

NSU Florida

Vice President of Government Relations
Nova Southeastern University
Davie, Florida

THE SEARCH

Nova Southeastern University (NSU) seeks a strategic, creative, and collaborative leader to serve as its inaugural Vice President of Government Relations (VPGR). The Vice President will join the University during a period of unprecedented momentum and excitement and will help shape the institution's next chapter. Reporting to University President Dr. Harry Moon and a member of the President's Cabinet, the Vice President will deepen ties and further expand NSU's impact regionally, nationally, and globally.

NSU is Florida's largest private research university and recently earned Carnegie Classification R1 status in recognition of its growth, impact, and extraordinary potential. The NSU Shark family includes more than 220,000 alumni around the world and more than 20,000 students across its undergraduate, graduate, and professional degree programs as well as another approximately 2,000 in its PreK2-12 University School. Approximately 65% of NSU's students are graduate and professional students. Additionally, NSU has the proud distinction of being the largest educator of physicians in Florida and produces more healthcare providers with terminal degrees than any other university in the nation.

The University has more than a \$6.5 billion annual economic impact on the state of Florida and continues to grow with a focus on graduate and professional education, innovative academic and research programs, and an integrated healthcare network delivered across eleven campuses in Florida, Colorado, Nevada, and Puerto Rico, as well as online globally. NSU is a distinctive institution that has expanded its research enterprise, strengthened its health professions programs, enhanced student success outcomes, and increased its national visibility as a comprehensive university. With ambitious plans for continued growth in research, academic excellence, healthcare, and public impact, NSU is well positioned to continue on its remarkable trajectory of success. Whether in healthcare education and delivery, oceanography and marine science, entrepreneurship, or one of the many other disciplines represented across NSU's 11 colleges, the future of NSU is grounded in academic excellence, innovation, and long-term progress.

The VPGR will serve as the institution's chief strategist and senior leader responsible for advancing the organization's public policy priorities at the federal, state, and local levels. The VP will provide strategic direction, leadership, and coordination of all government-facing activities, ensuring alignment with institutional goals and safeguarding the organization's interests in the public sector.

The person in this role will be a trusted advisor to the President and Board of Trustees on legislative, regulatory, and political matters, and serve as the primary liaison to elected officials, government agencies, and external advocacy partners.

As the University continues to advance strategic priorities across its academic, clinical, research, and community-serving enterprises, this role will provide dedicated leadership to develop a coordinated advocacy agenda, pursue public funding opportunities, and ensure that NSU's contributions and priorities are effectively represented in legislative, regulatory, and policy discussions. The Vice President will help position the University to maximize opportunities that support innovation, workforce development, research growth, healthcare advancement, and long-term institutional impact.

This is a newly created position, reflecting the institution's commitment to strengthening and unifying its government relations efforts. Historically, government affairs activities have been supported primarily through external advocacy and lobbying partnerships. The Vice President will be responsible for establishing NSU's in-house government relations function including the hiring of personnel and management of resources, developing a comprehensive strategy aligned with institutional priorities, and building the internal capacity needed to support those efforts. In partnership with University leadership, this individual will also oversee and coordinate the work of contracted advocacy and lobbying firms to ensure a cohesive and effective approach to government engagement. The ideal candidate brings an innovative mindset and thrives in building new capabilities, processes, and partnerships. The Vice President will play a foundational role in establishing and evolving government relations to advance NSU's strategic priorities.

Nova Southeastern University has retained Isaacson, Miller to assist with this important recruitment. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed confidentially to Isaacson, Miller, as indicated at the end of this document.

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 is comprised of 11 colleges, which include 7 healthcare-related colleges. NSU was recently recognized as the #23 top employer in Florida, according to *Forbes*.

NSU's more than 20,000 currently enrolled students come from more than 50 countries and all 50 U.S. states. Of the current student body, more than 7,311 students are undergraduates. NSU offers more than 130 academic degree programs and awards more than 6,000 degrees annually. NSU is currently one of only 11 universities nationwide, and one of only two in Florida, to be recognized by the Carnegie Foundation with all three of their designations: Very High Research Activity (R1), Community Engaged Institution, and Opportunity College and University (OCU). These distinctions reflect NSU's mission to make a meaningful impact throughout its many schools and colleges.

Further details about Nova Southeastern University can be found in the appendix and on the [NSU website](#).

ROLE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

The Vice President of Government Relations is a full-time, 12-month appointment. Candidates may reside in the National Capital Region, Tallahassee, or South Florida.

The following are the key responsibilities of the Vice President of Government Relations:

Strategic Government Relations & Advocacy

- Develops a comprehensive understanding of the institution's strategic priorities, translating them into actionable legislative and funding agendas.
- Leads the development and execution of a coordinated federal, state, and local government relations strategy aligned with organizational objectives.
- Identifies and advances opportunities to influence policy outcomes that support institutional growth and impact.
- Represents the institution in external forums, coalitions, and advocacy groups.
- Aligns institutional priorities with external advocacy strategies and communications.

Public Sector Engagement & Relationship Management

- Serves as the senior relationship manager with key stakeholders, including members of Congress and their staff, Governor's office and state leadership, State and local elected officials, and Federal, state, and local agencies.
- Builds and sustains strong, credible relationships that enhance the organization's visibility and influence in policymaking circles.
- Oversees external advocacy activities and ensure effective coordination between internal and external stakeholders.
- Evaluates, selects, and manages external lobbying firms and consultants, ensuring alignment with strategic priorities and performance expectations.

Appropriations, Policy Analysis, & Strategic Counsel

- Monitors and analyzes policy trends, regulatory changes, and political dynamics to inform leadership decision-making.
- Leads major appropriations and funding initiatives, including but not limited to healthcare workforce funding and federal research and program opportunities (e.g., NIH, HRSA, NOAA, NSF).
- Coordinates internal stakeholders to position the organization competitively for government funding.
- Provides strategic counsel to the NSU President and Board of Trustees on legislative developments, funding opportunities, and political risk.

Organizational Leadership & Collaboration

- Plans, directs, supervises, and coordinates work activities of subordinates and staff, including hiring, coaching, evaluating, and terminating, all in accordance with University policies and procedures.
- Collaborates across the organization to ensure cohesive messaging and advocacy efforts, including partnership with Advancement, Public Relations/Communications, Research functions, and Health and specialized program units.
- Completes special projects as assigned.
- Performs other duties as assigned or required.

QUALIFICATIONS, SKILLS, & ABILITIES

Required Qualifications

- A bachelor's degree.
- 12-15+ years of progressive experience in government relations, public policy, or a related field.
- Demonstrated expertise engaging with both federal and state government entities.
- Proven experience managing external lobbying firms or advocacy partners.
- Strong understanding of legislative processes, appropriations, and regulatory environments.

Preferred Qualifications

- Experience in higher education, academic health systems, or research-intensive organizations.
- Established network of relationships with key policymakers and agencies.
- Track record of securing government funding and influencing public policy outcomes.

Required Knowledge

- In-depth knowledge of federal, state, and local legislative and regulatory processes.
- Understanding of appropriations, public funding mechanisms, and budget cycles.
- Familiarity with public policy development, analysis, and advocacy strategies.
- Knowledge of higher education, healthcare, and/or research policy environments.
- Awareness of political landscapes, stakeholder interests, and emerging policy trends.
- Understanding of compliance requirements related to lobbying and government relations activities.

Required Skills

- Strategic planning and execution of government relations and advocacy initiatives.
- Relationship-building and stakeholder engagement with elected officials, agencies, and partners.
- Executive-level written and verbal communication, including policy briefings and presentations.
- Negotiation and influencing skills in complex political and organizational environments.
- Analytical and critical thinking skills to assess policy impacts and opportunities.
- Leadership and team management, including oversight of external lobbyists and consultants.
- Cross-functional collaboration and coordination across diverse internal stakeholders.

Required Abilities

The strongest candidates will demonstrate an ability to do the following:

- Translate organizational priorities into effective legislative and funding strategies.
- Build and sustain credibility with senior leaders, policymakers, and external partners.
- Navigate complex political environments with sound judgment and discretion.
- Anticipate policy risks and proactively develop mitigation strategies.
- Manage multiple priorities and shifting timelines in a dynamic policy environment.
- Synthesize complex information into clear, actionable insights for executive audiences.
- Represent the organization effectively in high-visibility external settings.

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:

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/nova-southeastern-university/vice-president-government-relations>

Jeff Kessner, Partner
Vijay Saraswat, Partner
Ivan Ceballos, Managing Associate
Elizabeth Arvanitis, Senior Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

Nova Southeastern University is in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and does not discriminate with regard to applicants or employees with disabilities and will make reasonable accommodation when necessary.

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.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Nova Southeastern University.

The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only.

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by Nova Southeastern University would supersede any conflicting information in this document.

APPENDIX: ABOUT NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

NSU is widely recognized for its medicine and profession-focused model, interdisciplinary collaboration, and emphasis on experiential learning across the health sciences, law, business, education, computing, and the arts and sciences. NSU offers more than 130 academic degree programs across undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels. The university is organized into 12 colleges and one college preparatory school. These are:

- [Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice](#)
- [Barry and Judy Silverman College of Pharmacy](#)
- [College of Computing, AI, and Cybersecurity](#)
- [College of Dental Medicine](#)
- [College of Optometry](#)
- [College of Psychology](#)
- [Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Allopathic Medicine](#)
- [Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine](#)
- [H. Wayne Huizenga College of Business and Entrepreneurship](#)
- [Halmos College of Arts and Sciences and the Guy Harvey Oceanographic Research Center](#)
- [NSU University School \(PK–12\)](#)
- [Ron and Kathy Assaf College of Nursing](#)
- [Shepard Broad College of Law](#)

NSU's flagship campus is located in the greater Fort Lauderdale area of Florida. It is a 314-acre academic and research hub that houses the majority of the university's colleges, core research infrastructure, and student life amenities. This campus is home to the Alvin Sherman Library—one of the largest library buildings in Florida, as well as comprehensive health program facilities that uniquely support interdisciplinary education across the fields of medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, optometry, nursing, and allied health.

Research & Innovation

Research is a defining strength of NSU, which has earned the Carnegie Classification's R1 designation, recognizing the highest level of research activity among U.S. universities. As Florida's largest private research university, NSU supports more than 250 sponsored research projects supported by over 100 external agencies across disciplines including health sciences, marine and environmental science, psychology, education, and technology. Faculty researchers secure funding from leading agencies such as the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, Department of Defense, and the Department of Education, advancing discoveries that address complex challenges in health care, environmental sustainability, and human well-being. NSU's research enterprise is distinguished by its interdisciplinary approach, modern research infrastructure, and commitment to engaging students at all levels of meaningful scholarly inquiry.

NSU Health

NSU Health is the clinical enterprise that connects Nova Southeastern University's health colleges through a shared platform for patient care delivery, clinical operations, and community-facing services. NSU Health operates a network of 70 locations across South Florida covering everything from primary care and dental services to specialized medical care and behavioral health. Through NSU Health, the university supports clinical infrastructure and operational capabilities that enable hands-on education, interdisciplinary practice, and expanded access to care across the region. As NSU continues to evolve its academic health environment, NSU Health plays a central role in integrating clinical strategy, quality, compliance, and operational performance across the health disciplines.

University Leadership

[Dr. Harry K. Moon](#) is the seventh president of NSU and an internationally recognized plastic and reconstructive surgeon. Since taking office in January 2025, he has led NSU to dual distinction as both a Carnegie R1 research university and a Carnegie Opportunity University—an achievement held by fewer than two dozen 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. 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 health care network.

Davie, Florida

Davie, Florida, is a vibrant community in central Broward County that combines suburban space, green open areas, and convenient access to the Fort Lauderdale–Miami metropolitan region. The town is widely recognized as a hub for higher education and health sciences, hosting multiple colleges, universities, and research-oriented institutions. With a pleasant, year-round climate, extensive parks and over 165 miles of trail systems, and proximity to major highways, airports, beaches, and cultural amenities, Davie offers a strong quality of life for professionals and families alike.

For more information, visit <https://www.davie-fl.gov>.