

Interviewee: Marta Vazquez

Interviewer: Ivan Rodriguez

Date: April 17, 2022

IR: Okay, and we are live.

MV: Okay

IR: Hi. My name is Ivan Rodriguez, and I am currently at home interviewing the former director of the Advising Center in the College of Education. Um this person she was an FIU, or you know she was associated with FIU for almost 40 years. Would you like to introduce yourself?

MV: Hi! My name is Martha Vazquez, and yes, I was, an FIU lifer and thank you for having me, Ivan.

IR: Sure, no problem. So, do you want to tell me about your family growing up?

MV: Sure. Um. Let's see. I came to this country on August 3rd, 1962. My eldest sister, who is a year older than me, and I came on the Peter Pan program. And the Peter Pan program was a program that encompasses 15,000 unaccompanied children leaving Cuba to the United States. It was run by the Catholic children's services. And basically, the kids came, and pretty much the parents, what they were doing is giving custody, so that Catholic services would be the body that would have custody of the kids. And all the kids came through um different camps in Florida City, and they would be placed all over the United States. Let's see my sister, and I were placed in a very small town is called Sunnyside, Washington. Washington State. So that was a big culture shock for us.

IR: And what year did this happen?

MV: This happened in nineteenth August 3rd, 1962. Um we were reunited with our parents in January of '64, even though they actually came to the United States in May '61. But what happened with all these kids was, even though the parents might have been here. They then had to sort of reestablish custody, so that they they had to have a place, a stable, you know stable place they had to show that they could support the kids that they had. We're now you know. They were now part of the archdiocese, so they had to prove that they could take custody back. So that's why the lapse the lapse of time.

IR: So, this was almost 3 years after your parents came from Cuba?

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MV: Yeah, yeah, about 3 years. And it was a huge change. I mean, first of all, um it was funny because my sister and I, even though you know, we definitely wanted to get back to our parents and everything else. We had also started to you know, have our own relationship in Sunnyside with our foster parents. Um I think we like wanted them to come up there as opposed to us coming down to Miami.

IR: So, it's safe to say that you had a you had a good relationship with your foster parents.

MV: We did, we did. We had a really good relationship, that was not necessarily what happened to a lot of kids. You know, there's been a lot of books and and different things written about this, and and not everyone had a good relationship. There were some kids that you know we're used to like help supplement somebody else's income. There were some kids that were actually abused. Thankfully, that was not the case, for you know, either my sister or I. So, so we were very fortunate.

IR: Okay, and how old were you when when you finally reunited with your parents?

MV: Let's see. when I came here, I was eight and then we reunited I was ten. Yeah, I was ten. And Annie was my sister Annie was nine and eleven.

IR: Okay. And what part of of Miami? Where did did your family settle?

MV: In Little Havana, East East Little Havana.

IR: Okay, and what did the community look like at that point in time?

MV: Oh, my goodness, okay! A lot of a lot of Cubans. East Little Havana pretty much was all Cuban. The Americans were pretty much concentrated. What is it west of 12th avenue and everyone else east of 12th avenue were primarily, primarily Cubans with Cuban businesses. It was a type of community that you like my my parents, my my parents, didn't speak English. And what happened with that is that they didn't even have to learn English, because everybody, everybody was in that little enclave less city, and everybody worked and lived their life in there. So, and I think that was pretty common for

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everybody a lot of you know a lot of the parents on didn't know english, which was pretty common.

IR: So, what what type of work did did your parents do?

MV: My mom was a pharmacist, and my dad owned a shoe repair.

IR: Okay. So, we can safely assume that that they were, you know, part of the community, and they were giving back to the community and well known and respected in the community.

MV: Yeah, I think so. I think so. And that was the other thing about about that time period. Everybody knew everybody, so that you know it was just a different time. Where, where you would be outside, you would walk to school by yourself um without really a lot of fear. And I think that naturally happens when there's such a need for parents to not be home because everybody's working.

IR: Right.

MV: Well when they're working multiple jobs. So, and I think, at least for for me and my sister. The fact that we had come through Pedro Pan, you kind of grow up real quick. So, we were not, were we were not usual kids of, you know, 10 years old. We were much older than than our age.

IR: Right. I mean, you were kind of forced to grow up.

MV: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

IR: Okay. So, what what what brought you? I know you you attended FIU. You graduated from from Miami High School, correct?

MV: I did. I did.

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IR: And so, what what brought you over to the FIU? How did you, or what did you decide to attend FIU for?

MV: Okay. It was pretty much a default, and what I mean it was it was, and I think for a lot of kids and for a very long time of for the entire population of FIU students. It was like a fall back. I had gone, I fit, I graduated high school, Miami High in 1972. From there I started Miami Dade. I had actually I had applied to transfer from Miami Dade to FSU, because by that time I had decided that I wanted to get my degree in social work, and I actually went through the process of applying, I got admitted. But then I was really unable to go, because my parents couldn't afford me going away. So, FIU was the natural thing.

IR: Right. Okay, do you want to tell me about your college years at FIU?

MV: Okay, yeah, well, um let's see. I was there as a student for 2 years. I absolutely loved my degree program. I can say that program shaped who I became as an adult. It was probably one of the most significant events of my life. I think about the things of my lifetime, and there was like Peter Pan, and then there was my FIU program. I absolutely loved it. The faculty were incredible. And it's funny because it was a very It was a very young faculty. A very young faculty group, and but I think every one of the time was so excited about being there. So, it was very, very different.

IR: And what major did you end up studying?

MV: Social work.

IR: Social work.

MV: Yeah. So, at the time that I transferred to FIU, I, it was September of '74. I also worked as a student assistant. I worked about 25 hours a week as a student assistant, and I worked in the registrar's office, which is another little community that was awesome. I think FIU as a whole, was a very small community at the time. I want to see there were something like, when I started, maybe I don't know 6 to 7,000 students around there.

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IR: Oh, wow! And what was the majority of the makeup of the students?

MV: Well, the makeup, well that was very interesting. I would venture to say that more than half were adult learners. So, the majority of the class, a lot of the classes were at night. College age students were, that was a very small community, so it was very difficult to have a college atmosphere. There really wasn't you know, because people, the majority of the students that were there were adult learners, they you know they came into FIU, took their classes and left, and that was, you know that was it, which then made the um where you work like what became your entire community really. So, it was very, very different than certainly not any type of college type environment.

IR: Okay. So, it was more of a commuter school, or maybe like a community college type of atmosphere?

MV: Definitely a commuter school.

IR: Okay

MV: Definitely, and I think that was pretty much the sense at FIU up until, I don't know. I would say probably the 90s.

IR: Oh, wow!

MV: Yeah, a long time, long long time.

IR: Which doesn't seem that long when you look at it in hindsight.

MV: Exactly.

IR: And what, what, what, what were your successes or accomplishments, and maybe challenges or frustrations that you experienced at your time attending FIU?

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MV: Let's see. Honestly, I did not feel that I had any challenges. And I and I know that for me, a lot of it was the fact that I was a social work major, so that I think the faculty in areas like that are very unique. They were very available students. They were very understanding of students, particularly for the adult learners, which was kind of interesting for someone my age. I was in a college age student, but I find that I learned so much from my classmates because they were adult learners.

IR: Oh, wow, and did you experience like any frustrations. I guess more in the sense of what was the surrounding community? Was it mostly Hispanics at that time? I know that that the school had just probably, you know, incorporated. But like it, was it more Americanized at the time because right now you look at FIU, and its mostly Hispanic population. Was it the same around that time? Or did you feel more at home because there was more Hispanics around?

MV: You know that for me didn't even factor in and I think that had a lot to do with the fact that I had those two-plus years in Washington. So that I didn't necessarily think of myself as Hispanic if you can understand.

IR: No, completely understand.

MV: Yeah, yeah, I like I really didn't like I remember when my, when I came back to Miami. I had practically lost my Spanish, and it took me a while to be able to communicate in Spanish again. And also, you get at that time kids wanted to fit in. So, even though you were Cuban, you were Hispanic. You didn't want to act Cuban or Hispanic. You wanted to be American.

IR: So, was there a kind of like kids assimilating more?

MV: Yeah, for sure.

IR: Than what you would see now in present time, or is it about the same?

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MV: Well, I I mean, I think kids assimilated. Wanted to assimilate. And I I mean what I see now in terms of in terms of assimilation. Is it's a mix. It's a mixed bag where you take, you know you take the better pieces of your culture and incorporate them in in the American culture.

IR: Right.

MV: I think I associate more with being in American that I am being a Cuban, even though for me as I grew older like I feel more Cuban now that I'm 68 years old, but I feel more Cuban now than I did when I was 20.

IR: Right.

MV: So, and I think that's you know I think that happens to everybody. It's not unique to my experiences.

IR: Yeah, it's a I mean it is totally understandable and you know that when people are young, you know they're still trying to find themselves and assimilation, sometimes it's probably the easiest, course, to take than you know following the norms of your parents, or what you know heritage you came from, sometimes it is easier, and that's totally understandable and also that you know that around when you become a little bit older, you try to, you know, embrace where you came from.

MV: Yeah.

IR: I mean it all. It all makes sense.

MV: Yeah.

IR: So how did once you graduated, you, you know. Did you move away from where you lived from your family or no?

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MV: No, no. Okay, let's see. So, I started FIU in '74. I finished my degree 2 years later. At the time I you know, I worked at FIU in the registrar's office. I was gung-ho. I mean here I am with my bachelor's degree in social work. And gung-ho to save people's life. And then reality set in because the jobs were absolutely miserable jobs in in social work. You could expect to have a salary of \$90. \$90 a week.

IR: Oh wow.

MV: I remember my younger sister, who was in high school at the time, had a part-time job; that she made more money than that. So that kind of leads into why, I sort of stayed at FIU. The fact that I had chosen, you know I had chosen a degree where you did not go into a FIU because you wanted to make money. I mean that's and that happens now, too.

IR: Oh, no, for sure.

MV: Anything that had to do with that, I think, has stayed the same. So, the other thing that buys into that is the fact that FIU had, you know, I came to FIU at exactly the right time in terms of having lots of jobs opening up, in terms of having a lot of opportunities to move up. And in fact, that was exactly what happened. I, you know I would go out, and I really wanted to work in the field, and I just. I could not afford to take a job as a social worker. I wouldn't you know. So, I took a job in the registrar's office as a clerk, and that's really how I started my career at FIU.

IR: Wow. So, you never really left after you graduated?

MV: Well, I had a little hiatus there for about, I think a total of 3, no, the total of 5 years I think it was. Because even though I you know, I got a job at FIU. I graduated; I got another job at FIU. I still, you know, I wanted to practice what I had studied. So, there was a faculty member who offered me a job, in believe it or not, citizens crime watch. Which was the existing organization that that is still alive now, except that then it had started as a grant program, and he had been one of my professors and you know I'm starting this program, and I think you would love it. I want you to come in as an operational manager. And I

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was super excited because it had, you know it had to do, it was actually part of a law enforcement grant. Little did I know that it, first of all was a grant position.

IR: Right.

MV: That lasted only 6 months, and then they did not get renewed. And here I was out of a job. And from there I went into the private sector. I worked for a headhunter. And I was there for 4 years maybe? Around 4 years. They went under, and then I was jobless.

MV: I got a call from my former boss. He said, I want you to come back to FIU. I only you know I need somebody just on a temporary basis. Please come back would really help me out. I said okay, you know I'm not working I haven't found a job. Let me go ahead and go. Thinking that I'm always going to be leaving FIU. Well, I never left.

IR: I feel like everybody that starts working at FIU goes through the same, you know, just gonna, it's gonna be a summer job. End up staying there, 20 years later, and it's I'm still here.

MV: It's ok.

IR: No, it's fine really.

IR: So, what? what? What did FIU, you know, like? What was it like when you when you started working there?

MV: Oh, God, okay, it was a very small community. You knew everybody and everybody knew you. I think so many people had such a strong work ethic. People worked all different hours. People would work overtime without being paid for it. You know there was such a sense of family, and I think that that was something that happened from the top down. I mean, I can remember Chuck Perry, who was the first president of the University, had no qualms about going into the registrar's office. And just to say, hi. Yeah, yeah, it was really, it was fascinating. I think that was one of the things that nurtured my own sense of love for the place.

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IR: Because it gave that that family atmosphere.

MV: Yeah, exactly, exactly. And you were vested. You were absolutely vested in that place, growing and becoming what it what it is now. And I think that stayed like that for a long, long time. I mean, it was not unusual to be a lifer. It wasn't. It just you know it happened.

IR: Yeah, I mean a lot of times It just seems like the people that were there first it's kind of like you guys helped build the school. So, I mean, you would hate to see, to leave because you feel like you're part of it.

MV: Yeah, yeah.

IR: And you want to help succeed as well.

MV: Yeah, exactly. Exactly.

IR: And did you have any influential mentors at the time, or during your path?

MV: Trying to think. I actually did have a very influential person in my life in that actually happened to be. My very first academic advisor. Who was a person that actually became, an assistant provost many, many, many years later. But there, wasn't, really a there wasn't a mentorship structure like there is now. Because the university, I mean, the university had to grow, and there were not a lot of systems in place. But that person was always a person that I always could go to, and throughout the years at FIU what I would. I would go to her in terms of professional help and in terms of personal help. But it wasn't it wasn't anything that was, there wasn't a structure. it just kind of happened.

IR: Organically?

MV: Yes, very much so. And I look at FIU now, and I know that mentorship is something that's very important.

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IR: Do you think that's something that's if you had a mechanism of mentoring in place when you started working there? Do you feel things could have been different for you? Or would have been better?

MV: Maybe. Maybe. With me, I always felt that I you know, whatever I. First of all, I was always very grateful that I got to go, that I went as far as I did professionally. How I moved in the ranks was something that probably would not happen right now. But it's something that happened because I had been there a long time. I was a great employee. I was FIU rah-rah and would do anything. I did, I did, and I mean I loved it, and like I felt that this place gave so much to the community. And had FIU not been there, a lot of people would not have a post-secondary degree. And that, I know for sure. Because they were being so busy raising families that they couldn't go away.

IR: Right.

MV: So, I think mentorship is something that in terms of a structure happens after all the other structures are put in place. I don't think mentorship is something that happens right off the top because you're, it's like you're learning through the process.

IR: Right. But there were people that were willing to kind of, you know, if you had any issues or looking for any guidance.

MV: Oh, yeah, yeah, definitely, but nothing, it was very personally based. You know it wasn't that it's just a relationship that you created with a particular person. And that person was always there for her and it wasn't a system type of thing.

IR: Okay, makes sense. Okay, so let's shift a little bit to kind of like FIU's culture, and you know how it differs from when you began working until the time that you retired.

MV: Oh, my goodness. Huge! Let's see obviously I think when I started you know it. That family unit was definitely there. As time went on it's almost impossible to have that continue, because we were growing so fast. And I gotta say and I've got to hand it to President Maidique. He wasn't my favorite person, but the growth that happened to that

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university under his run was phenomenal. And you know, growth has like a double-edged sword. We grew very quickly, and we always did not have the best say student systems, because we were creating other systems. You know we were creating, we, meaning the university was creating the systems like you know how to maintain all these records. So we didn't, have you know money was tight the institutional money was always tight, and and you were buying for piece of the pie.

IR: Right.

MV: And a piece of a pie always went to academics. Which is you know honestly where it needed to go. That's where you need to go, because the institution has to have an academic reputation with, you know. So, it makes sense, even though, as far as like from someone like me, my part was a student issue. And sometimes it was a little bit difficult to swallow, that that student affairs was not always at the priority of the institution. I think that has shifted, and I think that began to shift. I would say the last 10 years of my tenure there. Where students were important.

IR: And you and you think that had to do a lot with FIU establishing themselves academically, and then they could go ahead and put some, some, some importance on the students?

MV: Yes, absolutely, because then, you know, then you could attract the the saluatorians and and the valedictorians of the community. I don't know are you aware that if I you did not start out as a four-year institution.

IR: Oh, yeah, I honestly just learned it in in this course. As a matter of fact, it did start out as a 2 year.

MV: Yeah. Yeah. which yeah.

IR: To which she, professor described it as you did. That, you know, a lot of the students they came for night school. And you know, there's been talks also of you know, how some other people that were interviewed for this, they kind of gave the same account as you did. That they came back a couple of years later, trying to get their diploma because they

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didn't finish. Because they had family responsibilities as well, and it was maybe within the 10 years, and I guess the school was completely different to them. The same school that that you know that that they started going with that you know the night classes 2 years. So, you know it expanded. But I I feel like that's you know you have to grow, especially if you're gonna be serving the community. You have to give the community options of bettering themselves.

MV: Right. Exactly.

IR: So, I know you mentioned something about, I guess, the Maidique regime. Is that something that you you want to share about?

MV: Yeah. Sure. Why not? Let's see, he was the longest tenured president for 20 plus years, I think. I'm trying to remember I think he came in like mid '80s. And he left in around 2010, maybe. So, he was there a long time, and now it's funny because for me he he wasn't he was like a shift for me, in terms of in terms of personality. Prior to that, Chuck Perry, Harold Crosby, Gregory Wolf were were people who I identified as very FIU. And then comes Mitch Maidique, who was kind of an an outsider. He came from MIT, but he was very ambitious. He would, and he was very ambitious for the institution. I remember going to one of his interviews. And one of the things that that he said was, I'm here to do 3 things, and that is number one, to get a law school. Number two, to get a medical school, and number three, to get a football program. And by God, that's exactly what he did. And when you think about it, you know, when you think about influential schools, you gotta have schools that that have a law program. You have to have schools that have a medical degree, and a football team. Think about the University of Miami.

IR: Yeah

MV: People know about the University of Miami because of its athletics.

IR: Correct.

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MV: And and Mitch Maidique had that vision, and I mean, that was a hefty vision to have. All these three things to happen. And I thought to myself, I remember when I heard that I thought to myself, is he out of his mind, there's no way... and he did. He absolutely did that. At a big cost. But he did it. And I think that's that he was very much a visionary, and he, you know, I think most people felt that there was no way that that was going to happen. But he did it, and I mean granted he you know he wasn't he wasn't what FIU had known previously. As far as you know that family feeling kind of thing, I mean it's like, you know, he was President, if you know what I mean.

IR: Yeah, Yeah, yeah

MV: He wasn't necessarily approachable

IR: And he probably wasn't going in saying hello to people's offices either.

MV: Right, right. He was busy. But granted, I mean, during his tenure was where where we had that explosion of students. And it was murder to work because the systems could not the systems couldn't keep up, you know especially like in registration and financial aid and admissions. We were working off a systems that were not couldn't hold the growth as quickly as it happened. And he really was the person that made that happen.

IR: Well, kudos to him then.

MV: Yeah, no, for sure. You know he was he was the person we needed at the time, and that's what I mean by a double-edged sword. The double-edged sword. Is that, okay. You can't have everything. You can have at that time we couldn't have that community. If you wanted to grow the way he wanted to grow.

IR: Right.

MV: Something's got to give. Unfortunately, you have to prove yourself as an institution that you're worthy of the state giving me the kind of money that he was able to get. So yeah.

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IR: All right. Okay. So, let's move let's move on then. So, what do you believe have been some of the most impactful events or moments during your time with FIU?

MV: My personally? Okay, let's see. For me, I think when I went to the College of Education. What was impactful for me there was, I was the first A&P person at the college ever had. I don't know if you know what A&P is. I mean an A&P is administrative and professional position. Prior to me going to the College of Education. You were either faculty or you were like a clerical person. They were no administrative, administrative professional positions. And I was able to go in, apply for a position in and get the position. But what was so great about it? It was specifically in student services. Which was all prior to that that did not happen. There was no such thing as an advising center. You know, you either you either work a working bee or you were a faculty and that's it. So, for me that was really really impactful. I was able. I had the opportunity to start building systems that could be beneficial to students, because even at that time in this I want to say this: this was early '90s, mid-90's, students weren't always the big concern.

IR: Right.

MV: So, for me, I felt that I was a really good person for that position, because number one that was always my love, student affairs. And number two, it gave me the opportunity to start building things and to help students, which was really my first love.

IR: So, can we deduce that that's probably one of the proudest accomplishments during your time at FIU?

MV: Oh, most certainly. Absolutely, absolutely. I mean I was like the historian. Because we grew as quickly as we did. There was a lot of history that was lost in terms of systems. So, it would, it was not unusual for someone to come back to school, and nobody could find their records. I was, you know I was the person that I knew what systems were being used back then in the registrar's office, because that was my background. So, I was in a unique position to help students on an individual basis that perhaps would not have been helped. So that for me was extremely extremely rewarding.

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IR: That's great. And with your background in in social work.

MV: There you go!

IR: Dealing with these students is kind of you know. It may not be exactly...

MV: And you know it's it's funny because I even though I never worked as an official social worker. There were times of my job I felt very much like a social worker, you know. And the skills set that I got from my degree program were skills that I used throughout my entire professional career. So that if I had to do it all over again in terms of education, I would still go that route.

IR: It's great. Do you have a favorite memory associated with FIU?

MV: I feel like there were so many I remember one in particular like at the beginning, and that was I can't remember the year. But it was the year that was soccer team, and it was a division to soccer team. Won, like they won like everything, and I remember going, they would be like groups of people that work at FIU, faculty that worked at FIU, and we would go up. We would follow the team back and forth. You know all these different, and I remember winning that championship that year. So that was a great memory for me. Let's see, in the College of Education was when we got our own building, that was big! That was a really big thing was getting your own building at the institution. It's like it was like we're finally being recognized.

IR: Yeah. Because when when you started, how many buildings was there at FIU?

MV: Oh, my God! Well, when I started there were 3 buildings. There was Primera Casa or Charles Perry Building. There was DM. Then there was like a little version of the Graham Center. Which was known as University House. But it was like a little piece of what is now the University house.

IR: Right. So, yeah, I mean, it came a long way from 3 buildings to having your own building.

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MV: Yeah, yeah, that was like that was a big deal, that was a big deal. Let's see. We had again, in the college of education we had a lot of students that would win feature of the year or in the in the Miami School district. Rookie of the year. So, I mean that was, you know, that was pretty amazing. Our faculty was... in the College of Education. I think that the faculty was very much into his helping students succeed. They got to know, at least in the in the teaching programs. I'm sure, you know that not all the programs in the college of education are teaching programs. Let's see what else. You know, there were a lot of moments and what I got out of it was certainly a lot more than any other negative implications. You know? So that I would still go through the same path. If given the opportunity, I would still do the same thing.

IR: That's great. And what sort of challenge or excuse me. What sort of changes have you observed at FIU or in the surrounding community during your time there?

MV: I think one of the things is when you when you look around the community and look around the leaders of the community and the civic activists of the community. When you go back, and you try to find out who these people were. A lot of these people were FIU people in terms of people that had come back to FIU to get their degree, because now they've had that opportunity. And I think that that is, that was always the rule of FIU. That was always the mission of FIU, even from when it started, because there was nothing. There was no other institution that people could go to. And I think that kind of has stayed. And I know that a lot of administrators would disagree with me. But I think that we will always be a commuter type school. And that's because of location, I mean, I don't think we're ever gonna be a UF or an FSU, even though there's a lot of that now in terms of you know being a pure college experiment or a pure college experience. But that's just, I think something that that is inherent to whenever you have an institution in an urban area that happens.

IR: It doesn't make it a bad place, either.

MV: Oh no! It makes it a great place you know to be able, because I mean I'm not a true believer, that everything is what happens to people is directly related to the educational opportunities that you have. And if FIU wasn't where it is, a lot of people would not have

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that opportunity. And I think that that's still happens today. Perhaps not as much, but it's still an important piece to the mission of the institution.

IR: So, speaking of the institution. We often hear that the, you know International is our middle name at FIU. What are you? To you, what does the "I" in Florida International University mean?

MV: I think it does mean international. That was the piece that that I think we really excelled at initially. I mean, I remember most a lot of colleges. The when I mean colleges is the different. The different colleges within FIU, had started working with international things, and events before anyone else. For instance, in the College of Education. I want to say that even back in the '80s they had cohorts of Chinese students coming in and getting their degree at FIU. The college, or the school of hospitality. Building, having a building in China. Trying to think, the college of business. They were always very much into the international scene. So yeah, I think we are, and I think we'll always be international institution. And again, that goes to location.

IR: Makes sense, right? Okay, and based on your experiences with FIU, what are your hopes and dreams for the future of FIU?

MV: Hmm! I think it's to continue to realize that opportunity is something that will always be needed, particularly in a place like this. That is really immigrant community. I hope we never get away from that. So that other people can have the same opportunities that many of us had.

IR: And so, we're getting ready to wrap up the interview. Do you have any words of wisdom prior to wrapping this up?

MV: Words wisdom?

IR: Remember that this is going to be housed in the library as an archive. So, you know, some other students in the future may or may not come across it. So, you know any words of wisdom to them or to anybody else that may listen to this in the future?

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MV: I think, for students. The only thing I can say is, realize that higher education is the only way to a success. Not only professionally, but you as a person. I think the exposure that you have, as is in post-secondary education is very unique to anything else. This is where this is a time where you grow up. What you experience in post-secondary and beyond. It is very unique to who you will become as a person. I read... I had a very interesting stat that I looked up once, and it said something like only 2% of women hold doctorate degrees, Hispanic women hold doctorate degrees that's pretty low. So, I think that kind of stuff very much goes to the mission, the institution, and we will forever be tied to that.

IR: That is very true. On the upside, there are more women attending higher education now than men are so hopefully that'll increase the doctorates for women.

MV: Exactly!

IR: So that's great! I want to thank you very much for your time, and I hope we can have another talk in the future.

MV: All right.

IR: So, I'm going to stop recording now.

MV: Okay, I wish you much success, and I hope that you're getting as much as possible from your degree program.

IR: Oh, I definitely am. and I like you said it's I feel like it's it's a very important for somebody to actually get a degree in higher education, because it does give you that that sense, of you know becoming a lifelong learner, and it does make you a whole person. So yeah...

MV: And it actually, it actually makes you realize the impact you can have on others. Yeah, it's it's in the positive, the positive impact.

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IR: Very true. That is very true. I couldn't agree with you more than what you just said right now.

MV: Yeah, all right. So, thank you. I really enjoyed it, Ivan

IR: And no, thank you.

MV: It takes me back.

IR: I'm glad. I hope it was it was a good experience for you.

MV: It is, it is. Thank you.

IR: Awesome. Thank you very much.

[End of interview]

Transcribed by: Ivan Rodriguez