

Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centers
GCEC Vegas 2022
Award Submission for Outstanding Emerging Entrepreneurship Center
Alan B. Levan | NSU Broward Center of Innovation (Levan Center)
Nova Southeastern University
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Briefly explain the rationale for creating this entrepreneurship center including who the stakeholders are and how you garnered their interest and support.

The Alan B. Levan | NSU Broward Center of Innovation (Levan Center) at Nova Southeastern University (NSU) was created to link the growing South Florida (Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach Counties) innovation ecosystem with local, regional, national, and international impact acting as an economic and education development engine.

The Levan Center's vision is two-fold. Internally, the Levan Center was designed to create an innovative mindset at NSU creating accessible pathways of opportunity focused on innovation, technology, and entrepreneurship for students, staff, and faculty with the goal of commercializing research and creating new companies. Externally, the Levan Center was designed to address emerging trends, challenges, and opportunities focused on the themes of innovation, technology, and entrepreneurship in the South Florida region with the goal of creating and scaling new companies.

The Levan Center is the "World's first theme park for entrepreneurs" designed and built in a 54,000 sq. ft. facility. The Levan Center identified how to reverse engineer the entrepreneur's success resulting in creation of the Founder's Journey experience. The Levan Center acts as a giant "collision station" forcing entrepreneurs to collide with academia, industry, government, funders, professional networks, and wraparound service providers – all under one roof and virtually connected to the world.

The vision and mission were presented to NSU leadership including the President and Board of Trustees and upon acceptance and support, a presentation was made to the Broward County Mayor and Board of Commissioners. A unanimous decision was made to establish a public/private partnership between NSU and Broward County which resulted in an initial \$5 million investment by NSU and a \$5 million investment by Broward County to be used for design and buildout of the Levan Center. Today, a total of \$15 million has been invested and by the end of 2022, a total of \$20 million will be invested into expansion activities. The public/private partnership was formed in 2018 and the Levan Center had a soft opening in September 2021 followed by the official grand opening in April 2022.

Outline the strategic goals, objectives, metrics, and team structure used to launch the Center.

The Levan Center breaks down and eliminates geographic and political boundaries in the South Florida region acting as the hub or gateway to the region focused on three themes (innovation, technology, entrepreneurship), four pillars known as the Founder's Journey (ideate, incubate, accelerate, post-accelerate), and six outcomes (breakthrough ideation, creation of new technologies, talent skills pipeline, company formation, job creation, scaling of early-stage and young startup companies). The Levan Center is the only model in the world designed to support the Founder's Journey from birth of an idea through successful exit or global expansion.

At the concept phase, the Levan Center recruited an Executive Director then formed a Board of Governors consisting of 16 key influential leaders representing the South Florida region. The Levan Center then expanded the leadership team and created the Levan Center Community Advisory Council to assist with strategic direction.

Today, the Council consists of 10 pillars and 80 volunteers representing the region across all sectors the Levan Center supports.

The three themes, four pillars, and six outcomes previously mentioned are the foundation of the Levan Center outcomes and KPIs. See **APPENDIX** for list of outcomes and KPIs.

Provide a graphical timeline depicting major milestones for the development of the center from conception to current year. Include the initial milestones you set and how you met them.

In order to achieve the milestones below, the Levan Center created a strategic implementation plan focused on the end goal and has reversed engineered the different steps taken to achieve short, medium, and long-term success.

2018 (January): Public/private partnership formed between NSU and Broward County
 2019 (December): Executive Director hired
 2019 (December): Design process commenced
 2019 (January-March): Levan Center leadership team hired
 2019 (April-June): Levan Center team expanded
 2019 (July): Construction commenced on 54,000 sq. ft. facility
 2019 (August): Board of Governors formed
 2019 (September-December): Virtual Founder's Journey programs launched
 2019 (September-December): Virtual panels/workshops/seminars launched
 2020 (January): Levan Center Community Advisory Council formed
 2021 (July): Construction project completed (Certificate of Occupancy issued)
 2021 (September): Levan Center soft opening
 2021 (September-December): Expansion of virtual Founder's Journey programs
 2022 (January-February): Expansion of short courses/seminars/workshops/events
 2022 (April): Official grand opening
 2022 (April): Mayor of Broward County proclamation (Broward County Innovation Week)
 2022 (April): Launch of in-person Founder's Journey programs
 2022 (May): Launch of military-grade cybersecurity training range
 2022 (May): Launch of the media production studio
 2022 (May): Launch of the technology makerspace
 2022 (May-August): Expansion of Founder's Journey programs
 2022 (October): Launch of the first annual South Florida Space Day
 2022 (October): Mayor of Broward County proclamation (Broward County Space Day)
 2022 (October): Launch of the first annual South Florida Innovation Day (partner eMerge Americas)
 2022 (December): Launch of the volumetric capture studio
 2022 (December): Launch of the second phase artificial intelligence smart cities labs

Provide a list of three to five specific achievements to date with a brief explanation. Include highlights that illustrate what makes the Center unique.

The Levan Center is the world's first innovation center model capable of supporting the Founder's Journey from birth of an idea through successful exit or global expansion. The Levan Center was designed and built during a global pandemic and despite the challenges faced, a number of unique successes were experienced. The Levan Center has had not only a local impact but also a regional, national, and international impact including creation of new programs, new technologies, new companies, new jobs, new talent skills pipeline. Success data includes:

1,000 tours, 5,000 visitors, 80 Founder's Journey completers (100% successful completion rate), more than 300 jobs created, and \$2 million in new startup company revenue generation.

The Levan Center created a Country Desk model linking innovative nations from the world to the South Florida region by providing a "desk and a chair" manned by ambassadors of each nation. This model links the global innovation ecosystem by providing opportunities for foreign entrepreneurs to enter the South Florida market and South Florida entrepreneurs the ability to enter international markets. Opportunities are negotiated at the state government level (i.e., embassies, consul general offices) to link entrepreneurs with academia, industry, government, funders, professional networks, and wraparound service providers on a global basis.

U.S. Economic Development Administration grant (\$750K): Secured federal grant, NSU's first USED A grant, to acquire equipment and technology for the Levan Center, in order to continue the commitment to improve access to and development for emerging technologies. Funds are used to target minority students in order to expand curriculum in areas of spatial computing, artificial intelligence, robotics, and experiential human-focused technologies.

Community Project Funding Request (\$1.95 million): Secured federal grant via the sponsorship of Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman-Schultz, for design and buildout of a mixed reality studio and three artificial intelligence labs, including one focused on smart cities/government technology. Funds are used to target entrepreneurs and provide access and training to underrepresented communities.

Community Project Funding Request (\$2 million): Secured federal grant via the sponsorship of Congressman Ted Deutch, for design and buildout of a mobile innovation center on wheels. Funds are used to target underrepresented communities by providing increase access opportunities related to innovation, technology, and entrepreneurship.

In the first five years, explain how you have distinguished the Center from its peers.

The Levan Center, despite being a young startup, has achieved success metrics that have exceeded those of established innovation/entrepreneurship centers throughout the nation. Additionally, the Levan Center launched the world's first Founder's Journey program to support the entrepreneurial journey at all stages of development including ideate, incubate, accelerate, post-accelerate. To our knowledge, the Levan Center has secured more grants in an accelerated period than any other center in the southeast region of the U.S. (\$5+ million). The Levan Center has broken down geographic and political barriers in South Florida forming new partnerships linked to the previously mentioned success metrics. The Levan Center is truly acting as a major economic and education development engine with impact. The Levan Center's media production studio is home to *Dateline Health*, a highly regarded television show PBS network. In September '22, the Levan Center will be filmed to be aired on the Lifetime Network's, *Balancing Act* television show. Finally, the Levan Center will be the production home for a national television series, *Entrepreneurship Elevator Pitch*, commencing fall '22.

Describe the plan for sustaining the Center.

The Levan Center is a not-for-profit unit created as a new division within the NSU infrastructure and will be self-sustaining by June 30, 2023. Revenue is generated from the following resources: memberships (eight categories), philanthropic gifts (Charter Fellows program, donations), industry sponsorships, certification programs, workshops, seminars, cybersecurity training range, media production studio, technology makerspace, volumetric capture studio, events, and grants. The Levan is positioned to form equity and/or royalty license agreements with startup companies who successfully complete the Founder's Journey programs (ideate, incubate, accelerate, post-accelerate) with the goal of securing long-term financial success.

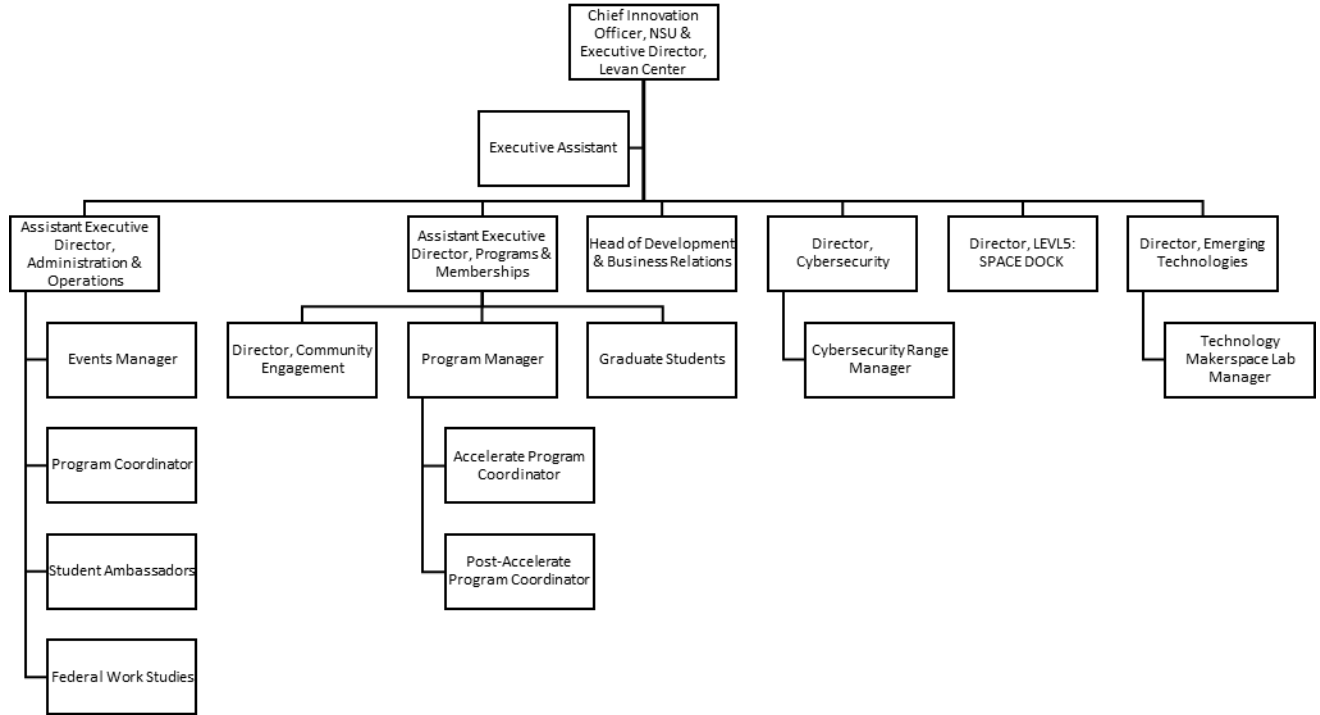
Appendix

- Levan Center Outcomes and KPIs
- Organizational Chart
- Levan Center Partners

Levan Center Outcomes and KPIs

Outcome	Objectives	Outputs / KPI's	FY23 (7/1/22 – 6/30/23)
Breakthrough ideation	1.1. Increase NSU faculty and student patents and IP creation	a. Number of patents filed annually (Baseline: 2010-2019 average of 4.3 a year)	patent applications issued patents
New technologies New company formation	1.2. Increase NSU and South Florida entrepreneurial mindset	a. Number of mentor hours completed by participants (Baseline: 0) b. Number of products taken to market (Baseline: 0) c. Number of businesses developed (Baseline: 0) d. Number of startups served through programs (Baseline: 52 – FY22) e. Number of daily active users of virtual community hub (Baseline: 420 – FY22)	a. b. c. d. e.
New company formation	2.1. Increase in non-local interest in Broward County	a. Number of visits from external companies and entrepreneurs and their place of origin (Baseline: 0 – begin measuring after opening) b. Number of international events (Baseline: 2 – FY22) c. Number of countries represented at international events (Baseline: 4 – FY22) d. Number of Country Desk Memberships (Baseline: 0 FY22)	a. b. c. d.
Job Creation	5.1. Increase job creation and retention by recipients of resources or services from the Levan Center.	a. Number of jobs from startups, scaleups, corporate partners and local businesses served by the Levan Center (Baseline: 0)	a.
Job Creation	5.2. Increase wages measured by labor statistics.	a. Annual average salary in Broward County b. Median hourly wage in Broward County c. Mean hourly wage in Broward County (Baseline: All occupations average \$50,060 annually; median hourly - \$17.76; mean hourly - \$24.07. Source: BLS, May 2019)	a. \$60,996 b. c. \$25.47* *May 2020 data
Talent Skills Pipeline	5.3. Increase tech-skills talent measured by the.	a. Number of individuals hired through the Levan Center (Baseline: 0) b. Number of individuals trained in cybersecurity (Baseline: 0 – FY22) c. Number of individuals trained in technical programs (Baseline: 0 – FY22)	
Scaling of early-stage, young companies	6.1. Increase funding of companies	a. Amount of funding invested in participant companies b. Amount of sales/revenue by startups and scaleups (Baseline: 0)	a. \$ b. \$ *numbers self-reported by startups
New company formation	7.1. Increase access to resources by underserved populations	a. Number of businesses created by founders from underserved populations	
Scaling of early-stage, young companies		b. Number of businesses scaled by founders from underserved populations	
	2.2. Increase recognition of Broward County and NSU in the technology and entrepreneurship arenas	a. Number of recognitions received after July 2021 (Baseline: 0)	
	3.1.1. Generate revenue to cover 100% of operating expenses by the end of the third year of operations.	a. Amount of revenue generated quarterly and annually b. Amount of operational costs quarterly and annually	a. b.
	3.1.2. Generate revenue via event space rental	a. Number of Events held (Baseline: 116 – FY 22) b. Number of attendees (Baseline: 4,213 – FY 22) c. Amount generated (Baseline: \$97,799 – FY22)	a. b. c.
	3.1.3. Generate revenue via memberships	a. Number of Levan Center Members (Baseline: 46 companies, 85 members – FY22) b. Amount generated (Baseline: \$86,338 – FY22)	a. b.
	3.2. Secure 50% of requested awards or gifts annually from external sources such as grants, gifts, and sponsorships.	a. Number of grant applications submitted b. Number of grant proposals awarded c. Success rate (based on determined grants) d. Dollars awarded via grants e. Number of gift requests f. Number of gifts received g. Dollars of gifts received h. Number of sponsorships received (Baseline: 0) i. Dollars of sponsorships received j. Number of Charter Fellows secured k. Dollars of Charter Fellows received	a. b. c. d. e.
	4.1. Increase the data collection and reports generated	a. Number of reports produced b. Types of tools used to collect data	a. b.
	8.1. Increase public awareness and ratings of the think tank	a. Number of media mentions b. Number of publications by think tank members (Baseline: 0)	a. b.

Levan Center Organizational Chart



Levan Center Partners**Academia**

Nova Southeastern University (15 academic colleges, faculty, staff, students, advisory councils)
Miami Dade College
Broward College

Government

Broward County
City of Fort Lauderdale
Town of Davie
City of Miramar
Space Florida
NASA

Industry

PeakActivity
Unity
Microsoft
Dell Technologies
TD Bank
Space Foundation
Spirit Airlines
Delta Air Lines
Florida Panthers

For Profit and non-Profit partners

South Florida Regional Planning Council
Enterprise Florida
Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance
Miami-Dade Beacon Council
Business Development Board of Palm Beach
eMerge Americas
South Florida Tech Hub
Small Business Development Center
The Venture Mentoring Team
OIC of South Florida
Economic Impact Catalyst
Life Sciences South Florida
Florida High Tech Corridor
Tech Florida Advocates
Global Tech Advocates
ASELA
Udonis Haslem Foundation
Dan Marino Foundation

Investors

New World Angels
Miami Angels
Las Olas Ventures
Black Angels Miami

Startups

Levan Center Members and Program Participants

Kauffman FastTrac graduates

Seaworthy Collective graduates

FAU Tech Runway and Research Park members