After Ovid Lewis’s retirement, the NSU Board of Trustees had the responsibility of choosing the school’s third president since 1992. Under these circumstances, the designation was easy since the new leader was already on campus and was more familiar with the institution than any other candidate. Ray Ferrero Jr., a distinguished attorney, had been a member of the Nova University Board of Trustees since 1984 and served as chairman from 1988 to 1995. In 1997, he was chairman of the executive committee and the finance committee and had a thorough knowledge of NSU’s recent history.

Some board members approached Ferrero in 1997 to see if he had any interest in becoming the new president. Ferrero said he would be willing to discuss the matter. He knew that NSU had great potential but believed the school had lost direction in the previous few years, and he thought he knew a successful way forward. Ferrero’s interest was contingent on two conditions made prior to formal discussions. He had to clear the matter with his wife and his law partners, and he needed enough time to close his law practice. He also had to be certain that all board members, not just a few, favored his candidacy. The NSU board agreed to those terms, and on May 17, 1997, chose Ray Ferrero Jr. as president-elect to assume office at the conclusion of Ovid Lewis’s term on July 1, 1998.

On December 1, 1997, the board of trustees decided that Ovid Lewis would leave office six months earlier than originally agreed upon. He would vacate the office on January 1, 1998, instead of July 1, 1998, and would receive a leave of absence and a sabbatical
Figure 8.1 Ray Ferrero Jr., JD, president, 1998–2010; chancellor, 2010–present. (By permission of Office of Publications, Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, Florida.)
at full pay to carry him through December 31, 1998.\textsuperscript{1} Ferrero would assume the mantle of the presidency on January 1, 1998. It is unclear exactly what role Ferrero played from June 1997 until January 1, 1998. The \textit{Miami Herald} claimed he had been running the university from June 1997 while continuing his role as vice chairman of the board of trustees.

In selecting Ferrero, the trustees had made a wise choice. Not only was Ferrero intimately acquainted with the university, but he also helped guide it through several difficult patches: the end of the merger with NYIT, the association with Southeastern University of the Health Sciences, Stephen Feldman’s resignation, and other key events. He had been on the board of governors for the Shepard Broad Law Center since 1978 and had a thriving law practice as a partner in the Fort Lauderdale firm of Ferrero, Middlebrooks, and Carbo. As former president of the Broward County Bar Association and the Florida bar, he was well connected and well known around the state.

When NSU announced Ferrero as the new president, there were protests from some in the academic community. Critics said that NSU had not conducted a national search, that Ferrero had no academic background, and that he did not want faculty to be included in the process of shared governing. William D. Horvitz came to the defense of the hire: “He comes to us as a known quantity, rather than bringing in some educator from a far-off field who doesn’t understand the way this school works.”\textsuperscript{2} The board of trustees decided that it would be more practical and safer to select one of their own, especially someone with Ferrero’s skills and experience.

Like Abe Fischler and Stephen Feldman, Ray Ferrero Jr. was born in New York City. He attended public schools in Queens through high school and received his undergraduate degree in business administration from St. John’s University in 1955. Ferrero’s father was a first-generation Italian American; his mother was one generation removed from Europe. His parents taught him strong values, a solid work ethic, and an interest in education. Ferrero remembered that his parents “encouraged us to obtain the best education possible, believing that with an education you could accomplish anything. They taught us to respect the worth of people, irrespective of where they came from or who they were.” From 1955 to 1957, Ferrero served his country in the U.S. Marine Corps, leaving the corps as a captain. He earned a JD degree from the University of Florida law school in 1960 and after a short stint in Miami began practicing law in Fort Lauderdale in 1963.\textsuperscript{3}
When Ferrero took the reins of the newly reorganized university, NSU was the largest private independent university in Florida, with fifteen colleges, a student enrollment of 15,500, an annual budget of nearly $200 million, and some 1,800 faculty, staff, and administrators. Ferrero’s first report to the board of trustees on January 26, 1998, emphasized his desire to work out more partnerships with private and public universities. Ferrero gave fulsome praise to the dual admission programs that had been established at NSU, as they led to a marked increase in undergraduate applications and in the quality of the students.

Ferrero, described by the *Miami Herald* as a “robust, ferocious fireball,” listed his main goals as president: to increase fund-raising efforts, seek out new grants and scholarships, create endowed chairs, and lobby his educational ideas before the Florida legislature. He wanted to lift the university back to the cutting edge of distance-learning technology, a concept Nova pioneered in the 1970s but had somewhat neglected in recent years.

Ferrero’s formal investiture as president occurred on November 6, 1998, during what the university called the “Celebration of Excellence.” In his first state of the university address, Ferrero spoke to more than 900 faculty, students, and alumni. In leading NSU into the new millennium, the president recognized that Florida would experience an enormous demand for education at the college and postgraduate level in the next ten years. The number of new students would overload the system, and there would not be enough state resources to take care of all the new applicants.

Ferrero proposed an alternative to the traditional means of providing education. Instead of building new public universities at a huge cost to the taxpayers and continuing the “needless duplication of programs”; Ferrero recommended a statewide collaborative effort among public and private institutions to increase educational resources. Independent institutions like NSU should be considered as equal partners with the community colleges and the state university system in meeting the challenges of higher education. The Florida Resident Access Grant, worth $1,800 per student in 1998, had been designed by the legislature to defray the cost of educating Florida citizens in private schools. Ferrero insisted that it would be much cheaper in the long run if state taxpayers were to financially supplement independent institutions for taking in some of the students desiring an education in Florida.
When Ferrero became president, he faced what he believed to be an underperforming institution. He thought that some elements within the university were malfunctioning or nonfunctioning and perceived that some employees had not grown with the university. He felt there was no overall blueprint for NSU’s future, and as a result, the university had not realized its full potential.

Ferrero, in attempting to change NSU’s direction, held a series of meetings with staff, faculty, and the board of trustees to discuss the university’s direction and how it would get there. First of all, NSU would remain a private not-for-profit university. Ferrero’s new plan envisioned NSU collaborating more with private and public institutions and public corporations. Ferrero wanted to reach out to the eastern part of Broward County and hoped to become the county’s university. He constantly stressed that NSU needed to branch out and “be more visible in the state from the standpoint of being a valuable asset for the education of Floridians.”

Ferrero understood, perhaps more than any of his predecessors, that NSU lacked a core physical infrastructure. He recognized that previous presidents simply did not have the wherewithal to build new structures, but now NSU needed superior facilities to house the university programs. Instead of increasing NSU’s endowment, Ferrero decided to embark on a huge building program. From around 2000 to 2011, NSU built almost 2,000,000 square feet of facilities and by 2012 developed a physical plant that would meet the institution’s needs for the foreseeable future.8

As Brad Williams and others noted, at this particular time Ray Ferrero Jr. was the best man for the job. Observers saw Ferrero as more aggressive and visionary than past presidents, and they knew that with his personality and contacts, he would rally people in favor of the university.9 Ferrero had a plan to lift NSU into a higher echelon in university circles and immediately set out to bring in a team that would work toward that goal.

Ferrero began his tenure at NSU with four major appointments that would prove crucial to the success of his presidency. First and perhaps most important, he persuaded George Hanbury, then the city manager of Fort Lauderdale, to accept the position of executive vice president. As Ferrero pointed out in his announcement, Hanbury had worked in city managerial positions for thirty years and would do an excellent job of managing a new “city,” namely NSU. This choice would prove to be momentous as Ferrero and Hanbury made an
excellent team. Ferrero would articulate a vision, and Hanbury would make it happen. Three other crucial selections were John Scigliano as vice president for academic affairs and technology and executive provost. Scigliano had been instrumental in creating one of the first online graduate programs in the United States. Ferrero chose Fred Lippman as executive vice chancellor and provost of the Health Professions Division. Finally, Norma Goonen, a first-generation Cuban American, took over as dean of the Farquhar Center for Undergraduate Studies. The appointment of these capable and professional subordinates allowed Ferrero to concentrate on the big picture.

A typical day for President Ferrero began at five a.m. He worked at home for an hour or two and arrived at his office at 7:30 a.m. His day was filled with strategic planning and meetings with staff, faculty, and visitors. Several nights a week, he attended university-related events and met constantly with potential donors. Ferrero said that university presidents always had to be thinking about fund-raising and “friend-raising.” He was usually one of the closers in the quest for a gift because a donor “wants to look the president in the eye and understand the gift is going to be meaningful and going to be appreciated.”

Ferrero tried to improve the flow of communication between the central administration and the various centers, and he wanted to forge a consensus—a shared vision—on the future of the university. He held town hall meetings with faculty, staff, and students to ascertain their views of NSU’s future. Ferrero opposed a faculty senate, but he did consult with the dean’s advisory council and the faculty advisory council.

Ferrero believed in having continuing contracts for faculty and strongly opposed tenure for any faculty other than the law school—the ABA required tenure for law faculty as part of accreditation. He believed that there was no longer a fear of a professor losing one’s job for unpopular and controversial comments, and if there were a threat, the faculty member always had legal recourse. In Ferrero’s opinion, professors with tenure often became too comfortable in their job, did not keep up with the literature, and had a tendency to stagnate. He believed that a secure lifetime university appointment offered less incentive to perform at a high standard.

Several of NSU’s full-time faculty aired some vigorous complaints about conditions at the university. They expressed anxiety about job security. They argued there was not enough time for research and that faculty did not have enough input into university governing and decision making. The professors carped that teaching loads were too high,
there was no clear-cut grievance policy, and too many part-time teachers were being hired to save money. The faculty’s primary concern was job tenure, and they concluded that the only way to protect their positions and have their grievances resolved was to form a union. The faculty felt they needed greater job security due to the capricious nature of contracts, which varied widely from center to center. They asked NSU’s Board of Trustees to recognize them as a chapter of the United Faculty of Florida.

When recognition from the NSU Board of Trustees was not forthcoming, the faculty applied to the National Labor Relations Board, which authorized a faculty vote on whether to join a union—in this case, the United Faculty of Florida. Only full-time faculty members were eligible to vote. Nova administrators pointed out that the use of adjunct and part-time faculty allowed a private university the flexibility it needed to thrive financially and that the faculty’s fears of job security were groundless. “Why should they be concerned about job security if there’s no history in this university of that being as issue,” asked President Ferrero. When the vote was taken, a majority of the faculty voted against the union. The negative vote did not end the controversy, however; some faculty still worried about their jobs, and some continued to gripe about a lack of faculty input into university decisions.

Alvin Sherman Library, Research, and Information Technology Center

The university library had been neglected over the years and needed immediate improvement. The library had been housed in various buildings all over the campus and its holdings, it was generally agreed, were inadequate. President Abe Fischler, lacking sufficient funds, did not see a need to build a large facility; it would be a waste of money since technology would soon enable researchers to read books, journals, archival materials, and other resources online.

When Ray Ferrero Jr. took office, an idea promoted by Samuel Morrison, then director of the Broward County Library System, had been making its way through the administrative levels. The concept was for Broward County and NSU to build a new library as a joint-use facility. Morrison said that the idea originated with Donald Riggs, who had previous experience in building libraries and had been appointed as NSU’s vice president for information services and
university librarian. Morrison and Riggs began discussing the idea in the late 1990s, but nothing was done until Ferrero became president. Ferrero dusted off the concept and began talking to key people to see if a joint-use facility might solve NSU’s need for a new library.

Morrison believed that the general public, small business owners, and researchers should have access to a major university collection. Riggs and Morrison set out to persuade the Broward County Board of County Commissioners that this joint venture would be a great thing to do. The two sides had a common goal: the county needed a new library in the western part of the county, and NSU wanted to consolidate its various libraries into a larger building. They realized that an alliance would enable them to achieve an objective that neither entity could afford on its own.

Frank DePiano gave much of the credit for the proposal’s implementation to Ray Ferrero Jr., who had the credibility and influence to bring everyone to the table. Ferrero turned to George Hanbury, who, as the former city manager, had inside information about how the county commission functioned and the technical knowledge to work out a final contract. Hanbury recalled that Ferrero asked him to lead the effort to get approval of a unique proposal: a private not-for-profit university with a public library.

Hanbury visited each of the county commissioners and explained that the county would get a major research library that would be open 100 hours per week, unusual for the public sector. All county residents could get a library card and have full access to the collections, databases, and library services. There were many hurdles to overcome, and negotiations went on for six months. The politics of sharing revenue, facilities, and a parking garage between public and private entities made the discussions difficult, but the two parties eventually decided that the county would pay half of the construction cost of the library and a parking garage. Ferrero, Hanbury, John Santulli, Tom Panza, and others received credit for pulling off the deal, but none of it would have been possible without input and support from Morrison and Riggs.

On December 14, 1999, the NSU Board of Trustees and the Broward County Board of County Commissioners unanimously approved a forty-year agreement between Broward County and Nova Southeastern University for the construction and operation of a joint-use 325,000-square-foot, full-service library, research, and information technology center to be built on NSU’s main campus. The university would supply the land and be responsible for building construction.
The project included a 1,525-space parking garage. The new library was a demonstration of a new kind of partnership between a private university and a public entity. The building would have five floors, four of which would be built out, with space for more than 1.4 million volumes, a 500-seat auditorium, and two exhibit galleries, along with twenty electronic classrooms and Internet access with 1,000 user seats.

Donald Riggs judged that the new facility would enable Broward County and NSU to serve their users more effectively and that both entities would realize benefits that neither could achieve alone. Ray Ferrero Jr. called the new building “the intellectual center of our community” and welcomed all county residents to use the facility. Broward County was responsible for 40 percent of the annual operating costs for the first four years. After that, the library would electronically tally the number and types of users and apportion the operating costs accordingly.15

Ground was broken in early 1999, and the building was completed and opened for use on October 8, 2001, just fourteen months after work began and less than two years from inception to completion—by any standard, a remarkable achievement. The final cost of the largest library building in Florida: $43 million. When completed, the new library also featured the Rose and Alfred Miniaci Performing Arts Center, children’s and young adult sections, wireless Internet access, a cafe, 700 computer workstations, study rooms, meeting rooms, and multimedia rooms. This would be the first jewel in Ferrero’s building program, and it set the standard for future facilities.

More than 7,000 spectators attended opening ceremonies on December 8, 2001. Visitors were given guided tours of the library; children were treated to a special book reading. President Ferrero remarked that he was thrilled to see “our vision become a reality, and in an even grander form than we ever imagined. This incredible new library will impact the lives of thousands of people in and around the university and the community.” Florida Education Secretary Jim Horne lauded the joint venture as a “shining example of the way government and the private sector ought to cooperate.” He saw the library as a portal to knowledge and culture and encouraged students “to blaze their own electronic trails.”

Most visitors were interested in the electronic classrooms, first pioneered by Nova in 1985. The “e-classrooms” contained the most cutting-edge computer equipment, providing instant access to the Internet using wireless technology while erasing some of the traditional
boundaries of learning. There was also a special e-classroom designated for children under twelve. In 2003, the library received a gift of $7 million from longtime South Florida real estate developer Alvin Sherman. A highly decorated World War II pilot, Sherman flew thirty-five combat missions and received the Distinguished Flying Cross. He formed the Development Corporation of America (DCA), which specialized in low-cost, single-family detached homes, and became a leader in the south Florida real estate market. A witness to NSU’s beginnings, Sherman was impressed by NSU’s rapid growth and excellence, especially for an independent university. Ferrero, the main cultivator of Sherman’s friendship, gratefully accepted his gift. It would benefit the university and all county citizens, as libraries, said Ferrero, are the “center of learning for all of us and serve as a bridge to the past as well as to the future.” In recognition of Sherman’s generous gift, the library was named the Alvin Sherman Library, Research, and Information Technology Center.

The joint-use library venture has had some financial problems over the years. Difficult economic times forced the Broward County Board of County Commissioners to cut back on the county’s annual funding. Despite the cuts, the library at NSU has managed to stay open the agreed-upon 100 hours per week. As of 2011, the library has issued 60,000 library cards to county residents. The main benefit to NSU was a new high-tech library that is both functional and aesthetically pleasing. The library strengthens the university’s ties to the community and encourages people to visit the NSU campus to discover the opportunities it offers.

Business School

The school of business had a more difficult road to success than the law school. The business school, then known as the Center for the Study of Administration (renamed the School of Business and Entrepreneurship in 1982) first taught students in 1971. From 1971 to 1982, the school’s offices and classrooms were scattered throughout the campus; they were housed in modular units prior to moving to better facilities on the east campus. The center offered graduate programs in business, human resource management, and public administration. The center developed one of the few weekend MBA programs for working professionals in the United States.
The business school had some difficulty raising money in its formative years. In 1987, the Glenn and Lucy Friedt Family Foundation agreed to give $1 million for a building to house business courses. The amount was contingent on Nova matching Friedt’s gift. Although the university targeted wealthy businesspeople in the area, in March 1991 President Abe Fischler informed the Friedts that Nova had been unable to raise the matching dollars stipulated in the agreement.¹⁹

Although the business school did not receive large sums of money in its early years, those large donations were soon to be realized. The business school had become a leader in distance learning, with more than forty off-campus U.S. and international locations. Positive changes in the school occurred after Ovid Lewis chose Randolph (Randy) Pohlman as dean. Pohlman earned a PhD in finance from Oklahoma State University, had been dean of Kansas State University’s college of business administration, and worked as a senior executive for Koch Industries, the second largest privately held company in the United States. Pohlman became dean in July 1995 and began putting his corporate, academic, and entrepreneurial experience to work.

Pohlman helped revamp the MBA program and promoted executive training programs for area corporations. When Pohlman resigned after fourteen years as dean, the school had grown from 1,300 to more than 6,000 students, had expanded its program offerings, and the students enjoyed learning in the new 261,000-square-foot Carl DeSantis building. Dean Pohlman was succeeded by Michael Fields, who earned a PhD in marketing from the University of Arkansas and had been dean of the college of business administration at Central Michigan University.²⁰

As dean, one of Pohlman’s first tasks was to raise funds for a new building on the main campus. Fortunately, generous donors in the area helped Pohlman realize his goal. One such benefactor was H. Wayne Huizenga. Described as “one of the greatest deal makers of the twentieth century,” the self-made entrepreneur had an unprecedented business career, having created three Fortune 500 companies. He developed Waste Management, Inc., into the global leader in the waste industry; he was CEO of Blockbuster Entertainment before selling it to Viacom for $8.5 billion in 1994; and he was the founder of AutoNation, Inc., at the time the world’s largest public automobile dealership. He brought major league baseball to South Florida as chairman of the Florida Marlins. He owned the Florida Panthers of the National Hockey League and the Miami Dolphins of the National Football League.
The Horatio Alger Association recognized Huizenga for his numerous business achievements and charitable donations. He is a five-time recipient of *Financial World Magazine*’s CEO of the Year award, and in 2005 Ernst & Young honored him with its World Entrepreneur of the Year award. Huizenga’s community involvement included membership in many civic organizations, such as the Salvation Army, the Boys and Girls Club of Broward County, and the Florida Council of Economic Education. The Huizenga Family Foundation gave $1 million each to the United Way of Broward County, a Broward County homeless shelter, and an African American research library in Fort Lauderdale.21

Huizenga became interested in Nova because of its roots in Broward County, the business school’s entrepreneurial theme, and his friendship with Ray Ferrero Jr. In September 1999, Huizenga and his wife, Marti, donated $4 million to NSU to help finance a new building that would return the graduate school of business to the main campus in Davie.

Both Ferrero and Pohlman acknowledged the Huizengas’ leadership and generosity. Ferrero was satisfied that the new link with the business community on the east side of Fort Lauderdale would go a long way in making NSU Broward County’s university. Pohlman declared that the relationship between the Huizengas and the school was a natural fit, “as both had built their success upon a belief in entrepreneurship and innovation in business.” In Huizenga’s honor, the business school was named the H. Wayne Huizenga School of Business and Entrepreneurship. The gift was made without any conditions, and Huizenga did not request that the school be named for him. In 2011, Huizenga and AutoNation pledged a significant gift for the Pathway Scholars program to benefit students who are financially or otherwise disadvantaged.22

The total cost of the new business school building was estimated at $14 million. Huizenga’s gift was important, but there were other significant contributors as well. Carl DeSantis, founder and chairman of Rexall Sundown, a leading developer, manufacturer, and marketer of vitamins, nutritional supplements, and other health products, came up with $2 million. The new building housing the H. Wayne Huizenga School of Business and Entrepreneurship was named the Carl DeSantis Building. August Urbanek, a financier and member of the NSU Board of Trustees, contributed $1 million; the university named the Entrepreneur Hall of Fame Gallery after him. Harris W. “Whit” Hudson, vice chairman of the board of AutoNation and Republic
Services, gave $2 million for the Hudson Center of Entrepreneurship and Executive Education. Leonard Farber, a decorated World War II vet and developer of more than forty-five shopping centers, donated $1 million for the Leonard and Antje Farber West Hall.23

The university broke ground for the DeSantis Building and the H. Wayne Huizenga School of Business and Entrepreneurship on January 24, 2002. At that time, the school had more than 2,000 students and 9,000 alumni and offered master’s and doctoral programs. The Hudson Center of Entrepreneurship and Executive Education made nondegree executive education programs available to interested businesspeople. In addition to the weekend MBA program, the doctoral division enabled students to earn degrees in business administration, international business, and public administration.

The DeSantis Building opened in spring 2004 and added a second gem to the campus. Dean Pohlman said the building “meets the needs of the future with cutting-edge technology for our students, yet honors the past and those who have helped us get to where we are today.” The 261,000-square-foot, five-story facility is built around a central three-story courtyard enclosed in a glass atrium. The 2,000-square-foot marble entrance, surrounded by columns and glass walls, is a spectacular introduction to the building. The imposing columns, the cherry-wood furniture in the classrooms, and the overstuffed leather chairs and couches strewn throughout give the appearance of an upscale office building. Business major Keith Dixon pronounced the arrangement as “very conducive for learning.” The new structure included general-purpose classrooms, compressed video and teleconferencing classrooms, a lecture theater, computer labs, conference facilities, and administrative and student offices. The building is also home to NSU’s Graduate School of Computer and Information Sciences.24

Over the years, the business school has done an excellent job of offering educational advancement for individuals working full-time. Zeida Rodriguez, who now works as a recruiter for the business school, earned an MIBA, a master’s degree in international business, in the weekend program. She took two classes of two hours each on Friday night, and then came back all day Saturday for eight hours. She was in class for a total of twelve hours during the weekend. Zeida liked the small classes and the ability to keep working while pursuing a degree, and she appreciated the contacts she made with other full-time workers.25

Charles Shirley went to work for SunTrust Banks in Fort Lauderdale and was one of the first students in the executive MBA program.
He concluded that the course content was challenging and that the material encompassed the same ground that a traditional MBA course would cover. Shirley appreciated that some of the teachers were active in their professions and could give real-life examples of things he needed to know. He would often apply what he learned in class to his work back in his office. He valued his experience at NSU, kept in touch, and ultimately became president of the alumni association.26

Like Charles Shirley, Paul Sallarulo gained valuable knowledge in the business school. He received a graduate degree in business while working full-time. It gave him the confidence to become an entrepreneur. Proud of his degree and his special connection to NSU, Sallarulo later became chairman of the board of the Huizenga School and currently is on the NSU Board of Trustees.27

In these three cases, the business school did its part to help each individual advance his or her career. In return, the school received long-term commitments from its former students.

At the time of this writing, in 2012, the Huizenga School of Business is one of the larger business schools in the country, serving more than 6,600 bachelor, master’s, and doctoral students and offering fourteen MBA programs, including conflict resolution and global management, as well as a master’s in accounting and public administration. All courses offer flexible formats: students can choose full-time, part-time, days, evening, weekends, online, or a combination of those options.

The school’s mission continues to be individual personal growth and professional development in business, academia, government, and nonprofit organizations. The success of the courses is realized when students apply their knowledge to create value in their respective businesses. To assist their students and faculty in acquiring this knowledge, the Huizenga School invites world-class businessmen such as T. Boone Pickens, Jack Welch of General Electric, and Mike Jackson, CEO of AutoNation, to share their experience and ideas.

An important new department in the business school was the Huizenga Sales Institute. When asked what skills their employees lacked, several Florida businesses replied that sales training was a serious need. In response, the Huizenga School opened the Sales Institute on the third floor of the DeSantis Building. The institute spans 8,200 square feet of space and includes sixteen mock sales rooms with video-conference capabilities. The new courses include an MBA in sales and an MBA in sales management.28
The NSU sports programs continued to grow, and one of the most significant changes occurred in 2002, when the school was granted full NCAA Division II membership. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is a voluntary organization of about 1,600 schools committed to maintaining athletics as an integral part of the educational experience. Division II is one step above NAIA, but does not require the huge amount of money and large stadiums necessary for participation in NCAA Division I. NSU remained a member of the Sunshine State Conference (SSC). President Ray Ferrero Jr. expressed pleasure at being part of Division II but did not anticipate that NSU would expand to Division I due to its low undergraduate enrollment and the prohibitive cost of building up the necessary athletic resources. In July 2003, Michael Mominey was promoted to director of intercollegiate athletics at NSU. He added women’s rowing and reinstated men’s cross-country and women’s tennis.

Brad Williams, worried about students connecting with NSU’s sports teams, decided that a new mascot might be in order. When quizzing students about the current nickname, the Knights, he found that 41 percent of them did not know the athletic team’s moniker. Williams put together a school spirit task force to increase knowledge of and participation in sports. A contest for a new school mascot garnered 447 entries. The final choice was narrowed to two—the sharks and the stingrays—and 83 percent of the student body voted for the sharks. Williams approved of how the contest created interest and energy on the campus. The students liked the new mascot so much that they raised money to have a Swedish sculptor build a shark statue, which now stands outside the Don Taft University Center. NSU’s new symbol gave the university community a sense of identity and helped unify the campus.

The athletic programs at Nova went on to national prominence in several sports. The women’s golf team won four straight national championships (2009–2012). In 2009, the NSU women’s rowing team won the Varsity 4 title at the 2009 NCAA Division II national championships. In 2008, the women’s softball team was ranked number two in the country and the men’s golf team won two SSC titles. In 2012, the men’s golf team finished first in the Division II championships. By 2012, the sports facilities had been upgraded and included a new natatorium, a baseball complex, a new basketball arena, a soccer
complex, and other venues. In 2010, Ray Ferrero Jr. boasted, “For the past five years, all sports, men’s and women’s, have seen the overall grade point average for NSU student athletes exceeding 3.0, and they are graduating in time. That is huge.”

The crowning achievement for students and athletes was the long-awaited, urgently needed university center. The complex took fifteen years from planning to fruition. Construction began in fall 2004, and the structure opened its doors in August 2006. The planners thought it would be a good idea to put the new complex, the campus energy center, next to the library, the intellectual center of the university, as the student center would create a sense of community. The center’s location was designed so that students from the dorms would pass through the center on their way to the library. The 366,000-square-foot multipurpose facility would be a centerpiece of the Davie campus. The 4,500-seat sports arena/convocation center allowed NSU to host concerts, special events, lectures, and conferences. The new building would be the focal point for student life and redefined the university’s interaction with students, faculty, and the surrounding community.

The new facility contained a performing arts theater, the student information center and card office, the student development and activities offices, the Flight Deck Lounge, the student union, and a food court. The design incorporated a modern health and fitness club with a gym, racquetball and squash courts, and a rock-climbing wall. NSU’s certified athletic training staff housed its sports medicine services in what was known as the RecPlex.

In 2009, three years after the completion of the center, Don Taft, a South Florida businessman, donated money to NSU, which renamed the university center as the Don Taft University Center. At Taft’s request, NSU declined to reveal the amount of his gift, but said it was in the “multiple millions” and was one of the largest donations the university has received. George Hanbury said Taft was the epitome of the old saying “you make a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give.” Thanks to the influence and generosity of Don Taft and the Taft Foundation, NSU became the permanent home of the Special Olympics Broward County.

**Student Activities**

While the Don Taft University Center was a wonderful campus addition for students, President Ray Ferrero Jr. and NSU also moved
swiftly to meet the housing needs of incoming students. NSU increased its on-campus living capacity by erecting the $45 million high-rise Commons Residence Hall in 2007. The university wanted to grow its undergraduate population, and the new coed dorm, with 525 beds, met the need. NSU also upgraded living quarters for graduate students. In 2007, NSU purchased the Rolling Hills Hotel for $12 million. It consisted of one seven-story tower and one three-story tower, which were converted into a plush graduate residence hall with 373 beds. A renovated pool and the frequent Shark Shuttle service to campus, one mile away, made this an ideal choice for graduate students. By 2011, approximately 1,500 students lived in campus dorms.

Ferrero and others have emphasized that one future objective for NSU is to increase its undergraduate population to achieve a better balance with graduate students, perhaps eventually achieving a sixty-forty split without reducing the number of graduate enrollees. Since the professional programs are oversubscribed, any growth at NSU would more logically take place at the undergraduate level. Provost Frank DePiano said new undergraduates at NSU should expect a much more personal education, with smaller classes and more interaction with faculty than one would find at a large public university. NSU has developed a $21 million scholarship fund to help defray the cost of the private institution. DePiano expects NSU to recruit higher-performing students without denying access to qualified students. Increasing the undergraduate pool to 5,000 would create a critical mass on campus to generate more energy and extracurricular activity. Undergraduate enrollment had grown to around 2,600 by 2011, but everyone agrees that the number needs to be higher. NSU has the capacity, facilities, and desire to enlarge the undergraduate population.

Since increasing undergraduate enrollment was one of his major concerns, Ray Ferrero Jr. pointed out that the new library and classroom buildings, the upscale student housing, and the university center created a campus environment that should be attractive to undergraduate students. Another factor in persuading new students to enroll at NSU was increasing the course offerings in the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences and transferring the undergraduate business program to the business school. Ferrero wanted to keep tuition ($20,000 for undergraduates in 2011) within reach of most students while maintaining NSU’s place between FAU (approximately $4,300 per year) and the University of Miami (more than $35,000 per year). Frank DePiano cited the dual admissions program as an important option that gave new students an advantage in entering the dental,
medicine, or law programs. Students who meet the qualifications with test scores or SATs will be admitted to NSU with a reserved spot in the graduate school of their choice. After successfully completing the undergraduate requirements, usually in three years, they would then enter the professional school.36

To attract new undergraduates to NSU, the university increased its advertising budget in state newspapers, sponsored open houses, and organized campus tours for interested families. One recruiter revealed that the most difficult issue in selling NSU was the cost, but the new campus facilities, the dual admission program, the large number of available majors, and the location helped overcome that issue. President George Hanbury pointed out that potentially 4,000 recruiters (students, staff, and faculty) were already on university grounds and would be organized to recruit for the entire campus, not just for individual centers.

By 2011, social opportunities for students had increased exponentially: there were 241 student organizations on campus, fraternities and sororities, high-quality recreational facilities, a superior student union, new dorms, and the possibility of working on the student paper, The Current, radio station Radio X, or SharkFINS (Fun and Interesting News for Students), the weekly student e-newsletter. The Office of Campus Recreation operates the RecPlex and sponsors intramural sports and group fitness. There is also the Office of Student Disability Services and the Office of Career Development, which gives career consulting and job search assistance. In 2000, to enable students to move around campus more efficiently, the university launched a fleet of four new sixteen-passenger shuttle buses called the Shark Shuttle, with “Wave and Ride” services to all forty permanent buildings on campus.37 All of these improvements helped make a student’s time at NSU more productive, more enjoyable, and more fulfilling.

NSU also reached out to its alumni to help publicize the school. Not much had been done with the alumni association in Nova’s early years, but as the number of graduates multiplied, the university has made more of an effort to stay in contact with alumni and bring them up to date on happenings at NSU. The university sends out alumni newsletters, sponsors alumni chapters around the country, and mails invitations to campus events. NSU alumni, however, are scattered all over the world, and some have never even seen the campus, so it has been difficult to raise money from alumni of a school less than fifty years old.38 NSU has made improving alumni relations a major objective.
The school continues its dedication to a diversified campus. In fall 2010, women accounted for 63 percent of the student population. Minorities made up 67 percent of the undergraduate population and 54 percent of the graduate enrollment. The Princeton Review rated NSU one of the top universities in the nation for diversity, and the U.S. Department of Education considers NSU the top university in the nation for diversity. For many years the school has been highly ranked in the number of master’s and doctoral degrees awarded to African Americans. In 2011, The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education Magazine certified NSU as the top institution in the nation in the number of doctoral degrees awarded to Hispanics.

Oceanographic Center

The Oceanographic Center continued to do significant research. In 1998, the U.S. Congress established the National Coral Reef Institute (NCRI) at NSU. NCRI’s objectives included the protection and conservation of coral reefs around the world through assessment, monitoring programs, and research on restoration. In 2000, President Ray Ferrero Jr., continuing his support of the center, appointed Richard (Dick) Dodge to succeed Julian (Jay) McCreary as dean of the Oceanographic Center. Dodge oversees research efforts in physical oceanography and biological and environmental sciences, as well as educational activities. The center offers programs in marine environmental science, marine biology, coastal zone management, and biological sciences.

Dodge, an expert on coral reefs, commented that these are trying times for ocean life and the land environment, with global climate change, El Niño, pollution, overfishing, and overuse of resources creating myriad problems. To help save endangered ocean life, Dodge received a research grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to put damaged coral in underwater nurseries, regrow it, and transplant it back in damaged reefs. Initial transplant experiments have shown great promise. Coral reefs, explained Dodge, are one of the oldest ecosystems on the planet and an invaluable part of the ocean’s infrastructure. Since coral reefs serve as home for 25 percent of all marine life and Florida has 84 percent of the coral reefs in the United States, it is imperative that the reefs be preserved and protected.
In January 2010, the U.S. Department of Commerce announced that the Oceanographic Center would receive $15 million in federal stimulus money to build the largest coral reef research center in the United States: the Center of Excellence for Coral Reef Ecosystems Research. NSU agreed to match that grant. There were 167 applicants for the grants and only twelve received funding, with NSU being one of only two to receive the full $15 million award. The 86,000-square-foot, five-story building opened in September 2012 at a final cost of $50 million. The new building features a dramatic architectural design and a number of eco-friendly aspects, including motion-sensor and solar-powered lighting, rainwater collection and reuse, and native-plant landscaping. The center has created new academic jobs, employed additional graduate students, and produced 300 construction jobs. The Center of Excellence for Coral Reef Ecosystems Research will have a “transformational effect on coral reef research” and enable the Oceanographic Center to attract new faculty and students. In 2012, the Oceanographic Center leads NSU with approximately $50 million—over 75 percent—of the total NSU extramural grant funding. The center now has more than 200 graduate students and offers five master’s degrees.\footnote{40}

Shepard Broad Law Center

In its thirty-eight years of existence, the law school has had a lasting influence on South Florida and the legal community. Many judges and state and elected officials were included in its alumni Gallery of Achievement. By 2010 the school had grown in enrollment to around 1,263 students, with 53 percent women and 30 percent members of minority groups. Of the sixty-six full-time faculty, there were twelve African Americans, five Hispanics, two Asian Americans, and thirty-three women. Three unique master’s programs were designed to educate non-lawyers on complex issues that they might encounter in their professional work. The school offered an MS in health law for practitioners, an MS in education law for teachers, and a degree in employment law.

The law school has continued its Alternative Admission Model Program for Legal Education (AAMPLE), a special admissions program for students with limited credentials. The school has worked assiduously to recruit a diverse community of scholars, especially in the Hispanic community, which had been underserved in previous years.
The law school’s performance on passing the Florida bar exam has been raised to where NSU graduates now consistently rank third or fourth in the state. Some law faculty believe that the school has become too large and will not improve the quality of its students until it raises the admission criteria and lowers the number of admissions each year. While almost all faculty favor the AAMPLE program, the lower admission standards hurt the school in national rankings. Nonetheless, insiders claim that the school educates its students well, and morale at the law school is high.

In recent years, the Shepard Broad Law Center added other special programs, such as joint degrees with schools in the European Union, in which students are licensed to practice in both the EU and the United States. There were also cooperative programs in business, psychology, and dispute resolution. Each new student has the opportunity of spending one semester in the Law Center’s clinical program in business, dispute resolution, criminal justice, and environmental law.41

Health Professions Division

Fred Lippman, the current chancellor of the Health Professions Division (HPD), was an early confidant of Mort Terry and Arnold Melnick and has been with SECOM and HPD almost from the start, having served in a number of administrative capacities. He succeeded Arnold Melnick as provost in 1998 and became chancellor in 2004. He knows as well as anyone about HPD’s extraordinary growth since it became part of NSU. The colleges have expanded in the number of students and programs, but perhaps more important, there has been a tremendous expansion of basic research and research publications in recent years. Lippman reported that he has concentrated on creating more effective and innovative academic and clinical programs for the students. As part of that goal, in 2001 the NSU College of Osteopathic Medicine (NSU-COM) signed a landmark ten-year agreement with the North Broward Hospital District that would provide additional clinical opportunities for NSU-COM students at the district’s four hospitals. Lippman also focused on sharing knowledge and interdisciplinary research among the six colleges, believing that the physician, pharmacist, and other specialists should work together to coordinate patient care and treatment.42

In less than two decades, HPD has developed into a multidisciplinary health center. With modern facilities, the division has
redoubled its commitment to innovation and community development. The College of Health Care Sciences offers physician assistant programs on campus and in Fort Myers, Jacksonville, and Orlando. Both the occupational therapy and physical therapy programs have enlarged their offerings. The nursing school, now a separate college, began allowing registered nurses (RNs) to earn a master’s of science in nursing (MSN) and continued to attract students for its bachelor of science in nursing (BSN).

The College of Dental Medicine is currently housed in a 70,500-square-foot, three-story building containing 171 modern dental operating units. The college remains committed to helping indigent and underserved patients. The College of Medical Sciences has sustained its role as the provider of all basic and medical science education for the other division colleges. The College of Optometry, founded in 1989, remains the only college of optometry in Florida. The college conducts a wide range of research in ocular disease, and its Eye Care Institute enables the general public to receive eye care.

The College of Osteopathic Medicine now has a public health program available to students and continues its emphasis on a holistic approach to healing and on family physicians and their role in rural and underserved communities. Each medical student completes a required three-month rotation in a rural practice. The Area Health Education Center (AHEC) supplies funding and electronic access to NSU’s medical library for those physicians working in rural areas.

After the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, NSU-COM mobilized a university-wide relief effort. The medical center performed primary and follow-up care to victims with chronic illnesses and acute injuries sustained during the storm. On an annual basis, NSU-COM students are also sent on medical missions to foreign countries—Ecuador, Haiti, Jamaica, Peru, and others. The health care contingent provides medical stations for pediatrics, general medicine, dermatology, and other specialties. Although not acting as physicians, students benefit from this hands-on experience. Taylor Hathaway, a medical student, commented on his time in Jamaica: “This experience gave us . . . a great chance to gain firsthand experience with patient care, not just as observers, but as medical care providers, under the supervision of physicians.”

The College of Pharmacy concentrates on drug-use review and medication therapy management in a rapidly changing field. The HPD operates five multispecialty health care centers, including a women’s health care center, in both Broward and Miami-Dade County. These
centers furnish patient care not offered by other local health care providers. The NSU health care system has more than 300,000 patient visits yearly to the communities it serves.\(^4\) The HPD, which arrived on campus in 1994, has been a major addition to NSU, adding prestige to the university and enabling NSU to serve the community in a way it never could before.

**Mailman Segal Center for Human Development**

The current Mailman Segal Center for Human Development’s history goes back to 1972, when Marilyn “Mickey” Segal developed early learning programs in the community. Segal was one of the first educators to emphasize the importance of learning in a child’s formative years, which are critical for development. Desirous of an early childhood center that would serve as a teaching and research facility and a model for quality child care, Segal set up the Family Center in 1975. The focus of the Family Center expanded in 1983 when the Baudhuin Preschool (formerly the Fort Lauderdale Oral School) was relocated to campus and became a unit of the Family Center.

Initially working with children with hearing impairments, the Baudhuin School expanded to include children with learning disabilities, attention deficit disorders, and autism. By 1988, the school had contracted with the School Board of Broward County to provide free services to children with the educational eligibility requirement of autism. The Baudhuin Preschool, with 157 children with autism in its care, is one of the only preschools nationally accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children for children with autism spectrum disorders.

In 2001, Jim and Jan Moran donated $3 million as a challenge grant for the Family Center to expand its outreach programs, to build a new, larger facility to house all Mailman Segal Center programs currently on campus, and to increase its programs so that more families in the community can benefit from its services. The Moran gift was part of a $12.5 million project to build a 110,000-square-foot center on five acres adjacent to the campus, ultimately known as the Jim and Jan Moran Family Center Village. The new edifice, which opened in 2003, is a nationally recognized demonstration and training facility.

One half of the Moran Family Center building is devoted to the study of autism; the other half offers programs in parenting, early childhood, and early brain development. There are specially designed
family rooms and outdoor play spaces to encourage families and the 1,000-plus children to play and learn together. The center also goes into at-risk communities in surrounding areas to offer parenting classes, child development programs, and training and professional development to its community constituents. In collaboration with other NSU centers, the Mailman Segal Center for Human Development offers academic classes in early childhood, autism, and applied behavior analysis. In 2010, after thirty years of focusing on children and families, the center is now composed of three institutes: the Early Childhood Institute, the Parenting Institute, and the Autism Institute.45

University School

With the University School (prekindergarten through 12th grade), the Mailman Segal Center for Human Development (birth to five), the undergraduate Farquhar College, the professional schools, and the Lifelong Learning Institute (formerly the Institute of Retired Professionals), NSU had met the original founder SFEC’s vision of cradle-to-the-grave education. The university achieved, in less than fifty years, the creator’s dream of an integrated learning experience.

President Ray Ferrero Jr. liked the concept of a campus-based school, “a university school within a university.” Ferrero described the University School as having a very nurturing culture and praised it as a fine prep school whose graduates attended some of the best universities in the nation. One hundred percent of its graduates have gone on to college. Although there were already several collaborative programs with NSU, Ferrero encouraged more interdisciplinary interaction between the University School and NSU programs, especially with the Oceanographic Center and the College of Arts and Sciences.46

While the school has expanded in terms of facilities and students—as of 2011 there were 1,900 students enrolled—Jerome (Jerry) Chermak, headmaster since 1999, continues to emphasize the school’s original pedagogy: to base instruction on the student’s learning needs, interests, and abilities. Chermak, concerned about the development of individuals and their values beyond academics, encourages extracurricular activities such as sports, music, art, debate, theater, and community service. Recent expansion at the school includes a 70,800-square-foot performing arts center, the Epstein Center for the Arts with a 750-seat auditorium, an art gallery, and band practice rooms.47
Nadine Barnes, currently the director of the Lower School, said that the teachers begin language instruction at a very early age. The Lower School introduces students to current moral issues during Cultural Unity Week, which teaches children about tolerance, acceptance, and name-calling. According to Barnes, it is important to help young students overcome reading and learning problems and social disabilities. She recalled one second-grade student who was barely reading and exhibited psychological problems. A complete psychological workup, with assistance from experts in the field from NSU colleges, remedied his problems, and he ended up attending Harvard University.48

**International Studies**

In recent years, NSU bolstered its international programs and expanded into new countries, focusing on its Latin American neighbors. In previous years, international exchange programs were just an afterthought. NSU signaled its long-term investment in a greater international presence with the appointment of Anthony J. DeNapoli as executive director of the newly created Office of International Affairs (OIA). DeNapoli, who began his new job on August 18, 2010, coordinates and facilitates existing and new international programs and works with NSU’s colleges, schools, and centers to increase the number of affiliations with foreign institutions. DeNapoli also coordinates and expands existing services for on-campus and online international students, as well as students who are earning NSU degrees in countries around the world.

DeNapoli is heavily involved with NSU’s growing and constantly changing international partnerships in the Bahamas, Belize, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Greece, Italy, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, South Korea, Spain, Malaysia, Mexico, and Great Britain. NSU is also working on agreements with Brazil and Argentina. NSU students and faculty, as of 2010, were engaged in projects in more than fifty-four countries, with students from 106 nations taking NSU classes at the main Davie campus or in clusters in their own countries. There are approximately 1,200 international students residing and studying on the NSU campus. Of the international students on campus, 76 percent are taking graduate courses, primarily in business and health sciences. Most of them are supported through scholarships or government aid from their home countries; for example, the Saudi Arabian government funds sixty Saudi students.
Before foreign students arrive in Florida, the Office of International Affairs gives them a pre-arrival orientation, which they can complete online. They attend an additional orientation session when they arrive on campus and a series of workshops throughout the year. Assisting foreign students in their adjustment to U.S. life and culture can prove difficult. One of the sensitive issues the OIA faced was providing Muslim students proper food and a time and place for prayer. NSU welcomes its Saudi visitors because it gives NSU students a chance to interact with Muslims and understand their religion and culture. OIA stresses the need for ethnocentric Americans to understand other cultures and religions.

NSU also recognizes the value of faculty exchanges and the interchange of research and ideas. Most faculty return from their time abroad reenergized and ready to share their experiences. The university is belatedly developing study-abroad programs for undergraduate students, who may spend a semester in such locations as Rome or London. This outreach will benefit U.S. students, who will need to understand the rest of the world to function effectively in the twenty-first century.49

Abraham S. Fischler School of Education

The Abraham S. Fischler School of Education, an early pioneer in field-based distance education, is located in an 18-acre, four-story building in North Miami Beach and serves more than 15,000 students annually in many states and several foreign countries. The school offers dozens of programs in the field of educational leadership, “almost all delivered through high-quality distance education techniques perfected after more than thirty years of experience.” A wide array of degrees is available: bachelor, master’s, and doctoral degrees, as well as educational specialist and teacher certification. Students have several course format options: online, campus based, site based, off campus, or a combination of these. Doctoral programs include educational leadership (the very same course the school began with some forty years ago), health care education, human services administration, special education, and many others.50

From 2000 to 2012, NSU pushed for increased technology for the entire university. President Ferrero, expanding on Abe Fischler’s early concept of distance education, said NSU would solidify its reputation as a “brick and click” university. The brick part was reflected
in the new library, business school, and Don Taft University Center.
The click part, or technology and distance learning, would always
be emphasized. As technology improved, NSU adapted online deliv-
ery formats for students dispersed nationally and internationally. By
2003, NSU offered 2,700 online courses and twenty-eight online de-
gree programs. Ferrero and others predicted that student interest in
distance education would only increase as the general population be-
came more engaged with telecommunication technologies. By 2007,
distance education represented 42 percent of NSU’s fall term enroll-
ment. By 2012, most major U.S. institutions, including Ivy League
schools, had adopted similar forms of online education.

Ferrero, responding to ongoing criticism of online education, de-
defended the distance education programs as academically rigorous. He
maintained that they would always be an important part of the NSU
curriculum because they provide a valuable service to society: reach-
ing those who might otherwise be shut out of an education.51

There has been some discussion about the efficacy of online educa-
tion. Practitioners have found that many students like a “blended”
course—some online work and some face time with the instructor. Other
students prefer live classes, while many enjoy the convenience and
efficiency of a purely online course. Many adult students pre-
fer the option of a cluster class so they can attend live classes near
their home on night and weekends. Two big advantages of the cluster
courses are that students can get a top-notch professor and the courses
are convenient for full-time employees. Since the university’s costs for
off-site courses are low, both the student and the provider benefit.

The cluster courses and live classes offer an exchange of ideas
and personal communication between professor and student. Online
courses typically lack the nuance, dialogue, and eye contact between
professor and student (although the virtual classroom and video-
conferencing software are rapidly overcoming these problems). Both
Anthony DeNapoli and Susan Atherley, who teach online and live
courses, say that while there are distinct advantages in a live class, the
online course can be done well. As Ferrero and Fischler have often
reminded people, education is neither place nor time bound.

NSU has rapidly developed its in-state, off-campus cluster pro-
grams by buying or renting buildings all over Florida as student
service centers. NSU has major education centers in Jacksonville, Or-
lando, Tampa, Fort Myers, West Palm Beach, and Miami, where stu-
dents receive person-to-person courses without having to leave their
hometown. The major centers offer courses at all levels in business
administration, health professions (physical and occupational therapy and nursing), education, psychology, and other fields. Each center has a director, staff, and classrooms. These service centers are efficient and profitable.

The service center in Miami is a representative example. It has 70,000 square feet of classroom and meeting space with videoconferencing and Internet access in every room. There are forty-six “smart” classrooms, three computer labs, and two compressed video suites. The degrees available at the Miami location include a bachelor’s degree in education and business; a master’s degree in business administration, education, and mental health counseling; and a doctorate in educational leadership and organizational leadership.52

Cultural Outreach

Under President Ferrero’s leadership, NSU continued being a good community servant and forged new relationships with community groups. When several board members from the Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale approached Ferrero about a possible affiliation, he responded favorably: “I think a university, if it has the capacity, should be part of the community, have outreach, and support important community assets.” Ferrero thought NSU would bring a lot to an affiliation with the museum and that NSU’s support would give the public and museum supporters confidence for the future and allow the museum to grow.

On July 1, 2008, the Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale became part of the expanded creative campus of NSU when the two institutions agreed to a merger. Cooperative programs between NSU and the museum would further enrich educational programming in the visual arts. In essence, with the merger, the museum lost its identity as a separate entity, though it kept its name. NSU owns the land and the museum building and has full financial oversight over it. NSU did not pay anything to merge the two but did accept the museum’s liabilities. This move gave NSU another presence on the east side of town and enabled it to increase the undergraduate population by offering more fine arts courses.

Founded in 1958 as the Fort Lauderdale Arts Center, the museum is located in downtown Fort Lauderdale in a 75,000-square-foot facility. The museum is known for its collection of contemporary Cuban art and its successful high-profile exhibitions, including “Saint
The Ray Ferrero Jr. Presidency

Peter and the Vatican” and “Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs.” From 2003 to 2008, more than 1.5 million visitors have enjoyed the museum’s exhibitions. Executive director Irving Lippman praised the merger, saying the two entities would become sites “for innovation in the arts, a catalyst for new ideas, and a hub for cross-disciplinary collaboration.” Ray Ferrero Jr. called the association a complement to the cultural and learning experiences NSU delivered to the community and to its students and faculty.53

NSU has added to its community involvement with the concept of the NSUCommuniversity. Its purpose is to initiate and develop public/private relationships that address the needs of Broward County citizens. NSU students and faculty have partnerships with the Broward Education Foundation, the Urban League of Broward County, the Broward Alliance, the United Way, and other organizations. In addition to community service provided by the Health Professions Division, the Oceanographic Center works to preserve natural resources and NSU students participate in America Reads, a federally sponsored work-study program that gives undergraduates the opportunity to tutor elementary school students who have reading problems. Between 1999 and 2002, 150 NSU students helped approximately 750 Broward County schoolchildren in thirty schools. While aiding others, NSU students derive valuable hands-on experience and leadership training that they can apply in their future endeavors.54 These collaborative efforts between the private and public sectors are examples of what President Ferrero promised the university would do when he took office.

The Distinguished Speakers Series, under the aegis of the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences, continued its tradition of hosting leaders who are prominent in their fields. Two of the more notable visitors were His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet and Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu. These proponents of peace appeared on campus within two days of each other. The Dalai Lama, who also visited the campus in 2004, spoke to faculty, students, and the public on February 23 and 24, 2010, discussing “The Effect of Compassion on the Global Community.”55 Tinsley Ellis, one of the invitees to a private session with the Dalai Lama, recalled being instructed not to touch him: “So I didn’t touch him—but he came and hit me in the back and asked how I was doing. He was very personable.”56

Archbishop Desmond Tutu arrived on February 26, 2010, to present a lecture entitled “Good vs. Evil: Human Rights or Humans Wronged.” Archbishop Tutu had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize
in 1984 for his long and unyielding fight against apartheid in South Africa. Don Rosenblum, dean of the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences, welcomed the archbishop to NSU, saying, “His message of engaging in peaceful resolution to address conflict and oppose injustice is especially relevant to our students,” and they will gain personal insights and inspiration by listening to him.\(^{57}\)

Other recent lecturers have upheld the high standards of the series. They include Eliezer (Elie) Wiesel, another recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize; writers Kurt Vonnegut and Salman Rushdie; former secretary of defense Robert S. McNamara; Geraldine Ferraro, the first woman nominated for vice president by a major political party; and Ehud Barak, the former prime minister of Israel. Other orators included Gloria Steinem and John Kenneth Galbraith. For a slice of controversy, the university also invited Spike Lee and Jack Kevorkian to speak. It is significant that an academic institution such as NSU has devoted time and money to host such eminent and notable personalities. NSU clearly understands the importance of having these world-class speakers impart their wisdom and experience to students, faculty, and the community at large.

**Retirement of Ray Ferrero Jr.**

Ray Ferrero Jr., who had aggressively guided the university since taking over in 1998, had been gratified by NSU’s accelerated growth in terms of students, buildings, courses, and faculty from 2000 until 2011.\(^{58}\) After thirteen years at the helm, however, Ferrero decided to retire. Possible reasons for his decision were the expiration of his contract in 2011, some health problems, and having accomplished much of what he set out to do. Ferrero knew that an experienced successor, George Hanbury, was ready to take over.\(^{59}\)

When administrators, colleagues, and former students were asked to describe Ferrero’s personality and evaluate his presidency, responses were uniformly positive. Colleagues described the silver-haired president as a hands-on leader who read voraciously, quickly got to the point, and asked a lot of questions. They portrayed him as a power broker whose connections to the highest tier of South Florida’s legal, business, and civic institutions opened numerous doors for NSU. Fred Lippman characterized Ferrero as a doer: “A thorough thinker . . . an administrator who finishes a task.” Abe Fischler credited him with
developing the campus infrastructure and said that Ferrero “believes in community cooperation, and he has demonstrated that.”

Other comments paint a rather clear picture of Ferrero as president: “He’s a very strong leader with a very strong personality.” “Ferrero collected information, made a battle plan, and then marshaled his forces.” “A good word to describe him would be determined.” “He gets things done.” “If an opportunity presented itself and it made sense, he took advantage of it.”

Many observers saw Ferrero as a true visionary who turned what originally was a war-surplus landing strip into a credible university. One of his greatest strengths was his ability to partner with a variety of people and institutions, both public and private. When most administrators hit a wall, observed a friend, they would stop, but “Ray hits a wall and finds a way around it, over it, under it, rebuilds the wall, remodels the wall.” A strong supporter of the university thought that the “growth and development of NSU is a result of the charisma and forcefulness of Ray Ferrero Jr.” A dean who worked with Ferrero over the years liked that he knew faculty names and was willing to have lunch with students and get their views on important issues. An alumnus referred to Ferrero’s “remarkable recall” and his ability “to go through ninety different things going on at the university without ever missing a beat.” Another person who worked closely with Ferrero called him the “catalyst” who moved things along. His background in law and business and his familiarity with the university enabled him to move ahead with great dispatch.

There were, of course, some detractors. A few members of the faculty viewed him as somewhat arrogant, a person who did not suffer fools gladly, and when at work, demonstrated a limited sense of humor. Others pictured him as a taskmaster who ran roughshod over any opposition. People respected him, but some of his close associates admitted, “It was difficult to say no to Ray Ferrero Jr.” When a powerful leader is determined to achieve success, there will always be those who disagree with his goals and methods, and there might be a few bodies strewn along the way, but in the end, Ray Ferrero Jr. made his mark.

Overall, praise for Ferrero was fulsome. Administrators in particular realized the difficulty of moving forward in an academic setting and recognized his intelligence and ability to get things done. That, as Ferrero himself might say, was the bottom line.

On December 7, 2010, the NSU Board of Trustees approved a leadership succession plan. Effective January 1, 2010, Ray Ferrero Jr.
would become university chancellor and CEO, and George Hanbury would become university president and chief operating officer. The board also stipulated that in 2011 Hanbury would assume the role of CEO when Ferrero’s term expired.

It is clear that in his thirteen years as president and chancellor, Ferrero enjoyed his work. When he began his time in the Horvitz Building, he asked himself three questions: “Would I enjoy being president? Is the timing right both personally and professionally? And do I think I would make a difference?” The answer to all three questions was yes. In 2008, Ferrero told a reporter, “The last ten years here have been among the most rewarding in my life.”

During his time as president, NSU had become a very different place from the university he inherited. Enrollment increased 68 percent in the previous ten years, and the number of degrees awarded during the same period grew by 77 percent. In 2011, with 28,741 students enrolled in courses both on and off campus, NSU was the nation’s seventh largest private not-for-profit research university and the largest independent institution in the Southeast. One of Ferrero’s early priorities was to bolster the school’s undergraduate population; from 1998 to 2008, undergraduate enrollment increased 32 percent.

From the outset, Ferrero knew that NSU did not have the kind of facilities it needed, so he focused on that area to the point where more than two million square feet of construction projects were completed during the last years of his tenure. The most notable new structures are the Alvin Sherman Library (Ferrero said, “It’s one of the things I am most proud of.”), the Don Taft University Center, the DeSantis Building, student housing in the Commons and Rolling Hills, and the new central energy plant that expanded the energy output on campus.

As the founders predicted many years ago, NSU had become an economic powerhouse in Broward County. In 2011, NSU was the second largest private employer in the county, and its statewide economic impact in 2008 was $1.4 billion. Ferrero had achieved what his predecessors found difficult. Not only was NSU in the black, but it was also a very successful financial entity. In the longtime tradition of the school, Ferrero displayed his skill as an administrator and entrepreneur, limiting his investments to “measured risks.” He took advantage of new opportunities, such as the Alvin Sherman Library, and made decisions with due diligence.

Two areas that garnered much of his attention and were a central part of his vision were diversity and community interaction. NSU, as noted earlier, has won many accolades for its diversity, and this
continues to be a top priority. From 2004 to 2009, the number of minority students in undergraduate programs increased by 19 percent, in graduate programs by 28 percent, and in professional degree programs by 35 percent. Ferrero pointed out that NSU “is an institution that gives everyone an opportunity.”

Ferrero always had a personal penchant for interaction with other universities and particularly with local community organizations. NSU’s outreach helped make Fort Lauderdale more dynamic and energized. His merger with the art museum, his support of the NSUCommuniversity, and the public service performed at the various university centers speak volumes about Ferrero’s zeal to help others. On a personal level, Ferrero was a member of many city and county organizations, such as the United Way and Chamber of Commerce, and he was chairman of the Broward Alliance, the county’s official public-private partnership for economic development.

Ferrero expanded the university’s presence statewide with student educational centers all over Florida. He advocated for increased international exposure for the university and demanded updated technology. He also presided over vast improvement in the three As: academics, athletics, and attitudes. He remained steadfast in his desire to improve academic excellence both for students and faculty. The President’s Faculty Research and Development Grant Program supported hundreds of faculty proposals. Athletics progressed and developed with new sports teams, a new facility, and excellent student athletes. The attitude at NSU has changed from the early days when people were defensive about the underdeveloped campus and resented the derisive remarks about Nova’s off-campus courses. Today, staff, students, and faculty are pleased with their campus and proud of their university.

On Ferrero’s departure from his thirty years of service, Ronald G. Assaf, current chair of NSU’s Board of Trustees, praised his contributions: “Ray Ferrero’s vision has transformed NSU from a small niche university into one of the country’s largest private not-for-profit universities. He is that rare combination of a pragmatic visionary.”

As he took his leave, Ferrero commented on his time at Nova: “That’s what we do here. We change lives. And NSU certainly changed mine. There are not too many people who are blessed, and this has been a blessing. I was given the greatest opportunity that anyone could have.”63