

**AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY**
 WASHINGTON, DC

CHANGE MAKERS FOR A CHANGING WORLD

2019-2025

**STRATEGIC PLAN
PROGRESS REPORT**

YEAR 3

THE PATH TO AU2025

Changemakers for a Changing World is both a strategic roadmap for our university and a call to action. For three years, our core pillars of scholarship, learning, and community have not only guided our work, but they also have provided a steadfast foundation as we navigated the unprecedented challenges of COVID-19. Our momentum grew as we remained true to our vision and mission, and AU changemakers expanded knowledge, learned from leading scholars and experts, and created meaningful impact wherever they went. Today more than ever, our students are committed to transforming their learning into action across campus and in the community.

Throughout our third year of implementing the *Changemakers* plan, we built on AU's strengths and fostered new opportunities. The work across our strategic imperatives is charting a vibrant future for our university, our community, and our world. Year 3 featured unwavering commitment to the hallmarks of the AU experience: providing unique experiential learning opportunities in our backyard and around the globe, championing inclusive excellence, discovering new insights that are put into action, ensuring that our students thrive today so they can embark on meaningful careers tomorrow, tackling the most pressing challenges of our time, enhancing how AU works, and advancing change that can't wait.

This Year 3 progress report highlights the important work undertaken every day by our dedicated students, world-class faculty, and expert staff. Our results and achievements are transforming AU, and we look forward to continued growth and impact as we continue implementing and innovating in the years to come.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PLAN, MEET THE IMPLEMENTATION TEAM MEMBERS, OR JOIN OUR EFFORTS, PLEASE VISIT [AMERICAN.EDU/STRATEGICPLAN](https://american.edu/strategicplan).

KEY TAKEAWAYS AND SHARING STORIES OF SUCCESS

SCHOLARSHIP

IMPERATIVE: AREAS OF STRATEGIC FOCUS

When we began *Changemakers*, we started with four areas of **strategic focus: health, data science and analytics, security, and social equity**. In 2021, we announced the fifth area of strategic focus: **sustainability**. These cross-disciplinary areas of research and study address some of the most pressing challenges of our time.

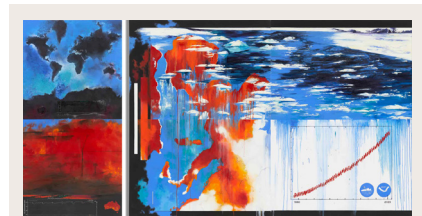
- **Advancing Sustainability:** Climate change is a challenge that cannot be overcome by working independently. We kicked off the Year of Climate Action with the [Seeing Climate Change Symposium](#), which gathered leaders

from the arts, sciences, and policy to examine how best to understand and respond to human-induced global heating, along with our new five-year sustainability plan (the third such plan in our history) with a goal to achieve zero waste by 2030.

- **Innovative Research and Teaching:** A \$5 million gift to American University creates a new endowed eminent scholar chair in neuroscience and behavior and accelerates AU's leading-edge scientific work in understanding the relationship between the brain, behavior and disease. The Trone Family Eminent Scholar Chair in Neuroscience and Behavior, held by CAS professor Terry Davidson, whose groundbreaking research on sugar and fats is transforming approaches to addiction.



Terry Davidson, CAS



Painter, photographer, and climate activist Diane Burko advocates for art's role in addressing climate change in *Diane Burko: Seeing Climate Change*.

- **Advocating for Inclusion in Tech:** A new inclusive tech policy group is working to encourage cross-campus collaboration and advance diversity in global technology by lifting underrepresented voices. The group and the Office of Research recently presented the first [American University Outstanding Technology Policy Changemaker Award](#) to Doreen Bogdan-Martin, SIS/MA '91. As the first woman in the 156-year history of the International Telecommunication Union to hold an elected office, trailblazer Bogdan-Martin received the award in honor of her work bridging the digital and gender divides.
- **Developing Strategic Research Initiatives:** Fifty-five research and programmatic centers across campus are creating knowledge that translates into action, including:

- » The **Center for Environment, Community, and Equity** will be launched in mid-2022. CECE aims to incubate innovative ideas, generate impactful and equitable actions and programming, and prepare a more diverse and inclusive next generation of thought leaders to advance a just transition to global sustainability.
- » An impressive class of 2022 fellows at the **Sine Institute of Policy and Politics** was announced this year. Among them are Mustafa Santiago Ali, vice president of environmental justice, climate, and community revitalization at the National Wildlife Federation; Julian Castro, former US secretary of housing and urban development; Michele Norris, Washington Post columnist, former NPR host, and founding director of the Race Card Project; and Shannon Watts, founder of Moms Demand Action. Established in 2018 with a \$10 million gift from AU trustee Jeff Sine, SIS/BA '76, and his wife, Samira Sine, the institute unites visionaries from across the globe to find common ground and bipartisan solutions to society's most pressing challenges.
- » This summer we launched the **First Ladies Association of Research and Education**, housed in the School of Public Affairs, bringing together scholars, historians, journalists, and former White House staffers to explore the evolving roles and cultural legacies of America's first spouses.

LADIES FIRST



AU's new research center is dedicated to the country's most exclusive sorority: the first ladies. Housed in SPA, the First Ladies Association for Research and Education, led by Anita McBride, has an agenda as long as First Lady Jill Biden's.

www.american.edu/magazine/article/first-class.cfm

IMPERATIVE: RESEARCH

- **Growing and Diversifying Research Funding:** In FY2021, the Office of Research secured a record \$29.44 million in sponsored funds. In September, the Office of Research received a history-making [\\$15 million grant \(FY2022\) from the National Science Foundation](#) that will enable a national team of researchers—40 faculty from 14 institutions—to research wasted food and reimagine a more sustainable, equitable, and resilient food system. CAS environmental science professor Sauleh Siddiqui leads Multiscale Resilient Equitable and Circular Innovations with Partnership and Education Synergies (RECIPES), an interdisciplinary network that aims to reimagine a more sustainable, equitable, and resilient food system—one of the greatest challenges of our time.
- **Advancing Research with Impact:**
 - » The [National Science Foundation \(NSF\) and Amazon](#) awarded \$1 million to Kogod professors Heng Xu and Nang Zhang to research structural bias in artificial intelligence in hiring systems.

A RECIPE FOR CHANGE

Something stinks in our food system, and it's not just the leftovers fermenting in the fridge. Forty-two million Americans don't have enough to eat, even while 40 percent of food in the US is wasted. But thanks to the largest externally funded award in our history, AU researchers aim to put a fork in this global crisis that's costing us our environment—and \$1 per person, per day in wasted food.



www.american.edu/magazine/article/a-recipe-for-change.cfm

- » The **Hall of Science** is a hub of cutting-edge teaching and research for both undergrad and graduate students. The hall's [state-of-the-art laboratories and classrooms](#) are home to AU's departments of biology, environmental science, chemistry, and neuroscience, where exciting discoveries are being made across disciplines, ranging from food waste to climate change to cancer. In 2018, AU trustee Gary M. Abramson, SPA/BA '68, and his wife, Pennie Abramson, made a gift of \$5 million to begin construction on the Hall of Science, continuing their tradition of creating spaces at AU that foster discovery and community.

LEARNING

IMPERATIVE: THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

- **Expanding Summer Education:** For the first time, AU offered financial aid for summer courses, allocating \$1.2 million to expand access to learning opportunities. This pilot effort helped our current students and families and inform our future efforts to expand summer educational opportunities.
- **Helping Students Thrive:** AU created six new sophomore living-learning communities to meet the academic and social-emotional needs of our second-year students. The Community-Based Research Scholars (CBRS) program is a living-learning community experience that emphasizes community-based research through responsible and meaningful community-engaged service and learning opportunities.
- **Promoting Student Wellness:** With the pandemic in its third year, the health and wellness of our community has never been more important. [AU has expanded mental health services](#) for students and provided innovative new ways of delivering them, such as telehealth appointments and texting options. We have also gathered as a community to discuss wellness, share resources, and support one another during this unprecedented time.



FIRST CLASS



Neuroscience major Kevin Chavez Lopez, CAS/BS '21, is among nearly 600 first-generation undergrads at AU, a figure that has nearly doubled since 2011.

www.american.edu/magazine/article/first-class.cfm

- **Boosting Representation:** AU launched two new partnerships to offer historically underrepresented populations better access to the application process. Service to School assists transitioning servicemembers and veterans in gaining admission, while College Track serves low-income students across the nation—especially in the DC area—who aspire to become the first in their family to graduate from college.
- **Answering the Call to Serve:** The Peace Corps celebrated AU for having the highest number of Paul D. Coverdell Fellows during the 2020–21 academic year, with a total of 92. The fellowship provides graduate tuition assistance to returned Peace Corps volunteers and connects them with underserved communities in the US, where they can apply and build on skills honed overseas.

IMPERATIVE: LEARNING FOR UNDERGRADUATE, GRADUATE, AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

- **Providing Dynamic and Flexible Learning:** AU is committed to providing new program opportunities and more flexible processes to meet student's learning needs. To this end, we launched our first winter session program in January 2022 and established a clear process for our graduate students to cross-enroll in programs on different calendars.

- **Promoting Faculty-Student Research Collaboration:** This Fall, five faculty-student research teams were awarded grants under a new pilot program in the Dean of Faculty's Office. By expanding opportunities for students to work alongside tenure-line and term faculty in scholarly, creative, and changemaking endeavors, the new program seeks to advance AU's strategic commitment to deep student learning and the scholar-teacher ideal.
- **Going Green:** The Green Teacher Program has certified 800 AU professors as green teachers.

IMPERATIVE: LIFELONG LEARNING

- **Operations, Digital, and Marketing:** AU's efforts in lifelong learning are inextricably linked to the university's digital strategy. This included the implementation of the Canvas e-learning management system, a digital credentialing and badging system called Credly, and a new way to register nondegree students with Canvas Catalog.
- **Evolving Online Programming:** Two new online programs were launched last year. The first is the Child Development Associate program, which focuses on teachers who care for and educate preschool-aged children in child development and daycare centers. The second is the soft launch of the MS in Accounting online program, which aligns with the residential MS in Accounting curriculum. The full launch of this offering is planned for fall '22.

LIFELONG LEARNING GROWS DURING PANDEMIC

As the AU strategic plan enters its third year, lifelong learning has seen a boost in digital infrastructure and strategy.



www.american.edu/news/lifelong-learning-strategic-plan.cfm

COMMUNITY

IMPERATIVE: INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

- **Diversifying Leadership Through Inclusive Hiring:** In August 2021, AU launched a recurring training for managers on inclusive hiring and an inclusive hiring toolkit. All executive staff searches used inclusive hiring practices; as a result, AU has seen an increase in the racial diversity of senior leadership hires.

Change Can't Wait: The Campaign for American University is contributing to building stronger communities. The campaign has seen an average annual increase of 68% to equity-based funds.

- **Creating Affirming Spaces:** [Black affinity housing](#) provides an intentional residential community dedicated to celebrating, exploring, and affirming African American student experiences at AU and beyond.
- **Faculty Leadership and Capacity-Building for Inclusive Excellence:**
 - » Since fall 2021, 294 faculty members across campus have participated in at least one of CTRL's 35 DEI-focused ongoing professional learning sessions, reflecting strong levels of continued engagement even over last year's historic high participation rates.
 - » The second cohort of 20 faculty department chairs and program directors are participating in a yearlong faculty learning community focused on building inclusive departmental climates.
 - » At the January 2021 annual Ann Ferren Conference, 53 percent of the 30 faculty-proposed sessions featured DEI-related focus areas—a 14 percent increase over last year.

- **Creating Change Through Technology:** Rethinking how we support our community created new technology initiatives essential in supporting a welcoming environment. More than 4,600 students designated chosen names, pronouns, or gender identities using [AU's new self-service tool, which debuted in January 2021](#).

IMPERATIVE: WORKING WITH WASHINGTON

- **Connecting in DC:** From entrepreneurial partnerships to state-of-the-art training, AU is creating opportunities for students and communities to flourish:
 - » Kogod School of Business and Martha's Table have formed a truly unique student experience supporting sustainable food systems and supporting experiential learning.
 - » [The School of Education partnered with Urban Teachers](#), a nationally recognized teacher residency program with sites in Baltimore, Dallas, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC, to deliver innovative teacher preparation programs and significantly increase SOE graduate enrollments.
 - » [The School of Education has also partnered with CityTutor DC](#) to expand high-impact tutoring to DC students.
 - » Community-Based Research Scholars at American University partnered with DC youth at three nonprofit organizations, Jubilee Housing, Latin American Youth Center, and DC Scores, to create the region's first Research for Change initiative. This partnership empowers youth voice in the role of nonprofit program design and evaluation.
 - » WAMU continues to strengthen community relationships with the [El Tiempo Latino partnership](#), the [Kojo in Your Community series](#), and the [Voices of Wards 7 and 8 series](#), each of which reaches and engages with diverse communities.



- **Advancing Education:** Last summer, AU welcomed its second cohort of [District Scholars](#), 11 high-achieving students from the city's public or charter high schools, who demonstrate financial need. The launch of the prestigious award, which covers tuition and room and board, led to a significant increase in the number of students from DC who applied to AU and were admitted.
- **Feeding DC's Hungry:** The AU Humanities Truck, which began delivering food to hundreds of hungry Washingtonians in summer 2020, received a [\\$100,000 grant from the Henry Luce Foundation](#) to expand food justice. AU partnered with DC Central Kitchen and six other nonprofits to distribute vouchers, cash cards, and groceries—a pioneering form of public humanities work that embraces what director Dan Kerr calls the “principles of mutual aid.”

IMPERATIVE: HOW AU WORKS

- **Pivoting to Meet Community Needs:** The pandemic has transformed how—and where—we work and AU is on the leading edge of that change.
 - » Balancing the needs of staff with the operational requirements of the university, we launched a new hybrid work modality.
 - » AU partnered with BHS to provide mental health support to AU faculty and staff and their families through the Faculty and Staff Assistance Program.
- **Inspiring Our Community:** At AU, we step up, we show up, and we say “Challenge accepted.” In April 2021, we unveiled a bold new narrative that reflects our community’s engagement, passion, and commitment to tackling the world’s most complex challenges, from combating violent extremism to navigating a post-COVID world. Challenge Accepted captures the essence of an institution where purpose and community are at the heart of everything we do.

CHALLENGE
ACCEPTED

**CHANGE
CAN'T
WAIT**
THE CAMPAIGN FOR
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

- **Building for Today and Tomorrow:** In May 2021, AU launched its first comprehensive fundraising campaign in 18 years, Change Can’t Wait: The Campaign for American University. Through the lens of three pillars—elevate, inspire, and lead—the campaign will create transformative educational opportunities for students, advance research with impact, and build stronger communities throughout DC, across the country, and around the globe.