Honors College Reflections Series

Keynote Speaker

MARK B. ROSENBERG, Ph.D.
CHANCELLOR
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
Biographical Note

Dr. Mark Rosenberg is a 1971 graduate of Miami University of Ohio, where he was Phi Beta Kappa and Omicron Delta Kappa. He received his doctorate in political science and a graduate certificate in Latin American and Caribbean Studies from the University of Pittsburgh in 1976. A scholar specializing in international affairs and Latin America and the Caribbean, Chancellor Rosenberg has written or co-edited seven books and numerous scholarly articles. His latest book, on Central America after the Cold War, is a Harvard University project co-authored with Luis Guillermo Solis of Costa Rica. It is scheduled for publication later this year.

A member of the Council on Foreign Relations, Dr. Rosenberg has testified several times before the United States Congress and has served as a consultant to the Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development, and other agencies. He has been a frequent source of expert commentary for the national and international media, including the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Miami Herald, and Univisión, and has served on the board of editors of Latin Trade and Florida Trend. The Chancellor also is a past member of the selection board of the Maria Moors Cabot Prize for Journalism based at Columbia University.

Chancellor Rosenberg is active in state economic development issues and has been a member of the leadership team of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce. Prior to his appointment as Chancellor in Fall 2005, Dr. Rosenberg served in various capacities for the almost three decades he was at Florida International University, including Professor of Political Science, Director of the Latin American and Caribbean Center, Dean of the College of Urban and Public Affairs, Vice Provost for International Studies, and for eight years as Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.
We are continually in search of clues to how to live our lives!

I would like to speak with you about this, with the understanding that you have spent some time this semester considering Santayana’s approach to skepticism—which should not be surrendered too quickly to the first comer.

I have three points to make based upon the best advice that I received from my professors and teachers:

Seek truth, Stay calm, and listen well.

Let me explain:

As you have heard, I have had a wonderful and meaningful journey: I have been blessed and I have a great deal of gratitude.

Who started me on my way? It was a political science professor who in my sophomore year at Miami Ohio answered a question from me about what he was trying to do with his career? His response was simple: I am seeking the truth. Now this was not a Biblical search, or even a search that would be described in a Hesse book such as Siddartha.

Rather my professor was obsessed with expanding the knowledge universe in his particular domain of interest—international affairs. He was on a mission—for him that was the truth. How many of you will dare seek the truth as you depart from FIU. Your lives will be enriched if you take on this major task.

Years later—some thirty to be sure, after I had crossed countless personal and professional thresholds, I was named as Provost of the University—or its chief academic officer. This is an immense responsibility. In search of my job description, I ran into the President of the University of Florida. Given to quick and pinpoint answers, I asked him if he could tell me my job description. He did not disappoint: Your job—he said—is to push paper. No I immediately responded, its got to be more than that. OK, OK, he said, “your job is to stay calm.”
Shortly thereafter, the 9-11 calamity befell us, and as the institution’s principle operating officer, I needed this advice and more to have the backbone to work to steady our academic community and deal with the psychological and financial trauma that was to befall us in that fateful year. Staying calm has serve me well in coping with a variety of life’s travails, because you see the career success that I might have had has not shielded me from the realities of aging parents, struggling children, and the chronic impairment caused to a family member from diabetes. As you grown and mature, the need to stay calm will expand, almost in direct proportion to your success and responsibilities.

Finally, as I have assumed greater levels of responsibility, I learned that I am a very poor listener. This has been a difficult lesson for me. It will be a very difficult lesson for you—we are trained to react, to move, to respond, not to pause, contemplate, absorb, process, and then react. Yet I can assure you, the better the listener you are, the more successful you will be. Sometimes less is more. Sometimes the silence really is golden. Sometimes you just need to be there for our humanity. The sooner that you come to grips with this, the better you will be.

So, Honors Students, your journey is filled with challenges, and there will be many, many adventures. If you seek truth, stay calm, and listen well, I can assure you that you and this world will be better off.

Thank you and best wishes!
The Benefits of The Honors College

The Honors College at Florida International University in Miami offers the best of two worlds. It is a small community of outstanding students, dedicated scholars, and committed teachers who work together in an atmosphere usually associated with small private colleges. Yet, we do so with all the resources of a major state university, which is one of the nation's top doctoral/research extensive universities. Only 152 universities in the United States hold this superior rank.

The Honors College provides a broad foundation for dedicated students who want to get the most out of their undergraduate education. The undergraduate experience it provides is significantly enhanced by the broad interdisciplinary nature of the curriculum and opportunities to work closely with expert faculty and in the community. The opportunities for graduate or professional study and for employment are greatly expanded because of the range of unique activities and academic experiences made available to students in the College.

The Honors Curriculum

A student may pursue almost any major available in the University and at the same time complete the honors curriculum. The curriculum emphasizes the following activities: critical, integrative, and creative thinking; group and independent research; oral presentation; close contact between students and faculty; and integration of class work with the broader community.

Outstanding Professors and Researchers

“Knowledgeable, caring, enthusiastic, and approachable”. These are some of the characteristics students use to describe the diverse honors faculty. Carefully selected from the more than fourteen hundred faculty members at the University for their accomplishments as both teachers and scholars, members of the honors faculty take great pride in their close association with their students and are committed to excellence.

Honors Place at Panther Hall

Honors Place, a living-learning community in Panther Hall, University Park, is the “in” place to live on campus. Provided space is available, all Honors College students are eligible to live in this great community of local, national, and international students. These multi-talented and multi-interested students are what makes Honors Place the “Best Living and Learning Community” in the state, as recognized by Florida Leader magazine.
Study Abroad Opportunities

The Honors College has been conducting study abroad programs since 1994 and currently offers opportunities for its students in Spain, Italy, Jamaica, and Trinidad. They are all designed to fulfill one year (six credits) of The Honors College curriculum requirement. The Honors College Study Abroad Programs offer students the opportunity to experience immersion in another culture while pursuing a rigorous academic program integrated with the Honors curriculum. Instruction is in English in all the programs.

Additional Opportunities in The Honors College

Scholarships ~ Special Study Abroad Programs
Priority Registration & Special Advising
Research and Artistic Initiatives Program
A Special Community of Students and Faculty
Excellence Lectures & Forums with Leading Scholars & Policymakers
Outstanding Professors and Researchers
Interdisciplinary Curriculum
FIU/USF Honors Medical Education Program
Team-taught and Individually-taught Seminars
Special Residence Hall at Honors Place
Library Borrowing Privileges as Graduate Students
Student Information Technology Centers
Gamma Epsilon Phi, the UP Honors College Student Society
Alpha Sigma Tau, the BBC Honors College Student Society
Funding to Attend National and International Conferences
Small Classes and Close Relationships with Professors
Honors Convocation with Recognition of Student Excellence
Internship, Mentoring, and Service Learning Opportunities
College Presence at Both University Park and Biscayne Bay
Awards Assembly for Graduating Seniors
Special Recognition at Commencement
Notation on Transcript: “Graduated through the University Honors College”
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DEAN’S THOUGHT ~ FOR THE SEMESTER ~ FALL 2005

“Character is like a tree and reputation like its shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the three is the real thing.”

~Abraham Lincoln

DEAN’S THOUGHT ~ FOR THE SEMESTER ~ SPRING 2006

“Skepticism is the chastity of the intellect, and it is shameful to surrender it too soon or to the first comer.”

~George Santayana