

MEMORANDUM

August 24, 2020

Dear FIU Family,

Welcome to Fall 2020 at our FIU! Whether you're joining us on campus, learning and working remotely, or a combination of the two, I'm excited to kick off the new academic year!

I'm especially thrilled to give a warm Panther welcome to our freshman class, a group of approximately 1,700 students representing 17 different countries and with an average GPA of 4.2. Five are National Merit finalists, nine are National Hispanic Scholars and 84 percent are eligible for Florida Bright Futures Scholarships based on their academic achievement in high school. Talk about a talented bunch!



[Click to watch my Fall 2020 welcome message](#)

We are so lucky to welcome you to our FIU family and grateful that you have entrusted your hopes and dreams to us. The start of your college experience is definitely unique – COVID-19 has altered our lives in many different ways – but I promise you that all of us at FIU will give you the full on-campus welcome experience you deserve as soon as it's safe to do so.

The last few months have been challenging, and yet we've kept our university operational and productive. At FIU, we've continued offering our courses as scheduled, hosted two virtual commencements and graduated thousands of students, organized numerous virtual events and town halls, made breakthroughs in our research endeavors and contributed significantly to our community's COVID-19 response.

I could not be prouder of the hard work, commitment and resilience of our FIU family – together, we face challenges head on and transform the impossible into the inevitable. And as we begin Fall 2020, we charge forward in true Panther spirit, protecting ourselves and each other from the risks of COVID-19 as we set new goals and help our students achieve their dreams.

While many of our university operations have transitioned to a remote platform due to COVID-19, our FIU will continue to provide our students, faculty and staff the services needed to succeed this fall. You can find a comprehensive list of available services and updated information about open locations at our [Panthers Protecting Panthers website](#).

Although much of our time recently has been occupied by coronavirus-related concerns, there are other issues that demand our attention as we begin this semester.

One of them is the urgency to end institutional racism, a matter brought to the forefront after national unrest driven by the tragic death of George Floyd in May. At FIU, we hosted [town halls](#) with students, faculty and staff, and we listened to what was in your hearts and minds during this crucial time in our nation's history.

Subsequently, FIU created the Equity Action Initiative project, charged with identifying initiatives to address issues of inclusion and equity, particularly as they relate to Black stakeholders at our FIU.

Specifically, I asked the advisory group to review and recommend initiatives that will enhance equality, dignity, inclusion and belonging. We seek permanent reforms that will make our community and our world a better place. I am presently reviewing the group's recommendations and will share next steps soon.

Our university is also moving full speed ahead with the [FIU Next Horizon 2025 Strategic Plan](#), which reaffirms our commitment to exceptional learner success and the highest level of university research and innovation. Our goal is to obtain national recognition as a top-50 public university, and we need each of you to help us achieve that milestone.

I'm aware that despite our excitement about the start of Fall 2020, COVID-19 continues to worry us all. Rest assured that the health and well-being of our students, faculty and staff remain our top priority. Through our [Panthers Protecting Panthers](#) initiative, we have and continue to take the necessary

steps to help stop the spread of COVID-19 at FIU and ensure all of you feel confident on campus.

FIU's P3 app, a web-based Apple and Android app, is a key component of our COVID-19 response. The app takes users through a questionnaire that screens for COVID-19 symptoms following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. While the app will not determine whether a user has contracted COVID-19, it will use the answers provided to either clear users to come on campus or recommend they stay home, monitor symptoms or seek medical attention.

All students, faculty and staff are required to complete the FIU P3 app process before starting each day on campus. On-campus residents are required to complete the app every morning. I ask each of you to download the app and familiarize yourself with the process. You can also complete the [screening questionnaire online](#).

In addition to the app, our COVID-19 safety protocols remain in place: Wear a face covering – at all times – while on campus, adhere to physical distancing requirements and follow posted guidelines, wash hands often or use hand sanitizer. Inform yourselves and be responsible for you and your fellow Panthers. We must all work together to ensure our health and well-being.

Because of the hard work and diligence of FIU's COVID-19 Screening, Testing, Contact Tracing and Disinfection workgroup, our university has received certification, purchased equipment and is conducting our own contact tracing.

As we kick off Fall 2020 at FIU, I encourage you to remain flexible, creative and intentional. I also ask that you remain vigilant and proactive as far as protecting your health and the health of those around you. Together, we can contain the spread of COVID-19. Unprecedented times challenge us to do better, to be better. It's what drives our Panther family to achieve greatness.

Welcome back! Let's go!

In the Panther spirit,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark B. Rosenberg', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark B. Rosenberg