

MEMORANDUM

August 26, 2019

Dear FIU family,

We have just completed an amazing Early Fall Semester – 41,000 learners enrolled for over 4,000 courses! Now, we are primed to continue the learning this Fall with nearly 57,000 learners taking almost 9,000 classes!

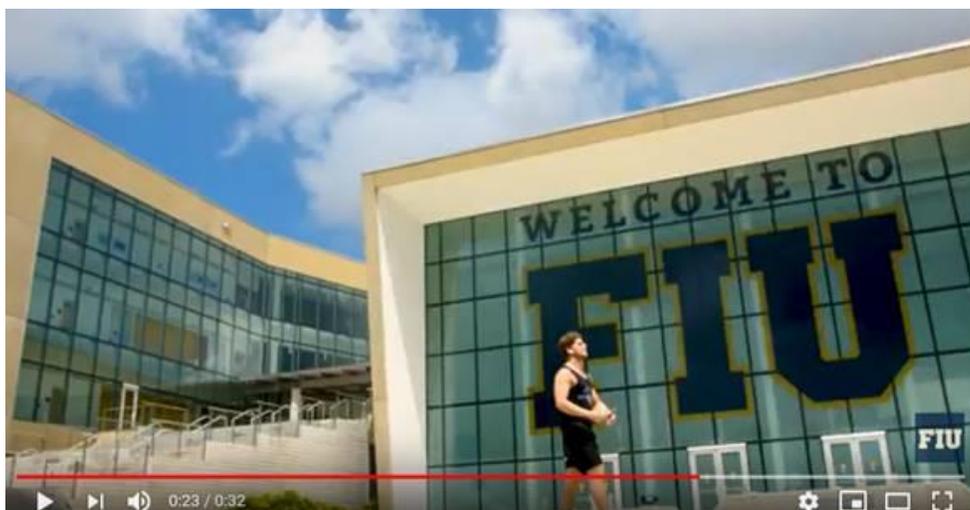
As I think about what we are up to, I am continually reminded of Guy de Maupassant's observation that "It is the lives we encounter that make life worth living."

I am most excited about all the wonderful people who gather around our university and who believe in the FIU learning experience in and out of the classroom.

Each of our 57,000 learners has a unique story and experience, guided by his or her own very specific hopes and desires. Each sees our FIU as integral to achieving his or her dreams.

Indeed, our faculty and professional staff themselves are guided by career aspirations that can and will hopefully be fulfilled at FIU. We spend a lot of time learning about how we can raise our expectations for what can and should be done, and how we can improve every day and how we go about achieving our goals.

These days, we are laser-focused on graduating students more timely and with a higher quality experience. Our goal is to get our four-year graduation rate to 60 percent. And we are very conscious of the importance of building affinity to FIU and all that it means.



Good things are happening that should encourage us all. The community has risen to support our Next Horizon Campaign – which is close to hitting its goal of \$750 million. The goal is important but what's behind the goal is key: resources for our students and faculty

to accelerate their progress -- more scholarship and more program support funding. We cannot depend on state dollars alone.

My hope for this year is that **we get better at being better**. Here are just a few of the things that we are doing to get better:

- We have offered scores of courses to foster college readiness through dual enrollment for our local high school students
- We have reviewed and restructured courses that were impediments to academic progression
- We have trained hundreds of students to use peer to peer teaching/learning skills to facilitate learning
- We have hired dozens of new student advisers
- We have constructed new and better pathways for eligible students into and through the university
- We have obsessed over first to second year retention and the causes and consequences of student attrition
- We have bundled millions of dollars in financial aid to reduce the financial burden on low and middle income students and their families
- We have fostered throughout the university the notion that “student success” comes first
- We have rebuilt our organizational culture to take even more pride in student accomplishment – with intensified attention to the actual student experience in and out of the classroom
- We are focused on student readiness to take or create a good job, and/or proceed on to graduate school immediately upon graduation
- We have developed and perfected a demanding and very public data-driven assessment and improvement process (with help from the Miami-Dade County Public Schools) that brings together hundreds of university officers and faculty quarterly to critique and improve our improvement initiatives

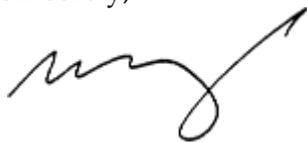
In other words, we have taken seriously the need to be better at getting better.

So as you can see, we turn into the Fall Semester excited about what’s ahead and happy that you are with us. Remember that you have a unique opportunity at our institution, not just to get a great education but also to meet inspiring individuals who, like you, want to make the world a better place.

Welcome back! We can’t wait to begin the new semester. Enjoy this amazing experience called FIU.

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