



"Yes We Can"
Address to the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce

**Given by Mark B. Rosenberg
on August 5, 2009**



This speech was presented to members of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce at its monthly trustee luncheon on August 5, 2009.

I am so pleased to be here with you. Thank you for the generous introduction.

The most important thing that you should know is my message:

FIU has a consequential impact on the quality of life in our community. FIU is a major economic and social development asset. FIU's success directly impacts on community well being!

Rosalie and I are grateful to be home. Tallahassee was a unique experience. We made a lot of friends around the state, but there is no place like Miami. We are grateful to be with so many people who have helped FIU to turn the impossible into the inevitable. We are grateful to be with so many people who want to be a part of FIU's future!

No doubt, the desire to be part of the FIU experience is not just about institutional loyalty or philanthropy and doing good. It is about doing well and community material self interest. It is about high stakes - how we do and what we do will help to shape our community this century:

- In the next ten years, we will graduate nearly 100,000 students.
- We will spend nearly \$10 billion for instruction and research.
- We will build nearly \$500 million in new buildings.
- We will generate nearly 5,000 new high paying jobs with the \$250 m. in annual research expenditures that we project over the next 10 years

Because institutions are about people—

- Could I please ask all those from FIU-- to please stand and be recognized? Stay standing please
- Could I ask all those who have a connection— a degree, or a family member attending FIU-- to please stand.
- Could I ask all those-- who have hired or work with an FIU graduate-- to please stand.
- Could I please ask those of you-- who have visited FIU because of its incredible museums or sports event-- to please stand?
- If you are not yet standing my goal is to find a way for you to stand for FIU in the next few years!

So my first message is that FIU has a consequential impact on our community and on you! Let's take a quick look at the FIU of yesterday, today, and tomorrow so that you have a better understanding of who we are!

~Video presentation~

But again, it's the people that matter. FIU is not just bricks and mortar, it is about its staff, its students, its faculty. We are about people; people are our product.

- Look no further than Sandy Gonzalez-Levy, who provided leadership on the GMCC staff for years before she went to the private sector, and now us.
- Look no further than Basil Bernard, a community business leader and leader in the Chamber who received his MBA from FIU!
- Look no further than Dr. Pedro Jose Greer, a dean in our new medical school, who was just awarded the Medal of Freedom by President Barack Obama, one of only 16 Americans to receive this singular distinction.
- Look no further than at the 8000 students who graduate every year from our institution who take the jobs and will create the jobs that will power our economy! Among them Adolfo Henriques who leads our community arts initiatives, so vital to the Dade County economy.
- Look no further than at the heroic teachers in our Dade County public schools – FIU provides nearly half of all our teachers. What an awesome responsibility!
- Look no further than the 1000 military veterans who attend FIU – heroes all who have made an enormous sacrifice for our country.

It is true that we have major challenges ahead:

- We are in a leadership transition! We owe a great deal to Mitch Maidique, who has just completed 23 momentous years as president of FIU. We owe much to Mitch and his vision and his determination to succeed – no doubt.
- We are entering an era of extreme global competition – our economy is flat. There is a great deal of insecurity about the future. This insecurity is justified. There has been a failure of leadership; major institutions are struggling and some have failed us and their employees.

But I must be candid, although there is difficulty all around, I have found a great deal of optimism and enthusiasm for the future at FIU. Even with the difficulties, our vision has remained the same:

We want to be a leading urban public research university in the US. FIU today is a comprehensive research university.

- This means that we provide degree programs and preparation for our community in all major fields.
- This means that we offer a full range of public education services right here in our community.

Mitch's job was to put all this in place. And what a magnificent job he did. Who could have imagined ten years ago that today your public university would have both a law school and a medical school? And why not? We are the seventh largest community in the US! Why should our sons and daughters have to leave our community to get quality public professional educations? Not on Mitch's watch... And not on mine! This is a new era.

So what is ahead? How can FIU, your FIU become the best university in Florida? I have promised our Board that I will hit the ground running!

1. I have asked our Board to work with me to move us from high tech to high touch – we are going to become far more student centered – this is critical.
2. We will obsess on financial security with a four front funding offensive. Our legislature has been supportive where they can be! But we must now ask our graduates and supporters to provide even more private financial support. For FIU to become the world class institution of the 21st century that our community deserves, we must have an endowment of \$1 billion. We have just completed a campaign to expand our Alumni Network. We now have over 20,000 members in this Network, and it is getting stronger every day.
3. We will aggressively pursue advanced research to help prepare this economy for the new world of work that is upon us. Innovation and job creation are critical by-products of our research. Here are the top jobs in the economy of 2030: Are you ready for this?
 - a. Space market planners, climate change forecasters, solar fuel developers, holographic game developers, customers knowledge mining specialists, neuro marketing managers, renewable energy entrepreneurs, real time supply chain designers, nano-manufacturing agents, health performance enhancers. Medical longevity planners.
4. We will aggressively pursue partnerships and win-win relationships with key institutions – public and private, both here and abroad.
 - a. With Miami Dade College, with the Univ. of Miami, with the Miami Dade County Public Schools, with the Public Health Trust, with the Children's Trust, with the MDX, with South Florida Water Management, with the Chamber, with the Beacon Council, with Enterprise Florida.
 - b. **Win-win partnerships are critical.**

So, if we keep our students in the center, if we continue to be optimistic and aggressive and if we build win-win partnerships, there is no doubt that FIU can become the very best in Florida and nationally. We should settle for nothing less. You should have high expectations.

FIU has come of age. We can and will deliver a quality public education that will make a difference for this community and wherever our graduates go!

In summary, FIU is your public university! FIU has a consequential impact on the quality of life in our community. FIU is a major economic and social development asset. FIU's success directly impacts on community well being! The stronger our community becomes, the stronger FIU will be! The stronger FIU becomes, the more prepared our community will be for the extreme competition of the 21st century global economy.

Ladies and Gentlemen! Help me to continue to turn the impossible into the inevitable.

It is a blessing to be home! Thank you!