



Chief Innovation Officer & Executive Director
Alan B. Levan | NSU Broward Center of Innovation
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

THE SEARCH

The Alan B. Levan | NSU Broward Center of Innovation, an award-winning private-public partnership between Nova Southeastern University (NSU) and Broward County, welcomes applications and nominations for the position of Chief Innovation Officer and Executive Director (CINO). Under the leadership of the CINO, the Levan Center attracts and retains industry-leading entrepreneurs, sources of investment capital, and supporting resources and partnerships with the goal of creating the premier innovation center in South Florida. The CINO is charged with sharpening a comprehensive strategy, increasing engagement and start-up incubation within NSU and throughout Broward County and South Florida, and elevating the profile of the Levan Center as the premier convener and resource for entrepreneurial innovation.

Founded in 2021, the Levan Center was established as a magnet for start-ups, accelerators, incubation, and angel investments that drive sustainable entrepreneurial innovation in technology, life and health sciences, financial services, and other industries in South Florida's thriving business ecosystem. The Levan Center provides programming, networking, mentoring, workspaces, wraparound business services, and state-of-the-art amenities in 54,000 square feet of space at NSU's main campus near Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Founded in 1964, NSU has grown to become Florida's largest private research university with over 22,000 students enrolled across 14 colleges and 5 medical schools. NSU recently achieved R1 Carnegie Classification status.

With a mandate to support innovation and entrepreneurial education throughout NSU, grow engagement with the South Florida business community, and continue to elevate the profile of the Levan Center, the CINO will be action-oriented, focused, and work collaboratively with academic, civic, and business leaders to enhance a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem. The successful candidate will be a convener, motivator, and relationship builder with the gravitas to capitalize on South Florida's thriving entrepreneurial scene and NSU's vast educational, clinical, research, and innovation enterprise. Adept at managing operations, the CINO will be eager to fuse their experience in entrepreneurial incubation and business development, have a demonstrated ability to forge partnerships across stakeholders from different industry backgrounds, and possess an appreciation for academic culture and structures.

The Alan B. Levan | NSU Broward Center of Innovation has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this search. All applications, inquiries, and nominations, which will remain confidential, should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT THE ALAN B. LEVAN | NSU BROWARD CENTER OF INNOVATION

The Alan B. Levan | NSU Broward Center of Innovation is a public-private partnership between Nova Southeastern University and Broward County intended to act as an economic and education development engine for the South Florida entrepreneurial ecosystem. The Levan Center's mission is to be the epicenter of entrepreneurship, innovation, technology, and research where visionaries develop impactful solutions that drive economic and social progress and promote a culture of innovation. With a vision of being the leader and convener of entrepreneurs in a region that is known for its culture of innovation, the Levan Center supports the "founder's journey" from the birth of an idea through the successful exit or global expansion.

The Levan Center opened in 2021 with funding provided through a public/private partnership with Broward County and Nova Southeastern University and a lead gift from [Mr. Alan B. Levan](#). Together with other philanthropic contributions and partnerships, a total of \$20 million was raised. The Levan Center provides programs, spaces, and wraparound business services to entrepreneurs and early-stage startups for the buildout and scaling up of their business. The next generation of business startups are developed at the Center through four [Core Programs](#). The Core Programs of Ideate, Incubate, Accelerate, and Post-Accelerate are designed to support success, regardless of the phase of the startup. All core programs have well-defined, time-based, objectives and include masterclass sessions, access to prototyping, mentoring, and access to services that support business growth and success. The programs are augmented with workshops on a variety of topics that are open to South Florida entrepreneurs. Many entrepreneurs who completed programs and their startups are in the revenue phase, have received funding, and won national pitch competitions." At present, entrepreneurs representing approximately 75 startups are engaged in the Levan Center's current slate of Core Programs.

In addition to the Core Programs, the Levan Center offers various training programs around technology and entrepreneurship. Examples of recent program topics include artificial intelligence, user interfaces, and spatial computing. Many programs, such as the regularly held lunch and learn workshops, are held in partnership or sponsorship with South Florida businesses and foundations such as the Truist Foundation, Chase Bank, and/or Veterans Florida.

Today's competitive, tech-driven environment calls for strategic partnerships to stimulate economic development and knowledge generation, of which the Levan Center serves as a convener of such networks and ideas. For example, organizations such as The Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance, the South Florida Manufacturers Association, & Broward County utilize the Center's coworking spaces, who in turn serve as resources and points of contact for entrepreneurs. Since its inception, the Levan Center's unique mission has been to serve South Florida's business entrepreneurs, as well as NSU's students, faculty, staff, and researchers pursuing startup success and related educational endeavors.

South Florida is home to several established industry clusters. Aligned with the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance's [targeted business sectors](#), the Levan Center offers tailored services to industries encompassing everything from sea to space. From aviation and aerospace to global logistics, life sciences to manufacturing, and marine industries to technology, the area offers a solid infrastructure to support these and other growing industries. Additionally, Fort Lauderdale is home to a highly trained and skilled workforce that ensures these industries continue to grow and prosper.

The Levan Center is located in Fort Lauderdale, Florida in Nova Southeastern University's Alvin Sherman Library, one of Florida's largest public libraries. Occupying the fifth floor with 54,000 square feet of space and amenities, the Levan Center is among the largest of its kind in the nation and is a hub of innovation in South Florida's thriving entrepreneurial market. Entrepreneurs engaged with the Levan Center have unique access to fully-equipped, remarkable amenities and equipment including a cybersecurity range, media production studio, technology makerspace, and a cutting-edge 3D studio. The Levan Center's workspaces and extraordinary meeting venues are available for rent and event use.

About Nova Southeastern University

Nova Southeastern University is a dynamic, private research university providing high-quality educational and research programs at undergraduate, graduate, and professional degree levels. Established in 1964, the university includes 14 colleges, 5 medical schools, the 215,000-square-foot Center for Collaborative Research, the private PreK2-12 grade NSU University School, the world-class NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale, and the Alvin Sherman Library. NSU students learn at campuses in Fort Lauderdale and 10 other campus locations in Florida, Colorado, and Puerto Rico, as well as online globally. NSU is Florida's largest private research university with an economic impact of approximately \$5 billion in Florida. The university was also recognized as the #23 top employer in Florida, according to *Forbes*. Dr. Harry K. Moon, NSU's seventh president and a member of the Levan Center's Board of Governors, assumed the presidency in January 2025.

NSU's more than 20,000 currently enrolled students come from more than 115 countries and all 50 U.S. states. Of the current student body, approximately 7,400 students are undergraduates. NSU offers more than 150 degree programs and awards more than 7,000 degrees annually. NSU has built a reputation for producing confident, capable, and caring professionals who make a difference in the lives of people in Florida and around the globe. Small classes, low student-to-faculty ratio, and impressive outcomes are all reasons why NSU continues to be a top-ranked university and a national leader in education. In addition to world-class educational opportunities, NSU is home to innovative research, patient-centered health care with more than 30 clinical locations, and more.

With nearly 216,000 alumni across the nation and globe, the reach of the NSU community is worldwide. NSU was recently classified as an R1 research university, according to the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. NSU is one of only two private universities in the state of Florida with this designation and is one of two universities in Florida to achieve this designation this

year. NSU is also the largest private institution in the United States that meets the U.S. Department of Education's criteria as a Hispanic-Serving Institution.

About Broward County

Broward County is the second-most populous county in the state of Florida, with more than 1.95 million residents. Broward is a hub for both business and leisure. Its largest city and home to NSU, Fort Lauderdale, is renowned for its picturesque beaches, world-class dining, and cultural venues. With more than 300 miles of waterways, it's known as the "Venice of America," offering residents the opportunity to enjoy boating, water sports, and year-round outdoor activities. The county also boasts an average of 246 sunny days annually. Additionally, Broward County is home to a variety of excellent schools.

Broward County's strategic location positions it as a leader in several industries, with the region's economy valued at more than \$123 billion. Last year, Broward County ranked 2nd in Florida and 12th nationally in the highest GDP growth. The county's diverse business sectors include technology, health care, tourism, and finance. Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport is a key transportation hub, contributing to Broward County's status as a global gateway and offering convenient access to markets worldwide. With an affordable cost of living compared to other major metropolitan areas like Miami, Broward County presents an excellent opportunity for both young professionals and families.

ROLE OF THE CHIEF INNOVATION OFFICER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The role requires someone who can successfully think creatively and strategically, while simultaneously managing the essential operations of the Levan Center. The CINO operates as the Chief Entrepreneur for the Levan Center, partnering with business and community leaders, as well as NSU's leadership, faculty, and staff to lead the Levan Center's mission of promoting a culture of innovation. The CINO reports directly to NSU's President, [Harry K. Moon, M.D., FACS, FRCSEd](#) and is a member of the President's Council, along with NSU's deans and other executive leaders. The 17-member Board of Governors, chaired by Mr. Levan, is an advisory board and comprises NSU and Broward County executives, as well as local business leaders.

The CINO is expected to provide significant leadership and advocacy in the formation and execution of key strategic initiatives. They directly oversee the management and operations of the Center, which includes an approximately \$3 million operating budget, 54,000 square feet of space with state-of-the-art equipment, and a team of six full-time employees. Approximately one-third of revenues are generated from earned income sources such as programs, co-working spaces, event rentals, and sponsorships. NSU, Broward County, and generous gifts from Mr. Levan, and other local philanthropists also contribute to the Center's funds. The executive leadership team reporting to the CINO is comprised of a Deputy Executive Director, Director of Community Engagement, and an Assistant Executive Director of Programs.

The Levan Center was recognized in 2022 as an Outstanding Emerging Entrepreneurship Center by the Global Consortium for Entrepreneurship Centers. Approaching its fourth year of operation, the Levan

Center has already forged a respected name for itself and has gained momentum as a valued resource and convener for South Florida's entrepreneurs. A future-focused entrepreneur with an appreciation for higher education, the CINO will enhance the Center's ongoing momentum by seeking and nurturing new partnerships and increasing engagement with the Center, both externally and internally to NSU. The outcomes of such efforts should be an increase in the number of successful businesses incubated at the Levan Center.

The Levan Center is a collaboration between NSU, local business leaders, and Broward County. The CINO should be adept at engaging stakeholders across these sectors, and meeting as many shared needs as possible. Of particular importance in the work ahead is achieving greater integration with NSU's educational and research activities. The CINO and their team is also tasked with continuing to develop a portfolio of programs and resources that effectively serve and support start-up and entrepreneurial success in NSU and throughout Broward County.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE CHIEF INNOVATION OFFICER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As the Alan B. Levan NSU Broward Center of Innovation reflects on its successes as well as opportunities for the future, the CINO will play a critical role. Specifically, the CINO will address the following:

Refine and execute a focused and effective strategy for success.

The Levan Center is approaching the start of its fourth year and has benefitted from significant investments and strong partnerships in a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem. The CINO, who should be well-versed with entrepreneurship and incubation organizations, will collaboratively build on this foundation and the ongoing momentum and craft the overall vision and strategy for the Center's future and ambitions. The Levan Center is in its own startup phase, and the CINO will continue strengthening the organization's foundation and collaboratively chart cohesive strategies for sustainability, growth, collaborations, and overall success.

In partnership with NSU, Broward County, the Levan Center Board of Governors, and local business stakeholders, the CINO will pursue a strategy that elevates the Levan Center as the go-to destination for convening with South Florida's entrepreneurs, driving real world impact, and facilitating start-up success. The CINO will identify market opportunities, assess risks, and make informed, focused, mission-consistent, and resource-sensitive decisions. The Center's strategy should effectively showcase the value propositions offered by the Center and its ability to connect entrepreneurs and elevate their businesses to the next level. The CINO's strategic planning efforts will culminate in the development of a detailed strategic roadmap that will ground and inform the Levan Center's endeavors. The CINO's strategic work will also include formulating clear objectives and metrics for success for the Levan Center by which they and their team will be evaluated.

Facilitate integration with Nova Southeastern University's teaching and innovation mission.

NSU has built the foundation for an environment where innovation and entrepreneurship can flourish. The success of the Levan Center, and its role in supporting innovation at NSU, has been established as a university-wide priority by NSU President Dr. Harry Moon. The CINO will capitalize on the university's existing strengths and will serve as an impetus for fostering a culture of innovation throughout NSU – for administrators, faculty, staff, and students. The Levan Center will become the go-to resource for members of the NSU community who are seeking the education, tools, and guidance needed to develop their ideas, research, and start-ups.

The prospects for synergistic collaboration throughout NSU are abundant as the university continues to foster groundbreaking discoveries that impact our world. In concert with key university stakeholders, the CINO will support NSU's efforts to commercialize NSU's discoveries and apply the Center's expertise and resources in guiding the translation of intellectual property into licensable technologies and startup ventures. They will work collaboratively to establish NSU as a premier destination for academics and investigators who seek to bring their innovations to market. They will also be tasked in forging educational and experiential learning opportunities for students. The CINO and their team will apply their collective expertise, and the Levan Center's resources, to support the growth of NSU-generated start-ups and engage the next generation of entrepreneurs.

Enhance the Levan Center's incubation and engagement impact with South Florida's innovation community.

The Levan Center is situated in one of the most vibrant entrepreneurial environments in the world. The Center's space and amenities are exemplary. So, too, are the Core Programs that have effectively supported local business leaders in launching and growing their start-ups. Moving forward, the CINO will maximize the number of companies that are incubated at the Levan Center. They will also be a convener of local associations and organizations that can collaboratively strengthen the Levan Center's mission of entrepreneurial incubation and success. These efforts include working closely with Broward County and municipal government leaders. Of particular importance in the work ahead is fulfilling the Center's vision of being the premier convener of South Florida's innovators, entrepreneurs, investors, and start-up professionals.

The Levan Center provides valuable resources, services, and programs, and is also a gathering place for South Florida's innovation community, especially for start-up professionals and venture capitalists within South Florida's targeted industries such as technology, manufacturing, climate technology, medical technology, and life sciences. A leader with a growth mindset, the CINO will be specifically tasked with elevating the profile of the Levan Center in Broward County and beyond and generating considerably increased member engagement and retention among business professionals and key community partnerships. The work required in this regard involves attracting entrepreneurs and investors to engage with the Center and utilize its resources—and, ultimately, delivering quality programming that will increase the likelihood of participant success in the marketplace.

The CINO will also be expected to grow and sustain mutually beneficial partnerships with the Center. Meaningful relationships with institutional, corporate, and county leaders are vital in amplifying the innovative efforts already in place and convening around initiatives yet to be imagined. The CINO is a leader with a bias for collaboration and can produce and sustain positive partnerships across professional backgrounds. The outcome of these partnerships should be enhancing the effectiveness of the Levan Center and its partners in achieving the economic growth imperative of South Florida. The Levan Center can and should have a direct impact in South Florida's economy by building up successful businesses, attracting and retaining a talented workforce, and capitalizing on the momentum and strength of the already dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem that exists in the community.

Ensure financial sustainability and secure viable resource pathways for growth.

The Levan Center has a remarkably strong operational foundation. The \$15 million Levan Center benefitted from strong start-up investments and partnerships. NSU is committed to increasing future funding to unlock the full potential of the Levan Center, and efforts are currently underway to strengthen the financial support from the university and community organizations.

In the next phase of the Levan Center's story, the CINO must focus on operational excellence and financial sustainability. They must raise funds through earned revenue and contributions that fully support operations and obligations as well as the Center's growth strategies. Core programs and services must function well and drive value for a range of stakeholders. The CINO will assess current operations and expenses, and craft a portfolio of programs and services that are financially self-supporting. Given that the Levan Center is in its own startup phase, the CINO will work with the Board and other key stakeholders to devise a comprehensive revenue generation and fundraising strategy.

The CINO should be comfortable operating across all potential revenue platforms including maximizing earned revenue strategies, stewarding sponsorships for programs and other Center initiatives, and engaging potential donors and generating philanthropic gifts for the Center. The CINO will also lead the pursuit of other potential revenue sources including but not limited to naming opportunities and grants generated from research opportunities and foundations. The revenue-generating and fundraising efforts of the CINO will be mission-consistent and informed by the Center's strategic priorities.

Cultivate strong relationships and lead a high-performing team

The Levan Center is a public-private partnership that serves NSU's and the region's entrepreneurial ecosystem. The CINO not only directs the Levan Center, but is also a visible and engaged leader in South Florida, requiring the cultivation of strong relationships across a wide variety of sectors. They will be an advocate for the Levan Center, broadcasting its value propositions and ability to impact growth and start-up success, and generate interest and support for the Levan Center across NSU and in the community.

The CINO works closely with businesses, municipalities, associations, and other organizations that serve South Florida in developing businesses and startups. These organizations look to the Levan Center for leadership, connections, and collaborations in supporting the transformation of South Florida into the

nation's best technological and innovation hub. The Levan Center thusly not only elevates startup businesses, but also other organizations with a shared purpose in enhancing South Florida's economy. Integral to the work ahead is supporting organizations and businesses that serve Broward County's underserved communities. The CINO should possess an understanding and appreciation for the community development outcomes of the Center and how strong partnerships can be leveraged to advance South Florida as a place to live, work, invest, and thrive.

Additionally, the CINO will develop and lead a high-performing team that fosters a culture of innovation, collaboration, and continuous improvement. As the Levan Center grows, so too will its staff who can manage various functions such as operations, programming, advancement, and more. The CINO will provide guidance, mentorship, and support in developing their staff. They must be skilled in supervision, providing direction, fostering a culture of teamwork, and being a thoughtful steward of change management who ensures that everyone on the team sees their value-add to the larger team and mission. In considering the ongoing work of the Levan Center, the CINO will possess strength in building on existing competencies and strengths, along with the foresight to course correct as appropriate.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The Alan B. Levan | NSU Broward Center of Innovation seeks a Chief Innovation Officer & Executive Director with exemplary leadership abilities and an entrepreneurial spirit. The successful candidate will bring many of the following personal and professional qualities and characteristics:

- A master's degree is required, as well as a minimum of ten years of related business and entrepreneurial experience.
- Formerly a successful entrepreneur and/ or success in running an innovation center
- Passionate about assisting founders achieve their business objectives
- Passionate about the mission and vision of the Levan Center
- Buys into the concept of above average accelerated annual growth of the Levan Center
- A good manager and delegator
- Comfortable with implementation of good management practices of the CINO and subordinates. Ability to motivate subordinates to achieve more than they themselves believe they can achieve.
- Comfortable with accountability for themselves and subordinates and the use of goal setting with defined metrics.
- Good interviewing and hiring skills as well as being able to conduct meaningful employee reviews
- Comfortable working in a university setting
- A personal and successful characteristic of asking for philanthropic and sponsorship dollars
- Ability to train subordinates to also ask for philanthropic and sponsorships dollars as well as creating sustaining revenue such as membership fees. History of achieving revenue/ expense break even including dollars for growth - comfortable in creating and successfully implementing models of earned and contributed revenue
- Ability to have the Levan Center achieve a leadership role in Broward County and the tri-county area in the areas of innovation and community think tanks.

- Can recognize and capitalize on the fact that they will operate within the tipping point for Broward and the tri-county area in becoming a tech hub.
- Ability to turn emerging technology (i.e., cyber security, AI Smart Cities Lab, Volumetric Capture Studio, Media Studio) into educational and profit generators.
- Thorough knowledge of business and financial management and planning principles.
- Ability to develop and implement a comprehensive and cohesive long-term strategic plan.
- Exceptional verbal, written, and presentation communications skills.
- An ability to operate across a complex organization, applying superb interpersonal skills.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the [Isaacson, Miller website](#). Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Andrew Lee, Managing Partner
Ivan Ceballos, Senior Associate
Isaacson, Miller

It is the policy of NSU to ensure equal employment opportunity without discrimination.