



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC

FIVE YEARS OF **IMPACT**

A LOOK AT AU'S CHANGEMAKING WORK

YEARS 1–5
CHANGEMAKERS
FOR A CHANGING WORLD

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DOUBLED
EXTERNALLY FUNDED
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\$109M
INVESTED in the
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230+
EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING
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MORE THAN **HALF** of chemistry and biology
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ENGAGED WITH
6,500
LIFELONG LEARNING STUDENTS
since the start of the strategic plan



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57% OF **NEW TENURE-LINE FACULTY** AND **34%** OF **NEW TERM FACULTY**
hired since 2019 self-identified as people of color

71% of AU's senior leaders are women and
NEARLY HALF of the leadership team are people of color

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CREATED
300+
PARTNERSHIPS
with local schools and nonprofits

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92% OF THE WAY TO OUR **\$500M**
CHANGE CAN'T WAIT GOAL
as of 1/31/24

22,500 alumni contributed to the campaign



“Today, our strategy is more important than ever. As you read through story after story of our community’s incredible accomplishments, you will see that when we combine clarity of mission, learning, scholarship, community, a passion for changemaking, and great people with a recognition and appreciation for the significant shifts happening in our world, we can make dramatic progress—even amid challenging times. And we have made meaningful progress because of the hard work, talent, and commitment of this AU community.”

—President Sylvia Burwell

In January 2019, American University unveiled its bold vision for the future. [*Changemakers for a Changing World*](#) is our community’s call to action. It is a living document that embodies AU’s commitment to catalyzing impact-driven scholarship and teaching, fostering intellectual curiosity, supporting student thriving, enhancing our people-focused initiatives, and empowering lives of purpose, service, and leadership.

Together, over the last five years, our world-class faculty, dedicated staff, extraordinary students, and accomplished alumni—changemakers all—have advanced our strategic priorities and generated momentum that will propel the institution through the next two-year accelerator phase to complete the plan in 2025.

This work also represents the culmination of President Burwell’s changemaking tenure. AU’s 15th president arrived on campus at a moment when the university was building on its strengths to expand its impact in Washington, DC, the nation, and the world. Under her leadership, our global community of changemakers—150,000 Eagles strong—has pushed the university to ever greater heights.

Five Years of Impact chronicles the totality of our work over the last five years, from the establishment of District Scholars, our signature scholarship program that will graduate its first cohort in May 2024, to a groundbreaking \$15 million grant from the National Science Foundation to reimagine the food system to the historic Change Can’t Wait campaign, which is 92 percent of the way to its \$500 million goal (as of January 31, 2024).

The stories of the first five years of the *Changemakers* strategy exemplify the AU community—our purpose, our impact, our connection—and have positioned us for an even brighter future.

SCHOLARSHIP

“I’m proud of the impact we are making each day through scholarly work and results-driven research. We are poised to make an even bigger impact thanks to our outstanding record for externally funded research and the advancement of our key strategic priorities. The combination of these two pillars will enhance and benefit communities near and far for years to come.”

—Vicky Wilkins, acting provost



IMPERATIVE 1: AREAS OF STRATEGIC FOCUS

“Working alongside other trailblazing colleagues furthered my vision and inspired me to take the risks that make my work all the more relevant in today’s world.”

—Sonya Grier, Arlene R. and Robert P. Kogod
Eminent Scholar Chair in Marketing



Over the past five years, AU has set itself apart as a collaboration-fueled institution committed to tackling the world’s most pressing challenges. Our work to advance AU’s academic mission sparked innovative cross-disciplinary scholarship and led to unprecedented hands-on learning opportunities for our students.

With the launch of the strategic plan in 2019, AU identified four areas of strategic focus for our scholarship: health, data science and analytics, security, and social equity. Two years later, the university added a fifth area of strategic focus—sustainability—that aligns with our history of climate action, including becoming the first university to achieve carbon neutrality, and our commitment to achieving zero waste by the end of the decade.

To foster discoveries in these areas of strategic focus and other academic disciplines, AU harnessed more than \$156 million in Change Can’t Wait funding for faculty and research support. The university established eight endowed faculty positions that expand opportunities for professors who excel as researchers and scholar-teachers and help AU recruit and retain even more world-class scholars. AU also launched or named four distinctive centers and institutes to showcase the strengths of our community, incubate innovative ideas, generate impact-driven scholarship, and train the next generation of thought leaders.

Over the last five years, we have established our expertise across areas of strategic focus—and beyond—by:

Elevating AU’s Reputation through Endowed Faculty Positions

- Jack Rasmussen, CAS/MFA ’75, MA ’83, PhD ’94, who has helmed the American University Museum since 2005, was named the inaugural [C. Nicholas Keating and Carleen B. Keating Director](#) in October 2023. Carleen Keating, CAS/BA ’64, endowed the directorship in honor of her late husband, Nick Keating, SIS/BA ’63, MA ’64. The campaign gift includes more than 80 works from the couple’s private art collection.
- Robert Kogod, Kogod/BSBA ’62, and his wife, Arlene—AU’s most generous benefactors—made a [transformational \\$15 million campaign gift](#) in September 2023 to endow three chairs to support excellence in finance, marketing, and sustainability. Kogod professors [Sonya Grier](#) and [Valentina Bruno](#) hold the Arlene R. and Robert P. Kogod Eminent Scholar Chairs in marketing and finance, respectively, and a search is underway for the sustainability chair, who will hold a joint appointment in Kogod and SPA.



- SPA’s Erdal Tekin was named the inaugural [Charles W. Fotis Sr. and Dorothea G. Fotis Family Distinguished Professor in Health Policy](#) in May 2023. The professorship was established by Linda Fotis, CAS/BA ’78, and her brothers Stephen, WCL/JD ’86, and Bill, in honor of their parents. Tekin’s scholarship centers on the determinants of risky health behaviors, delinquency, and crime.
- The [Abdul Aziz Said Endowed Chair in International Peace and Conflict Resolution](#)—funded by gifts from more than 125 AU alumni and friends—was established in August 2021 to honor the late, trailblazing SIS professor, who served the AU community for 60 years.

The inaugural chairholder, Mohammed Abu-Nimer (pictured), worked alongside Said, SIS/BS '54, MA '55, PhD '57, for 22 years, building on SIS's founding mission to wage peace around the world. "I feel honored and also a sense of responsibility to continue the work," Abu-Nimer said.

- The [Trone Family Eminent Scholar Chair in Neuroscience and Behavior](#) was established in June 2021 with a \$5 million gift from the David and June Trone Family Foundation. The inaugural chairholder, [CAS professor Terry Davidson](#), has advanced cutting-edge research on how excessive consumption of fat and sugar may derail the brain's ability to stave off harmful cravings.

Expanding AU's Reach with the Launch or Naming of Four Signature Centers

- Kogod Advisory Board member Gary Veloric, Kogod/BSBA '82, and his family made a milestone gift in October 2023 to rename the AU Center for Innovation the [Veloric Center for Entrepreneurship](#). Kogod is now among an elite group of business schools nationwide with a named entrepreneurship center—solidifying its position as a leader in this arena. "This gift will accelerate AU's entrepreneurship programming, events, competition scope, and awards and ultimately elevate American University and Kogod in the global university entrepreneurial space," said Tommy White, Kogod/MBA '95, director of the Veloric Center (pictured, far left).
- AU's first-of-its-kind Center for Israel Studies commemorated its 25th anniversary in April 2023 with a transformational, multimillion-dollar gift from trustee Alan Meltzer, CAS/BA '21, and his wife, Amy, and their longtime friends Jaime and Andrew Schwartzberg. The newly renamed [Meltzer Schwartzberg Center for Israel Studies](#) will continue its mission to build bridges between nations, religions, and cultures.
- The [Shahal M. Khan Cyber and Economic Security Institute](#)—funded by a \$5 million campaign gift from Shahal M. Khan, SIS/BA '95, in April 2023—is establishing AU as a hub for research on global economic activity and the efficacy of digital systems. The state-of-the-art center will partner with Cyber Range Solutions to create a "cyber range" where students and practitioners can train to respond to security breaches and learn to protect against attacks.



- A laboratory for university-wide collaboration and an incubator for policy innovation, the [Sine Institute for Policy and Politics](#) was established in September 2018 with a \$10 million campaign gift from trustee Jeff Sine, SIS/BA '76, and his wife, Samira. [In the five years since](#), the institute has welcomed 29 fellows, 8 distinguished lecturers, and 265 guest speakers—changemaking experts in government, politics, academia, journalism, nonprofits, and business. They include Maryland Governor Wes Moore, political analyst Bill Kristol, former New York City mayor Bill de Blasio, Moms Demand Action founder Shannon Watts, and former national security adviser Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster.

Fostering Collaboration throughout Campus and across Disciplines

- The [Center for Environment, Community, and Equity](#)—a bold assembly of researchers from across campus working at the intersection of sustainability and social justice—kicked off in October 2022. The center's impact-driven work focuses on climate and sustainability; environmental equity and justice; food, agriculture, and land; and water, oceans, and fisheries.
- The Center for Latin American and Latino Studies, which was established in 2010 and elevated to a university-wide center a decade later, harnesses the expertise of 80 faculty from across campus to generate

new research about Latin America, the Caribbean, and Latino communities in the US, with a focus on governance, inclusion, environment, and more.

- The work of the Center for Behavioral Neuroscience (CBN) integrates psychology, biology, math, chemistry, neuroanatomy, and other disciplines to advance understanding of the cognitive, emotional, sensory, and regulatory functions underlying both human and animal behavior. Elevated as a university-wide center in 2020, eight years after its inception, CBN's changemaking research on such issues as addiction, mental health, and obesity has implications for the whole of society.
- Launched in 2019, SPA's [Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab \(PERIL\)](#) takes a multidisciplinary approach to preventing radicalization and violent extremism by strengthening community resilience. In addition to creating resources for policymakers, parents, and faith leaders, PERIL produces trailblazing research, like its July 2023 [report on young people and gun violence](#), coauthored with the Southern Poverty Law Center and Everytown for Gun Safety.

IMPERATIVE 2: RESEARCH

“Over the last few years, we have transformed our approach to interdisciplinary research, producing impactful scholarship and leading impactful change. From advancing our sustainability goals with the launch of the largest externally funded research grant in our history—the National Science Foundation award to study wasted food—to launching the Outstanding Inclusive Technology Policy Changemaker Award, we are furthering our mission of changemaking and celebrating inclusivity.”

—Diana Burley, vice provost for research and innovation



Over the last five years, faculty—often in partnership with students—have produced changemaking research that addresses today's most pressing challenges and anticipates those of tomorrow, while elevating the university's standing as a home for impactful scholarship. Since 2019, we have doubled externally funded research to \$177 million.

During the first two years of the strategic plan, AU restructured and streamlined its research infrastructure to provide more agile and responsive support to grant-seeking faculty. That foundation helped AU build a more robust research enterprise, with externally funded scholarship more than doubling over the last three academic years to \$51 million across 240 awards in 2022–23.

AU's research culture also includes an emphasis on the scholar-teacher ideal: faculty who are committed to the cultivation of new knowledge and the creation of hands-on learning experiences for students—one of the hallmarks of an AU education. “As scholar-teachers, faculty ask the right questions, addressing critical issues and seeking answers that go far beyond our campus,” President Burwell said. And that quest for answers has fostered even more collaboration between faculty and students, with undergraduate and graduate students coauthoring papers and books and presenting at conferences.

Over the last five years, we have strengthened our research enterprise by:

Growing Sponsored Research to Address the World's Most Pressing Challenges

- A [five-year, \\$15 million National Science Foundation \(NSF\) grant](#)—the largest externally funded award in AU history—reimagines a food system that's more sustainable, equitable, and resilient. Awarded in September 2021 and led by AU, Multiscale Resilient, Equitable, and Circular Innovations with Partnership and Education Synergies (RECIPES) for Sustainable Food Systems includes a network of 40

researchers from 16 institutions “who are eager to create a new common language around wasted food,” said CAS professor and principal investigator Sauleh Siddiqui. “We’re coming to this challenge with a diversity of perspectives. Often in science that’s a problem, but here, it is the ultimate strength.”

- In December 2023, AU received [\\$5.7 million from NSF’s Accelerating Research Translation program](#). The four-year award will help the Office of Research build institutional capacity to translate scientific knowledge into evidence-driven public policies and private sector practices.
- In March 2022, the Department of Defense awarded CAS nutritional neuroscientist Katie Holton (pictured) a [\\$6.4 million grant for a clinical trial](#) to explore the efficacy of a low-glutamate diet as a treatment for Gulf War illness, which affects up to 250,000 American veterans. The dietary intervention could also help others suffering from chronic pain.
- AU landed a [\\$1 million ADVANCE grant from the NSF](#) in January 2023 to help retain and develop the careers of our STEM faculty, with a focus on women and members of underrepresented communities. The award funds university programs that provide research support, mentoring opportunities, and development grants and furthers the university’s commitment to inclusive excellence by ensuring equity in tenure, promotion, and reappointment.
- Also in January 2023, SOC’s Center for Media and Social Impact won [three transformative grants totaling \\$1.73 million](#), including from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, to expand its work with comedy for social justice. The center was also named among the [Kennedy Center’s six community partners](#) for its 2023–24 social impact and comedy programs.
- SOE’s Shari Earnest Watkins and Brian McGowan received a [\\$1.3 million grant from NSF](#) in October 2022 to examine the experience of Black undergraduates. The professors are founding members of a collaborative of scholars focused on racial equity in education.



Facilitating Collaboration with a Focus on Multidisciplinary Research

- AU’s Signature Research Initiative program—which mobilizes university-wide research efforts that require a holistic, cross-disciplinary approach and elevate reputation, grow external sponsorship, and accelerate impact—marked its first anniversary in 2023. Three Signature Research Initiative programs are currently underway: Inclusive Technology Policy; Changing Aid: Understanding and Transforming Aid in Violent, Insecure, and Crises-Affected Environments; and Unmasking Antisemitism. Twelve AU faculty from six schools and colleges are involved in the work.
- In fall 2021, AU debuted its Inclusive Tech Policy initiative, which advances a more equitable technology infrastructure by amplifying underrepresented voices. Each year, the group—composed of a cross-section of AU scholars—awards its [Outstanding Inclusive Technology Policy Changemaker Award](#) to an individual who exemplifies AU’s commitment to equity and digital innovation. Doreen Bogdan-Martin, SIS/MA ’90, secretary general of the International Telecommunication Union, was the inaugural honoree. Pamela Wright, chief innovation officer of the National Archives and Records Administration, and Zach Tudor, associate director of the Idaho National Laboratory, received the award in 2022 and 2023, respectively.

Investing in AU’s Physical and Organizational Infrastructure to Foster Innovation

- Unveiled in October 2020, the 125,000-square-foot [Hall of Science](#) boasts cutting-edge labs and classrooms and houses the neuroscience, biology, environmental science, and chemistry departments. In addition to serving as the academic hub for Eagles majoring in science—the fastest-growing area of

undergraduate study at AU—the LEED Gold-certified Hall of Science also represents our commitment to sustainability. The glass façade reduces solar energy entering the building by up to 75 percent, and 33 percent of the construction materials were locally sourced.

- In 2022, AU launched the Office of Sponsored Awards and Research Administration (OSARA) to further collaboration between the Office of Sponsored Programs and the Office of Grants and Contracts Administration and provide seamless support to researchers throughout the entire life cycle of an award. In 2023, OSARA serviced 265 grant proposals totaling \$104.7 million.

LEARNING

“We are committed to ensuring that all students have excellent educational opportunities and experiences that are equitable, including well-being resources, mentoring opportunities, and experiential learning, which are foundational to the AU experience.”

—Monica Jackson, deputy provost and dean of faculty



IMPERATIVE 3: STUDENT EXPERIENCE



“We are committed to providing students with seamless access to the wellness resources—best practices borne out by empirical data and the expertise of our clinical staff—that they need to thrive at AU. The center is now serving a record number of students from historically underserved and marginalized communities. Intentionally investigating inequities in mental health access and engagement has fostered a culture that supports the unique needs of our community.”

—Shatina Williams, director of clinical services,
Center for Well-Being

The *Changemakers* strategy puts student thriving at the heart of the AU experience. We strive to offer Eagles myriad opportunities for academic discovery, research, mentoring, internships, extracurricular activities, and wellness—a rich slate of transformational experiences that create a foundation for students to become productive, resilient, and purpose-driven members of society once they graduate.

To center our student-thriving work, AU enumerated long-term goals to increase graduation rates, reduce transfers, and further our commitment to enrolling international students. Staff developed a data-driven retention-to-graduation strategy, complete with bespoke recruitment plans for target student populations, including Asian, Black, Latinx, military-affiliated, first-generation, and international undergraduates, and launched the disabled student thriving workstream.

Meanwhile, the university doubled down on its commitment to meeting the full demonstrated financial need for eligible students. AU has expanded and created more than 150 scholarships. And to help alleviate financial stress for more Eagles, the Change Can't Wait campaign launched the \$25 million Elevate Scholarship Initiative, which is matched by an equivalent university investment.

Our dedication to the student experience is anchored by the forthcoming Student Thriving Complex—a key priority of the Change Can't Wait campaign. Located in the heart of campus, the complex represents the largest institutional investment in student thriving in AU history.

Over the last five years, we have championed a holistic approach to student thriving by:

Enhancing the Value of an AU Education through Internships and Enrichment Opportunities



- SPA's Disagree with a Professor series—a forum for Eagles to engage with difficult, and sometimes even controversial, questions outside the confines of a traditional classroom setting—generated new learning and connections and was featured by the [Washington Post](#) and [PBS NewsHour](#) in 2023. The program is sponsored by the Project on Civic Dialogue.
- AU's [Model UN](#) team was number one in North America for the 2021–22 and 2022–23 seasons. About 200 Eagles try out each year for the university's 16-member delegation, which prepares students to devise policy solutions for real-world challenges like those faced by the United Nations.
- AU's first-year experience was [12th in the nation in 2022](#)—up 27 spots from the previous year—according to *US News and World Report's* annual rankings. The transformation of AU Core, which includes a series of classes that builds the foundation for academic success, propelled the university to the top of the first-year rankings.
- Over the last five years, the [Community-Based Research Scholars program](#) has connected 185 first-year Eagles with a living-learning experience that gives them the tools—and the network—to tackle such pressing community challenges as homelessness and food insecurity. Students are also required to work 20 hours per semester with a local nonprofit.
- A living-learning community for 60 sophomores, [AU Compass](#)—a pilot program that launched in fall 2023—provides space for focused exploration, including help selecting majors, minors, and study abroad programs. Students are grouped based on academic interest but come together for guest speakers, field trips, and more.



- AU's Cornerstone Program, which welcomed its first cohort in 2021–22, gives first-year students the opportunity to build relationships with like-minded peers in their cohorts, work alongside faculty, and study abroad or intern with organizations like the NAACP, Human Rights Campaign, and the Woodrow Wilson Center.
- In March 2023, 12 WCL students [volunteered in the Navajo Nation](#) as part of the 11th annual Alternative Spring Break Trip, sponsored by the Program on Environmental and Energy Law. Two months later, four

staff members and 21 student-athletes traveled to Kibondo, Rwanda, for the second [Eagles in Service trip](#) (pictured). The AU group worked alongside community members to construct a multipurpose sports court for local youngsters.

Prioritizing Student Belonging and Well-Being through Holistic Support Services

- AU is investing \$109 million in the [Student Thriving Complex](#) to ensure Eagles have what they need to flourish physically, mentally, and emotionally. The cornerstone of the complex, which includes a renovation of Mary Graydon Center (MGC) and the new Student Well-Being Commons, is the Meltzer Center for Athletic Performance, named by a \$15 million gift from [Alan and Amy Meltzer](#). With updates already complete in the Tunnel and Butler Pavilion, AU will break ground on the Meltzer Center in March 2024.

- [The Market](#), AU's food pantry for students experiencing food insecurity, relocated to a new corner of MGC in January 2024 as part of the renovations for the Student Thriving Complex. The move enabled the Market, which served 372 Eagles during the fall 2023 semester, to expand its offerings to meat, cheese, tofu, and frozen food. Also during the fall semester, the Market received an average of 15 crop shares per week from AU's Airlie farm—donated by subscribers to the community-supported agriculture program—which provided students with 1,400 pounds of fresh produce.
- In fall 2022, AU embraced a more holistic approach to student wellness with the launch of the [Center for Well-Being Programs and Psychological Services](#). The center offers free and confidential crisis-intervention, survivor-advocacy, and counseling services, including six therapy groups for LGBTQ+ individuals, students of color, and survivors of interpersonal violence. We're ranked in the 99th percentile for outcomes for students with anxiety, our most common mental health challenge.
- AU expanded virtual support through the Counseling Center—a development that supplemented the [fall 2020 launch of YOU@American](#), a free and confidential platform that offers health and wellness tools for students.
- [AU's Trans and Queer Cooperative](#), run by the Center for Diversity and Inclusion and AU Pride, the university's LGBTQ+ student group, opened in MGC in April 2023. The gender-affirming closet—a joyful and safe space for students to explore and celebrate their identities—offers new clothes, unopened makeup, wigs, and other supplies to transgender, nonbinary, and gender-nonconforming students, free of charge.

Boosting Retention by Eliminating Barriers to Student Success

- In March 2023, AU launched the [Elevate Scholarship Initiative](#) (pictured) to raise \$25 million in unrestricted scholarship funds for undergraduates. AU is matching those philanthropic investments with an additional \$25 million—doubling the impact of this important endeavor.
- In fall 2023, SIS became the first university partner in the US to [team up with the Pat Tillman Foundation](#)—named for the Arizona Cardinal turned American soldier who was killed while serving a tour of duty in 2004—to offer \$5,000 in renewable matching funds for any SIS student selected for the nonprofit's flagship scholarship initiative. The Tillman Scholar program offers tuition support, leadership training, and networking opportunities for service members, veterans, and their spouses.
- Established with a gift from William Jacobs, Kogod/BSBA '63, WCL/JD '66, who sought to support undocumented and immigrant college students across the DC area, WCL's [Defending the AU Dream Initiative](#) offers high-quality legal services for those who cannot afford representation. A practice by and for Eagles, AU Dream has since 2019 provided individualized legal services to 105 students. Fifty-three students enrolled in WCL's Immigrant Justice Clinic have worked with AU Dream; they have been supervised by six faculty members.
- In 2023, AU removed GPA requirements for Eagles transferring internally between schools, easing students' ability to pursue their ideal academic paths. The university also unveiled a new family engagement strategy, improving campus-to-household communications and streamlining the registration process for [students and families](#).
- AU piloted a program in 2020 to expand student access to summer school, allocating \$1.2 million in financial aid. The total amount of aid earmarked for the initiative has since climbed to \$2 million.



Recruiting Eagles from across the District—and around the World

- Underscoring our commitment to inclusive excellence, AU has partnered with community-based organizations to increase the diversity of applicants, including Service to School, a nonprofit that provides undergraduate and graduate school application counseling to [US military veterans and service members](#).
- The Office of Enrollment has reduced barriers impacting students during the application and enrollment processes. AU piloted self-reporting for test scores on its applications and reduced the number of required recommendations from two to one for students admitted for fall 2021. We also waived select fees, including enrollment and early-housing deposits, for Pell-eligible students.

IMPERATIVE 4: LEARNING FOR UNDERGRADUATE, GRADUATE, AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

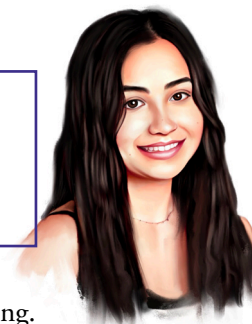


“We believe that Gen Z is well suited to make a difference on the issues that matter most today, from food insecurity to climate change to racial inequities, and provide new and diverse voices for brands and organizations. SOC3 aims to amplify messages that change minds and mindsets using empathy, knowledge, humor, and goodwill.”

—**Pallavi Kumar, SOC-SPA/BA '94, SOC3 faculty director and SOC Hurst Senior Professorial Lecturer**

“It was a privilege to be in the first cohort working with DC Central Kitchen, which is such an important community-based organization.”

—**Cady Tran, SOC/BA '24**



From students' first year to their last, inside the classroom and out, Eagles learn by doing.

Experiential learning is the hallmark of an AU education. The university boasts more than 230 experiential learning opportunities—from living-learning communities to faculty-guided assistantships to [Alternative Breaks](#)—that bring students' coursework to life, broaden their worldviews, and give their résumés a competitive edge.

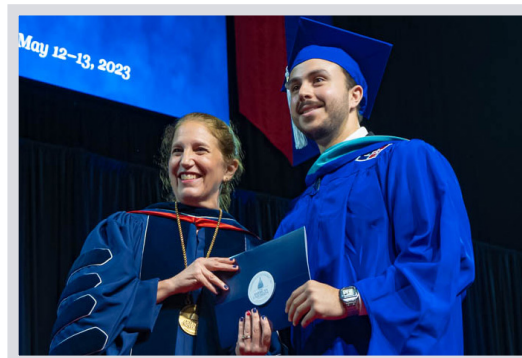
AU's scholar-teachers are also essential to the growth and development of our changemaking students. Expert faculty help Eagles hone their skills, deepen their knowledge, and expand their networks of support to lead lives of purpose and make an impact on their communities. And university-sponsored faculty-student collaborations offer opportunities for mentorship and research. For example, more than half of chemistry and biology research papers are coauthored by undergraduates.

We know academic excellence starts with excellent faculty. That's why, over the last five years, the university has made additional strategic investments in faculty who are skillful researchers and teachers—and who are committed to infusing their teaching with their research. The Center for Teaching, Research, and Learning (CTRL) serves as a nexus for faculty development, offering pedagogical support; fostering innovation, collaboration, and inclusion; and championing AU's scholar-teacher ideal.

Over the last five years, we have bolstered students' academic experiences by:

Cultivating Hands-On, Experiential Learning Opportunities

- AU's first-ever in-house communications agency, SOC3, [kicked off in fall 2022](#). Launched with a \$500,000 campaign gift from trustee and public relations CEO Michael Kempner, SPA/BS '81, SOC3 allows participants to earn credit and a \$1,000 stipend working for clients like [DC Central Kitchen](#), [Bridge Park](#), [the Home Depot](#), [ALDI](#), and [the League of Women Voters](#).
- SOE, CAS, and DC's Friendship Public Charter Schools were awarded a five-year, \$1.8 million grant from the US Department of Education in October 2023 to establish the [Residency for Excellence in Teaching and Learning](#). Similar to a medical residency, the program will enable up to 15 master's candidates to spend an academic year honing their craft under the guidance of a master teacher in one of Friendship's elementary schools.
- [Playwright Olivia Luzquinos, CAS/BA '23](#), staged her first production, *Damn Things Will Kill Ya*, at the Katzen Arts Center's Studio Theatre in December 2023—marking the first time AU's theatre program has ever produced a show by a recent graduate. Luzquinos began writing the play, which centers on a dying mother, played by CAS professor Tara Giordano, in 2020. CAS's Aaron Posner directed the production.
- Building on a partnership now in its 18th year, SOC professors Lynne Perri and Molly O'Rourke and Betsy Fischer Martin, SPA/BA '92, SOC/MA '96, executive director of SPA's Women and Politics Institute, led student reporting trips to [New Hampshire and South Carolina](#) in 2020 and [Pennsylvania](#) in 2022. The class—which was back in the Granite State in January 2024—gives budding journalists the opportunity to interview voters and candidates, interpret poll data, and even contribute stories to the local news outlets.
- In August 2022, Kogod debuted [Environmental, Social, and Governance \(ESG\) Funds](#), a finance course that challenges students from across campus to achieve sustainable gains through sustainable investments. The Board of Trustees allocated 1 percent of AU's endowment—about \$9 million, based on current market values—for investment in ESG funds researched and recommended by students.
- Now in its second year, the [yearlong ESPN/SOC fellowship](#) embeds a graduate student in the sports network's investigative and enterprise journalism unit, which includes Pulitzer Prize– and Emmy Award–winning reporters. Under the guidance of journalists like T.J. Quinn, who led coverage of WNBA star Brittney Griner's detention in Russia, the interns concentrate on sourcing, reporting, data mining, and freedom of information requests. “The sports world is wrestling with so many things: gender inequity, transgender rights, sexual abuse, geopolitical issues. The whistle blows at the beginning of the game, and it blows at the end, but the world doesn't stop for the 90 minutes in between,” said inaugural fellow Shwetha Surendran, SOC/MA '23. “Learning how to report on and investigate these intersections responsibly, holistically, and [with an eye] towards social impact is a challenge I've set for myself as a young journalist.”
- Eight SOC graduate students were part of the *Washington Post* reporting team that won the [2022 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service](#) for coverage of the January 6 attack on the US Capitol. The students were all enrolled in SOC's innovative *Washington Post* practicum program—led by the school's John Sullivan, investigative reporter in residence and a Pulitzer Prize–winning journalist—which gives young reporters experience researching, writing, and fact-checking major investigative stories.
- Since it was gifted to AU, Airlie has served as a [rural laboratory for learning](#). In spring 2023, 14 MBA students in Kogod executive in residence Tom Kohn's capstone class were tapped to analyze the Warrenton, Virginia, property's business strategy, focusing on sustainability, community-supported agriculture, and brand awareness. During the fall 2023 semester, 20 first-year students in SOC



professor Sarah Menke-Fish's Visual Literacy course created a brand strategy for Airlie, capturing images of the property for a 60-second digital postcard.

Offering Unprecedented Opportunities to Learn Alongside AU Experts

- Over the last five years, [225 Eagles have supported the work](#) of the Sine Institute of Policy and Politics, serving as associates, graduate assistants, event cosponsors, and members of the 15-person student advisory board. Under the guidance of executive director Amy Dacey, SPA/MA '95, students also contribute to the institute's [annual poll](#) on [young people and democracy](#). "We go to AU to learn, but so much of AU's learning goes *beyond* the classroom itself," said Samantha Hessel, SPA/BA '26, chair of the Student Advisory Board. "I've really gotten to know what it's like to run a program by watching Amy do it."
- Elisa Davey, CAS/MS '22, served as lead author on a paper about [DC's microplastic problem](#), published in the fall 2023 issue of *Water, Air, and Soil Pollution* and [featured in the Washington Post](#). Coauthored by three CAS professors, the research represents three years' worth of work gathering samples from freshwater streams that feed into the Anacostia River.
- Chelsea Thomson, SPA/MPP '21, and SPA professor TaLisa Carter (pictured) [coauthored an article](#) in the February 2022 issue of *Qualitative Criminology* about the latter's experience as a corrections officer in Savannah, Georgia. Carter's research focuses on colorism, a concept largely unexplored in criminology, and how skin tone influences a person's decision to pursue a career in criminal justice.
- In December 2021, researchers from SPA's Center for Environmental Policy—including Michele Aquino, SPA/PhD '24, and Ryan Heslin, CAS-SPA/MS '22—published a first-of-its-kind study on the [impact of lead pipe replacement efforts](#) on low-income African American households across the District. The research was conducted in partnership with DC Water and the Environmental Defense Fund.
- Biology graduate students Deborah Weinstein, CAS/MA '19, and Sarah Allen, CAS/MA '17, [produced a genetic map of *Halicephalobus mephisto*](#)—the deepest-living animal in the world, also known as the "devil worm." Along with CAS professor John Bracht, the students are the first researchers to map the DNA of any subterranean animal. Their work was published in the November 2019 issue of *Nature Communications*.
- The [Investigative Reporting Workshop \(IRW\)](#), an independent, nonprofit newsroom based in SOC, has trained more than 240 journalism students, partnering them with seasoned reporters to dig into investigative and enterprise projects that would otherwise go unexplored. Thanks to IRW's partnership with the *Washington Post*, AU students have worked on investigations into no-knock warrants—a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize—and corruption in professional body building.



Fostering Learning Through Faculty Support in Development and Teaching

- In addition to its inclusive pedagogy research program and its podcast on qualitative research, *Coloring Outside the Memos*, hosted by the University of Buffalo's Lizzy Bartelt (pictured left) and CTRL's Tiffany Quash (pictured right), CTRL boasts a competitive fellowship program. Since 2019, 51 faculty have served as fellows, sharing their knowledge, experience, and creativity across four tracks, including teaching and scholarship and AU Core.

- In June 2020, AU revised the faculty manual to remove existing barriers to cross-disciplinary research. Language changes and updates ensured that faculty advance their careers at the same pace—regardless of whether they focus on a single field or subfield or choose to span disciplines. Cross-campus collaboration has blossomed in the wake of these revisions, which have cascaded to students and classroom learning.
- AU has launched several new funding awards over the last year to kickstart scholarly and creative collaborations among faculty and students. Among them: the Office of Undergraduate Education’s [Summer Scholars and Artists Research Fellowship](#), which launched in summer 2022, providing up to \$4,000 for rising juniors and seniors to work alongside a faculty mentor for eight weeks.
- In fall 2020, AU expedited the successful launch of the Canvas learning management system to support faculty and students in the remote learning environment amid the pandemic. The majority of AU’s eight schools now use the platform to facilitate their courses.

IMPERATIVE 5: LIFELONG LEARNING

“Since the launch of the strategic plan, we have focused on how best to meet the needs of a wide array of learners. After building the infrastructure necessary to serve this vital part of our community, we are even more dedicated to providing them with the knowledge, training, and skills to empower them to make an impact in our changing world.”

—Wendy Boland, dean of graduate and professional studies



Inherent in AU’s mission to prepare changemakers for a changing world is meeting those changemakers where they are. While the traditional four-year residential program remains at the core of the AU experience, the university set out to evolve its [lifelong learning portfolio](#) to be more agile, accessible, and innovative.

AU kickstarted this work by investing in operational structures to deliver an expanded portfolio of programs—on-campus, online, and through hybrid-learning modalities—to accommodate the needs of a wider range of learners, including working professionals seeking new skills, recent graduates interested in online master’s degrees, and alumni pursuing nonprofessional interests.

This foresight proved crucial when, in March 2020, [all learning moved online](#) for 18 months due to COVID-19. During the early days of the pandemic, AU’s Office of Online Learning and Digital Strategy accelerated the implementation of Canvas, which laid the foundation for the development of four new online and hybrid programs, and migrated several existing Kogod and SOC programs from our external partners. We also crafted a robust engagement strategy to tout six areas of focus—leadership, policy, analytics, sustainability, business, and education—that distinguish AU in the online space.

Since the start of the strategic plan, AU has engaged with 6,500 lifelong learning students who’ve participated in online programs, certifications, credentials, and training in cybersecurity, executive coaching, antiracism, and more.

Over the last five years, we have served our community of learners—on campus and beyond—by:

Building Infrastructure That Offers Greater Flexibility for Students

- In 2022, AU launched a new marketplace system for executive education, Canvas Catalog, which allows students to browse nondegree offerings, register, and pay—all on one platform. Offerings like [SOE's Go Alliance Academy](#), which boasts affordable continuing education units for school counselors across the country to maintain their professional credentials, have created a new revenue stream for the university, while offering flexible pricing for students.
- AU moved the Office of Digital Learning and Strategy onto enterprise services, eliminating unnecessary platforms like Slack, Calendly, and—soon—Dropbox.
- AU partnered with Parchment in 2023 to manage and design all nondegree badges, enabling participants to tout their digital credentials on LinkedIn and other social media platforms.

Expanding Online Programs to Meet Students Where They Are

- WCL integrated its online offerings, including a human rights academy and an international commercial arbitration program, to streamline the enrollment and registration processes.
- The hosting platform for [SOE's Child Development Associate program](#) was upgraded, simplifying access for students to complete 120 hours of formal childhood education coursework online.
- SOE debuted a pair of credentials that underscore AU's institutional priorities: an 18-credit virtual certification in anti-racist administration, supervision, and leadership and the annual Summer Institute on Education, Equity, and Justice, which convenes teachers from across DC and throughout the US to address the academic needs of learners of color.
- AU engaged all academic units to develop new content—which are in various stages of development—for its lifelong learning platform. Among the offerings: two in-house, graduate online learning programs in sustainability management and data science from Kogod, which migrated all of its online programs onto AU's Canvas platform, and SOC's strategic communications program, which moved back in-house.

COMMUNITY

“Over the last five years, one of the university's top priorities has been strengthening and expanding the connections between AU and all its communities—our internal community of staff, faculty, students, and alumni and our community of neighbors, fellow Washingtonians, and others across the DC area. With the completion of the strategic plan's first phase, we are proud of all the progress we've made to strengthen our ties with each other and with the city and region we are proud to call home. As we enter the next phase of the strategic plan, we remain committed to ensuring we are supporting our most critical resource—our people—to advance How AU Works and make the university a great place to live, learn, and work.”

—**Seth Grossman, vice president of administration
and chief administrative officer**



IMPERATIVE 6: INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE



“We all have an important role to play in ensuring that our community is living up to its values. The work of the President’s Council on Diversity and Inclusion (PCDI)—which includes a diverse group of committed leaders from across campus—builds on our successes, while engaging faculty and staff from across campus. Our work as collaborators and accountability partners advances the goals of the inclusive excellence plan, which impacts the whole of AU.”

—PCDI members **Priya Doshi**, associate dean for faculty and inclusive excellence and SOC senior professorial lecturer; **Stacy Merida**, associate dean for diversity, equity, and inclusion and Kogod professorial lecturer; and **Amanda Taylor**, assistant vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusion and SIS senior adjunct professorial lecturer

photo credit: Roy Oak Photography

In January 2018, President Burwell [launched AU’s Plan for Inclusive Excellence](#), charging the university to live up to its values and advance equity in all its forms. The first phase of the plan—grounded in survey data and input from more than 1,000 community members—established a foundation for developing more inclusive and equitable practices and bolstering all Eagles’ sense of belonging. Year two—which included the establishment of inclusive teaching workshops and a new Office of Title IX and Equity—laid the groundwork for more actions and growth in the second phase of the plan.

In the three years since, AU has extended these roots of inclusive excellence further across the university landscape, demonstrating a commitment to inclusive excellence inside the classroom and out.

The work to thoughtfully and strategically advance AU’s inclusive excellence efforts has been “woven into the fabric of the institution,” said President Burwell. Among the key partners propelling these efforts is the President’s Council on Diversity and Inclusion (PCDI), composed of a dozen faculty and staff liaisons from all of AU’s schools and colleges (pictured).

This changemaking work requires time and many hands. And for that, President Burwell was recognized with the Women Business Collaborative’s 2023 Trailblazer in Gender Equity and Diversity Award, and the university received the [2022 Inclusive Excellence Award from the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education](#). “It is truly an honor to have our AU community recognized in these ways,”

Amanda Taylor, assistant vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusion said. “While we have much work ahead of us, the award reminds us we are headed in the right direction and inspires us to continue forward.”



Over the last five years, we have strived to build a more diverse and affirming AU by:

Fostering Student Thriving Through Inclusive Excellence

- Giving to equity-based funds has increased 17-fold under the Change Can’t Wait campaign.
- AU was named a [First-Gen Forward Institution](#) in 2020 by the Center for First-Generation Student Success. CDI has led the charge in this space by [expanding resources and programming for first-generation students](#), who comprise 8.4 percent of undergraduates—a 4 percent increase from 2019. The Center for Diversity and Inclusion’s (CDI) *First-Gen Yearbook*, which debuted in 2019, features

advice from dozens of first-generation staff and faculty who serve as mentors for Eagles navigating the same experience, and in November 2023, AU established the Eta Sigma chapter of Tri Alpha, a first-generation honor society. The university will induct its inaugural class in May 2024.

- AU has launched seven academic programs—many of them through the Department of Critical Race, Gender, and Culture Studies and the Department of World Languages and Cultures—aimed at developing inclusive thinkers and leaders. Among the new offerings that underscore AU’s commitment to DEI in the classroom: the Arab world studies bachelor’s and minor and the [Latina/o/x studies program](#), both established in 2020, and the [disability, health, and bodies undergraduate certificate](#), launched in 2023.
- Since it opened in 2021, Black Affinity Housing has created intentional space for 126 Eagles to forge connections, engage in conversation, and celebrate Black student experiences.
- More than 200 students with demonstrated financial need have received free laptops and tech support during their time at AU thanks to the [Inclusive Technology Initiative](#)—a campuswide collaboration between Bender Library and the offices of Financial Aid, Inclusive Excellence, and Information Technology that launched in 2022.
- AU’s Kay Spiritual Life Center, which celebrates its 60th anniversary next year, offers five prayer spaces for Eagles of all beliefs to explore meaning and purpose and find community.
- Each year, the Academic Support and Access Center serves the educational needs of about 1,200 students, including those with learning disabilities. In December 2023, the center moved to the third floor of Butler Pavilion—in the space formerly occupied by the Campus Store—to bring together services that were previously scattered across campus.

Equipping Our Community to Lead Change in a Complex World

- The Inclusive Excellence Mini-Grants program, launched in 2018 by PCDI, encourages cross-campus collaboration, offering up to \$1,500 in funding for a range of community-driven projects on Indigenous health and history, Islamophobia in the media, the immigration experience, and more. Forty-one grants have been awarded to date.
- The [Latino and Hispanic Mentorship Program](#)—spearheaded by the Latino and Hispanic Faculty and Staff Affinity Group and funded in its inaugural year by an Inclusive Excellence Mini-Grant—has over the last five years paired 84 mentors with 137 Latino, Hispanic, and Latinx students for weekly check-ins to foster thriving and belonging.
- AU’s first-ever [student chapter of the Asian American Journalists Association](#) was announced in October 2023 at a panel discussion featuring Paul Cheung, CEO, Center for Public Integrity; Emilie Ikeda, SOC/BA ’16, correspondent, NBC News; and Theodore Kim, SOC/MA ’99, director of career programs, the *New York Times* (pictured left to right, from center, with SOC’s Jane Hall and Aarushi Sahejpal, CAS/BS ’22, SIS/BA ’22, CAS/MS ’23). The group, cofounded by three SOC undergraduates, works to empower the next generation of Asian American and Pacific Islander reporters by diversifying the journalism industry.
- AU’s Antiracist Research and Policy Center partnered with the White House Historical Association to create a two-year, first-of-its-kind [Public History Fellowship in the History of Slavery and Its Legacies](#). Since 2020, three Eagles have helped develop a more complete—and inclusive—record of the past. Fellows have visualized slavery’s influence on AU and the District through interactive mapping and more.



- The Women Business Collaborative named President Burwell its 2023 Trailblazer in Gender Equity and Diversity. The diverse makeup of the university's leadership underscores her impact in this realm: 71 percent of AU's senior leaders are women—up from 17 percent in 2017 when she became president—and nearly half of the leadership team are people of color.

- WAMU's [Lift Every Voice initiative](#) (pictured) premiered during Black History Month in February 2022. The project highlights the stories of Black changemakers and includes segments recorded by DC high school students.



- Since its inception in 2022, the [SPA Summer Diversity Academy](#) has engaged 16 doctoral students and junior faculty from underrepresented backgrounds as fellows. Twenty-three AU faculty members have assisted with the weeklong summer intensive, which seeks to boost fellows' careers in policy and public administration.

Spearheading Structural Change to Build a Culture of Dignity, Respect, and Belonging



- [Nkenge Friday](#) (pictured) joined AU in January 2024 as vice president of inclusive excellence. Friday will help drive the development of the next phase of *AU's Plan for Inclusive Excellence*, which will include a focus on combatting antisemitism, Islamophobia, and all forms of hate and discrimination.

- AU charged all academic departments with updating faculty tenure and promotion guidelines to recognize and reward the often-hidden labor undertaken to support diversity and inclusion in teaching, service, and scholarship. Thus far, more than half of academic units have completed this important work, ensuring a more vibrant and representative community of faculty.

- *Insight into Diversity* magazine named Bender Library the [inaugural winner](#) of its Library Excellence in Access and Diversity award in January 2024. The award recognizes AU's efforts to make the library—which drew nearly 439,000 visitors in 2023 alone—more diverse, equitable, and accessible.
- In line with improved inclusive hiring practices, 57 percent of AU's new tenure-line faculty and 34 percent of new term faculty hired since 2019 self-identified as people of color.
- The [inclusive hiring toolkit](#), developed by the Office of Human Resources and released in 2021, helps managers keep equal opportunity top of mind during the hiring process—from drafting an inclusive position description to recognizing the impact of unconscious bias to ensuring a smooth onboarding process that meets a new hire's unique needs. AU also rolled out an inclusive hiring toolkit for faculty in 2023. "It's import for communities to see themselves represented on campus," said Jennifer Scott, director of recruiting. "Inclusive excellence is about fairness and equal access, and that's what we're trying to achieve."
- As part of the university's Name and Gender Identity Policy, launched in 2021, 8,388 Eagles have recorded the pronunciation of their names through NameCoach, and 21,905 individuals have entered their chosen names, pronouns, or gender identities through AU's self-service system.
- Since 2019, 1,180 faculty members have participated in 246 learning sessions on inclusive pedagogy, accessibility, neurodiversity, international learning, and more, hosted by the Center for Teaching, Research, and Learning.
- AU boasts eight affinity groups for faculty and staff—six of which were created in 2019 or later. The lineup, which began



with the Black Faculty and Staff Affinity Group, now includes the LGBTQ+, Latino and Hispanic, People of Color, International, Disability+, Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander, and Military-Connected groups. Alumni, too, can find community in a growing number of identity-specific groups: the Black Alumni Alliance, Latino Alumni Alliance, Women's Network, and Asian and Pacific Islander Alumni Network, among others.

IMPERATIVE 7: WORKING WITH WASHINGTON

“Our dual enrollment program represents the best of AU, catalyzing a diverse and well-prepared teacher workforce to meet the needs of DC Public School students across the city. Similarly, the Child Development Associate program broadens our impact through our collaboration with a variety of community partners. We are excited to continue this important work, which benefits our city’s future leaders.”

—Toks Fashola, faculty coordinator, dual enrollment program, and SOE senior professorial lecturer



In her April 2018 inauguration address, President Burwell charged AU to be “a part of, not apart from” the District. Nearly six years later, that call continues to inform the innovative ways we engage with DC: as a welcoming neighbor, an institutional partner, a research collaborator, and a champion for Washington and its people.

AU will notch a significant milestone in this work when we graduate our [first cohort](#) of [District Scholars](#) in May 2024. Established in December 2019, AU’s signature, \$3 million scholarship program covers full tuition and room and board for high-achieving students from DC’s public and public charter high schools who demonstrate significant financial need. Since fall 2020, AU has enrolled 37 District Scholars—talented Washingtonians who work to shape the future of their neighborhoods and the world. “I am fortunate to live in a place where anything is possible,” said Keyri Reyes Rodriguez, SPA/BA ’24, who emigrated from El Salvador to DC’s Columbia Heights in 2013. “Thanks to the District Scholars award and the opportunities afforded to me by AU, I will be able to break barriers and be successful at accomplishing my many goals.”

An anchor institution in the city, AU also plays a key role in supporting DC nonprofits through service-learning opportunities and volunteer work. The Center for Community Engagement and Service (CCES) boasts more than 300 partnerships with local schools and nonprofits and has helped 6,000 AU students log nearly 150,000 service hours since 2019.

The fifth largest private employer in DC, AU serves Washingtonians in other ways, as well, providing a gathering place for the community. Children learn to ride their bikes on the quad; families enjoy [movie nights](#) in the Woods-Brown Amphitheater; and students, faculty, staff, and neighbors revel in quiet moments in the AU Arboretum and Gardens.

Over the last five years, we have expanded and strengthened our ties to Washington by:

Supporting DC Students, Families, Artists, Nonprofits, and More

- CCES and the Latin American Youth Center Career Academy (LAYCCA) have [worked together since spring 2022](#) to establish nine programs, including immigration support, mentorship opportunities, and professional development, at the tuition-free charter school in Columbia Heights, which serves students from across DC. In November 2023, CCES and LAYCCA received Transform Mid-Atlantic’s annual [Transformational Partnership Award](#). “The partnership [with] AU has been a tremendous blessing because we’ve been able to bring into the career academy different services we didn’t have before, [including] the immigration consultation for our students who have newly arrived to this country and need a lot of support,” said LAYCCA principal Jacqueline Fernandez.

- More than 35 DCPS high school STEM teachers and eight students have taken a free class in the R programming language through a [partnership launched in 2021 with SPA's Center for Data Science](#). The program, which aims to integrate data science into the classroom and introduce young Washingtonians of color to careers in STEM, is funded by the DC Space Grant Consortium, of which AU has been the lead institution for more than 20 years.
- In 2023, AU partnered with Hiring Our Heroes (HOH), an initiative sponsored by the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation that connects transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses with employment opportunities. [AU's first HOH fellow](#), Air Force veteran Tyeshia Boone, worked with Human Resources for 12 weeks, shadowing staffers in a variety of roles.
- The Office of Community and Government Relations convenes the AU Neighborhood Partnership and the Community Liaison Committee, both of which consist of university representatives and neighborhood residents. The *AU Campus Plan* was developed in collaboration with these constituents and other community stakeholders and approved in 2022.
- In 2022, AU's [Airlie Berkshire Farm](#) donated 270 pounds of meat to Martha's Table, filling the nonprofit's freezer to capacity. Martha's Table is dedicated to increasing Washingtonians' access to healthy food, quality education, and family support.



photo credit: Dylan Singleton

- The American University Museum—the largest university-affiliated art museum in the DC area—has long championed local artists. With a historic gift to the Change Can't Wait campaign of [9,000 works from the famed Corcoran Gallery of Art](#) in May 2018, the AU Museum [more than doubled its collection](#), complementing its focus on works by women, people of color, and DC artists. Last year, the museum drew nearly 17,000 visitors and featured 156 Washington area artists.
- Since it was unveiled on the grassy ellipse behind the Kay Spiritual Life Center in April 2023, Elyn Zimmerman's monumental sculptural installation, [Sudama](#), has become a popular community gathering spot.

Composed of five granite boulders and smaller accent rocks that surround a crescent-shaped pool of running water, *Sudama* was gifted to AU by the National Geographic Society in December 2021 as part of the Change Can't Wait campaign.

Building Community Through WAMU Partnerships

- WAMU's *Dish City* podcast, which explores DC history and culture through its iconic foods, from mambo sauce to half smokes, [won a prestigious Media Award](#) from the James Beard Foundation in June 2022. Hosts Ruth Tam and Patrick Fort won in the audio programming category for an episode from their third season, "How American Chinese Food Became Delivery Food."
- As part of a [collaboration launched in spring 2022](#) between WAMU and the Creative School, a youth empowerment and storytelling nonprofit based in Congress Heights, teenage journalists reported on issues facing residents in Southeast. The workshop was born out of [photojournalist Dee Dwyer's](#) monthly series, [Voices of Wards 7 and 8](#).
- WAMU partnered with *El Tiempo Latino*—a DC-based Spanish-language newspaper—in October 2021 to [cross-publish news stories](#), providing both organizations' audiences with more in-depth coverage of issues impacting more than a million Latinos who live in the Washington area.
- Since 2019, *Kojo in Our Community*, hosted by longtime WAMU personality Kojo Nnamdi, has recorded 16 live broadcasts across DC. With topics ranging from rising rents to reviving the local restaurant scene in the wake of the pandemic, the program gives residents a forum to pose questions and share their point of view on neighborhood issues.

Tapping the Expertise of Our Faculty and Students to Serve Our Neighbors

- [Faithfully Fit](#), a collaboration between CAS, Wesley Theological Seminary, and DC faith-based groups that kicked off in spring 2023, aims to reduce obesity and close the health equity gap in the District. The program has certified 15 people from six religious organizations as health ministers, guiding fellow Washingtonians to promote healthy lifestyle choices.
- The [Advancing Early Education Collaborative](#)—a partnership between SOE, Trinity Washington University, and Martha's Table, launched in May 2021 and funded by a \$5 million grant from JPMorgan Chase—helps childcare workers obtain the required Child Development Associate credential and continue their education. Since its inception, 104 students, mostly women of color in DC's Wards 7 and 8, have received full scholarships, textbooks, and wraparound services, including childcare and transportation vouchers, clothing, food, and counseling.
- Over the last five years, 40 DC high school seniors—95 percent of whom are Black or Latinx—have participated in [SOE's dual enrollment program](#), taking classes alongside AU students and earning six free college credits. Eleven of the students have enrolled in AU. [The program](#) is part of SOE's Teacher Pipeline Project, which aims to diversify the city's teacher workforce.
- Eighteen days into what would become the longest government shutdown in American history, AU hosted 550 federal workers from across the DC area for [Classes Without Quizzes](#) in January 2019. The free daylong event featured 15 workshops taught by SPA professors on topics like managing across generations and emotional intelligence.

IMPERATIVE 9: HOW AU WORKS

"We are proud and excited to have been among the 90 staff members from across campus who launched Workday in January. The culmination of 18 months of work, Workday is a cloud-based system that consolidates many of AU's administrative systems in one platform. We are confident that Workday will lead to administrative efficiencies and processes across our community and will position AU well for the future by creating new opportunities for the delivery of services."

—Workday implementation team members Nicole Bresnahan, associate vice president, financial operations; Ann Joiner, executive director, total rewards and service delivery; Beth Muha, associate vice president, human resources; Jackie Palumbo, director of change enablement; and Prita Patel, vice provost for academic administration



"Changemaking is a collective act, made possible by the dedication, talents, and spirit of AU community members. The Change Can't Wait campaign is making an impact on our university in real time, and we are continually inspired by the response from our community to Change Can't Wait's call to action. We are at an extraordinary moment in AU's history—one in which we all play a part as we close our \$500 million campaign goal this year."

—Courtney Surls, vice president, University Advancement

To realize the strategic plan's many objectives, AU needed a structure that facilitates collaboration and streamlines the work of our dedicated community of staff and faculty. Just as Eagles *make* change, we also embrace it in our own operations.

The university assembled a council of assistant vice presidents and other senior leaders to encourage cross-campus communication and engagement, reevaluated outdated policies and procedures, and examined whether our infrastructure, both physical and technological, supported faculty, staff, and student thriving—all with an eye toward improving the way we tell the AU story, internally and externally.

This work proved even more critical when [COVID-19 hit in March 2020](#) and the university quickly reimaged how we learned, worked, and lived. Even as the pandemic ushered in rocky economic conditions and unprecedented public health challenges, our community met the moment with [grace, empathy, and creativity](#). While other higher education institutions faced personnel cuts, AU focused on keeping our community whole—embracing a remote-learning model, avoiding large-scale layoffs, paying health benefits for contract workers, and resuming university matching contributions to retirement benefits a month ahead of schedule. We also offered a Community of Care tuition discount—10 percent for undergraduate and graduate students and 5 percent for WCL students—in spring 2021.

There are always improvements to be made in how AU works, but our commitment to our people—whose work and dedication is foundational to supporting the next generation of changemakers—is unwavering.

Over the last five years, we have fostered operational excellence by:

Launching Campaigns to Elevate AU's Profile, Inspire Impact, and Lead Change



- AU announced the historic \$500 million [Change Can't Wait campaign](#)—our call to address the world's most pressing challenges—in May 2021. The university's first comprehensive campaign to launch in 18 years advances critical areas of the strategic plan through three pillars—Elevate, Inspire, and Lead—that create transformative student opportunities, drive research and teaching with impact, and build stronger communities across DC and around the world. As of January 31, 2024, AU has raised more than \$460 million, or 92 percent of our goal. More than 22,500 alumni, 8,300 current and former faculty and staff and emeriti faculty, and 1,400 students have contributed to the campaign.

- In April 2021, the university unveiled a bold new narrative, [Challenge Accepted](#), that reflects our community's engagement, passion, and commitment to tackling today's most complex issues, from slowing climate change to combatting violent extremism. The Challenge Accepted brand campaign, which places community and purpose at the center of the university's story, blends AU's signature blue and red to create a vibrant purple that symbolizes the need for common ground.

Building a Culture of Innovation and Thriving Among Our Staff

- In January 2024, [AU launched Workday](#), its new enterprise resource planning system—the [culmination of 18 months of work](#) by more than 90 staff members, with input from student and faculty advisors. The cloud-based system consolidates many of the university's administrative systems, including human resources, payroll, and finance, in one platform.
- During Staff Appreciation Week in June 2023, [AU honored 19 changemaking staff](#)—selected from a record 161 nominees representing 273 staffers across 66 departments—for their work to make AU a better place to work and learn. From 2019 to 2022, 156 staff members were honored across eight categories, ranging from the Outstanding Supervision Award to the Service to the AU Community Award.

- The Office of Human Resources' Supervisor Academy, [which debuted in May 2022](#), centers on the foundations of good people management, with seminars on inclusion and belonging, communication and relationship management, conflict resolution, coaching and feedback, and more. Sixty-two percent of AU's 500-plus supervisors had completed the 14-hour training as of December 2023; [all managers responsible for at least one full-time employee](#) will complete the academy by summer 2024.
- The Performance Management Process (PMP), used by staff to track their professional-development goals, was redesigned in 2017 and additional training was added in 2019–20 to reflect university-wide goals. This subtle but important change underscores AU's view that the PMP process is as much about improving the way the university works as it is about evaluating each individual employee's performance.
- The return to in-person learning in August 2021 brought with it a new hybrid work environment for many staff members, which has boosted morale, productivity, and retention. Employees follow one of five modalities, allowing AU to balance student support and our operational requirements with the needs of staff.
- In October 2019, the Office of Human Resources modernized the hiring process, moving orientation for new employees online. The Reinventing Hiring program prioritizes convenience and lessens the workload for key personnel, ensuring they have the bandwidth to perform other essential tasks. AU also took strides to diversify applicant pools, implemented new systems to track applications and check references, and overhauled the hiring process for adjunct professors.

Incorporating Sustainability into Everything We Do

- In 2018—two years ahead of schedule—[AU achieved carbon neutrality](#), becoming the first university in the US with a net-zero carbon footprint. We are also the first urban campus and research institution to reach the environmental milestone. Two years later, on the 50th anniversary of Earth Day in April 2020, [we divested from fossil fuels public investments in our endowment](#).
- AU celebrated the 30th anniversary of [Campus Beautification Day](#) in April 2023. Under sunny skies, 327 staff, faculty, and student volunteers planted 5,000 shrubs and 12 trees—including a willow oak near SPA's Kerwin Hall to commemorate the [20th anniversary of the AU Arboretum and Gardens](#). AU was also presented with the Tree Campus USA designation for the 13th consecutive year.
- New reusable takeout containers distributed in September 2022 to about 4,000 students on meal plans [diverted 2,571 pounds of waste from landfills](#). Funded by a \$24,750 grant from DC's Ditch the Disposables award program, the initiative supports AU's efforts to achieve zero waste by 2030.
- AU's [2021 Sustainability Plan](#) builds on the 2010 Climate Plan and the 2014 Sustainability Plan and focuses on climate literacy, food systems, green construction, wellness, and environmental justice.



Fine-Tuning Financial Operations to Promote Transparency and Efficiency

- AU launched financial aid self-service for students in 2020. This EagleService upgrade enables students to review charges and payments in an easy-to-access and user-friendly portal. Charges are now broken into clear categories like tuition, housing, meal plans, and mandatory fees, as are the sources of funds, including student deposits and financial aid payments.
- In 2020, AU established the Budget and Financial Management Certification Program for staff; it was expanded the following year with the development of seven modules outlining our financial systems, policies, and responsibilities. By 2022, 93 percent of budget and financial managers had completed the program, and a new University Budget Committee began leading regular, year-round community meetings.

OUR CHANGEMAKING PATH TO 2025

As the myriad milestones chronicled in *Five Years of Impact* illustrate, when we combine clarity of mission, learning, scholarship, community, a passion for changemaking, and great people with a recognition and appreciation for the significant shifts happening in our world, we can make dramatic progress—even amid challenging times.

As a community of changemakers, we are stronger and more powerful than ever before. And as we turn our focus to the accelerator phase of *Changemakers for a Changing World*, we are poised for continued success and impact.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our progress across the pillars of scholarship, learning, and community. Your commitment, hard work, and talent have positioned American University for a changemaking future.

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PLAN, MEET THE IMPLEMENTATION TEAM MEMBERS,
AND JOIN IN THE WORK, VISIT [AMERICAN.EDU/STRATEGICPLAN](https://american.edu/strategicplan).**



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