

**A Work Project, presented as part of the requirements for the Award of a Master's Degree in Impact Entrepreneurship & Innovation from the NOVA School of Business and Economics.**

**Case Study : Nova Transition To Egypt with focusing on Attracting Top-Notch Students**

**A Project carried out under the supervision of**

**Professor Ricardo Zozimo**

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## **Abstract**

Nova Lisbon's strategic decision to establish a new campus in Egypt stems from a comprehensive analysis of market dynamics, economic factors, cultural considerations, and regulatory frameworks. Aligned with the institution's global expansion goals, this move reflects the broader trend of internationalization in higher education. The study underscores the importance of initiatives like branch campuses and international programs, emphasizing Nova's commitment to responsible management education (RME). The case study delves into the potential impact on Nova's operations, global positioning, and the complexities of internationalization in a new cultural and economic context. Insights from responsible management education in Egypt provide valuable perspectives, guiding Nova's efforts to develop ethical leaders within the Egyptian context. The Research concludes by offering strategic recommendations for Nova to attract top-notch students to its new campus, considering factors such as internationalization strategies, responsible management education, and global positioning.

## **Keywords**

Nova Lisbon, international expansion, higher education, responsible management education, global positioning, internationalization strategies, business school, cultural dynamics, economic considerations, Egypt, sustainability, Higher education key trends, student attraction, Nova Cairo, Campus business model, regulatory challenges, academic freedom.

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## **Introduction**

Nova Lisbon's recent decision to establish a new campus in Egypt stands as a compelling case study, delving into the intricacies of international expansion in higher education. This strategic move is underscored by a comprehensive analysis of market dynamics, economic considerations, cultural nuances, and regulatory frameworks, as elucidated by Altbach and Knight (2007). Aligned with Nova Lisbon's overarching international expansion objectives, the decision mirrors a prevailing trend in higher education institutions worldwide. Drawing insights from Altbach and Knight's seminal work (2007), the case study sheds light on the pivotal role of initiatives such as branch campuses and international student programs in the broader landscape of higher education internationalization. Moreover, the decision's implications extend beyond the immediate expansion, considering the potential impact on Nova's global operations and positioning.

Integral to Nova's strategic choice is a steadfast commitment to responsible and sustainable education practices, aligning with the evolving landscape of responsible management education (RME) in the context of international business school expansion. Mousa's (2021) research emphasizes the transformative role of RME in addressing socio-cultural challenges and shaping the perspectives of business students, academics, and trainers.

This case study also gives insights into the complex strategies of internationalization employed by business schools. Understanding the complexities inherent in such strategies is paramount for Nova in successfully attracting top-tier students and navigating challenges associated with establishing a campus in a distinct cultural and economic milieu. Further enriching the narrative is Massoud and Ayoubi's (2021) study, which provides valuable insights into responsible management education within the context of public business schools

in Egypt and the broader Middle East. This research unveils the unique challenges and opportunities associated with RME in the region, offering critical perspectives for Nova's decision-making process and the cultivation of responsible leadership within the Egyptian context. In conclusion, this case study aims to unravel the layers of Nova Lisbon's decision to expand into Egypt, presenting a comprehensive exploration of the factors influencing this strategic move. The case study seeks to provide valuable insights for academic discourse and strategic decision-making within the higher education landscape by examining internationalization strategies, the integration of responsible management education, and the potential global impact.

## **Overview**

In the dynamic context of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, higher education reforms confront the intricate task of balancing domestic and international influences (Kohstall, 2021). Our case study hones in on Egypt, a nation navigating a complex socio-political landscape shaped by the aftermath of the Arab Spring Revolution and subsequent political shifts.

Post-revolution, Egypt witnessed the rise of extremist parties, causing social instability and impeding intended reforms, eventually leading to military intervention and the election of President El-Sissy. Against this backdrop, the Egyptian government strategically focuses on addressing the needs of a burgeoning population through a dual emphasis on education and sustainable urban development. Within the higher education sector, a pivotal challenge is expanding access while combating exclusion and inequality (Buckner, 2013).

Educational reforms are deemed essential to counter extremism and steer the nation toward a democratic society. In this pursuit, the government unveiled a comprehensive plan, investing

US\$5.87 billion in education by 2022, achieving noteworthy progress in gender parity and reducing disparities among disadvantaged groups. The ongoing reform is indicative of Egypt's commitment to nurturing an inclusive and equitable educational environment.

This case study delves into the symbiotic relationship between large-scale urban development and educational initiatives, exemplified by multinational corporations like El Sewedy. El Sewedy Education's establishment of The Knowledge Hub (TKH), serving as the operational basis for European universities in Egypt, is a noteworthy venture in this landscape.

The collaboration between El Sewedy and Nova Lisbon takes center stage, showcasing Nova's high-level reception in Egypt and strategic engagements with key stakeholders. The study navigates the regulatory landscape, exploring the International Branch Campuses Act ratified in 2018. This legislative framework guides the meticulous approval process for foreign university campuses, emphasizing alignment with European curricular structures and accreditation standards. With a lens on Egypt's broader initiative to introduce international branches, the case study explores expectations, ranging from improved access and quality competitiveness to concerns about exclusivity and cultural integration challenges.

As El Sewedy's educational venture unfolds, stakeholders cautiously anticipate the outcomes and impact of this evolving transnational educational landscape in Egypt.



## **Why Egypt?**

This move strategically positions Nova Lisbon in the Mediterranean corridor, encompassing countries between Lisbon and Egypt, and serves as a reference point for the Mediterranean region. Egypt, with its massive and youthful population, coupled with insufficient educational resources, presented an attractive opportunity for Nova Lisbon. The support from the Elsewedy Group along with the support from the governmental environment, further incentivized Nova Lisbon to open a new campus in Cairo. Notably, this campus marks Nova Lisbon's first Portuguese campus in Egypt and Africa, a move that was made possible through the support of TKH founded by Elsewedy. Additionally, the decision to hire local faculty on local contracts and the consideration of tuition fees in euros cater to a niche market in Egypt, distinguishing Nova Lisbon from other institutions such as the American University in Cairo (AUC). The complementary nature of the courses offered by Nova Lisbon, particularly its science-based programs, further sets it apart in the Egyptian educational landscape. Legally, Nova Lisbon is bound to maintain an identical curriculum to its Portuguese counterpart, ensuring that the hard knowledge imparted aligns with Nova standards. The process of obtaining the accreditation to deliver degrees, along with considerations of national support from the Portuguese embassy and the Egyptian government, underscores the institutional commitment to establishing a strong presence in Egypt. Enhance Nova Lisbon's positioning in the global education landscape. The institution's ability to attract and retain high-quality faculty will be crucial in maintaining its distinctiveness and avoiding the pitfalls of mismanagement that have plagued other universities in Egypt. Therefore, Nova Lisbon's entry into Egypt represents a strategic move that necessitates careful navigation of various challenges and opportunities to establish a strong and sustainable presence in the region.

### **Egypt is an opportunity geographically**

To comprehensively address the importance of Egypt in the context of opening a new European campus, it is essential to consider the strategic significance of Egypt as a gateway to Africa and the Middle East, as well as its potential to attract students from these regions. The geopolitical importance of Egypt is highlighted by its strategic location at the crossroads of Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. This positioning makes Egypt a pivotal player in regional geopolitics and positions it as a potential hub for educational initiatives catering to students from diverse geographical regions. Moreover, Egypt's role as a gateway to Africa is emphasized by its geographical proximity and historical ties to the continent. The country's strategic location as a bridge between continents suggests its potential to attract students from across Africa to a European campus. The economic and strategic significance of Egypt in the Middle East further supports its potential as a key player in the region. Insights into the geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East indicate Egypt's potential to be a focal point for educational opportunities, drawing students from neighboring countries. Additionally, the historical and cultural connections between Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula, underscored by geographical and cultural proximity, suggest the potential for Egypt to attract students from the Gulf region to a European campus. By integrating these considerations, it becomes evident that Egypt's geographical significance as a bridge between continents and its strategic importance in regional geopolitics position it as a compelling location for establishing a European campus. Leveraging its geographical reach and historical ties to neighboring regions, Egypt has the potential to attract a diverse student body from Africa, the Middle East, and the Gulf, thereby enhancing the internationalization and global impact of the proposed European campus.

## **Egypt is an opportunity Financially**

The establishment of Nova in Egypt has been made possible through a remarkable partnership with Elswedy, who has played a pivotal role in facilitating the entire process (Matos & Cunha, 2022). Elswedy has not only spearheaded the construction of the campus but has also committed to covering operational and capital expenditures, as well as funding faculty salaries and accommodations (Matos & Cunha, 2022). This level of comprehensive support has created an unparalleled opportunity for Nova Lisbon to expand its global presence. The partnership with Elswedy allows Nova Lisbon to seamlessly bring its accreditation and programs to commence operations without the burden of these logistical and financial concerns (Matos & Cunha, 2022). This strategic collaboration has the potential to significantly enhance the academic landscape in Egypt and the broader region, providing a platform for educational excellence and international collaboration (Matos & Cunha, 2022). The involvement of Elswedy in this initiative represents a transformative approach to addressing the challenges faced by universities in providing adequate infrastructure and support for their academic programs (Matos & Cunha, 2022). This partnership not only streamlines the process for Nova Lisbon to establish a presence in Egypt but also sets a new standard for public-private partnerships in the realm of higher education (Matos & Cunha, 2022). The comprehensive support provided by Elswedy presents a compelling case for Nova Lisbon to seize this opportunity and leverage the existing infrastructure and resources to expand its academic reach into Egypt and the broader Middle East and North Africa region (Matos & Cunha, 2022). This collaborative model exemplifies the potential for innovative partnerships to drive educational excellence and global engagement (Matos & Cunha, 2022).

## **Campus Business Model**

The uniformity of Nova Lisbon's business model in Egypt, where they conduct identical exams simultaneously in both locations, underscores a significant strength for Nova in Egypt. The replication of the same bachelor programs and utilization of identical materials in both Nova Lisbon and Nova Egypt contribute to a level of consistency that enhances the accuracy and reliability of the educational experience.

This standardized approach not only ensures that students in both locations receive the same level of education but also fosters a sense of cohesion and interconnectedness between the campuses. The synchronized examination process is particularly noteworthy, as it implies that the assessment standards and benchmarks are consistent across Nova Lisbon and Nova Egypt, reinforcing the credibility and reliability of the academic outcomes.

The strength lies not just in the replication of programs and materials but also in the concurrent examination process, demonstrating a commitment to maintaining high educational standards. This uniformity between Nova Lisbon and Nova Egypt not only strengthens the brand's global identity but also establishes a foundation of trust and dependability for students and stakeholders alike. The synchronized model provides students with the assurance that their education in Egypt aligns seamlessly with the standards set by Nova Lisbon, fostering a sense of equivalence and excellence in both locations.

## **Main Challenges for Establishing European Campus in Egypt**

<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Description of the challenge</b>	<b>Impact On Nova</b>	<b>Solution</b>
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<p><b>1- Regulatory Challenges</b></p>	<p>Egypt's International Branch Campuses Act presents significant hurdles for European universities planning new campuses. The Act demands a thorough process of state approvals, ultimately requiring a Presidential decree for operation, making the regulatory journey intricate and time-intensive (Matos &amp; Cunha, 2022).</p>	<p>Navigating regulatory challenges is crucial for aligning curricular structures with European standards and meeting national accreditation requirements (Altbach &amp; Knight, 2007). Operating in over 50 countries, the global diversity in accreditation standards further complicates the process of establishing European transnational campuses in Egypt (Hou, 2010). This complexity demands meticulous attention to legal frameworks and compliance requirements during the establishment process.</p>	<p>To surmount these challenges, Nova Lisbon should proactively collaborate with Egyptian regulatory bodies, adhering strictly to the International Branch Campuses Act. Vital to this effort is engagement with national and international accreditation agencies to navigate diverse standards. The establishment of a dedicated legal and compliance team is crucial to ensuring alignment with the sequential approval process. Nova Lisbon should also proactively adjust its educational models to align with Egypt's evolving digitization efforts and educational policies. This involves continuous monitoring of policy changes, technological advancements, and</p>
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			<p>educational trends.</p> <p>Collaborating with local stakeholders and actively participating in national educational forums will facilitate a smoother integration of European educational models.</p>
<p><b>2-Culture Challenge</b></p>	<p>Establishing a European university campus in Egypt presents a critical challenge related to cultural integration. This challenge necessitates a nuanced understanding of the local context and societal expectations to ensure the acceptance and relevance of the European educational model within the Egyptian cultural milieu.</p>	<p>The impact of the cultural integration challenge is pivotal. Successful integration and community engagement are paramount for fostering a positive learning environment. It ensures that the European educational model aligns with local values and traditions, contributing to the overall acceptance and success of the university campus in Egypt.</p>	<p>To address this challenge, proactive community engagement is vital, involving stakeholders like community leaders, educators, and students. Comprehensive assessments guide the adaptation of the European educational model to align with local values. Establishing strategic partnerships with local institutions, promoting diversity, and ensuring inclusivity within the campus creates a culturally responsive environment. This approach allows</p>

			European universities to connect with the local community, fostering intercultural learning and exchange.
<b>3-Economical Political challenges</b>	Establishing a European university campus in Egypt confronts a diverse set of hurdles rooted in the intricate interplay of economic and political dynamics. Tackling obstacles linked to bureaucratic entanglements, uneven competition, and fostering innovation becomes imperative for the triumphant inception of a European campus in Egypt (Roccu, 2014).	The economic and political terrain in Egypt, reshaped significantly post-revolution, holds sway over power dynamics, economic policies, and development strategies. Grasping the intricacies of this evolving landscape is pivotal for European universities to adeptly navigate the complex environment ("Egypt's political economy: power relations in development," 2009).	To overcome these challenges, European universities need a proactive strategy, understanding the evolving political economy and power dynamics. Seizing opportunities within Egypt's economic reforms for innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development is crucial (Zalat et al., 2021). Strategic engagement with economic challenges like inflation and inequality is vital for higher education systems. Leveraging online education to bridge knowledge gaps and contribute to capacity building in health

			professionals emerges as an enticing avenue (Wilkins, 2010)
<b>4-Social dynamics challenge</b>	Embarking on the establishment of a European university campus in Egypt unfolds a challenge intricately tied to the social dynamics prevalent in the country. The creation of an inclusive and supportive campus environment, encompassing diverse student groups, including sexual minority students, and addressing mental health concerns, emerges as an imperative consideration for fostering a positive learning environment (Zalat et al., 2021).	<p>The impact of these social challenges extends beyond the campus borders. Social dynamics intricately affect university-community engagement, accentuating the role of universities in addressing complex social problems alongside local communities.</p> <p>Demonstrating the added value universities bring to social challenges requires effective university-community engagement and social impact assessment (Shiel et al., 2016).</p>	<p>Supporting international and local students and fostering cross-cultural understanding and collaboration is crucial (Chen &amp; Vanclay, 2021).</p> <p>Recognizing the social impacts of university campuses on local communities and engaging effectively with these communities are essential for building trust and cultivating positive relationships (Chen &amp; Vanclay, 2022).</p> <p>Acknowledging the social responsibilities of universities in promoting social justice and socioeconomic development is critical. By embracing these responsibilities, European</p>

			universities can contribute to a harmonious and socially responsive educational environment aligned with the values and aspirations of Egyptian society.
<b>5-Academic Freedom Challenge</b>	The establishment of a European university campus in Egypt confronts a formidable challenge that is intricately linked to the notable decline in academic freedom since the 2013 military coup. This decline has manifested in severe restrictions, criminalization of researchers and academics, and the replacement of a once-vibrant atmosphere of open debate with a climate of fear and self-censorship (Mousa, 2022).	The impact of this academic freedom challenge is profound, reverberating through the academic community. The freedom to research has been stifled, and sensitive or controversial topics are effectively off-limits, risking persecution and arrest for those daring to investigate certain subjects. Faculty members face heightened surveillance, censorship, and interference in course content, eroding	Overcoming this challenge requires a strategic and principled approach. European universities must champion academic freedom as a fundamental principle, creating an environment that encourages open debate, intellectual exploration, and the pursuit of knowledge. Collaborating with local academic stakeholders, advocating for freedom of research and teaching, and providing support to faculty members in navigating these challenges are crucial steps.

		<p>the freedom to teach. Restrictions on publications, limited access to research materials, and increased censorship in the media further curtail the exchange and dissemination of academic knowledge (Mousa, 2022).</p>	<p>By upholding academic freedom, European universities can contribute to revitalizing intellectual discourse, fostering innovation, and catalyzing societal progress within the academic landscape in Egypt.</p>
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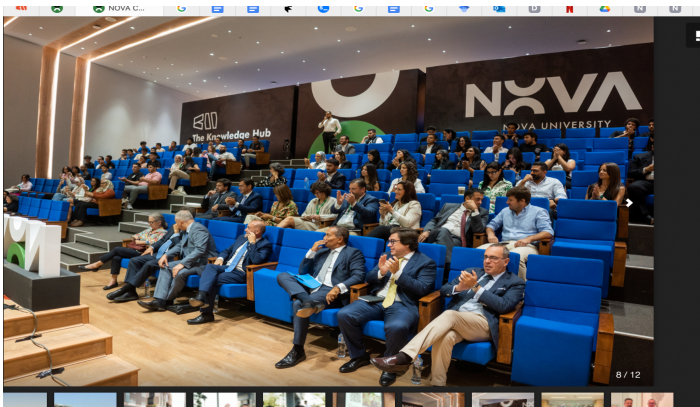
## Appendix

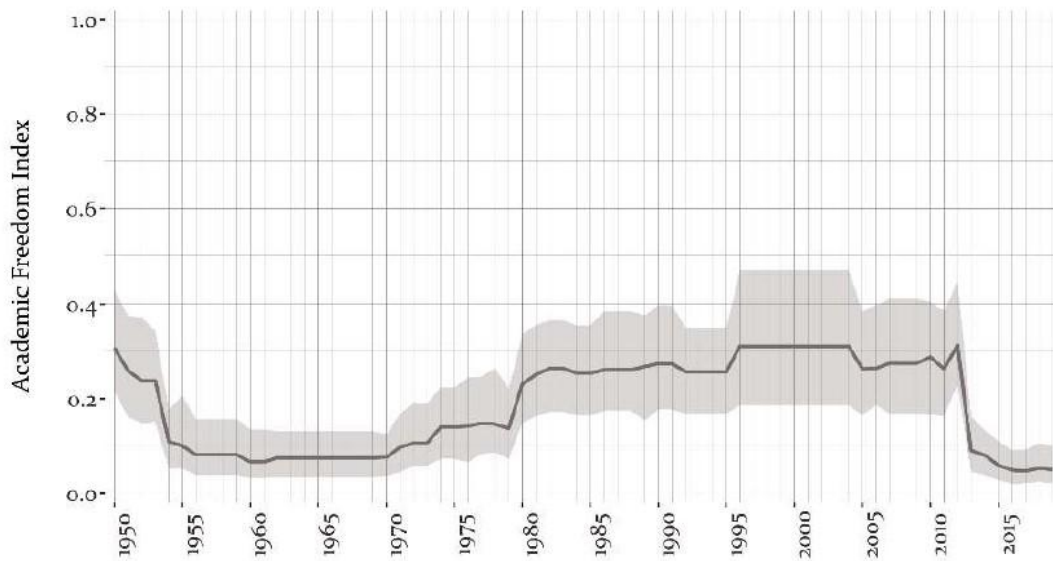
- **Statistics on number of Higher Educations students**

<b>Number of students enrolled</b>	<b>3,700,000</b>
<b>Percentage of students enrolled in public universities</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Percentage of students enrolled in private universities</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Percentage of students enrolled in Al-Azhar University</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Number of universities</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>Number of public universities</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>Number of private universities</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Number of technical colleges</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Number of specialized institutes</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Number of academies</b>	<b>20</b>

**\*CAPMAS report 2022-2023.**

	<b>AUC</b>	<b>GUC</b>
<b>Number of students enrolled</b>	<b>7000</b>	<b>10000</b>
<b>Number of undergraduate programs</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Number of faculty members</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>600</b>





### **More recommendations to nova on how to attract Top-Notch students**

NOVA should engage in targeted marketing campaigns that specifically reach its ideal student profile in Egypt. This involves understanding the aspirations, interests, and motivations of Egyptian students and tailoring marketing messages accordingly.

Strategies:

- **Conduct Market Research:** Before developing marketing campaigns, conduct thorough market research to understand the Egyptian student demographic, their aspirations, and their perceptions of higher education.
- **Utilize Digital Marketing Platforms:** Leverage social media platforms, search engine marketing, and online advertising to reach a wide audience of prospective students in Egypt.
- **Create Engaging Content:** Develop culturally relevant and engaging content that resonates with Egyptian students, highlighting NOVA's unique strengths and value proposition.

- Localized Marketing Campaigns: Tailor marketing campaigns to resonate with the Egyptian culture and preferences.
- Collaborate with local influencers and media outlets to amplify NOVA's message and build a strong connection with the target audience.

## 2. Effective Recruitment and Admissions Process

Streamlining the recruitment and admissions process can significantly enhance NOVA's appeal to prospective students. This involves providing clear and accessible information, facilitating application procedures, and offering personalized guidance.

Strategies:

- Establish a Dedicated Egyptian Website: Create a dedicated website section or landing page specifically tailored to Egyptian students, providing comprehensive information in Arabic.
- Simplify Application Procedures: Streamline the application process, making it user-friendly and accessible to students from diverse backgrounds.
- Provide Arabic Language Support: Offer support services in Arabic, ensuring that prospective students can access information and guidance in their native language.
- Host Virtual Open Houses: Organize virtual open houses and information sessions to connect with prospective students and showcase NOVA's facilities and programs.

## 3. Tailored Outreach and Relationship Building

NOVA should engage in targeted outreach initiatives to connect with prospective students directly, building relationships and fostering interest in the university.

Strategies:

- Partner with Egyptian Schools and Organizations: Collaborate with high schools, universities, and youth organizations in Egypt to provide educational workshops, seminars, and career counseling sessions.
- Attend Education Fairs and Events: Actively participate in education fairs and events in Egypt, showcasing NOVA's offerings and engaging with potential students.
- Establish Alumni Chapters in Egypt: Foster alumni chapters and networks in Egypt to connect with prospective students, providing insights into the NOVA experience.
- Engage with Online Communities: Actively participate in online forums, social media groups, and discussion boards frequented by Egyptian students, providing guidance and answering questions.

#### 4. Scholarships and Financial Aid Packages

NOVA should offer attractive scholarships and financial aid packages to make its programs more accessible to students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Financial aid and scholarships serve several critical purposes in the higher education landscape.

Strategies:

- Develop Merit-Based Scholarships: Establish merit-based scholarships that reward academic excellence and attract top-achieving students.
- Introduce Need-Based Scholarships: Provide need-based scholarships to support students with financial constraints, ensuring access to quality education.
- Partner with Egyptian Organizations: Collaborate with Egyptian organizations and sponsors to establish scholarships and financial aid programs.

- Promote Financial Aid Options: Communicate financial aid options and application procedures on NOVA's website and promotional materials.
- Work-Study Programs: Provide students with part-time employment opportunities on campus or in the community, allowing them to earn income while pursuing their studies.

## 5. Customized Student Support and Services

NOVA should provide comprehensive student support services to ensure a smooth transition and a positive academic experience for students from Egypt.

Strategies:

- Pre-Arrival Orientation: Offer pre-arrival orientation programs for students from Egypt, providing them with information about campus life, culture, and academic expectations.
- Dedicated Student Advisor: Assign dedicated student advisors to Egyptian students, providing personalized guidance and support throughout their academic journey.
- Multilingual Support Services: Offer multilingual support services, including Arabic language assistance for academic advising, administrative tasks, and personal counseling.
- Cultural Events and Activities: Organize cultural events and activities that celebrate Egyptian heritage and promote integration within the NOVA student community.