

Interviewee: Jesus Arias

Interviewer: Demi Moro

Date: April 1, 2022

DM: Hi, my name is Demi Moro. Today is April. Friday, April 1st, 2022. Today I'll be interviewing Jesus Arias for my History of Higher Education Oral History project. Hi Jesus, can you please introduce yourself?

JA: Hi, good morning, Demi. Yes. Hi, my name is Jesus Arias. I'm a faculty and staff member at the university. I'm also a three-time alumni at the university. I've been working at the university for a long time. I believe I started my part-time back in 1992 and I stepped foot as a, as an incoming student back in 1989. I became full-time member in 1997 and then been working ever since.

DM: Great. So tell me a little bit about yourself. Where did you grow up and what did you enjoy doing?

JA: Well. I was born in Miami. My parents came from Cuba, back in the mid sixties when there was a change in regime around the age of three or four. I, we moved to Hialeah and I had lived there since, just as I'm when I got married back in 1997. I pretty much, you know, all my young life was raised in Hialeah. I went to Mae Walter's, Filer Junior High, Hialeah High. PAUSE Let me see, other, single parent home and you know, based on the work ethic that my mom had, that was what really spurred me, why I wanted to pursue working in higher ed that I've always said education was a big part of my life... What I enjoy doing was, you know, the normal, typical stuff a kid would do back in the day, baseball, right. Watch TV PAUSE there wasn't internet back in the day or Twitter or Facebook or anything like that. So, going to the local park, doing, joining clubs, things of that nature. So, so pretty much that, that was a, you know, a general synopsis of my life until the time I started going to college.

DM: Oh, by the way, I'm also Hialeah a kid. I went to school in - at Immaculate Conception, so like right across the street from Hialeah high.

[Pause]

DM: And then I went to pace for high school.

[Laugh]

JA: Oh, wow. So, that's good. Hialeah, a cousin of mine. That's good to know.

DM: How did you become affiliated with FIU? Like what made you come to FIU?

JA: You know that's a nice question to answer because when I was in, in high school, FIU was not on my radar. Right. FIU was more of a, I know the school was down the road. I had applied to the University of Arizona got accepted, but I got cold feet. Right. And so life took me in a different path. And I'll answer your question in a roundabout way. I decided to go to Miami Dade, right. It was a good choice. Good. Miami Dade is a good college to go to. But then I started warming up to the idea of there was this great institution down the road called FIU, and it's funny enough, back in 1987, [19]88, even though university had only been less than what, 15 years old. A lot of my professors in engineering at

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Miami Dade kept telling me, don't go to FIU, go to another school. They're not accredited. And, you know, my track was engineering, but then I found out they were accredited. And, I had an experience where I actually stepped foot at FIU to meet my advisor back then in the day, all of engineering, everybody was in VH. So you can imagine all the engineering was in one building. So I got to meet them. And then, you know, I discovered that there was a great opportunity to come into a great school. And so I started coming here as soon as I was done with Miami-Dade and the first time I step foot in some of my classes, I met a good friend of mine Elise Jakubznik And, she had been working in the biology department and she basically asked me, Hey, since I know that you work at Sedano supermarket, because when I started working, I had worked almost let me see. I started working at Sedano and back in 1987, and I worked there for seven years and she had asked me, Hey, do you want to work in the biology department? And she goes, you might get a little dirty working with the frogs and stuff like that. And I go, come on, Elise I pick up carts. You know, so then I got an opportunity working in biology and I worked there for four years and I became integrated with the community. I became integrated with my classes, my professors, people who I worked with, and little by little that organic growth of being part of a community started to you know blossom inside me. And then after that, I got to meet a couple of folks in engineering, as a matter of fact, one of them, a great mentor and friend, she had told me of an opportunity working back then, there wasn't a division of, IT it was something else and it was working in IT. And so from there, I transitioned over from part-time biology to part-time IT. And then I graduated in engineering. And then I started working full time and then little by little, you know, again, integrating myself with the community, with the people around me, the good people that I work with and then later on, I decided to, you know, what, I have a bachelor's in engineering, let me pursue a master's in finance. And a few years after that, you know, keep growing, keep understanding, keep being part of a great community. I decided to say, Hey, you know what you know, of course talking with my wife and my kids first, I decided to get a Doctorate in Business. And so I finished that and I am here today now. You know, overall, I was sparked by the camaraderie and the family oriented nature of things as they were back in the day. And then that really was the cause as to why I stay and stick around at FIU.

[Pause]

DM: So, you recently graduated with your, Doctor of Business Administration, tell me about your experience being a student and working full time.

JA: Well, you know, that experience has always been in my blood because either undergraduate or master's or doctorate, I was always working and going to school. Right and I worked from the time that I was doing my bachelor's or my undergraduate degree over to my doctorate when I was an undergraduate, I worked you know, it took me a little long. And I'll share with you Demi, in this interview, it took me about 10 years to get my bachelor's, right. I was working 30 to 40 hours a week, single parent home. So the need of working was always there, right. One way or the other. So it took me a little longer. Obviously the maturity level back then was a little bit less so that, you know, the challenges of knowing things and studying and the academic rigor, you know, it was one of the challenges for

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the 10 years. But once I started working full time, you know obviously gaining knowledge and maturity and whatnot, I decided to embark on a master's in finance, and I would say that in the college of business, great professors, great classmates, it was very intensive. As a matter of fact, I did my masters while we got hit by those four hurricanes back in 2004 / 2005. It was very rigorous. We did 36 credits in one year and I was working full time. So basically I lived in breathed that FIU. I would come in at 8:30 in the morning, like everybody else, and I would leave at 1:00 in the morning every night.

DM: Wow -

JA: Yeah. Yeah. It was a pressure cooker for one year. Then after that I felt I was invincible. I go, I can't - I think I can do anything now. So then years passed by and something struck in me said, Hey, you know what? I was, by the way, when I finished my master's, I started teaching SLS back in 2006. So it's been, oh my gosh, 16 years. Right. So, about four years ago, I came across a UNIV mail or email from the DBA program that they were starting out. And I go, man, you know, this is interesting. They talk about catering to working individuals. So during my interview, I had a chance to speak to Dr. George Marakas. Excellent, excellent person, great mentor. I asked him, you know, what, what does this mean? He goes, look, you know, a lot of people work, a lot of these professionals, they, you know, they have very important roles. And so what we tried to do is cater to an online flavor, right. With a once a month, residency meeting, meeting on site for one - two whole days. So then, you know, we were going back and forth and he told me, look Jesus if you don't do the program 3 years from now, you'll still be the same person without the degree. 3 years from then you would have a degree. Right. And the opportunities you would be monumental, which he was completely right. So, I spoke to my wife just as I did with my master's when I did my masters. I only had two kids when I did, my doctorate was three, right. So I sat down with her. It was a big investment, even though I am absolutely grateful for the university help. It was still just a small fraction. So I had to take on a loan. I sat down with her and my kids, they understood, I say, look, it's three years. And so I embarked on it and I made sure that there was balance in life and my personal and in my profession and my academic. So along the way, I made sure that there was balance at every moment. I think it was a little bit more manageable now because I'm older. I sorta knew things how to balance it and luckily my profession, as a project manager and business continuity manager in the Division of IT, you get to sort of sway and move with things. I didn't have that capacity when I was an undergrad, but in my master's, I had the ability and I could see that it was sparking. So, that basically was sort of the, the perspective I bring of work and school. Right. As long as you find balance, you're not at a high point, too stressful, then you can manage, at least I was able to manage both.

DM: Are you still teaching?

JA: Oh, yeah. As a matter of fact, starting with first, I've been teaching SLS for 16 years, a few

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years ago. I had a chance to start teaching strategies of success, which is 1510, which is the class right after 1501. And I'm going to tell you a little bit before I go into my other teaching opportunities, I find SLS very connecting because one, I just recently was videotaped as one of the SLS instructors for the program to really spur the spark of interest for other people who want to teach. I came from a single-parent home first graduate. Right. And I know what the struggles are right. And I'm only adding this so that you understand where the perspective of teaching SLS is. I went to the counseling center for a year because it was pretty hard single parent first year experience. I mean, a first year graduate working 40 hours a week. And so I connect with students quite well in the undergraduate level. I see that many of them are challenged by life. They're really smart, but they're challenged by life. So I love that class because it connects me in some way to my past. Right. DM: yeah - JA : I also got an opportunity last year to teach in the honors college. So I now teach in the Intro to Leadership in the honors college phenomenal program, phenomenal director, a great opportunity. And I took advantage. And again, I connect with students in many ways, right. Once I finished my doctorate, I was given the opportunity of teaching in the college of business as an adjunct instructor. I was recently given the - one of the grad courses in project management. Let me tell you, Demi, I am working in all cylinders. I am working seven days a week. I work, I teach on Fridays, I mean, on Saturdays from 8:30 to 12:30, it's an 8 week course. So I have to prepare for that. As soon as Sunday comes around, well, Saturday afternoon comes around. I take a break and I keep preparing for my class for the following week, Sunday, I do the same thing. And then of course, Monday through Friday, I work. And then as soon as I come home, I kiss everybody. Hello, we have dinner in one fashion or form, and then I get started. So, even though it is incredibly, I mean, I've never worked so much in my life. It's great. I love it. And I was just given another teaching opportunity to teach a risk management and organizational resiliency class. I'll be, I'll be honest. I've never did that. But, I'm up to the challenge because, you know, in IT, I've been exposed to a lot, you know security, business continuity, things of that nature. So I took it upon myself. So now in the summer I will have two courses, at the beginning. So, I've been teaching again, sort of recaps SLS for 16 years, Intro to honors strategy success. Now a project management course in the grad program for master's in information systems. And now the risk management one now in the summer. So yes, I, these are the courses that I've been given and I'm up for the challenge.

[Laugh]

[Pause]

DM : What do you believe has been some of the most impactful events or moments during your time with FIU ? What has been your favorite memory? What are you most proud of having accomplished during your time FIU?

JA: You know I had remembered seeing that question that you gave me. I was pondering. It's just been so many years. I mean if you calculate I stepped foot in 1989 back then President Maidique was our president. We had 35,000 students and a fraction of our buildings to look at the most memorable moments. I think there, there are many, right, and as time goes by the more recent ones are the more impactful, but let me, let me tell you that from

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a generalized thing is I've seen at every step of the way, whenever we've had a, an emergency, because I'm a business continuity manager for the division, and what's really impactful is to see an FIU community come together very quickly to address emergencies. So case in point that's just recent is our ability to respond to COVID our ability to respond to hurricanes, our ability to respond to the bridge collapse, right. and whatever, the reasons the underlying cause or whatever, that's not the nature of my perspective. What's really impactful is I see leadership and the university community people coming together to really come and support the community. The other level that I see as an instructor is that I could see that when we were coming back from COVID, we're coming back from a hurricane, the sensitivity to students was there, right. We were mindful of the things that they go through to be a student. So those are the things that are most recent to me that the most impactful when I see it from, from a global perspective, right. Something impactful for me. I don't think it was one, I think it's been many, right. It, you know, little nuggets of opportunities, little nuggets of encouragement, little nuggets of you know, when I say nuggets, you know, like reference to small nuggets of gold, right. DM: Yeah JA: There've been little over time. They haven't been one. Right. So I can't really tell you there's one, you know, I can tell you that for sure. The lingering feeling that I've always had is, is that there's always been someone next to me, whether at work where at school that encouraged me. Now that I'm going through this, I will tell you something impactful it was at an FIU event. When I was at Miami Dade, I was taking an undergrad course in macroeconomics. And it turns out that, Dr. Montoya was my professor. And it turns out that later he became interim president for Miami-Dade college. And I, you know, of course the years passed, but you never get in contact., I'm in the commencement committee, by the way, I've been participating in commencement since 10 years. So I volunteer every commencement. I saw Dr. Montoya there. And I had to thank him because this has had just been after I'd gotten my master's. Right. So, I remember I went to the back part where the robing room is for the, for the guest. Right. And I went up to him and say, Dr. Montoya, I don't know if you remember me. I know it's been a long time, but my name is Jesus Arias. And I just want to say, thank you so much. I remember how much I struggled in the class, but you just encouraged me. And I was able to get a B, and you told me it wasn't really you. It was really me. So I just want to tell you that everything turned out fine. I got my master's I'm here at the university. You know what? He started crying.

DM: Oh wow!

JA: I was like, no, it's okay, you know? So that would be a memorable moment, right? The other memorable moments that I start adding now that I'm going through my memory is the fact that I participate in graduation because I know how important it is. Right and so when I'm about to tell you supports that when I was 10, I used to watch my mom work so hard, you know, until 2:00 in the morning, she was a seamstress, you know, and I saw how much she worked. And I go, man, you know, I really need to figure out a way to move forward, to help her help me. And so education was part of that. Right. And when I graduated things changed, you know, even though I had a close heart to Hialeah, you

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know, I would've stayed there, but my wife didn't want to stay at Hialeah. But I remember you know, I wanted to succeed to better myself. Right. And so when I see graduation, I go, man, you know what, I'm so happy to see the moms, the dads, the grandmas, los abuelos, abuela, tias, uncles so happy to see their child, you know, or, loved one graduate because it's an immense amount of energy that you put in. So I think that adds to the nuggets of things. Right. And then also to the opportunities I get along the way as an employee, or as a staff member or friend bumped into people in the, you know, down the hallway, crack a joke, right. See my good friend, Ashley, you know, say, hello, how are you? You know, you create community. DM : Yeah - JA: So over time, it's not really one thing. It's many things.

DM: What do you do at commencement?

JA: Oh, I am the lobby coordinator. So, let me describe what lobby. So before COVID all of our graduations are at the arena. And so, it started many years ago where I saw an opportunity to volunteer for commencement. I go, oh, you know what? This would be great. So I volunteer and about maybe a year later, I was tapped on my shoulder to say, Hey, Jesus, would you like to be a committee member? I said, sure. Why not? And so I went ahead and, at that time, the law - the arena didn't - had not had a lobby. You know, when you go to the commencement building or the basketball arena, that front part didn't exist, they had just built it. So they go, Hey, Jesus, would you like to take over the lobby and I go, great. I don't know anything about the lobby, but we'll, we'll figure it out. And so over the course of time, I became the lobby coordinator part of the committee, and I volunteered other people. So I exposed them to being part of a greater thing than just being at work. Right. So that's how I sold it. I go, Hey, look, you know, you get to see the abuelos and people graduate. We'll have a fun time. And I have five people in my committee, DM : Oh wow! - JA: my little subcommittee. So, and we make it, we make it really fun because we take selfies, we talk, we laugh. But you know, at the same time we realize how important it is to be part of something greater. Right. And at the end of the day, even though we're not a company, but we are a family, but we also are an organization that produces graduates. So when you, at the end, you go, what did I do? Oh, I see the graduate. Oh, that's what I'm supporting. Right. And so on now that because of COVID, we do it in the stadium, but, that might change later on. So I manage the lobby now for the stadium. It's a little different. So now I manage a group of people, same folks, plus a couple of more volunteers just to make sure that guests come in and they're greeted. They're helped. You direct them to wherever they need to go. Right. You facilitate help with the students. That's where I see Ashley and others, you know so that's what I do. I'm part of a larger group of people that serve the greater good of graduation, just to make sure that there's a good experience with the graduate and their families.

DM: Could you describe any differences and any similarities from when you were an undergraduate at FIU versus during your doctoral?

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JA: Um, yes. no matter how old we are or young, we are, we face the same things. We have commitments, we have responsibilities. We juggle things right. Based on our capacity. When I was an undergraduate, I had the same situation minus the family, right. I had work, I had the pressures of school and I had the pressures of meeting the expectations of instructors, right. The day-to-day challenges of whatever faces me when I did my doctorate is pretty much the same thing. You start realizing that we all face the same things, and that's why I connect it. And I tell students, I go, look, I get it. You know, we're no different, we have fears. We have, joys, we have apprehension, we have responsibilities, we have assignments, right. All that was the same, you know what was a little different is our capacity when I was an undergraduate, I would say my capacity wasn't as much as now, but as you grow in capacity, you grow an opportunity. And Demi, I'll be honest without that doctorate and the masters, I wouldn't be teaching today and that opportunity. So as time goes by, the difference would be capacity. As you grow, you learn, you mature, your capacity grows, but really you face the same thing. You know, now I've probably faced different perspectives, expectations from students at a graduate level. Expectations dealing as a business continuity manager with events that happen at the university, working with our leadership team, working with our administrators, working with the day-to-day stuff. But I could see that the similarities of their life is still there. The challenges are still there. Right. But your capacity grows. So that's where I see the difference.

PAUSE

DM: What sorts of changes have you observed at FIU or in the surrounding community during your time here?

JA: You know, I guess with the surrounding community, I'm not so much involved with the day-to-day things that happen with the university expanding into the community. But what I have seen is over the course of years, for a time I worked one year at the College of Medicine, I was a director of project management. And what I had seen is that the university has grown into becoming an integral part of different aspects of the community life. Right, they're trying to serve a greater good. It's obviously with COVID, there was a lot of emphasis of serving the community, inward and outward, right? Definitely over the course of years, FIU has grown to be more recognized. Right. I do have friends that deal with some aspect of a global perspective for FIU, and they told me that we have, you know, leaps and bounds. Recently I and this is just little anecdotal comments that I'm bringing to the table. Recently, I was asked to give my - provide feedback to a future DBA student. And he was out of state and talking to him, he was very impressed with FIU. The way that we've positioned ourselves and whatnot, obviously being in a very dynamic city like Miami. So what I've seen is keep in mind, I'm coming from a 1987 student, right. We were international, but we weren't as recognized. Right. And now fast forward, what, 40 years? Something like that, right? DM : [Inaudible 25:05] - JA: No, no, no, not yet. Not yet. Not yet. Several years later, several decades later, you start seeing FIU has changed immensely. The way that we interact with our community and Inward and outward and really trying to make strides in our, in our identity. Right. And so that's good. That's good. I, that I've seen.

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DM: How many buildings were there when you were an undergraduate there wasn't as many?

JA: You know, I just, before the dinosaurs died out, [Laugh] JA: I got to see the books. I would say probably less than 30 maybe back in the day when I stepped in 80. So I-you're familiar with the campus of course. Right. DM : Yeah - JA Do you know where the buses are? The Metro bus and Metro Dade buses are in the - they used to drive in front of FIU in front of PC. DM: Oh Wow! - JA: There was a road that would come right in front of PC and pick you up and then they go back up. All right. So, when I came to school so just imagine a map in your head, right. You know, where parkview is, you know, where Everglades hall, Panther hall. DM: Yeah JA: Okay. Okay. Imagine nothing. All you had were runways from the former airport.

PAUSE

JA: So imagine, imagine nothing. Right. We had VH, Graham center was University House. We have Primera Casa , You had OE - JA: no DM. OE we was, uh, oh no. Oh we, yeah. So you had DM, OE, VH, PC CP. Chemistry/Physics was being built.

JA: Right. There was nothing in the front. So forget AHC 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. That was completely barren. So that corridor was empty. There was no parking garages, nothing. So clear, clear cross. When I stepped foot, I got confused a few years later because our mascot was never Rory the Panther. It was a Sun Blazer. I don't know what a Sun blazer was as a student. I was still bewildered to this day, what is a Sun blazer? It's just another cat, but it was like what Sun blazer. It was a little bit more intimate because when I started working here in [19] 92 – [19] 93, and we've grown, we've grown for the better, but there's some aspects that, you know, I still miss. We used to play volleyball in the biology department where the Stocker astronomy center DM ; Ok - JA: That spot we used to play volleyball. Other departments, there was a softball league. Finance had a softball group, Division of IT, or wherever we were called, then, you know, so there were different groups. I didn't know about that until later, but I was pretty much an undergrad. So it was a little bit more intimate back then, garden apartments, where the own, it was the garden apartments and, uh, the Biscayne bay apartments were the only two. That was it.

DM: Wow

JA: Yeah. Yeah. But I remember the runways, you remember, you know, the tower, right?

DM: Yeah. Yeah

JA: Yeah. Right next to, uh, E.L.I, right?

DM: Yes.

JA: All right. So imagine the runway was there and clear, clear across was Clearfield. There were



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no buildings, nothing Clearfield. And so when I came in, you know, we're just starting, right. I mean, that's just starting. I, when I started working here, I got to meet those people that started at the university when the university started, when it started in 1972. Right. So, I knew the people that are in these black and white pictures with Charles Perry, right. When they were younger. So I got to meet that first generation of FIU people for the first time.

DM: Does anyone stand out to you? Do you remember?

JA: You know, the you know, there were a few people that were in our department that had started, right. We had employees that started when they had just finished getting their degree from FIU in 1972,[19] 73. They had started here when they were 18 and they retired, you know, people that are memorable to the, you know, I've met Maidique several times. And, the people that were around him at the time, some of them, right. And again, remember the perspective of I'm an OPS, I'm a student. So, you know, I'm not very fully aware of my surroundings, only bits and pieces of who they were and whatnot. We had a director, her name was Blanca Riley and her husband, I forgot his first name. He wrote a book about the 50 year anniversary, and there's a lot of pictures. So, she was an integral part of the history of FIU. Right. There was a presidential leadership program that I attended and, a lot of the People uh, some other people there that spoke, our former, Vice President Dr. Rosa Jones, you know, I had started when some of these people, their careers were just taking off, but when you start, you don't even know who they are yet DM: Yeah - JA: But then I was like, oh yeah, yeah, I know. So I, there were a few people, I, you know, Blanca Riley comes up to a name, some of the employees, some of my colleagues that I work with, Of course I administered some of the administration that had been here for the longest time I've been bumped into. Right. so yeah, over the course of years, you get to realize who they are and what they did. Right. And then of course, people have passed away and they've moved on, but it's really interesting to be part of the first generation of employees and students working with them, you as a student, and then, you know, you realize you're the second, third generation, right?

DM: Yeah.

[Pause]

DM: So, we often hear that international is FIU's middle name. What does that I, in Florida International university mean to you and Why?

JA: You know, I saw that question, the I for it. Right. You know, I think I belong to a community. That's where I see the I. Right. The me, the I, my interactions now with, teaching the grad course, right. I have about 10 students from India. And it's interesting because in the course of undergrad there were a few students from other countries. But, you know, I would say 60% were latin, right. So, you know, but different countries within the Latin community. And then as I did my masters, I got to interact with more. And then now that I'm teaching, I now have a better breadth of different students from different parts of the

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country and in the, over the 16 years of teaching SLS as well. The one thing that I feel is that I always tell them, and it's a mutual thing that when you get involved with FIU, you become a part of a community, right. So when I get to meet each of them, and I'm going to share with you, Demi, I have 37 students in my grad course, and I know each of their names by heart. When I come in, I call them by their first name, you know, Butmody or Aurora or Christian, or Arturo, right or Aisha and I do the same thing with my SLS, the most important thing that I have found out that when you call someone by their first name, you connect with them instantaneously. I had a student coming in, she was running, it was her first day. And I go, Aisha, how are you? You know my name? I go, of course, I know it's on the roster. You know? So I think that the I is, is also part of a bigger tapestry of being part of a community, right. To know that I, that I do some level of good for someone else. Right. That the thing that we exchange is knowledge, which is beneficial to us and to humanity, right. Because sometimes we have to sit down and think the world is not just about us. Right. It's about other people, but the I is important because you have to feel that you contribute that you, you have self-worth and self-value, so, yeah, I think the I is important because it centers you and it grounds you in a bigger, in a bigger cog of things. Right. So to speak that you are just as important as everybody else. And also, I'm going to share with you Demi that at the end of every SLS class, which I've been doing for the longest time, I read a poem called *Desiderata*. I bumped into that poem years ago. And I thought, you know, back then they didn't know where it came from. It you know, they thought it was from the 1600s, turns out to be from 1920 and it doesn't matter the age that it has, but it starts like this go placidly amid the noise and haste and remember what peace there may be in silence. Right. And it tells you all these good things. And it says, there's a part that says, Don't worry, the universe is unfolding as it should you have a right to be here no less than the trees and the stars. Right. So everybody has a worth, right from the leaf on a tree, to the star in the sky. I tell them, I go, you all have worth. And when you connect with them with their first name and you laugh with them, you get to know who they are, and it brings a different perspective. So I believe the I is important because it gives you a sense of belonging, but then at the same time, you know, that there are other good people around you that you want to share.

DM: So do you feel this - the campus is an international campus?

JA : Oh, yeah. Yeah, definitely. So definitely. So now I can't compare it to another campus.

Right. I mean, DM : Yeah - JA: Do I see diversity? Absolutely. Right. Do I see a sharing of different minds and thoughts? Yes. I think that the, you know, given the political climate, I think that the university has done a very good job in balancing, expectations and allowing people to share their thoughts. So, it's a tight rope sometimes, you know, but I see that the culture that's been built, has allowed diversity to flourish. Right. I see it in the composition of our class our students. Right. to some degree, I see it in the, in the diversity of faculty. Right. So when I've been exposed now to the college of business and undergrad, and I could see there's diversity. Right. So I see it in both things, on the administrative side. Yeah, we could see diversity too. I think that, the university has really

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tried to focus on bringing a diverse work group. Right. Work in progress, obviously COVID is affecting us in many ways, but I see diversity. Yes. I see, different people from different cultures. Right, and I'll tell you, it's not an easy job, because we all have different ways of looking at things. Right. But as long as we've got the right environment and we've got the right outlook, meaning, Hey, we're here for a greater good, right. We will know how to share things. Right. We'll know how to compartmentalize things and find middle ground. So, yeah, I've seen diversity and inclusion at the student level, at the faculty level, at least in my little world that I'm being exposed to and stuff.

DM: So based on your experiences with FIU, what are your hopes and dreams for the future of FIU?

JA : I hope to retire and be a landscaper for you just started tending to the roses and the gardens. Right. You know, it's funny. What's my [Inaudible 36:41] for me, I think I'm just enjoying the journey. Right. It's like asking me, Hey, what are you going to do after you ride space mountain? No, don't worry about it. Let me, let me enjoy space mountain. Right. I'm enjoying, even though it's a little taxing, like I told you earlier, it's a little taxing this teaching so many classes, right. Especially, you know, eight week courses, but I'm enjoying the journey. Right. So right now my perspective is enjoy the journey. But I'm cognizant of what the end looks like. I like to see myself more in faculty being a faculty member. Right. You know, a teaching professor position is fine. My goals are not to be in a tenured at all. It's just to be able to teach right. To import both undergrad and grad, which I'm enjoying both. I like to see myself a little bit more involved in student life, right. Student. I want to be back into that. I've been in administration for the longest time. I mean, I've been, you know, working, but I do enjoy, I do enjoy that part. I want to grow intellectually at the university. I've always told my wife, she goes, what are you gonna do when you retire? You go, oh my gosh, I'll probably go take a math course of physics. Dr. Webb, or I got to share with you Dr. Webb. One of the - he, I don't know if he knows that I'm a big fan of him, you know, Dr. Webb is one of our physicists. He's the one that really spurred that astronomy center for us. Right. DM: Ok JA: That man has re re by himself for 10 years before that building was done. Every single star party raising money. Right. Consistently, right. Just promoting the admin astronomy. And that person has been, I don't know of anybody that was able to do what he did on campus, because normally buildings are, you know, because you have a bot or a need - that that professor was able to look for a benefactor, a sponsor, raise the money and build that building With his shoulders. Right. I mean, of course, with help of other people. DM :Yeah - JA: So he is phenomenal I have always thought jokingly, like, you know, I haven't been to a star party because, you know, COVID and whatnot, but I would love to be a volunteer at the astronomy center when I retired, just to help out. Right. So I think right now, Demi is to answer your question, I'm enjoying the journey, let's finish the ride. Later on, if I could teach more often, I would definitely in a heartbeat. Right, If I continue to do some level of work for the university, I will do so. Right. you know, whether, if I'm capable, I'll continue to teach right until the end, if not then in some diminished capacity as a volunteer. But I think that, that the, the DNA of FIU is well weaved into me. You know,

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you know, all my clothes are FIU. My jackets are FIU. My office is painted FIU. Right. when I talked to people, first thing, what are you doing now ? Well I work at FIU. So I'm very proud to be an FIU member. I'm more of the quiet ones, right. I'm not, you know, but, there's a strong heartbeat of FIU. So I think pretty much to answer your question in some ways that I'll be with FIU one way or the other until the end,

DM: Thank you Jesus for your time.

JA: All right. No problem. That's it.

[End of Interview]

Transcribed by: Demi Moro, April 8, 2022