Address at the January 25th Student Town Hall

Given by Mark B. Rosenberg
on January 25, 2021
Good afternoon!

Thank you for being with us!

Welcome back to the second semester of this academic year.

I want to thank Academic and Student Affairs for hosting this gathering! And all the staff for putting it together.

We are anxious to have this conversation with you!

Yes—these are difficult times.

A pandemic—that has perhaps taken friends and loved ones. And forced you into new and more difficult patterns of action and behavior…

A political season that has been turbulent and troubling. And edged you or driven you to be more politically aware and possibly active than ever in the past…

Race relations tensions unlike anything most have ever known. And given you the opportunity to rethink why and how we must do better in leveling the playing field and genuinely committing to more equal opportunity…

An economic recession that has crippled our economy and driven you into rethinking your life’s purpose and how to get there…

In her amazing inauguration poem, Amanda Gorman spoke to this in her own way:

She said…

“We are striving to forge a union with purpose
To compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, characters and conditions of man.

And so we lift our gazes not to what stands between us
but what stands before us”

We are here today because of what stands before us!
Amanda challenged us all very clearly:

“When day comes, we step out of the shade, aflame and unafraid
The new dawn blooms as we free it
For there is always light,
If only we’re brave enough to see it
If only we’re brave enough to be it”

Your essence as a human being and family member… your experience at our FIU as students, your journey as emerging professionals… they are all being forged by what stands before us and by the light of the new day.

And we are blessed to have this sanctuary called FIU — not just a place, but an amazing cluster of talent, hope and opportunity for you, for us:

Never dark, always ready, always on task, always energized…

I am proud to tell you that we have a moral ecosystem at our FIU!

While it requires care and feeding and can always be improved… this institution is real and filled with good people — faculty, staff and students, board members, alumni — quite a circle of expectation, triumph, and good… all wanting to do the right thing.

We are focused on your educations. Your graduation is everything, your success as a citizen, a professional and a humanist are critical!

Now — more than ever…

We expect a record graduating class this Spring — many of you part of that.

How do we get there? What should we expect? How to take full advantage of what the university offers — in and out of class?

That is our focus today in this town hall. To Amanda’s point, there is always light! I hope that you can see it fully after our important conversation today.

If not contact me at mark.rosenberg@fiu.edu.

I got your back — for me every student, every learner — counts — beginning with you.

Thanks!