



2026 State of the University Address

Dr. Harry K. Moon • President, Nova Southeastern University

Tuesday March 17, 2026 • The Rose and Alfred Miniaci Performing Arts Center

Welcome, trustees, students, faculty ... fellow administrators, alumni ... parents, friends, and community leaders.

And to all of you on livestream and at our regional campuses...welcome.

We are here today to do three things: to reaffirm our commitment to excellence, to take stock of the progress we have made, and to look ahead to what we will achieve next.

Our purpose has not changed ... but our progress HAS.

Let me give you a few highlights.

Florida TaxWatch recently conducted an independent analysis of NSU's impact across the state.

Our total annual economic impact in Florida this year has reached close to seven billion dollars.

And the return on investment for an NSU education is six to one.

That means for every dollar our students invest in tuition they will earn back six times that amount over the course of their professional careers.

We want to make that return on investment even stronger.

And while we are talking about students, here is another statistic that speaks volumes.

This fall, nearly half of our entering undergraduates ... and about 40 percent of our graduate and professional students ... came from outside Florida.

We are proud to serve Florida and always will be ... but those numbers confirm what we already know ... NSU is a NATIONAL university.

We are one of only two universities in Florida ... and just 11 nationwide ... to hold all three of these Carnegie distinctions:

First, we are now an R-1 Research University, for very high research activity.

Second, we received the Opportunity University designation, awarded for providing exceptional student access ... combined with producing college graduates who earn significantly above the national average

And third, we are also a Community Engagement University, for broad and sustained partnerships with the communities we serve.

These are significant recognitions.

And they tell a clear story. NSU delivers outcomes ... with excellence and purpose.

We are seeing higher student retention rates ... as much as 90 percent in many key programs including in the J-D and medical areas.

We are seeing strong pass rates on certification examinations and high residency placements across the healthcare portfolio.

We are also taking a hard look at curriculum and delivery ... especially in graduate and professional education ... so we can remove barriers, increase flexibility, and support students more effectively.

We want every student to have what they need to succeed ... not just to graduate, but to lead ... in their careers and in their personal lives.

Achieving that kind of student success takes strong partners.

A powerful example is the 5-million-dollar contribution from U.S. Anesthesia Partners ... with half of that investment dedicated to scholarships and the other half given to support an education center and an endowed professorship.

It's also allowed us to open yet another NSU location this spring ... this one in Henderson, Nevada.

Today, one of every three licensed anesthesiology assistants working in the U-S have trained at NSU.

This is a powerful model.

NSU prepares many talented, highly accomplished graduates in many high-demand careers. More and more, employers are choosing to invest in NSU to support those students and our mission.

We have also seen extraordinary long-term philanthropic support ... like that from the Royal Dames of Cancer Research, whose cumulative contributions now total seven million dollars donated to advance cancer breakthroughs and treatments.

Even in a rapidly changing higher-education landscape, students choose NSU because they see value and feel supported.

But the best testimony does not come from me. It comes from them.

I have had the privilege of meeting with many NSU students, including every member of the President's 64, a student leadership organization named for the year of our founding ... and many of you are here today.

Up there, I see you in the balcony ... and we have other students here on the main floor along with some of our alumni.

(wave...we will call out students soon, right after the student video).

Your stories are inspiring.

But rather than hearing it from me, let us hear from our students themselves.

You can see exactly why we do everything we can for our extraordinary NSU students.

Students like all of you here in this theatre today and those of you on livestream.

Please stand and let us give you a hand in recognition and appreciation.

We respect your dedication and your ambitions.

You are not just earning degrees.

You are strengthening our workforce and serving our communities.

You are caring for patients.

You are expressing your creativity through artistic endeavors.

You are driving the economic and social progress we all depend upon.

That is the power of student success ... of YOUR success.

And it is the reason NSU is so well positioned.

We all know higher education is changing rapidly, and institutions must respond ... not with slogans, but with solutions.

If we want to deliver the very best education and expand access to it, then we must continue to build upon our strong foundation.

We must be steady.

We must be disciplined.

And we must evolve to better serve the changing landscape we all are facing.

NSU's position in today's higher-education landscape is not only strong; it is particularly well suited for what the market is demanding.

Our financial stability is recognized by our rating agencies.

Just recently, Fitch Ratings has affirmed NSU's A-plus credit rating and upgraded us from a Stable to a Positive outlook.

This rating reflects their confidence in NSU's disciplined planning, responsible stewardship, and indicators that NSU is built to thrive long into the future.

Across the country, universities are facing shifting demographics, cost pressures, and increased skepticism about the value of higher education.

But NSU is resilient because we are well aligned with high-demand fields, workforce needs, and measurable outcomes.

One of the clearest ways we are responding is by reducing the time it takes to earn your degree WITHOUT reducing the quality and outcomes these degrees deliver.

And let me add we are one of the first to do so.

That means accelerated pathways to graduation and thoughtfully redesigned programs.

It means removing unnecessary redundancies.

But structure alone is not enough.

What truly sets NSU apart is the human element.

Our students are strongly supported. They are mentored.

They have faculty and staff who pick up the phone, stay late, and help them navigate the challenges that come with pursuing a degree and a world-class education.

That culture of support is not accidental.

It is part of what defines us.

Student success, affordability, innovation ... all of it is strengthened when partners step forward to invest in people, in research, in solutions that matter.

And that brings me to something we are seeing a lot more of here at NSU ... the transformational philanthropic generosity that creates opportunity, delivers powerful contributions to the world's most essential needs, and builds hope for the next generation.

What makes this possible are people who believe in what research and education can do.

People who invest not only in buildings, or programs, but also in human potential.

Gifts that allow students at every level ... to pursue their goals without being defined or limited by financial barriers.

This kind of giving creates opportunities for those we may never meet.

It produces impacts that may last for generations.

And more than ever, it is in the form of ENDOWED giving that provides NSU with resources, not just in one current year, but on a continuing basis.

We are grateful to our visionary philanthropists who see the enduring power and potency of helping NSU increase our endowment to one billion dollars.

This will give us the equivalent financial stability to match that of the national universities we now measure up to in virtually every other way.

We produce the same quality outcomes.

We enroll and graduate the same ... or greater ... numbers of students.

But we do it all with far less endowment to draw from.

A robust endowment allows us to fund the changing needs of our students more reliably, more thoroughly, and more predictably.

It enables us to invest in strategic growth.

It empowers us to capitalize more effectively on early-entry opportunities generating greater results and establishing leadership position right out of the gate.

And it often inspires greater confidence and larger investments from others.

Building NSU's endowment is job one for my presidency.

I am determined to see us get there.

To those of you who have already supported the university and our endowment ... I thank you.

Please keep it coming. We have more to achieve together.

And to those of you who are considering it ... we need you.

I firmly believe, as an investor myself, that a philanthropic gift or corporate partnership with NSU is one of the most powerful and rewarding investments anyone can make.

No one believes that more than my dear friend, David Husman.

David understands that philanthropy is ultimately about hope ... hope for people we may never know ... hope for discoveries we may never witness ... hope for a better future beyond our own lifetimes.

David has made transformational gifts to NSU ... now totaling more than 41 million dollars ... primarily to help us advance neuroscience research and patient care, particularly focused on Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, A-L-S, or Lou Gehrig's disease.

He established the David and Cathy Husman Neuroscience Institute and the Cathy J. Husman A-L-S Center at NSU Health ... accelerating efforts to develop treatments and improve the quality of life for patients and families.

David's generosity comes from a deeply personal place and is now impacting countless lives.

Stories like this remind us that one person's vision can ripple outward in extraordinary ways.

And David is not alone.

We are fortunate to have other visionary supporters who are helping shape the future of this university and, in many cases, the future of our planet.

One such visionary is Steve Halmos, whose passion for the ocean and for education is driving transformative work through the Halmos College of Arts and Sciences and our NSU Ocean initiative.

I would like you to see the impact for yourselves. Let us take a look...

What you just saw is what happens when generosity meets purpose.

And many of the other people who are in this room today, are also helping to make this possible.

Let me mention just a few of them ...

Our Board of Trustees, in particular, includes individuals who have provided long-time transformational leadership and support to this university.

Starting with our Chairman of the Board, Mr. Charlie Palmer, whose confidence and energy keeps me pushing forward ... thank you, Charlie ...

I'd like to take a moment to thank the members of NSU's Board of Trustees for giving their time, expertise, and resources so NSU can thrive.

Please stand as I call your name so we can recognize you.

So, the work you benefactors do ... and the commitment and shared vision you saw in that last video...are producing meaningful progress that delivers broad reach and powerful impact.

For example, our work in Greenland demonstrates our commitment to assert NSU's leadership position, not only in oceanography and marine biology, but also in climate science and the ocean economy.

We envision a future presence in Greenland helping us better understand the forces shaping our coastlines.

Other NSU scientists, researchers, and partners are collaborating on solutions that strengthen coastal resiliency, protect marine ecosystems, and advance sustainable innovation.

That's the opportunity that drives our focus on the blue economy and the importance of the health of our oceans.

Because without a healthy "blue," there is no "green."

Equally important to this work are our partners.

We continue to deepen collaborations with organizations such as the Marine Research Hub, the Guy Harvey Foundation, Save Our Seas, Ocean Exchange, and others.

We will attract partner investors to help us expand NSU's Ocean Campus to become an international and multipurpose hub for marine science and the blue economy.

Planned additions include acquiring the use of a soon-to-be-renovated research vessel called the Lana Rose through a partnership with the Mission Resolve Foundation.

This vision for an expanded NSU Ocean Campus would include the development of an eco-lodge ... plus a conference center where we can host thought-leader summits, expositions, and collaborative gatherings important to our world's future.

Now, as important as the health of our planet is, there is another key strength that also defines NSU.

That other foundational mission and profound area of impact is, of course, healthcare.

When we talk about NSU's future, one of the most important stories we can tell is how we are strengthening healthcare through education, research, patient care, and workforce development.

NSU is the largest educator of healthcare professionals in the nation ... and the largest educator of physicians in Florida.

This strength did not happen by chance. It reflects our deep understanding that healthcare is a public necessity and a moral responsibility.

Let us take a look at our final video

As you heard, this purpose ... this momentum allows us to move quickly in areas of greatest need.

It fuels our work to establish an academic medical center.

Another priority for NSU Health is to grow our clinical research and services.

With our multi-disciplinary breadth ... and our multiple locations across Florida and into Colorado, Nevada, and Puerto Rico ... NSU is positioned to significantly expand our clinical enterprise.

Growth in this area attracts major industry investment. It accelerates discovery, and most important, it brings innovative treatments to patients sooner.

At the same time, our faculty continue to produce healthcare breakthroughs that improve outcomes, define best practices, and address urgent public health challenges.

This work is practical, mission-driven, and closely connected to the patients and communities we serve.

We are especially proud of the first students progressing through our accelerated, six-year M-D and D-O pathways.

Their success demonstrates that quality and accelerated time to degree completion CAN coexist when programs are thoughtfully designed.

NSU is expanding workforce development across many other high-demand health professions as well.

And our mission is strengthened every day by partners who see how NSU can produce effective, innovative, and scalable healthcare solutions.

We have received major public support for critical research initiatives, including federal funding championed by Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz to advance work on glioblastoma and other forms of cancer.

We have received record-level state funding this year to support and grow our Veterans Care clinic.

In addition to government support, new industry partnerships like that of U-S Anesthesia Partners combined with transformational philanthropic gifts such as those from David Husman and the Royal Dames are proving to be life-changing donations that advance healthcare here in Florida and across our nation.

Today I have spoken about our progress, our priorities, and the new heights we can scale ... together.

But at the heart of it all is a simple question:

Why? Why do we do this work?

We do it for patients seeking healing and hope.

We do it for employers who depend on skilled professionals and capable, caring leaders.

We do it for communities needing the benefits of education and better healthcare in order to flourish.

We do it for the planet we all share.

And we do it for the generations who will follow us.

Ultimately, we do it ALL for our students.

Because they are the future. YOU are the future.

Education remains the great equalizer ... the great liberator ... the force that allows individuals to rise and societies to move forward.

Everything we build at NSU is designed to help you, our students, realize that potential.

NSU is rising not by accident, but by design.

Our priorities are clear.

Our progress is being recognized.

Our mission is strong.

And our commitment to students, to patients, and to society has never been deeper ... or more powerful.

It is my honor to serve alongside an extraordinary community of faculty, staff, trustees, partners, alumni, and students ... all working toward a shared vision of impact.

We are Florida's largest private research university ... and we are a leading NATIONAL university.

One that serves with purpose, leads with vision, and delivers results that will endure for generations.

Thank you, all, for being part of this journey.

Our future is bright.

Onward we go.

And always ... Fins Up!

Thank you ...