

THE READERS' FORUM

## FIU fulfilling vision of a better South Florida

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As we welcome a new year and look toward the future, our community has much to be optimistic about. We continue to struggle with economic challenges, but the good news is there is hope as long as we continue investing in higher education. A college degree is the key to prosperity for the many people with the drive and preparation to pursue higher education. In turn, it's the key to prosperity for their families and our community. Florida International University is proud of the role we play in providing an accessible education to thousands of South Floridians, preparing them for the careers that will elevate the standard of living in our region and benefit our state economy.

FIU is answering the challenge of educating more science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) graduates. We are leading the way in preparing minority students for STEM careers. FIU is first in the nation in awarding bachelor's and master's degrees to Hispanics and bachelor's degrees to minorities. We also lead in preparing Hispanics for careers in engineering and computer science and are first in Florida in the percentage of doctoral degrees awarded to women in engineering and computing.

Preparing students for STEM careers starts in K-12, and we are proud of the partnership we have forged with Miami-Dade County Public Schools. This groundbreaking partnership known as ACCESS — Achieving Community Collaboration in Education and Student Success — includes collaborating to strengthen science and math education through teacher preparation. We also are proud of The Education Effect, a program we recently launched with M-DCPS at Miami Northwestern Senior High, with help from a three-year \$1 million grant from JPMorgan Chase. Working together we are creating a college-going culture at Northwestern that includes giving students the tools they need to succeed in science.

This is just one of the many ways that FIU, as an anchor institution in our community, is collaborating with other key institutions to address our region's most critical issues. With the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority, we are developing cutting-edge, intelligent solutions to end traffic bottlenecks in our region. With medical institutions in Miami-Dade and Broward, we are educating the next generation of doctors and addressing the medical, legal and social-service needs of families in our community through the Green Family Foundation Neighborhood HELP program.

We also are moving forward with Life Sciences South Florida, a collaboration between FIU and other educational facilities, economic-development organizations and other institutions in our community. Through this groundbreaking partnership we will harness the research and economic capabilities and strengths of our respective institutions to drive innovation, entrepreneurship and job creation in South Florida.

We have much to look forward to in 2012, and FIU is proud that it will play a part in taking our region to the next level.

**Mark B. Rosenberg, president, Florida International University, Miami**

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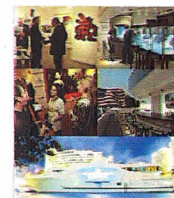
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