change. The seminar will focus on climate adaptation, preparedness and resilience.
- FIU's leading environmental researchers, including Evelyn Gaiser, executive director of the School of the Environment, Arts and Society and director of the Florida Coastal Everglades Long Term Ecological Research (FCE LTER) program, met with White House officials in April to advocate for greater interagency coordination with South Florida research and adaptation partners on the emerging threat of rising tides. Much of FIU's work in the Everglades is based on research conducted within the FCE LTER, which studies how hydrology, climate and human activities interact with ecosystem and population dynamics in the Everglades.
- [Earth and Environment](#) professor René Price, along with a team of international researchers, completed a study based on historical data that identifies the timings at which accelerations might first be recognized. Their results show that by 2020 to 2030, scientists could have some statistical certainty of what the sea level rise situation will look like in 2100. According to Price, that means policy makers will know what to expect and have 70 years to plan.

More Worlds Ahead Research

- Our [FIU researchers are moving the needle in conservation efforts](#) and embarking on the largest-ever attempt to survey the world's shark populations.

Predators are disappearing from the oceans in alarming numbers with nearly a quarter of shark, ray and skate species threatened with extinction. 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.



By deploying baited underwater video equipment, researchers hope to catch the ocean's top predators on camera in their natural habitats. More than 400 reef locations will be surveyed during the three-year project dubbed Global FinPrint.

- FIU is also [helping to save our guacamole.](#)

Redbay ambrosia beetles are on the move in Florida and are a major concern for the state's multimillion dollar avocado industry. FIU researchers are using a combination of drones and dogs to stop a deadly fungus spread by these invasive pests.



Detection is a major challenge. Diseased trees can begin to wilt within two weeks, and by the time symptoms are visible, the fungus has likely spread to nearby trees via root grafting. This is a particular problem in commercial groves, where trees are planted close together.

As part of an FIU research program, three specially trained canines were recently deployed in a grove where the beetles were suspected. The dogs were able to identify infected trees, though the trees were not yet showing symptoms.

- According to FIU researchers, [South Florida's butterflies](#) have become the unintended victim of insecticide control.

A five-year study by scientists in the FIU Ecotoxicology and Risk Assessment Lab has found that exposure to naled, permethrin and dichlorvos – insecticides sprayed locally for mosquito control – are acutely toxic to butterflies.

The FIU researchers studied the abundance and diversity of butterfly populations, and found that butterflies were most directly affected by insecticides sprayed in the air and on the ground, but they were also significantly exposed to the chemicals by eating contaminated plant leaves as caterpillars.



Our research really has an impact.

As a result of our work, Miami-Dade and Monroe counties [have increased boundaries around endangered butterfly habitats](#), changing how they spray.

Developing Africa's Next Generation of Leaders

For the [second year in a row](#), FIU was the only university in Florida to host a select group of emerging leaders from Sub-Saharan Africa. The group came to FIU over the summer as part of President Obama's Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders and lived at our university, where they participated in a public management curriculum. Their work at FIU will ultimately help them advance the community-focused work they do through governmental offices, ministries and non-governmental organizations.



For the first time this year, the fellows were also connected with peer collaborators — young leaders in Miami that have been identified through various sources, including a collaboration between FIU and The Miami Foundation.

Cuba

The U.S. government recently re-established diplomatic relations with Cuba. This action, together with the removal of Cuba from the State Department's list of countries that sponsor terrorism, removes the prior limitations on FIU and other public universities in Florida to use university dollars to travel to Cuba.

The Office of Faculty and Global Affairs, shared more on this development and its implications for faculty engagement with colleagues on the island; research and educational programming; and study abroad trips, [in a recent memo](#).

Partnerships

- [FIU and Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd.](#) (RCL) recently unveiled a 130,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art rehearsal and production studio and announced details of a new partnership.



The Royal@FIU World Stage Collaborative will create new opportunities for students in FIU's Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism Management and the College of Architecture and the Arts (CARTA). These include paid internships, custom curricula and behind-the-scenes access to Royal Caribbean's experts and facilities.

- We are also [joining forces with Florida Power & Light Company \(FPL\)](#) on a new partnership to build a commercial-scale distributed solar power facility that will both generate electricity for FPL's 4.8 million customers and serve as an innovative research operation.

The project involves the installation of more than 5,700 solar panels on 23 canopy-like structures that will be built this summer in the parking lot of the university's Engineering Center.



Using data from the 1.6-megawatt solar array, faculty and students from FIU's College of Engineering and Computing will study the effects of distributed solar photovoltaic (PV) generation on the electric grid in real-life South Florida conditions.

- 2015 marks the [four-year anniversary of our partnership](#) with Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) at Miami Northwestern High School (MNW). Funded by grants from the JPMorgan Chase Foundation, over the past four years FIU's Education Effect has worked in collaboration with M-DCPS – as well as parents, teachers, administrators and the community – and supported the school's efforts to boost student achievement, promote 100 percent graduation and ensure that students are college and career ready.

By all measures, the partnership has been a success.

The school has gone from a historic D/F grade to an A or B ranking. Ten percent more students are going on to post-secondary education – and they are receiving millions of dollars in scholarships to get there. This year's 345 graduates received more than 400 acceptance letters for college. Combined, they have earned nearly \$5 million in scholarships to continue their education. The number of MNW students enrolled at FIU has climbed as well – from 17 in 2010 to 58 last year.



Based on this success, last year FIU secured \$1 million from the Lennar Foundation to expand The Education Effect to a second school, Booker T. Washington Senior High School in Overtown.

- And we continue to collaborate on even more projects.

The Nicole Wertheim College of Nursing & Health Sciences (NWCNHS) [recently received a \\$1.45 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#), Health Resources and Services Administration to fund a school-based, primary health care clinic at Miami Northwestern Senior High School in Liberty City.



Scheduled to open in November 2015, the clinic will serve as a health care “hub” for children and families in Liberty City, an area affected by high rates of acute and chronic health conditions, including obesity, diabetes, HIV/ AIDS, teen pregnancy and infant mortality.

Looking forward

We have come this far thanks to hard-working students, world-class faculty, dedicated staff, successful and steadfast alumni and the support of our donors and community. All of them are telling and living the FIU story, helping us to truly become one of the world’s great universities.

This is still only the beginning.

The [FIUBeyondPossible2020 Strategic plan](#) is our bold blueprint for building a world class university for the 21st century.

We are preparing our students to graduate in a timely manner so that they can launch successful careers. We will build on the unique programs that have enhanced the FIU brand throughout the world. We will reach the next level in research and creative activity. We will make FIU a leading urban public research university.

This is our Next Horizon

Just a few weeks ago, we held our summer commencement in which a record 3,620 students graduated. Throughout the six ceremonies inspirational stories of love, perseverance and determination were heard through the corridors of our arena.

Looking back on that day, I saw a picture that caught my eye. A graduation cap that read "Be the Change."



Taken from the popular saying, "Be the change that you wish to see in the world," this simple phrase has so much meaning. Lead the way, inspire others. This embodies the values that represent our FIU!

FIU is blazing a trail. We are taking responsibility. We are making an impact. I am proud to be part of such a great institution and excited for what's to come.

Now we get a chance to begin again. This is big....

Let's Go!

Sincerely yours,

Handwritten signature of Mark B. Rosenberg.

Mark B. Rosenberg
President