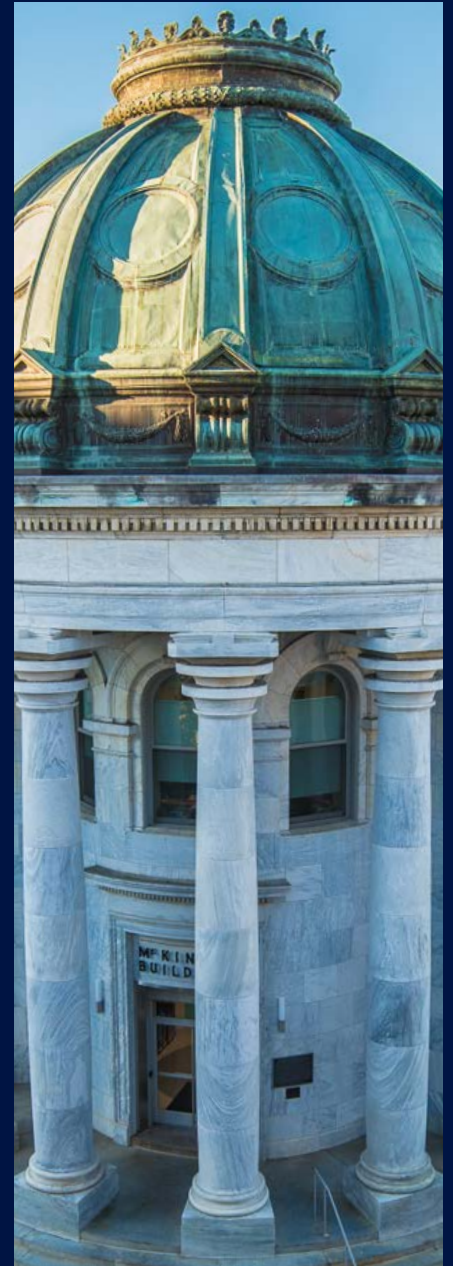


MEET OUR MOMENT

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY'S PLEDGE
TO OUR STUDENTS AND OUR WORLD



FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN
JANUARY 2026



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC

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Dear American University students of today and tomorrow,

Meet Our Moment exists for you. University strategic plans often plot new levels of growth and success for institutions of higher education. At American University, that success means you. We make these pledges and commitments to you, and we will be accountable to you.

At American University:

- You will be ready for a career of achievement and a life of purpose.
- You will learn in the classroom, across our beautiful campus, throughout our great Washington, DC, community, and around the globe.
- You will discover alongside expert faculty and dedicated staff, finding not just what is new, but what we can do together right now.
- You will find your place on our vibrant campus in a community that cares deeply about you and your potential.
- You will develop the skills to civically engage, solve problems, and enhance democracy.

The world needs Eagles like you. Your passion and dreams will be supported and strengthened by American University's unmatched combination of hands-on learning, skill and career development, entrepreneurial spirit, impactful research that is put to work every day, and focus on community. The *Meet Our Moment* plan harnesses what distinguishes American University and delivers

a more cohesive and comprehensive approach to connect what you want today and what you need tomorrow.

Throughout our history, American University Eagles have always met the moment. In times of challenge and in dawns of possibility, we act with courage and creativity to break new ground. We shape history. We are dreamers and doers, builders and crafters, innovators and leaders. We thrive wherever change is made and the future is shaped—classrooms, boardrooms, theaters, laboratories, the halls of Congress, and the heart of our communities. From our arboretum campus in Washington, DC, we strive for the type of impact found at few other places. We chose American University because of who we are and what this community represents. We've been called wonks, and we're known to be changemakers thanks to the goals and dreams we pursue and the ways American University helps each of us think, solve, and grow. Now we stand ready for our next moment with you and to meet the grand challenges of our time.

This is the future of your American University: aspirational, entrepreneurial, prepared, globally minded, and deeply connected. Here, readiness meets opportunity, and every Eagle gains tools, skills, and knowledge not just for a job, but for a life of meaning, productivity, and consequence. We will stand together as a model for a 21st-century university: relentlessly innovative, inclusive in spirit, and deep in purpose.

We are ready to meet our moment. Are you?

Sincerely,
Jonathan Alger, President





Introduction

American University represents an ideal and an opportunity: What can a national university in the nation's capital be and become? Our name affirms our enduring promise—an urgency to act, the ability to adapt, the audacity to lead, moral guidance through our values, and determination to pursue our biggest hopes and aspirations.

From our home in Washington, DC, we create impact at today's global intersections—economics and business, law and politics, arts and culture, science and discovery, democracy and media, athletics and competition, and research and learning.

At American University, students connect with peers, leaders, communities, and institutions that shape the world. We educate both the head and the heart through human connections and relationships that span

generations, disciplines, and geographies. AU Eagles graduate with knowledge *and* networks, education *and* experience, a sense of self *and* empathy for others, *and* purpose and adaptability. In other words, they are ready.

At American University, faculty and staff pursue the great questions and contribute the big ideas that change the world. Our scholar-teachers share their research in the classroom and partner with students in the laboratory and in the community. Our dedicated staff power a learning community where ideas, action, and service lead to meaningful outcomes. We hold dear the core values of a liberal arts and sciences education, embrace the entrepreneurial spirit of a rapidly changing world, and believe in collaboration, accountability, and transparency.

Our strategy centers on our students, preparing them for meaningful and productive lives and careers. The *Meet Our Moment* plan prioritizes people, not buildings or bureaucracy. We will pursue audacious goals to make us a better university for our students—and prepare our students for all their moments ahead. We will scale great things we already do. We will innovate and dream big. We will work together now and forward to achieve our goals.

This is our leap ahead. Together, we will meet this moment, the next, and all the moments to come. AU will be a recognized leader in developing trailblazers and bridge builders with an unmistakable entrepreneurial spirit. Our innovative curriculum and enhanced community engagement will help students develop impactful and marketable skills from critical thinking, communication, and civil discourse to mastery of emerging technologies like AI, information and data literacy, and creativity and resilience. We will leverage our R1 status to produce research that improves the human condition. AU leads in civic pluralism and civic research and education in an era when democracy needs it. Our community will feature strong bonds and traditions focused on service to each other and the world. AU's culture will recognize people as our most valuable resource. Our engaged alumni base will provide intergenerational mentorship and career development for all Eagles. We will foster the American University that we all know this institution can be.

Now is a moment for solutions. And American University meets the moment.

Our Aspiration and Our Pledges

Since American University's founding in 1893, inquiry, engagement, and service have been at the center of our mission. An enduring and boundless curiosity guided our early embrace of international perspectives, our deep commitment to public service, and our goal of producing leaders who advance knowledge, build community, and seek new frontiers in government, business, culture, law, policy, and research.

We aspire to be the first-choice university in Washington, DC, for all who want to turn moments and ideas into action, service, and leadership:

- The students who grow from a uniquely hands-on education and professional preparation into careers of achievement and purpose.
- The scholar-teachers who ask probing questions, pursue meaningful answers, generate solutions, and share knowledge.
- The staff members who make the American University experience memorable, transformative, welcoming, and lasting.

- The alumni who lead and create because they learned here, thrive because they grew here, and give back because they believe in why we are here.
- The policymakers who need to solve today's conundrums and embrace tomorrow's possibilities.
- The employers that need team members and leaders with the skills, knowledge, and tenacity to succeed in any environment.
- The local advocates who depend on partners deeply invested in building stronger, more sustainable communities everywhere.

We pledge to prepare students for meaningful lives of purpose and achievement, to expand our curiosity, to build our community, and to be accountable for our outcomes. Our pledges meet what students and families expect and what the world demands. They reflect where AU excels. Each commitment draws from our community and aligns today's ambitions and tomorrow's needs. The pledges ensure every student is ready to thrive, lead, and make an impact beyond graduation locally, nationally, and globally.

American University Pledges	Our Intended Outcomes
<p style="text-align: center;">AU Ready (Undergraduate Students)</p>	<p>Every undergraduate will have access to a \$4,500 resource for a funded internship or research experience beginning in sophomore year. The experiences will include a professionalism course, career preparation support, and other required foundational activities to enhance student skills.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">AU Ready (Graduate Students)</p>	<p>Every graduate student will complete a series of professionalization courses, integrating career preparation from day one of their program.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">AU Global (Undergraduate Students)</p>	<p>Every undergraduate will have access to a study abroad experience, global learning opportunity, or international research project.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">AU Global (Graduate Students)</p>	<p>AU will deploy more international opportunities for graduate students.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Mentors Matter</p>	<p>All sophomores and transfer students will have the opportunity to engage a mentor, building durable professional networks and communities. Graduate students and Washington College of Law students will have access to mentoring opportunities as well.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">A Distinctive Curriculum</p>	<p>A new AU curriculum will emphasize exploration, simplicity, adaptability, inclusion, and experiential learning with the goal of making AU's general education uniquely impactful for career development, inquiry, and comprehensive learning.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">AI Readiness</p>	<p>AU students will graduate with responsible, ethical, and practical AI literacy—fully prepared, regardless of major, with the skills, confidence, and judgment needed to thrive in a digital and AI-powered world.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Civic Engagement and Learning</p>	<p>AU curricula will infuse civic learning as a feature of every degree, supported by a unique Civic Transcript to formally document students' civic engagement.</p>

American University Pledges	Our Intended Outcomes
AU90	A 90-credit degree pilot program will offer a flexible pathway for students, including transfer and nontraditional learners, while maintaining academic rigor and expanding access.
DC-Centered Learning	All academic programs will integrate Washington, DC-based opportunities through the AU/DC Community Portfolio and DC-intensive lab courses, blending service, arts, policy, business, international, and cultural experiences.
Student Belonging and the Power of Cohorts	Expanded cohort models (including a larger AU Honors program) will deepen engagement and belonging, supporting student belonging and peer connections.
Career Preparation Through Integrated Experiential Learning and Workforce Preparation Services	Modernized and integrated career and study abroad functions—including new employer partnerships—will support students' readiness for the workforce and professional opportunities.

Higher Education Today, AU's Place in the Changing World, and How We Win

Universities are engines for nations and economies. Our institutions convene expertise from different disciplines and sectors to address grand challenges and prepare the leaders and workforces that will drive the next chapter of human development. Yet in this moment, universities face unprecedented political and economic pressures. The value of higher education is under scrutiny. The rapidly changing economy demands new skills and preparation. Students pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees have an urgent need to be ready.

- Most of the fastest-growing occupations through 2034—including management, healthcare, and data analysis—will primarily require a bachelor's degree ([US Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)).
- Eighty-four percent of hiring managers say high school students are not prepared to enter the workforce, and 80 percent believe that high school students are less prepared for work than previous generations ([US Chamber of Commerce](#)).
- Today's college graduates enter a historically difficult job market. The unemployment rate among young graduates (ages 23-27) rose to 4.59 percent in 2025, compared to 3.25 percent in 2019 ([Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis](#)).
- Seventy-two percent of young Americans (ages 18-34) identify responsible AI training as an important element of career preparation, and most (78 percent) said AI either did not receive much attention or was

actively discouraged or prohibited in high school ([Sine Institute of Policy and Politics](#)).

- Seventy percent of Americans say the United States' higher-education system is generally heading in the wrong direction, up from 56 percent in 2020, and 55 percent say colleges and universities only perform fairly or poorly at preparing students for well-paying jobs in today's economy ([Pew Research Center](#)).
- The US Congress enacted sweeping higher education policy reforms in the 2025 federal budget reconciliation bill, including student loan limits, changes to federal Pell Grants, and new institutional accountability rules.

A university strategy must successfully navigate these crosscurrents. A strategy that prepares an institution—and more importantly, its students—for what comes after this unique moment is equally critical. American University's *Meet Our Moment* plan does both.

In this complex and competitive higher education marketplace, American University will stand out. We are a midsize, private, R1 university in the global intersection that is Washington, DC. Our scholar-teacher ideal combines with a welcoming campus and a striving student body to prepare for and impact our changed world. The *Meet Our Moment* plan will succeed—and the AU community will thrive—by maximizing our existing strengths, demonstrating our commitments, proving our worth, and living our values. We will be proud of our achievements but never satisfied with our pursuits.

Building the *Meet Our Moment* Strategy

At American University, collaboration generates our best results. The *Meet Our Moment* strategic plan illustrates our storied history of innovation that has always featured inclusive and integrated action.

President Jonathan Alger arrived at American University in July 2024 and immediately recognized that connection forms the foundation of a shared future vision. He engaged every school, college, and administrative unit on an ambitious listening tour. He heard the hopes, aspirations, and concerns of the AU community. Students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, and our DC neighbors offered insights, and President Alger shaped the initial framework for collective strategic planning.

Eight themes and eight working groups emerged from the listening tour. Nearly 140 students, faculty, staff, and alumni accepted the charge to transform the themes into ambitious “big bets” to distinguish and differentiate AU’s future. Over several months, the groups engaged their AU colleagues, debated ideas, and crafted recommendations.

The working group proposals crystallized into a set of five potential strategic focus areas—career, curriculum, community, civic pluralism, and curiosity. Returning to the AU community for further engagement in September and October 2025, the concepts were sharpened. Across more than a dozen community working sessions and many more department-level and group meetings, more than 600 students, faculty, staff, and alumni joined discussions about the proposed directions. The conversations and input helped transform the ideas from exciting possibilities to actionable plans reflecting AU’s existing strengths, our lofty goals, and our student focus.

In November 2025, the AU Board of Trustees approved the draft strategy that was built from the community up.

In January 2026, *Meet Our Moment* became our guide and our commitment.

Foundations and Enabling Goals

To support the strategy and deliver the best AU experience possible, we will ensure excellence throughout the university's core functions and foundations.

Enrollment and Access

We will grow the prospective student pool, increase applications (particularly early decision), strengthen yield, invest in additional financial aid, and improve student retention. Grounded in market trends, historical performance, and student perspectives (including the fall 2025 Admitted Student Questionnaire), we will further customize recruitment and retention approaches to meet students where they are. We are embarking on a long-term enhancement of our aid strategy as financial aid and affordability are key drivers of enrollment and retention. We will continue striving to make AU's undergraduate and graduate programs more accessible and affordable for students of all backgrounds and incomes. In the graduate, law, and lifelong learning space, we will further expand opportunities for continuing students, working professionals, and all who want to grow their knowledge and career potential.

Student Life, Engagement, and Belonging

Beyond the new Student Thriving Complex, American University will cultivate a strong, inclusive community for all students. We will leverage, enhance, and expand co-curricular and community resources, services, spaces, and programs to foster a genuine sense of belonging for every AU student. AU will strengthen student engagement and connection through expanded onboarding, pre-orientation, and orientation programs; dynamic residential living/learning experiences; family and community partnerships; investments in infrastructure; and vibrant community-wide initiatives. Growing our signature

events, creating and sustaining meaningful new traditions, and deepening opportunities for experiential learning, we will foster a culture that celebrates our shared humanity and embraces diverse perspectives. We champion holistic health and wellness for students, including mental health resources and physical health and recreation opportunities. All of this focused student support builds resilience and prepares graduates grounded in community, equipped to lead, and ready to navigate complexity.

Brand and Reputation

We launched a strategic brand initiative to strengthen the university's reputation, support enrollment growth, and clearly articulate AU's distinctiveness in the crowded higher education marketplace. Using quantitative and qualitative research, the initiative will produce a singular university brand narrative, visual identity, and campaign to connect with key audiences; advance specific enrollment goals and higher education rankings; engender pride; and make AU an attractive destination for future students, faculty, and staff. The brand process unfolds in three integrated phases: research (August–December 2025), creative development (January–July 2026), and implementation (August 2026).

Resources and Operations

Sustainable, aligned university resources serve as a foundation for our mission, strategic priorities, and operations. We will improve efficiency, apply further rigor and intentionality to our decision-making and analysis, and make the best use of our resources en route to our desired achievements. Resource initiatives (human, financial, and physical) will support our commitment to investing in people and organizational optimization. This includes the HR job architecture and market compensation

analysis, the ongoing comprehensive review of AU facilities and real estate (including owned and leased properties as well as Airlie), and leveraging the latest technology and tools (such as Workday Student to improve the student technology experience and streamline academic operations; AI features in Workday and Service Now; Salesforce for graduate admissions; and Adobe Experience Manager for the university website). We will continue to lead in sustainability, adding to our 2018 achievement as the first carbon neutral university in the United States with the 2026 opening of the Meltzer Center for Athletic Performance, the first net-zero collegiate building in Washington, DC. Finally, these foundational elements and the strategic priorities prepare us for the 2031 campus plan, a District of Columbia regulatory requirement for universities.

Inclusive Excellence (IE)

The next chapter of our inclusive excellence work introduces new university-wide definitions and frameworks. We will foster and sustain an inclusive university climate that supports retention and success of all students and employees through a consistent and effective campus-wide efforts. The work includes policies and practices that promote inclusive behavior and quickly address actions that create barriers to belonging or violate university policies. As part of our educational mission, inclusive excellence provides opportunities for all students, faculty, and staff to participate in innovative learning experiences that support belonging.

University Advancement

Building immediately on the momentum from the successful \$507 million *Change Can't Wait* campaign, we will begin to plan and prepare to launch AU's next comprehensive

fundraising campaign. It will align with and support core elements of the strategic plan, and the campaign will extend well beyond the strategic plan to form a broad philanthropic agenda for AU that invites friends, parents, alumni, foundations, and others to invest in transformational ideas—ideas for and beyond AU. The dedicated fundraising strategy will significantly increase the level of philanthropy across endowment, operating, and capital support to a level commensurate with peer institutions. Part of our approach will be to broaden and deepen the engagement of AU's alumni community of more than 160,000 Eagles around the world, with an immediate focus on the 62,000 AU alumni who live in the greater Washington, DC, metro area, and to ensure we are leveraging local momentum to engage all alumni around the world.

Global Engagement

AU prepares graduates to lead and connect across borders, differences, and disciplines. We champion a global perspective and offer a vibrant, multicultural environment where students and faculty from diverse backgrounds collaborate, challenge assumptions, and broaden their worldviews. With more than 100 international programs in 33 countries and dedicated on-campus learning environments for students and scholars who come to AU from around the world, AU serves as a hub for global dialogue and ideas. We will deepen our international commitments; leverage our strong presence in global capitals such as Brussels, Madrid, and Nairobi; and provide opportunities for all Eagles to participate in the global community.



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY WILL MEET OUR MOMENT

The *Meet Our Moment* strategic plan will prepare our students to be ready for all of life's opportunities. Our university community supports them every step of the way, driving world-shaping knowledge and inspiring productive discourse and problem solving through an enduring commitment to civic pluralism. Each strategic initiative builds on AU strengths with innovation, connection, flexibility, and university-wide commitment. The focused priorities are transformative, achievable, and rooted in who we are, what we do best, and what we know needs to happen next.

READINESS

Our Pledge to Prepare Students for Meaningful Lives and Careers

American University graduates are prepared, confident, and resilient. They are ready. And in a rapidly changing global digital economy and a highly competitive job marketplace, we will ensure they always will be. Students and families expect clear pathways to careers, and American University will deliver them. Employers seek graduates with proven skills, cultural fluency, and adaptability, and American University will produce them.

We pledge to prepare students for meaningful careers and engagement by building on the entrepreneurial, problem-solving spirit that is a hallmark of an AU education. Our undergraduate and graduate students—and the global economy they will join and lead—tell us they want an updated approach and deserve the most effective career and life preparation available. We will deliver accessible opportunities for all students and explore new programs to meet students' new needs. We will be a hub for employers seeking the candidates who can surmount challenges and deliver results. AU will be a national leader in professional preparation, global engagement, and student success, featuring curricula and majors mapped to career readiness and human capabilities, experiences that lead directly to professional opportunities, and emerging technologies like AI infused into AU's research and learning.

Thriving in moments that matter requires the skills and mindsets of civic pluralism. American University uniquely prepares students to succeed in a world lived in common. We will lead the nation in transforming civic pluralism from an abstract value into lived, measurable, and celebrated practices that yield solutions. Curricular innovation, experiential learning, community engagement, research, and national leadership will position American University as the premier hub not just for civil discourse, but for true bridge-building, understanding, and positive change. When we think constructively and collaboratively, engage respectfully with our differences, and build trust, we overcome obstacles. Civic engagement drives us toward our shared goal—real solutions that advance our country, democracy, and our world. As President Alger said in his 2025 inauguration, this is not a “false veneer of politeness,” but a vigorous civil discourse “based on facts, evidence, and reason.”

Why AU Can Do It

Study abroad, internships, and post-graduation job placement are bedrock AU strengths. Now we will leverage them for every student. Our combination of a liberal arts and sciences education, experiential learning, graduate and professional education, and leading-edge instruction in emerging fields forms the foundation for a next-generation curriculum. AU's scholar-teachers are the heart of reimagining the AU classroom for students in every pursuit and practice, placing a focus on interdisciplinary and collaborative engagement. Multiple civic pluralism campus centers of excellence will augment learning so students are ready-made leaders of tomorrow's workforce.

- Eighty-seven percent of AU students complete at least one internship.
- Sixty-eight percent of AU students study abroad, and AU is ranked #5 nationally for study abroad programs (*U.S. News & World Report*, 2026).
- Ninety-one percent of recent AU graduates work in their field, attend graduate school, or do both within six months of graduation.
- More than 200 robust experiential learning opportunities—from case competitions to community-based research—provide meaningful student outcomes.
- AU leads in the application and ethics of emerging technologies, including AI. The Kogod School of Business's singular

approach to integrating AI throughout the curriculum, the Institute for Applied Artificial Intelligence, and unique AI-focused major and minor degree offerings make it the first “AI first” business school. With Iris, our AI robot, and the College of Arts and Sciences' study of the ethics of AI, we integrate the technology into the liberal arts and sciences. As a university built for new challenges and eras, AU is the right place to prepare students for the AI moment.

- The AU Career Center (along with programs in the School of International Service and the Kogod School of Business) delivers not just job listings, but coaching and confidence to empower students.
- AU's Washington, DC, home offers the place for dialogue, principled disagreement, and problem solving. Eight US presidents have walked our campus and offered stirring calls to democracy's highest potential. Our unmatched academic and scholarly initiatives are the engine of democratic innovation and civic engagement, including the Sine Institute for Policy and Politics, the Democracy Innovation Lab, the Lincoln Scholars Program, the Civic Life initiative, the Civic Learning and Democracy Engagement Coalition, the Project on Civic Dialogue, and the Marshall-Brennan Constitutional Literacy Project.

Soaring Together Initiatives

AU Ready Pledge (Undergraduate)

Every undergraduate student will have access to a \$4,500 resource for a funded internship or research experience beginning in sophomore year. The experiences will include a professionalism course, career preparation support, and other required foundational activities to enhance student skills. As part of the commitment, students will share reflections on their experiences for peer learning and networking.

AU Ready Pledge (Graduate)

Every graduate student will complete a series of professionalization courses, integrating career preparation from day one.

AU Global Commitment

Every undergraduate student will have the opportunity to participate in a global experience such as study abroad, alternative spring break, or an international research project.

Mentors Matter

Every sophomore and transfer student will have the opportunity to pair with an alumni mentor, enriching each student's journey and building lasting connections for our alumni. We will build the mentor network from the extensive expertise and reach of more than 160,000 alumni. We will extend mentoring opportunities to graduate and Washington College of Law students as well.

A Curricular Sprint and a Marathon

We will collaboratively review and reimagine our undergraduate curriculum with input from all key audiences to ensure our academic agility and relevance. The work will ladder through a 90-day sprint and an ongoing marathon. The sprint will immediately update regulations, policies, and practices that can slow student progress. The work builds into identifying human capabilities and skills learned across an AU education and aligned with our values, mapping those capabilities to our courses, and ultimately charting a new curriculum. The review process will emphasize exploration, simplicity, adaptability, inclusion, and experiential learning to make the general education uniquely impactful.

AU90

We will create flexible, fast-track academic pathways that meet evolving student needs and interests. A 90-credit degree program will provide our highest level of academic rigor while broadening access and personalizing education to meet the diverse needs of students, including transfer students, nontraditional enrollees, and lifelong learners.

AI Readiness

AU students will graduate with responsible, ethical, and practical AI literacy—fully prepared, regardless of major, with the skills, confidence, and judgment needed to thrive in a digital and AI-powered world.

A Record of Student Civic Success

Civic education will be embedded in every AU degree. AU students will graduate equipped for a life of engagement, constructive disagreement, problem solving, and leadership. AU will formally track and recognize students' civic activities on a specialized transcript, offering a tangible credential to future employers, graduate programs, and social opportunities. Partnering with Educational Testing Service (ETS), AU will pioneer not only teaching these skills, but also demonstrating their value for any career path.

Civic Fellowships

Signature civic fellowship programs will help AU students and faculty advance democracy education, public service, and leadership. These experiences will cultivate a cohort prepared to contribute meaningfully to civic, economic, social, and cultural life.

The AU/DC Community Portfolio

Every undergraduate and graduate student will have a signature experiential journey on our campus and across the Washington area. The program combines service, public policy, culture, community activities, athletics, and entertainment to offer exclusive rewards and opportunities.

DC Lab Courses

We will combine the Washington region's rich resources and AU courses built on intensive experiences in the nation's capital to provide direct connections between learning and service, public policy, the arts, media, and cultural opportunities.

American University uniquely prepares students to succeed in a world lived in common. We will lead the nation in transforming civic pluralism from an abstract value into lived, measurable, and celebrated practices that yield solutions.

Pass the Baton

We will create annual opportunities for students to share their internship experiences and lessons, including the ways they found opportunities and networks. With nearly 90 percent of AU students participating in at least one internship, current students are the best ambassadors for new Eagles as they follow their DC journey.

COMMUNITY

Eagles Journey Together

American University will transform the student experience by making Washington, DC—and the unique convergence of local, national, and global perspectives—an integral part of the Eagle journey. We will leverage our location, our reputation for changemaking, and our commitment to experiential learning so that every student develops deep connections—to AU, to each other, and to the world beyond campus. Students will enjoy the fun of shared adventures, the fulfillment of service, and the pride of measurable achievements. The journeys, explorations, and learnings will be accessible to all AU Eagles with inclusive programming and a commitment to community-based engagements.

The foundation for unparalleled DC opportunities starts on campus. We intentionally come together as Eagles, building an AU community that reflects our values through trust, transparency, robust discourse, and collective problem-solving. Our campus is a hub of learning, culture, athletic competition, and fun. And community well-being is a centerpiece of how we sustain it. We will provide support, opportunities to connect, and structures that make any activity at AU possible. We will bring our energy and our cheers to Eagle student-athletes in Bender Arena, the new Meltzer Center, and on the field.

Our approach to our mission, our daily work, and our community will model the values we share with our students and build in our society. We will further our commitment to inclusivity, recognizing that diversity of backgrounds, viewpoints, and dreams is an enduring strength that propels our priorities forward.

Why AU Can Do It

- AU features more than 300 partnerships across the DC region, with international institutions, nonprofit organizations, and local governments.
- AU's longstanding commitment to inclusivity has fostered a community that respects our differences, builds connection, and empowers us all to achieve our goals.
- More than 40 percent of AU alumni live in the DC region, providing a powerful base for networking, mentoring, and engagement.
- AU is a global meeting place with international centers (Brussels, Madrid, and Nairobi); alumni shaping world affairs; interdisciplinary and cross-border faculty collaborations; and global leaders bringing their impactful words and work to campus.

Soaring Together Initiatives

A Student Success Hub on the Quad

We will renovate Hurst Hall (the oldest building on campus) to collocate critical student services including admissions and the Welcome Center, the Career Center, and AU Abroad. The new facility will also welcome alumni and employers to deepen engagement. It will be a one-stop “home” for every Eagle’s success, from the first visit to campus to career recruitment to returning as alumni.

Solving Grand Challenges Together

Each year, the AU community will select a significant local or global challenge for a yearlong, community-wide problem-solving exercise. The ongoing collaboration will feature participatory decision-making, charting and navigating disagreements, and fostering common ground and consensus. We will do something difficult—together. The initiative will build on existing programs like the Project on Civic Dialogue grants and the Complex Problems seminars, which explore some of today’s most urgent challenges.

With Honors

We will expand the AU Honors program offerings to strengthen peer networks and deepen academic engagement. Cohort-based learning and social engagement through specialized programs will help nurture excellence, leadership, and lifelong connections for students.

Community Starts on Campus

We will deepen student connections and foster belonging through ongoing events, building on traditions like Thank Clawed It’s Wednesday and creating spirit through athletics, arts, creative pursuits, and culture.

CURIOSITY

Our Research Goes to Work

Achieving the Carnegie Classification R1 research designation in 2025 recognizes our scholarly journey, the impact of our work, and the opportunity for what comes next at a moment when our impactful research is needed more than ever. AU's road to R1 was singular. Rather than make a tradeoff between world-class research and transformative teaching, we chose both—and succeeded.

R1 is not an endpoint—it is our platform.

At AU, inquiry is a catalyst for transformation—personal, institutional, and societal. The university is a stage for bold conversations, from President John F. Kennedy's 1963 commencement speech urging a new era of nuclear arms control and peace to today's engagement with the global challenges such as climate change, inequality, hunger, and immigration. Our research and discoveries—from environmental breakthroughs to navigating AI to advances in international law—transcend traditional academic boundaries and reflect inquiry aimed at creating public impact and lasting change.

Now, we will invest in this ongoing journey to shape debates, produce tangible outcomes, and provide students with leading edge opportunities. This is R1 the AU Way—translating our research into enriching learning, fostering faculty community, and generating actionable societal insights. AU uniquely integrates knowledge creation and excellence in education, ensuring our research advances understanding without compromising transformative teaching.

Why AU Can Do It

- Our School of Public Affairs, ranked in the top 10 nationally and #1 in DC, and our top 10-ranked School of International Service feature leading experts and ideas that turn problems into good public policy.
- The Translating Research into Action Center (TRAC) is strengthening American University's already leading-edge ability to propel scholarly research into societal and economic impact. TRAC was established by a \$5.7 million grant from the National Science Foundation as part of the Accelerating Research Translation (ART) program.
- Our new Hall of Science and growing scholarly achievements in biology, chemistry, and other scientific pursuits create the ideal research environment for students and scholars.
- The Washington College of Law's highly ranked specialty programs (#2 Clinical Program; #5 Part-Time; #6 International Law; #6 Intellectual Property; #20 Health Care Law; and #24 Trial Advocacy) and clinics and practice areas (such as the Defending the AU Dream Initiative) bring legal scholarship to public impact.
- The Katzen Arts Center, which celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2025, is a world-class space where curiosity, collaboration, and creativity thrive. The American University Museum, housed within the Katzen, is the largest university art museum in the Washington area.

- AU's long history of community-based research, including the DC Community Impact Scholars, connects scholarly expertise with hyperlocal action to transform lives.

Soaring Together Initiatives

Research and Policy Translation Center

AU will launch a university-wide center dedicated to translating research discoveries into actionable policy solutions. The hub will connect faculty, students, and external partners in the policymaking process, elevating AU's already extensive presence in local, state, national, and global public affairs and service.

Research and Teaching Investments

We will invest in faculty in strategic areas of strength, such as democracy, governance, and extremism; AI for social good and digital governance; health equity and translational medicine; and sustainability and complex food systems. These are dynamic fields where AU's leadership can turn monumental challenges into opportunities for society to thrive. To sustain our R1 journey, we are also modernizing systems, mentorship, and technical resources to support faculty and student researchers. We will also enhance infrastructure across campus, including library resources and research assets.

Timeline and Implementation

The five-year *Meet Our Moment* plan features a dynamic and flexible strategy to meet the evolving needs of current and future AU students. Each year, we will set immediate-term goals that advance the overall priorities and report on their progress. Specific projects and timelines will be developed throughout implementation.

American University stands on a strong foundation. *Meet Our Moment* will foster close collaboration and connect our many robust pieces and initiatives seamlessly. Our strategic priorities call on us to do things differently. They grow from our lessons learned. But they do not rest there.

Our 2026 “takeoff” will outline how the AU community starts the plan’s first phases. The engagement and the work to fulfill the plan

will be spirited and collaborative. All will be heard. All will be asked to contribute. Following the January 2026 plan launch, key steps and milestones, core teams, and opportunities for community participation will come forward in an annual cycle, with updates on the progress and the new heights we aspire to reach.

The *Meet Our Moment* plan begins in a time of questions and uncertainty in higher education, Washington, DC, and the broader world. These factors will inform our annual goals and daily efforts. We will remain agile, adjusting timing and resources to account for external changes. But our plan and work will always center on our values and priorities.

5-Year Metrics and Accountability

Category	Metric	Target
Readiness	Freshman-to-Sophomore Retention Rate (with incoming fall 2029 class)	90%
Readiness	Sophomore-to-Junior Retention Rate (with incoming fall 2028 class)	82%
Readiness	Four-Year Undergraduate Graduation Rate (with incoming fall 2026 class)	75%
Readiness	Six-Year Undergraduate Graduation Rate (with incoming fall 2026 class)	80%
Readiness	Average Number of Years to attain doctoral degree	Improving
Readiness	% of Undergraduate students employed or in graduate school or both within six months of graduation, as measured in We Know Success (by the end of calendar year 2030)	≥ 97%
Readiness	Average starting salary for AU graduates (as calculated in We Know Success)	Improving
Readiness	% of Undergraduate students completing the AU Ready pledge for an internship or research opportunity by graduation (by the end of calendar year 2030)	95%
Readiness	% of Undergraduate students completing the Global Commitment (by the end of calendar year 2030)	90%
Readiness	% Undergraduate students with at least three civic competencies on the Civic Transcript by graduation (beginning with incoming fall 2026 class)	99%
Readiness	# of students completing Civic Pluralism Fellowships (by the end of calendar year 2030)	≥ 250
Readiness	% of Undergraduate students participating in and completing University Honors program (by end of calendar year 2030)	10%

Category	Metric	Target
Community	% of students participating in the AU/DC Community Portfolio by graduation (beginning with incoming fall 2026 class)	≥ 75%
Curiosity	Levels of federal and foundation research funding	Maintain R1 Levels
Curiosity	Number of community-based research projects	Increasing

Aspirations to Meet

- Complete the curricular “core sprint” in 90 days and the “core marathon” within two to three years.
- Develop and implement civics-related first-year course requirement.
- AU students will complete at least one course by graduation that includes responsible, ethical, and practical AI literacy—fully prepared, regardless of major, with the skills, confidence, and judgment needed to thrive in a digital and AI-powered world.
- Launch the accelerated degree program pilot with 90-credit hour policy analysis bachelor’s degree for spring 2027.
- Develop and launch 3+1 bachelors/ masters degree offerings.
- Complete five annual “grand challenges” with the AU community and document the results and impact.
- Every graduate student will complete a professionalization course, integrating career preparation from day one.
- Increase the number of international learning opportunities for graduate students.
- Provide all sophomore and undergraduate transfer students access to a mentor from the university’s mentoring program and alumni network starting fall 2026.
- Complete the renovation of Hurst Hall and establish the “student success hub.”
- Modernize career and study abroad services into an integrated function—including new employer partnerships—to support students’ readiness for the workforce.
- Launch the Research and Policy Translation Center.
- Complete a campus climate survey during academic year 2026–27.
- Establish a national hub and gain recognition as top university in the nation for civic pluralism and democracy innovation.
- Establish the annual “Solutions Summit” focused on civic pluralism and engagement.



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