

# NSU Florida

Senior Vice President for Research and Economic Development  
Nova Southeastern University  
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

## THE SEARCH

Nova Southeastern University (NSU), a fast-moving, nationally recognized private R1 research university with emergent strengths across the health, natural, and physical sciences, seeks an entrepreneurial and visionary leader to serve as its next Senior Vice President for Research and Economic Development (SVPRED). Having just achieved R1 status, the new SVPRED will join the university at a critical inflection point and harness that momentum to truly shape the institutional research vision and strategy for the future, with a near-blank slate.

As the largest private research university in the state of Florida, NSU is a hub for real-world impact in the region. It is the largest educator of physicians in Florida and contributes more than \$5 billion in economic influence across the state. The university also earned the Carnegie Foundation's Community Engagement and Opportunity classifications, recognizing NSU's dedication to outstanding student outcomes, which has made it a magnet for talented undergraduate and graduate students from around the world. NSU's achievement of coveted R1 status in 2025 was driven by rapidly expanding research expenditures, which have more than doubled in the past five years, and strong growth in health sciences, marine and environmental sciences, biotechnology, behavioral sciences, and interdisciplinary areas. The SVPRED will lead the continued development of a vibrant research ecosystem that spans 12 colleges, NSU Health, the Guy Harvey Oceanographic Research Center, and the Alan B. Levan | NSU Broward Center of Innovation. In FY24, NSU generated \$60.63 million in research expenditures and managed \$172 million in total active awards.

Reporting to the provost, the SVPRED plays a central role in advancing a holistic vision of NSU's research mission, strengthening and diversifying its growing national research profile, and accelerating innovation and economic impact across the region and beyond. Given this moment of growth and opportunity, the SVPRED will continue to shift NSU's research posture from its teaching-focused roots, defining and building the necessary operational and cultural infrastructure to support this transition to maximize the university's immense potential. The new senior VP will leverage NSU's powerful alumni network, its geographic and political advantages, and its disciplinary strengths to create new opportunities and incentive structures that support greater interdisciplinary collaboration and impact and attract new resources. The incoming SVPRED will find a campus community primed for growth and keen on collaboration, powerful leaders eager for partnership, and a dynamic South Florida ecosystem hungry for university investment and opportunity. The SVPRED has the opportunity to bring all parties together in novel ways to advance research, discovery, impact, and economic development to meet NSU's grandest ambitions.

NSU has engaged Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to support the search committee in this important recruitment. All applications, inquiries, and nominations should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the conclusion of this document.





## ABOUT NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

### History

Proving that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, a group of local businessmen who called themselves “The Oatmeal Club” decided in the early 1960s to develop an innovative educational concept—an MIT of the South, with a twist. Their institution would break new ground in educational excellence and community service. Nova Southeastern University was founded in 1964 as Nova University of Advanced Technology, a graduate research institution rooted in the physical and social sciences. Initially located in downtown Fort Lauderdale, the university later moved to the former site of Forman Field—a World War II auxiliary airfield that had been returned to the community to be used for educational purposes—in Davie.

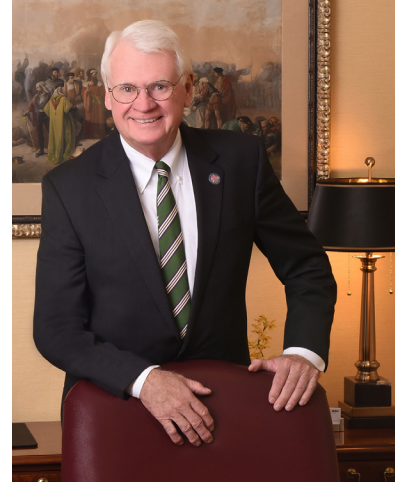
Over time, the university has added programs in law, education, business, psychology, engineering, computing, and oceanography, and has become nationally recognized for innovative distance-education programs. Today, field-based programs are located on regional campuses throughout Florida and across the country, including Puerto Rico. In 1994, Nova University merged with Southeastern University of Health Sciences, which had added colleges of Pharmacy, Optometry, Allied Health, Medical Sciences, and Dental Medicine, to form Nova Southeastern University.

Over five decades of explosive growth, NSU’s reputation for academic excellence and innovation has flourished. Today, NSU is classified as an R1 research university with “very high research activity” by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and recognized with Carnegie’s Community Engagement Classification and as an Opportunity College and University. It is also the largest private, not-for-profit institution in the U.S. that meets the Department of Education’s criteria as a Hispanic-serving institution.

Across its 11 campuses, NSU has more than 22,000 enrolled students (9,000+ undergraduate, 7,000 graduate, 4,500 professional, and 2,000 pre-K through grade 12 students) from more than 115 countries and all 50 U.S. states. NSU is home to 18 NCAA Division II teams, and the Sharks have brought home 15 NCAA Division II national championships, including the 2025 men’s basketball and women’s swimming titles.

## UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

**Harry K. Moon, M.D., FAcS, FRCSEd**, is the seventh president of Nova Southeastern University and an internationally recognized plastic and reconstructive surgeon. Since taking office in January 2025, he has led NSU to distinction as a Carnegie R1 research university and a Carnegie Opportunity and Community Engaged University—an achievement held by only a handful of institutions nationwide. Under his leadership, NSU is advancing transformative initiatives that accelerate academic pathways, expand interdisciplinary research, and position the university as a driver of innovation and economic impact. He also introduced accelerated degree programs, allowing selected students to complete a combined bachelor's-to-terminal medical degree in six years instead of eight, reducing both the cost and debt burden for students.



Previously, Dr. Moon served as NSU's executive vice president and chief operating officer, where he led the integration of the university's clinical practices to create NSU Health, a university-affiliated, integrated healthcare network.

Dr. Moon has been a major force in the development of medical, health, research, and educational programs in South Florida for the past quarter-century. He was president and chairman of the board of the Cleveland Clinic Foundation and a member of the foundation's Board of Trustees from 2001 to 2003. Dr. Moon was chief executive officer and chairman of the Board of Governors of Cleveland Clinic Florida from 1997 to 2001 and president of the Cleveland Clinic Florida Health Network from 1996 to 2001. A fellow in the American College of Surgeons (FACS), he earned his medical degree from the University of South Alabama College of Medicine and completed surgery residencies at the University of Hawaii, the Medical University of South Carolina, and the Cleveland Clinic Foundation. He earned his bachelor's degree in English at Tulane University.

**Ronald J. Chenail, Ph.D.**, has served as NSU's provost, executive vice president for Academic Affairs, and chief academic officer since 2020, after serving in the role on an interim basis. He also previously served as associate provost. Dr. Chenail holds an appointment as professor of family therapy in the NSU Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine. Dr. Chenail has held numerous administrative positions at NSU, including vice president for institutional effectiveness; vice president for research, planning, and governmental affairs; assistant to the president for Academic Affairs; dean, School of Social and Systemic Studies; and interim dean of the Center for Psychological Studies, the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education, and the College of Computing, AI, and Cybersecurity. Dr. Chenail earned his Bachelor of Arts in History from St. Bonaventure University, his Master of Arts in Education in Educational Psychology-Counseling from the University of Houston, and his Doctor of Philosophy in Family Therapy from Nova Southeastern University.



## RESEARCH AT NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

Since its founding, Nova Southeastern University, Florida's largest private research university, has stood as a beacon of knowledge and innovation, a crucible of intellectual exploration, and a catalyst for positive change. The research community is committed to exploring new frontiers, tackling complex challenges, and making a lasting impact on the world. With historic strengths in health sciences, NSU researchers are world-renowned experts in healthcare research, leading the fight against cancer, neuroimmune diseases, ALS, and autism. In addition, NSU's marine scientists are at the forefront in addressing issues of the environment and climate resilience, as well as in ground-breaking research into saving sea life and protecting coral reefs. The unique combination of research activity and longstanding strength in professionally oriented education and workforce development distinguishes NSU. It underscores university's commitment to translation, impact, and innovation with real-world results.

NSU is the fastest-growing research university in Florida, with 93% growth in research expenditures and 95% growth in publications since 2020. In FY24, the university conferred 422 doctoral degrees, generated \$60.63 million in research expenditures, and managed \$172 million in total active awards (57.5% federal, 25.2% state, and 11.4% local funding sources). NSU achieved R1 status in 2025 and continues to invest in research infrastructure and faculty capacity to sustain its growth trajectory and realize its nascent identity as a research-intensive university.

### The Center for Collaborative Research

NSU's Center for Collaborative Research (CCR) is a 215,000-square-foot, six-story, LEED Gold-certified facility equipped with both wet and dry labs and high-performance computing environments. It provides direct access to the Florida LambdaRail, a high-speed broadband service delivery network, to connect NSU researchers with collaborators in healthcare, bioinformatics, technology, cybersecurity, and business. The CCR houses multiple research institutes spanning cancer research, cell therapy, neuro-immune medicine, and ocean sciences, including translational research from bench to bedside. Located within the CCR, NSU's Core Facilities offer researchers, their collaborators, and their community and industry partners cutting-edge resources for advanced research, including flow cytometry for cell analysis, next-generation sequencing for genome analysis, high-resolution imaging for detailed visualization, cell therapy core for experimental treatments, and a vivarium for animal studies. Opportunity exists to continue building out the CCR space to accommodate research growth and partnerships.



### NSU Health

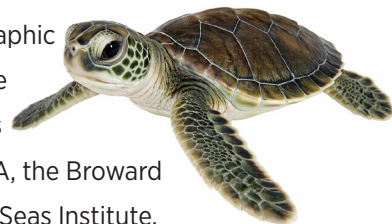
NSU Health provides crucial clinical services across the state of Florida, including dental care, eye care, hearing, speech, and language services; medical care; pharmacy; psychological counseling; family therapy; and physical therapy and sports rehabilitation. NSU also maintains a partnership with HCA Healthcare, including a new 200+-bed teaching and research hospital. NSU is one of only three universities in the country with both M.D. and D.O. colleges, and it is the largest educator of physicians in Florida, producing more healthcare providers with terminal degrees than any other university in the nation. Students benefit from an interdisciplinary approach to healthcare as they learn to practice, allowing for wider career paths and more diverse job opportunities.



## RESEARCH AT NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY (cont.)

### NSU Ocean

With a state-of-the-art 86,000 square-foot facility for oceanographic research, NSU is a pioneer in marine science and resource development for the blue economy. The Guy Harvey Oceanographic Research Center offers direct marine access to the intracoastal waterway, Port Everglades, the open Atlantic Ocean, Florida's reefs, a coral breeding facility, and more than a dozen labs. It is also home to the National Coral Reef Institute, the Save Our Seas Shark Research Center USA, the Broward County Sea Turtle Conservation Program, the Guy Harvey Research Institute, and the Rising Seas Institute.



### Alan B. Levan | NSU Broward Center of Innovation

The Levan Center—a joint venture between NSU and the Broward County Government—is a groundbreaking facility that supports entrepreneurship from ideation and incubation through launch and beyond. Since 2021, the Levan Center has supported more than 200 founders with \$6 million in facilitated investments and has launched 100+ companies. This 54,000 square-foot space houses cybersecurity training facilities; a makerspace with 3D printers, robots, and an AI lab; high-performance computers; a pitch room; a 3-D volumetric capture studio; and coworking spaces—enabling NSU to drive more opportunities for collaboration and innovation.



The Guy Harvey Oceanographic Research Center



The Center for Collaborative Research (CCR)

## THE ROLE OF THE SVPRED

The senior vice president for research and economic development provides strategic, academic, and administrative leadership for NSU's research portfolio. The SVPRED partners with faculty, college leadership, NSU Health clinicians and investigators, and university leadership to expand extramural funding, strengthen research infrastructure, enhance compliance and research integrity, and grow NSU's economic development impact. The successful candidate will drive a culture of discovery, interdisciplinary collaboration, innovation, and commercialization that aligns with NSU's vision, mission, values, and strategic priorities. As NSU leans into its new R1 identity, the SVPRED will lead the university through a period of critical transition and growth, managing operational and structural changes to support its growing research operations and reorienting the university to balance its pedagogical roots with rising research expectations and ambitions.

The SVPRED reports to the executive vice president, provost, and chief academic officer and is a member of the President's Cabinet. They manage NSU's Division of Research with approximately 24 staff members across sponsored programs, tech transfer, and research facilities functions. The SVPRED has a leadership team of four direct reports: the associate vice president for research, the executive director of sponsored programs, the director of tech transfer, and a research compliance manager. The incoming SVPRED will have the opportunity to hire and grow this collaborative and well-functioning team through several open positions.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE SVPRED

### **Articulate and execute a strategic vision for research expansion and preeminence, capitalizing on NSU's new R1 status**

NSU finds itself at an inflection point in its institutional development, moving from a teaching-and professions-focused institution to a research-intensive one. The incoming SVPRED will be expected to bring depth of understanding of the mechanisms for building and scaling a successful research enterprise, coupled with an entrepreneurial posture towards uncovering and accessing new opportunities and approaches to research impact. In collaboration with senior leadership and researchers across NSU's diverse research ecosystem, the SVPRED will craft a new vision for research excellence that leverages current momentum, cultivates and catalyzes a nascent culture of research, and unifies the university community behind shared purpose and impact. Given NSU's strengths, assets, and vast footprint across South Florida, the university has the opportunity to position itself as a regional hub for biotech and life sciences. With an innovative approach to systems change and external engagement, they will position NSU to succeed today and to harness its strengths to capitalize on a rapidly changing national research environment.

### **Build, develop, and improve research infrastructure, systems, facilities, and hiring to support operational efficiency and excellence**

The new SVPRED has the opportunity to reenvision NSU's research posture to meet the moment and fulfill its considerable aspirations. Internally, they will lead, develop, and invest in NSU's Division of Research team to enhance capacity, customer service, and resourcing—including the human architecture of the office—to become a proactive partner and force multiplier for scholars across campus. The SVPRED must also define and strengthen the structures, systems, processes, and policies that support research and technology transfer activities, ensure compliance and alignment while minimizing logistical and administrative burdens on investigators. This includes support for pre- and post-award activities, indirect cost recovery, IT, backend systems, procurement, budgeting, collaboration with legal counsel on intellectual property, and more.

In addition to operational structures, the SVPRED will work to ensure that NSU's physical research infrastructure is optimized to support its ambitions. This includes further evolution of the CCR and engagement in faculty hiring, patent activity, licensing, and tech transfer to continue to grow NSU's research excellence.

#### **Foster and incentivize greater interdisciplinary and cross-unit research collaboration**

Working across the institution and campuses, the SVPRED will seek ways to maximize NSU's ability to capitalize on large team-science opportunities and reduce barriers and silos across the university. In fostering a nascent culture of research, the SVPRED will coalesce faculty and define mechanisms and conduits for interdisciplinary collaboration. While continuing to support NSU's historic strengths in the health and ocean sciences, the SVPRED will also identify opportunities for crosspollination and ways to build research in complementary areas, all with an eye for real-world impact and partnership. An SVPRED with wide exposure to and intellectual curiosity about the breadth of disciplines at NSU—from clinical trials to basic science to commercialization—will find a nimble, creative, and permissive environment in which to thrive.

#### **Serve as the face of research and innovation at NSU across campus and in the wider community to enhance connections with external research partners locally and nationally**

In addition to leading NSU's research enterprise, the SVPRED will champion the story of its research and impact, contributing to economic development and innovation locally and beyond. As an ambassador for research at NSU, the SVPRED will leverage the Levan Center for Innovation, NSU's powerful alumni network, and supporters across Broward County and South Florida to advance NSU's position as a ready, nimble, and responsive partner for future growth. This senior VP will champion the university externally as a driver of engagement and growth, exploring new areas of research and garnering further support through new federal and industrial partnerships, foundation funding, collaborations with the Florida High Tech Corridor, and other academic and civic institutions aligned with NSU's goals. The SVPRED will harness faculty's scholarly endeavors to advance technology transfer, commercialization, and entrepreneurship in a coordinated effort across NSU leadership and its robust external partner ecosystem. The SPVRED will think creatively about how best to strategically resource NSU's growing research portfolio through grants, fundraising donations and philanthropic engagement, and monetizing intellectual property.

## QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The ideal SPVRED candidate will be a distinguished scholar and research leader who embodies NSU's mission, vision, and culture. The successful candidate must possess an earned doctorate or equivalent degree from an accredited institution. Candidates must also have significant leadership experience in university research administration and/or technology transfer and innovation activities, including budget and personnel management. Strong candidates will have some combination of the following qualifications and characteristics:

- distinguished record of management of external funding as a sponsored researcher or innovator
- experience and interest in securing financial resources from a variety of public and/or private sources
- demonstrated record of organizational leadership in higher education or similar complex organizations, as evidenced by experience having supervised a team; having led or contributed to the development of budgets and operational strategy; having fostered an inclusive, collaborative, and respectful work culture; having navigated political and legislative contexts, government agency bureaucracy, corporate sponsorship, and complex regulatory environments
- outstanding communication and collaboration skills, including evidence of the ability to facilitate connections within and external to the university; to articulate a strong and clear vision for the university's research programs; to exhibit sound judgment; and to interact effectively with multiple and diverse constituencies
- distinguished record of capitalizing on and aligning research with regional and national economic development priorities and issues
- a deep understanding of interdisciplinary research and team science, including its challenges and advantages
- impeccable academic judgment, an eye for high-quality research, and a deep understanding of the opportunities and challenges faced by world-class researchers
- a demonstrated record of attracting and helping to recruit and retain research-active faculty
- track record of growing institutional research and scholarship with a balanced funding portfolio
- ability to enhance research impact through support of university-led efforts in entrepreneurship, commercialization, technology transfer, science communication, and/or industrial collaborations
- a commitment to transparency in policy, strategy, and financial management, with an appreciation of and support for shared governance
- highest ethical standards in all matters
- deep understanding of federal research agencies, compliance requirements, and sponsored programs operations
- experience in health sciences, clinical research, biomedical innovation, or in an academic or corporate healthcare environment preferred
- research leadership experience in an R1 university strongly preferred.

## APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the search process is completed. Applications, inquiries, and nominations should be submitted confidentially to the search team via the Isaacson, Miller website: [imsearch.com/open-searches/nova-southeastern-university/senior-vice-president-research-and-economic-development](https://imsearch.com/open-searches/nova-southeastern-university/senior-vice-president-research-and-economic-development).

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**Isaacson, Miller**

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NSU is an Equal Opportunity Employer and considers applicants for all positions without regard to race, color, religion, creed, gender, national origin, age, disability, marital or veteran status or any other legally protected status.

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