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Levan Ambassadors Breakfast Meeting
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Good morning ... and thank you.

Just two weeks ago, I had the honor and privilege of being formally invested as the seventh president of Nova Southeastern University.

It was an awesome and humbling experience, part of an institutional journey linking our proud past with a future filled with opportunity.

NSU has achieved so much in its relatively short history.

Today, NSU is a different university -- and not just for the reasons you think.

After years of investing in breakthrough research – research that is transforming lives – *it was announced this morning that NSU has now attained the elite status of a Carnegie R1 Research Institution.*

R1 classification is attained by just a few of the nation's 4,000 colleges and universities that demonstrate the very highest level of research activity.

Our designation as an R1 institution is testament to the passion and commitment of NSU faculty, staff, students, alumni, and inspiring donors who have paved the way for decades.

Individuals like David Husman, who just a few weeks ago made an additional \$20-million bequest to Nova Southeastern University to provide funding for ALS research and the outstanding work of leading neurologist Dr. Eduardo Locatelli at NSU Health's neuroscience institute and ALS center.

In short, NSU will never be the same after today.

It will stand among the very best research universities, with a host of benefits for NSU and our state, including the promise of exciting new innovations in health care, biotechnology, oceanography and economic development supporting Florida's Blue Economy.

Today's news affirms our path to become Florida's leading private university, where we leverage our unique and proprietary academic, research, health care and intellectual capabilities...working together to attract world-class educators, researchers and students while embracing an innovative model for advanced degree education and professional workforce development.

This educational model will put our students, patients, partners and communities at the forefront of everything we do.

As I stated in my investiture speech, our vision is guided by three components:

Our Purpose.

Our Path Forward.

And our Promise.

Let's begin with our purpose.

The Hippocratic Oath was not the only thing the ancient Greeks taught us about the advancement of ethics and society.

They also spent a lot of time exploring the nature of why we exist.

At NSU, we exist for one very simple – but compelling – purpose:

To ignite the power of discovery and human potential to enrich lives, enhance well-being and make ours a healthier world.

This purpose affirms the combined power of NSU academics, health care, research and innovation. How they collectively transform lives, careers, personal well-being and communities.

That simple but powerful purpose will serve as our North Star today, tomorrow and for decades to come.

Our path forward also takes another leap ahead as we enter this new stage in our development.

We're only 60 years old as a university and unlike many others we have a history of focusing first on advanced degree professional education.

This includes a history of being among the first—and best—to recognize needs and respond to them with agility and impact.

We led in distance learning.

We led in converting to online learning and weathered the COVID storm well ahead of most others.

We led in combining breadth and depth in building an interdisciplinary and integrated medical and health care portfolio.

We led in creating a footprint across Florida and into Puerto Rico and Colorado to meet employer needs where they are.

And we'll continue to lead as the world demands new and better approaches to education, research, health care outcomes and career readiness.

Today's higher education, healthcare and research landscapes are under existential pressure to keep up with evolving student, employer and public demands.

Higher education is more important than ever, but new approaches and models are clearly needed.

You can't go a day without hearing about the need to reform, revitalize and reinvent the foundations of higher education.

And it's a clarion call we're hearing not just in the U.S., but around the world.

We've been privileged, here in higher education, to help create the future by preparing and empowering our students to lead.

We're at an inflection point.

We've grown into one of the most dynamic, diverse and influential private universities in the Southeast.

From this position of strength, we're ideally poised to take this great institution to new heights of transformative academic achievement and life-changing health care and research innovations.

All supported by long-term investments in our students, patients, faculty, staff, alumni and communities.

Our path forward consists of four strategic imperatives:

First, we will elevate our academic enterprise by enhancing student selectivity, investing in intellectual talent, and committing to reducing the cost of attendance and time to degree completion.

At the center of this is continuing to support our outstanding faculty with the resources and tools they need to deliver the finest education and in-class experiences.

These brilliant women and men are the living embodiment of the NSU academic experience and my job – our job – is to ensure that we continue to retain, reward, develop and attract the world's best academic professionals.

All of these actions are aimed at propelling our graduates to meaningful and fulfilling careers in which they'll have a major impact on their professions, their communities, and the world.

Second, NSU will lead Florida's academic health care system through strategic partnerships and growth.

This system will integrate education and research to ensure the very best patient care.

By investing in advanced facilities and leveraging our strategic locations, we will expand clinical services across the state.

With top-tier physicians, health care providers, and clinical researchers, we will redefine patient care and health outcomes, extending our influence far beyond our campuses.

Third, we will elevate NSU to the pinnacle of research universities, amplifying our strengths in vital areas such as oceanography, healthcare, and biotechnology.

With an annual investment of \$50 million dollars or more in research and development, we'll foster groundbreaking discoveries that transcend academic boundaries.

All of this will be accelerated by our elite R1 status, which will certainly be a catalyst for attracting the brightest students and minds in higher education.

Our research aim is not only to contribute to scientific knowledge but also to support emerging commercial enterprises, positioning NSU as a cornerstone of Florida's "blue economy" and earning us the distinction of being the "Woods Hole of Florida."

And fourth, we will bolster partnerships with business, government and non-profit organizations to become a leader in innovation and technology that transform higher education and advance society.

Our strong heritage of innovation will serve us well as we become a catalyst for health care breakthroughs and the enrichment and sustainability of the Blue Economy in Florida and across its coastal communities and industries.

To support these ambitious goals, we will attract investors to elevate NSU's endowment to one billion dollars.

We'll diversify our revenue sources through impactful research, healthcare initiatives, and strategic commercial partnerships, ensuring sustainable growth and long-term success.

Through these efforts, we will shape a future where NSU stands as a beacon of excellence in education, research, healthcare, and community impact.

Excellence built on our own terms.

As leaders.

Without the biases and constraints of convention and prevailing norms.

Our summit to reach.

Our shared future to build.

Our promise to keep.

And just as physicians pledge to uphold the highest standards in medicine, I know all of us here pledge to uphold the highest standards in leading this university forward.

While NSU is on a continuous journey of exploration, discovery and transformation, one thing that will never change is the set of core values that has defined us—and propelled us—since our founding.

Our promise will never waver.

Remaining student-centered while holding ourselves to the highest degrees of academic excellence, scholarship and research always comes first...along with our commitment to creating a world-class patient-centric health-care network.

We support this by unleashing innovation and creating opportunities for every student and professional we serve.

And when we combine these with our deep commitments to community service, diversity and integrity, we stay true to our goal of always being the very best neighbors, employers, educators, partners, researchers and care givers we can be.

As I look out at all of you here today, this is what I believe:

When we bring together a shared purpose, a visionary path forward and the timeless values that have shaped and defined NSU, there's no limit to what we can achieve together.

And this is key—the word together.

None of this is about me, or simply about the beginning of a new presidency.

It's about all of us—all of you, not me.

The way I see it, my role is to be the coach who helps to bring in superstars and hone the excellence of the team.

The coach who supports and motivates the leaders, performers, contributors and innovators who have led this institution to such heights already.

This role of fostering achievement and impact...together...is one of the most profound rewards one can experience.

Throughout my childhood and youth, my college and med school years, throughout my careers in medicine, business and academia, I've been blessed by the support, camaraderie and commitment of so many great leaders—including many here at NSU.

It's that very commitment... that resolve...to make a difference to someone else, for some greater purpose.

It's that drive from our students, our faculty, our researchers ... and from all of YOU ... that will propel NSU and all we do to unprecedented heights.

So, we can stand as Florida's top, private university and academic health care system.

But more importantly, so we can enrich the lives of our students and our patients ... and make our world a healthier place.

This is what excellence looks like.

Together, let's step into that future...today.

Thank you.