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The Search For Nova University: An Essay On Its First Twenty-five Years 1964-1989

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Acknowledgement

Twenty-five years in the life of a university is a short period of time. Yet, in its first twenty-five years, Nova University has been able to respond to major changes in American society. After Sputnik was launched in 1957, our government and our educational system placed a high priority on science and technology. President Kennedy declared that we would place a man on the moon within a decade. Nova University of Advanced Technology was conceived in response to the national agenda. In the mid-1960's, President Johnson launched the Great Society, which began to take effect in the late 1960's and continued into the 1970's. Nova University responded to the challenge of equal educational opportunity and minority success by taking education to the student. In the 1980's, in the new information age, Nova is responding by making quality education accessible to all individuals with the assistance of technology.

This essay, written by Dr. Stephen Goldstein, presents a broad sweep of Nova's twenty-five-year history. It is a macro view of what has taken place. I personally am grateful to Dr. Goldstein for volunteering to write this piece since he had only a brief time in which to do research.

The success of this institution is due to many individuals who have contributed over the years. Too numerous to mention in this publication, benefactors, trustees, faculty, staff, and students have helped make the dream of Nova University a reality.

Nova University is a dynamic institution; it remains committed to its original mission to create, implement, evaluate, and disseminate quality educational programs and to help each student realize his or her fullest potential.

Abraham S. Fischler
October 10, 1989
The history of Nova University is really the history of three Nova Universities. The first one was chartered on December 4, 1964 and lasted until July 1970. The second one survived until October 1985. And the third Nova began in the fall of 1985. True to one meaning of *nova* ("new"), the University consistently has been identified with innovation and experimentation for all of its twenty-five years. However, at each stage in its history, the University's efforts to pursue "the new" have taken on a different dimension, have involved a different governance structure, and have prompted a different public perception of it.

The Nova University that survives today is not the Nova University that its founders originally had in mind. That Nova, Nova University of Advanced Technology, actually aspired to be "the MIT of the South"—a "new" kind of graduate, research campus for a relatively small cadre of senior professors and (primarily) their doctoral students. That Nova was intended to be the capstone of a

The ebb and flow between the extreme of Nova's expectations and fortunes is ultimately what this history is all about.
comprehensive educational park in Broward County that would do everything from undertaking sophisticated research to fostering economic development in the region.

For a number of reasons, some of which can be traced to events in Washington, Southeast Asia, and Florida, that first Nova was in danger of closing for good just five-and-a-half years after it was chartered.

The second Nova grew out of the dream of the first, when the University formed a federation with the New York Institute of Technology in July 1970 and saved itself financially. During the fifteen years of the federation, Nova redefined its mission of pursuing "the new," expanded beyond its campus and greater Fort Lauderdale by pioneering the delivery of off-campus programs across the United States, and built a nationwide educational presence. During that same time, it suffered some of the worst press in its history and experienced some of its best and worst financial times. Ultimately, the Nova-NYIT federation proved unworkable and was dissolved in October 1985.
The third Nova University, the Nova of today, dates from the fall of 1985. Although it is now a mature institution because so many of its programs and priorities are already in place, it is still open to new ideas and new pursuits. Currently, it is developing innovative approaches to education through the use of computers, satellites, and other emerging technologies.

The early fundraising material about Nova University proclaimed that Nova was "an idea whose time had come." The ensuing twenty-five years has shown that nothing could have been farther from reality. In 1964, it would probably have been more accurate simply to predict that Nova was "an idea whose time would come, but just when no one knew."

In the heady afterglow of Nova University's founding, no one could have taken into account the host of indifferent or hostile conditions that would conspire to bring it to near financial ruin by 1970. Nor could anyone describe the disappointment. Equally, no one could have predicted the successful measures that would be taken to save Nova time and time again—at the eleventh, twelfth, and (it sometimes seemed) at the thirteenth hours.

In 1970, at the lowest ebb in its fortunes, you couldn't have given Nova University away. Efforts to join it with the University of Miami and the Florida State System were rebuffed. In 1989, at a high point in its history, in only the latest challenge to its mission and independence, some say that the time is now ripe for the State of Florida and its university system to absorb Nova University.

The ebb and flow between the extreme of Nova's expectations and fortunes is ultimately what this history is all about. During its first twenty-five years, Nova University has been an example of "an institution in search of itself." Through trial and error, it has found its niches. And during those same twenty-five years, it has had the wherewithal to survive in spite of the odds.
"The opening of the first privately endowed technological graduate university of the age begins with a small note that will be heard around the world."

The Miami Herald

When the first class of seventeen graduate students enrolled in Nova University of Advanced Technology on Monday, September 25, 1967, the campus in Davie, Florida still looked more like the abandoned naval airfield it had once been than like the campus of what aspired to be "the MIT of the South." Only the Rosenthal Building had been completed. The shell of the Parker Building was under construction. The rest of the campus was barren, acre after acre of weeds and sand relieved here and there by some of the original tarmac.

September 25 was a dusty and unseasonably hot day. Still, no matter how inhospitable the campus and the climate might have appeared to the critical eye, the arrival of the first students seemed auspicious to anyone who had had a hand in shaping the brand new university. Finally, finally—after years of planning, talking, hoping, cajoling, arm-twisting, fundraising, promoting, and recruiting, Nova University had opened its doors. Even though the day was hectic, faculty and staff smiled, breathed a sigh of relief, forgot about how much more had to be done, and celebrated the fact that the dream of creating a major university in Broward County seemed one major step closer to becoming
real world. Echoing the high spirits of the day, The Miami Herald declared, "The opening of the first privately endowed technological graduate university of the age begins with a small note that will be heard around the world."

Registration began at 9 A.M. After filling out a predictable batch of paperwork and enrollment forms, the students listened to university officials, whose messages (compared to those being given at other colleges and universities) were anything but commonplace. Dr. Warren Winstead, the University's first president, emphasized the seriousness of the occasion and the importance of the first students to the fledgling institution. "You will make or break the University with your performance this year," Winstead said. At the same time, he wore a broad smile, indicative of the excitement of the day, adding "It's not often in a century a university opens."

Stressing the freedom from traditional restraints in Nova's new approach to graduate education, Dr. Abraham S. Fischler, then dean of graduate studies, said, "We're trying to do something at the Ph.D. level which we feel will be exciting. We're looking for your reactions as we move toward an unstructured program to what may become more unstructured." He went on to explain that the University would be organized around "cluster" groups of professors engaged in relevant research. Each student would be assigned to a faculty member who would assess the student's academic preparation and set up an individual program for him or her.

The first seventeen Nova students
With only one permanent building ready for occupancy on the 300-acre campus, after the formalities of registration and orientation, faculty and students went to Rolling Hills Country Club for lunch and then met in groups, based upon their areas of specialization. Science education students went back to Rosenthal; physics and chemistry students went to the University's temporary laboratories in the 400 block of East Las Olas Boulevard; and oceanography students went to the houseboat laboratories at Southeast 15th Street.

Later, at five o'clock in the afternoon, there was a cocktail party on the first floor of the Rosenthal Building for students, faculty, staff, and the large community of Nova supporters. Several hundred well-wishers packed the building, so many that some people had to take refuge on the staircase to the second floor. Since the early 1960's, the dream of Nova University had struck a nerve in the citizens of Broward County. They were now there to celebrate the passing of yet another major milestone in the long list of accomplishments in the short history of the University.

Chartered by the State of Florida on December 4, 1964, by opening day 1967, Nova University boasted assets, contributions, and pledges of $10 million. A total of $125,000 had been raised and paid to the Federal Government as an installment on what became the University's 300-acre campus. James Farquhar, the University's first chairman of the board, donated 100 acres adjacent to the campus—a gift valued at in excess of $500,000. Mr. and Mrs. W.C. Mather and the Bailey Foundation donated a 100-acre parcel of land in Hollywood valued at $400,000. Ten acres at Port Everglades for the oceanographic laboratory were deeded to the University by the Broward County Commission. Three buildings on East Las Olas Boulevard to be used for temporary offices and laboratories were donated by W.A. Carson.

Louis Parker had donated $1 million for the construction of the Physical Sciences Building. Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Rosenthal had contributed $300,000 for the Student Center. Dr. Ray Pepinsky, a leading authority on crystal physics, joined the faculty of the University and installed a $500,000 laboratory. The Chicago Bridge and Iron Company and Oceanic Contractors, Inc. donated $200,000 worth of oceanographic research equipment. The first endowed chair in physics had been established with a gift of
$105,000 from the Robert O. Law Foundation. The Hollywood Founders had been formed to raise funds for what became the Mailman-Hollywood Building. The citizens of Davie set out to raise funds for a graduate resident apartment complex.

In 1966, $153,000 was donated to the University from local parimutuels—racetracks and jai alai frontons. The Florida Derby Ball netted $47,000 that same year. In 1966, research grants for oceanography totaled $357,000. Dr. Charles and Hamilton Forman contributed $130,000 to the oceanographic center.

In addition, a cross-section of the Broward County community had been mobilized to support the University project. Local merchants held benefit bazaars. Raising funds for library resources became the priority of the Library Society, a women's support group. Fifty business executives joined Gold Key, donating $1,000 each year in unrestricted operating funds. The board of trustees had already raised $4 million by March 1967. The U.S. Office of Education approved a grant of $550,000 to be matched by $1 million for the Mailman-Hollywood Building campaign. The U.S. Treasury and Urban Development Department loaned the University $1.1 million for graduate student apartments.

But beyond the money and the gifts, the idea of Nova University had captured the imagination of men and women not only in South Florida but across the nation. People at their best always seem to gravitate to things that are new, special, and different. Nova University seemed to be a combination of all three.

First, the University represented a kind of great white hope for higher education in South Florida, an institution that would keep the best and the brightest at home and attract the most promising faculty and students from around the country to a great seat of learning in a rapidly developing region of the United States. Second, by stressing the importance of science and technology, it would provide exactly the kind of leadership that was needed to help bring the United States into a competitive position in the conquest of space, the new frontier of the 1960's. Third, for education in the abstract, Nova University would be in a position to provide fresh approaches to the process of teaching, learning, and doing research. Fourth, as one institution in an educational park made up of a public school complex, a community college, an agricultural research center, and an instructional television center, Nova University would serve as a catalyst in developing and im-
plementing educational models that could be applied in its neighboring schools and then nationwide. And finally, as a magnet for business and industry that was technologically oriented, Nova University would help attract much-needed "clean" industry to an area crying out for major economic development.

By the time that Nova University opened its doors to its first students, it had attracted to its advisory board an enviable cross-section of distinguished scientists, university presidents, and even two Nobel laureates in physics, among them James R. Killian, Jr., Chairman of the Corporation of MIT, Abram L. Sachar, President of Brandeis University, and Frederick Seitz, President of the National Academy of Science.

University officials knew that September 26, 1967 would be more than just another day—the day after the opening of Nova University. From then on, all eyes would be focused on the faculty, the students, and the campus. From then on, people would begin to look for some sign of results. More time, energy, and money had probably been invested in the first seventeen Nova students than had been spent on any other students in America. They had been selected from 250 applicants from all over the United States. They were all doctoral students, and all had been given free tuition, as well as stipends up to $5,000 for living expenses if they had financial need. On top of that, it took 68 staff, 17 faculty, and an annual budget of $1.7 million to run the University that academic year.

For all of the major funding and grand plans, operating Nova University day-to-day had been very much a family affair. At one point, furniture had been donated by the School Board. A small, dedicated staff had worked tirelessly. Everyone pitched in. Whatever the University lacked in material resources or decades of tradition it more than made up for in spirit. September 26 and the days that followed would offer other opportunities to test the depth of people's commitment—their resolve to overcome obstacles, rationalize setbacks, and keep the momentum going. The process was not over. It had really just begun.
"We were dreamers."
Dr. Abraham S. Fischler

In 1970, less than three years after what had seemed its auspicious opening, Nova University of Advanced Technology was in danger of closing its doors for good. "Opening day 1967 was the highpoint; it was all downhill after that," says one long-time observer of the University. Once the University began to operate, it seemed as though its problems increased and intensified rather than eased. Everything needed to happen at once, but there was only so much momentum to go around.

To be sure, there continued to be progress and successes during those difficult years. The Parker Building was completed in 1968, as was the Davie Living Complex of student apartments. The Hollywood founders raised the monies needed to construct what became the Mailman-Hollywood Building; it opened in 1969.

Nova University was given candidate status and was accredited (1971) by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), by far the most important of its academic credentials. Students continued to enroll. Faculty taught and engaged in research. But overall, the University's existence remained tenuous, at best.

The reason for the University's precarious early history was an acute lack of operating dollars. "There is nothing wrong with Nova's progress that money and more money can't cure," one journalist
observed. A feasibility study prepared by a New York fundraising firm in the 1960's turned out to be overly optimistic when it estimated that the University would be able to raise $52.8 million long-term by 1974. In the short term, when the time came to solicit funds in the late 1960's, the amount raised, though considerable for those pre-inflationary times, fell far short of the original projections, particularly in the local South Florida community and especially in the form of unrestricted operating funds to pay for salaries, utilities, supplies, and general ongoing expenses. Nova had buildings and land that had been generously donated; it needed money to keep the lights on.

Lack of money is a problem for colleges and universities whether they are old or new. When they are beginning it is obviously critical. Nova needed a massive infusion of operating dollars particularly in its early years because its entire success had really been predicated on its ability to attract outside funding. The founders of the University decided that it should be privately, not State, funded. They felt that a major university effort in South Florida would never succeed because the power in the legislature was in the northern part of the State in the early 1960's. While that decision was politically and strategically sound, it placed a tremendous and (what would prove an) insurmountable burden on the fledgling University.

In addition, Nova was not set up to survive on student tuition. In its heyday, it projected having at most 1000 graduate and 500 undergraduate students. In its early years it had only a handful. The economic model upon which the University was established committed it to an ongoing need for outside funding from research grants and private donations of enormous proportions.

If lack of money was the major reason for the early difficulties of Nova University, there were others. During its first decade, the University became a victim of its own excessively ambitious and optimistic public relations. In the space age, Nova promised the moon. A "special report" prepared for a fundraising event in 1966 declared that "South Florida's 'dream college' has shot out of the planning stage with the speed of a missile, and is thundering toward its opening on the campus at a pace which has left even its most enthusiastic founders breathless."

Nova's literature proclaimed that this altogether "new" University was going to be able to solve problem after problem in Broward County and throughout the nation overnight—and the press repeated these early claims with an uncharacteristically uncritical eye.
First, Nova was going to be able to reform education: "Education today is 'by and large 50 years behind the times,'" and the new institution would help bring it forward more rapidly. Second, dubbed "an opportunity staggering to the imagination," Nova was going to stimulate the economic development of Broward County as no single entity before it had ever done. An impact study prepared by a professional firm estimated that the University would have a $1 billion effect on real estate sales and new construction in Broward County by 1980 and that nearly 60,000 engineers, technicians, and service workers would be employed by such industry as would be attracted by Nova. In the short term, Nova was called "the single most significant factor on the Broward real estate horizon." In the long run, the University was considered "an absolute necessity if we are going to attract the kind of industry we must have in South Florida."

Third, Nova University was going to "add a cultural and intellectual ambiance that contributes to a vital and interesting community." It was going to "influence the betterment of the arts and the humanities." To those in South Florida concerned that there was little to keep the best and the brightest at home, Nova University's presence would mean that "no longer will our children have to look North for their opportunity."

The "panacea complex" from which Nova suffered progressively undermined its continuous solicitations for funding and general support. In the earliest planning stages everyone was a dreamer about the University by his or her own admission. No one really knew how much money would be needed or exactly where it was going to come from, but the sheer force of the dream was thought to have been enough to make it happen. As time went on and dreams came
face-to-face with reality, some people lost heart and became disillusioned. At the very least, they began to question the rhetoric. The casualties were the plans that had once sounded so convincing.

In retrospect, the 1960's were probably the worst time to begin an undertaking as major and decisive as establishing a university. In the early 1960's Americans still revelled in post-World War II self-confidence and national pride. President John F. Kennedy had declared that we would put a man on the moon, that the conquest of space would be ours. Before Nova was chartered, President Kennedy was assassinated, and during the first decade of the University, the United States was mired in the Vietnam War. There was civil unrest and there were demonstra-
tions on college campuses as had never been seen before. Private and, more especially, public funding for education was one of the casualties of the Vietnam era, and Nova in its own way felt the negative repercussions. In addition to the shortage of philanthropic dollars, Nova suffered from the effects of cutbacks in federal funds for research and education in the mid-1960's.

All in all, at the end of the first decade of the Nova idea in Broward County, it seemed as though the University was too much too soon for everybody.

In May, 1970, when the first four graduates of Nova University walked across the stage to receive their Ph.D.'s, the mood of the audience was predictably joyful. Behind the scenes, however, University officials were agreeing on the final details of a plan to save the University. As it happened, within a month, a "new" Nova University would be created—one dramatically different from any that its founders could have conceived.
The "second" Nova University was born in the summer of 1970. On June 23, the board of trustees voted to enter into a federation with the New York Institute of Technology. Dr. Alexander Schure, president of NYIT, became chancellor of Nova University. Dr. Abraham S. Fischler became president. Nine trustees of Nova resigned and were replaced by an equivalent number nominated by NYIT. The New York Institute of Technology paid Nova $1.2 million in the form of pre-paid rent, an amount that enabled the University to pay off the bulk of its accumulated operating debt. The charter of Nova University was amended; the phrase "of Advanced Technology" was dropped from its corporate name.

During the fifteen years of the federation, four major sweeps in the University's history took place.

First, the whole concept of Nova's student body, programs, and campus changed. Unable to survive with a score of students on a few hundred acres in Davie, the University did what any smart business would do: it looked for student markets where it could find them and found ways "to bring the campus to the student." Year by year, the decade of the 1970's saw Nova University develop new programs and expand beyond the limits of its

Before long, the Nova national educational presence could be seen and felt across the country—in California, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Texas, and some twenty other states at any given time.
Part of $500,000 worth of physics and chemistry research equipment in the laboratories on E. Las Olas Blvd.

campus and South Florida. Before long, the Nova national educational presence could be seen and felt across the country—in California, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Texas, and some twenty other states at any given time. Day by day, Nova faculty and adjunct faculty hired from other universities criss-crossed the nation to teach "clusters" of students in city after city. Nova rented classrooms at other schools and in hotels and completely redefined the traditional notion of a college campus.

More important than the locations in which the University taught its programs were the student populations it discovered and served. Across the country, hundreds of adult, working professionals in school systems, government agencies, and businesses were unable to earn advanced degrees unless they quit their jobs and became full-time students. Few colleges and
universities offered evening and weekend programs that fit their schedules; they still catered to students fresh out of high school. Nova had clearly found what in business would be called a market niche. In educational terms, it had distinctly identified a mission.

A second major change that occurred during the period of the federation (1970-1985) was that the direction of the campus programs changed. Undergraduate evening programs for adults began, the law school was opened in 1974, and a host of master's programs in business, psychology, and education continued to be developed. Nova was beginning to find momentum even in Broward County.

It is an axiom of science that "for every action there is an equal but opposite reaction." The same law can be applied to the politics of education.

By the mid-1970's, Nova University became a victim of its own success and suffered a third change—one that was seriously to affect its reputation. The national programs that it had pioneered and implemented created a backlash of negative publicity from coast to coast, from college president's office to college president's office. As the Nova programs in various states became more public and visible, local institutions began to complain to state officials that an out-of-state university had no business coming onto their turf. They said
that Nova didn't have a campus in their state. They looked upon Nova's degree requirements with suspicion and contempt, and they set about to precipitate regulations and even legislation that would make it difficult if not impossible for Nova to operate.

To defend its programs and the students in them, Nova University ultimately had to resort to major litigation. It sued a newspaper for calling it a "diploma mill" in print. It challenged procedures in state licensing laws that seemed written to force it to close its programs. It won most, if not all, of the battles, but it lost a major portion of the war. The negative press that Nova received in the 1970's has continued to haunt it.

The fourth significant and decisive occurrence during the years of the "second" Nova University was, like the experience of the out-of-state programs, a mixed blessing. What became the largest single philanthropic gift in its history—$16 million from the estate of the late Leo Goodwin, Sr.—ultimately put the University on the road to financial stability, but only after a protracted legal battle that generated some of the worst press in its history.

The facts in the case of the Goodwin millions are fairly straightforward, at least initially. Leo Goodwin, Sr., the founder of Government Employees Insurance Company (GEICO), established a charitable unitrust and died suddenly—without naming the exact beneficiaries, but having specified that the money should go to Broward County charities. The trustees of the Unitrust named Nova University the principal recipient of the funds. Allegations then surfaced that because of its federation with the New York Institute of Technology, Nova University was "controlled" not in Broward County but in New York and therefore was not eligible to share in the Unitrust. So, the Goodwin trustees voted to rescind their decision to enable Nova to receive trust funds.

The suits and countersuits that occupied the better part of three years generated a tangled web of local and national press and public opinion that called Nova's governance and even its academic programs into question. The Goodwin battle at home coincided with hearings and legal skirmishes the University was having with state licensing officials across the country because criticism of its national programs was at high pitch. Wherever anyone turned, Nova was getting a press-bashing. In the South Florida media, Nova made headlines because of the Goodwin controversy, was accused of selling out to an out-of-state school,
lost status as a local university, and was said to be discredited because of its national programs. In state after state, Nova was accused in print of being a carpetbagger run by a New York school that with it was now trying to sue for millions of dollars that had been denied it once "the real story" got out.

In October 1979, the Goodwin case was finally settled in Nova's favor, and the University received $16 million, by far the largest single gift in its history. But the damage to its reputation far exceeded that sum or any amount of money.

From 1979 until 1985, when the federation with NYIT was dissolved, Nova University was heavily engaged in damage control, as well as in campus and program expansion. It continued to pursue its mission of educating professionals across the country, still facing lawsuits and negative press, at the same time that it attempted to build its support in Broward County and shed its negative image. During these same six years, the Nova-NYIT federation attempted to achieve what it was ultimately unable to do: blend the strengths of two institutions into a working whole.

When the model of the federation was no longer workable, it was dissolved. In October 1985, Dr. Alexander Schure and the NYIT trustees resigned.
Not-for-profit organizations are curious entities that inspire abiding loyalties in those who work for and support them. This is especially the case with colleges and universities. Most students enroll in degree programs for several years and hang their hopes of future success on the reputations of the schools from which they graduate.

There is no question that without the help of the New York Institute of Technology, Nova University would not have survived. It is equally true that a real, and ultimately unrelievably, tension existed within the federation of the two schools. There was more pulling them apart than bringing them together. Separated by twelve hundred miles and pursuing basically different educational missions, Nova and NYIT never achieved a workable blend. Faculty and staff are slow to change their loyalties, if they ever do. Moreover, the organizational parities were never put in place to create a synergy of staff, faculty, students, and resources.

During the years of the federation, it was difficult to draw lines in matters of governance, finance, and academic policy so that the public, let alone academic colleagues, could understand them. Because the federation was a unique corporate arrangement, it
Merchant's bazaar-1960's
was almost impossible to explain how the two schools functioned alone and together without interference.

As the population of Broward County grew in number and sophistication, more and more voices could be heard echoing those in the 1960's that called for a major university for Broward County. It became harder and harder to point to Nova as the local university when the suspicious spectre of its governance clouded the issue. Questions like "Who really runs it?" and "Where does the money go?" were not idle probings about Nova's internal organization; they were symptomatic of a need for answers to basic questions that troubled potential donors and supporters. Colleges and universities simply were not run the way Nova was, and no amount of explaining was going to clear up the matter.

In the fall of 1985, after the dissolution of the federation, the vacancies on the board created after the resignation of the NYIT trustees were gradually filled by South Florida community leaders. If there had ever been any question about who ran Nova University, it was then put to rest. After fifteen years, the University's stewardship was squarely back in the hands of its own local board.

Without the help of the New York Institute of Technology, Nova University would not have survived.
"Computers, Satellites, and Other Things"

The "third" Nova University, dating from 1985, is partially in place and partially on the drawing boards in the process of emerging and being shaped. In each period of its history, Nova has pursued a major new idea, not by conscious design so much as by disposition. In its third decade, the University is committed to incorporating new educational technologies made possible by computers and telecommunications into the teaching and learning process and into its delivery of education.

Already a network of Nova students on-line at their computers has redefined what a classroom is. Communicating across time zones, linked to a professor who can be on campus or anywhere, students across the United States and even in foreign countries are turning one-dimensional computer screens into fields for academic discussion. Once a satellite uplink now proposed for the campus is funded, the possibilities of broadcasting educational programs anywhere in the world will become a reality. A new undergraduate program, funded in part by a grant from the State of Florida, is reshaping the way college students think and learn.

In Nova's current design, the use of technology is not an end in itself but the means to an end. Long-distance delivery of programming via satellite is the state-of-the-art way to do what Nova has been doing for years: sending professors to meet with students in its clusters across the country. More important, computers open up a

In one sense, Nova is a mature institution, because the bulk of what it now does is dictated by its past rather than its future.
whole range of opportunities for individualized learning that take into account the fact that human beings absorb and process information at different rates. The first seventeen Nova graduate students were told on opening day 1967 that their doctoral studies would be highly unstructured and personalized. Today's students, from the youngest to the oldest, are hearing a similar message, this time with a focus on computer-assisted instruction. Modern technology is making possible the achievement of the educational philosophy that has guided much of Nova's academic thrust.

First Graduation 1970

In its twenty-fifth year, Nova University moves in a major new direction not from scratch, without a history, but from a solid foundation, a situation that carries with it both its plusses and its minuses. In one sense, Nova is a mature institution, because the bulk of what it now does is dictated by its past rather than its future. It has an image to protect, as well as to make. It has assets to keep secure, as well as to acquire.

Each year, Nova enrolls more than 8,000 students. It has nearly 25,000 graduates in every state and in many foreign countries. Its revenues in its twenty-fifth year are projected to be nearly $70 million. The credibility that it has so long sought has finally materialized in many, though not in all, areas. It has maintained its accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. In addition, its law school is accredited by the American Bar Association and by the American Association of Law
Schools. Its psychology programs and clinics are accredited by the American Psychological Association. Even its once acute problems in states across the nation where it continues to operate its national programs have been minimized.

If the years of the Nova-NYIT federation were years of expansion, the middle of Nova's third decade is a period of both enhancement and redirection. Now that the major infrastructure of its academic programs is in place, the University is in pursuit of substantial resources to maintain and strengthen its campus and off-campus presence. Since the 1970's, three buildings have been constructed on the campus—The Baudhuin School, The Mailman Family Center, and the Sonken Building. Campaigns are under way to complete a new law school and a school of business and entrepreneurship. Other structures are needed, as well as a host of resources, simply to satisfy its present commitments.

The history of any organization is the outcome of its tensions. When Nova couldn't survive on its campus in Davie, it expanded and was successful. Now, with its off-campus programs firmly in place, it finds itself in the middle of one of the fastest growing counties in the United States with a population of 1.2 million people and a mandate and opportunity to serve local educational needs. How Nova can build a university for the future at the same time that it invests in its present operations is a problem, only the latest in the series of tensions that has shaped it during the years. As technological enhancements are put in place, almost inevitably, the picture of the Nova campus will change in the future, as it has in the past, and as it is already changing in the present. What it will ultimately look like no one quite knows. That it will be different we can be certain.

*How Nova can build a university for the future at the same time that it invests in its present operations is a problem.*
Concluding Perspective

"Nothing happens exactly as we think it will."

If the first Nova, the Nova University of Advanced Technology, had developed fully as its founders had conceived of it, it would probably be the darling of the high tech industry in South Florida today but little else. Even if the grandest of its original schemes had come to fruition, they would in all likelihood not have made as much of an impact as the Nova University that survives has been able to make.

In some ways, the history of Nova is similar to the history of many developing organizations. It started out with great ideas. It has never really had enough money. It has had its ups and downs, its two steps forward and one step backwards. It has had its supporters and critics, its advocates and its detractors.

In other ways, Nova is quite different. For one thing, it has had a dose of two seemingly contradictory qualities—consistency and flexibility—that really have insured its success. The University has remained committed to a basic course and educational philosophy, at the same time that it has had the wisdom to adjust to new realities and to seize new opportunities. To the degree that the University can maintain the balance of its consistency and flexibility its future will be secure, even if the details of its next quarter century cannot accurately be predicted.

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