MEMORANDUM

To:       University Community
From:   Douglas Wartzok, Provost & Executive Vice President
Date:    14 September 2011
Re:       Appointment of Dean of the School of Journalism & Mass Communication

I am pleased to announce that Raul Reis, PhD, has accepted my offer to serve as Dean of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication (SJMC). His tenure will begin 1 December 2011. He is currently Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication at California State University, Long Beach. He began both his academic and professional career in his native Brazil where he obtained his bachelor’s degree from Universidade Federal do Pará, Belém and worked as a reporter, writer and assistant editor for a variety of newspapers. He received his master’s degree from Kansas State University and again mixed academics with reporting for newspapers in Kansas. He obtained his PhD in Communication and Society from the University of Oregon.

As chair of the Department of Journalism & Mass Communication he led curricular changes that created cutting-edge, innovative, convergent mass media programs resulting in the department becoming one of the most respected and sought after mass media programs in Southern California. FIU is emphasizing its new curriculum in Global Strategic Communications and Professor Reis created a Global News Media class that includes a trip abroad to Brazil. Most recently the class went to the Amazon region where the focus of the class was on science and environmental journalism. This fits well with the emerging linkages between our School of Environment, Arts and Society and the SJMC. We have recently added a course on environmental journalism.

The community engagement activities of FIU’s SJMC match closely with some of the work Professor Reis has been doing in the Long Beach community. He developed an innovative and successful media literacy program, taught by his students, which focused on gang violence prevention and peace building. He looks forward to furthering our professional outreach activities through the South Florida News Service and the Liberty City Link.

At California State University, Long Beach the student newspaper and monthly magazine operate out of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication. Under Professor Reis’ guidance, the student publications won five California College Media Association awards in 2010. Also the newspaper became the first college newspaper in the country to offer daily podcasts through iTunes. The department started two successful video news services online, Beach News and Beach News En Español and more than doubled the number of internships available for students.


I thank the search and screen committee, chaired by Dean Kenneth Furton, for identifying three candidates who had the background and experience to lead our School through the very uncertain times ahead in journalism and mass communications. They all showed that they could identify opportunities where others saw only challenges. Fernando Figueredo will continue to lead the Department of Advertising and Public Relations and Manuel Garcia, Executive Editor/General Manager, El Nuevo Herald, withdrew.

My special appreciation goes to Dean Lillian Lodge Kopenhaver who will remain a faculty member in the School. Dean Kopenhaver has been at FIU since the first year of the university’s operations and has been involved in every aspect of the creation, growth, and development of the School. She has led the School
to prominence throughout the United States and Latin America and has positioned it to succeed in the future.