

**AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY**
 WASHINGTON, DC

CHANGE MAKERS FOR A CHANGING WORLD

2019-2023

**STRATEGIC PLAN
PROGRESS REPORT**

YEAR 1



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC

AU Community,

You may have heard it said around campus that “AU is on the move.” At the one-year mark of the launch of AU’s Strategic Plan, *Changemakers for a Changing World*, we’re making progress and moving forward in our five-year plan to achieve impact in our community, in Washington, DC, and in the world. We wanted to provide an update of where we are today and on the work we will continue to do to make our shared vision a success.

In the first year of our journey, we’re thankful for the work led by the strategic imperative directors and the implementation teams, made up of more than 160 members of our AU community from across campus.

Organized around three driving themes—scholarship, learning, and community—the report outlines each strategic imperative, documents the impacts we have already achieved, and highlights our plans for the coming years. As you read through, we hope you’ll reflect on how to deepen your engagement with the plan and how to advance collaboration with members of our community to reach our goals.

We welcome your feedback. If you have input or would like to get more involved and learn more about our teams driving our efforts, please visit american.edu/strategicplan.

We’re excited to see what the next year brings as we continue our efforts to implement the plan, and we look forward to continuing this journey with all of you.

Sincerely,

Fanta Aw

Vice President, Campus Life and Inclusive Excellence

Seth Grossman

Chief of Staff and Counselor to the President

Dan Myers

Provost



THE PATH TO AU2023

Higher education is changing, and our vision—rooted in scholarship and learning, research, and teaching—is that American University will be among the leaders of that change. American University’s five-year plan boldly embraces opportunities for greater impact and addresses the issues facing our community and higher education broadly while building on our legacy of leadership, scholarship, and service.

Through AU’s Strategic Plan, *Changemakers for a Changing World*, we are preparing graduates whose education, experience, and commitment empower them to lead change and navigate the future of work; enhancing opportunities for research and scholarship, deepening understanding, and elevating the discovery of knowledge to benefit our community and impact society; cultivating partnerships that create additional opportunities for dynamic learning and cutting-edge research; leading in the development of transformative approaches to inclusivity; engaging and partnering with communities in DC and throughout the region; and changing the culture and improving how AU works to better support our goals.

In the first year of our changemakers journey, the implementation work led by the strategic imperative directors and more than 160 faculty and staff is transforming our vision into action. This progress report outlines each imperative, documents our impact, and highlights recent successes as we continue to move forward.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PLAN, THE IMPLEMENTATION TEAM MEMBERS OR HOW TO GET INVOLVED AND SUBMIT FEEDBACK, PLEASE VISIT [AMERICAN.EDU/STRATEGICPLAN](https://american.edu/strategicplan).

MEASURING SUCCESS AND OUTCOMES

SCHOLARSHIP

IMPERATIVE: AREAS OF STRATEGIC FOCUS

By making particular investments in four areas of strategic focus—health, data science and analytics, security, and social equity—AU will achieve distinction in an increasingly competitive higher education landscape, attracting and retaining even stronger faculty and students and generating increased support for research.

- **Growing Our Research Strategically:** In 2020, AU will inaugurate two to three university research centers aligned with our areas of strategic focus that will have significant potential for future growth.
- **Supporting Research Growth:** The Office of Research will pilot an administrative team charged with supporting the new centers, incubating new research initiatives, and improving the administrative support for existing centers.

RESEARCH

AU is enhancing its scholarship and reputation as it diversifies its revenue sources by attracting significantly more external funding for research, scholarship, and creative activity, including projects with higher rates of indirect cost recovery. By building a faculty-centered research culture, we are reducing barriers to getting and managing external grants, which increases the impact of our scholarship. The number of applications and awards faculty receive will increase, as will other indicators of research, creative, and professional accomplishments—all positively impacting AU’s reputation. In addition, we will also increase faculty-student collaboration in research projects.

- **Increasing Our Scholarship:** In FY2019, AU received \$33.4 million in externally funded grants and contracts, up from \$30 million in FY18. By the end of the first quarter of FY2020, AU received nearly \$3.5 million in sponsored awards from foundations and government agencies.

- **Streamlining Research Development and Support:** AU is in the process of conducting a university-wide environmental scan of the current state of research development and administration support that will serve as a roadmap for faculty members who seek and manage sponsored research programs. This effort includes recommendations for streamlining current processes for staffing, systems, technical infrastructure, research mentoring, rank and tenure procedures, and faculty incentives for externally funded projects.

LEARNING

IMPERATIVE: THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

AU is implementing a comprehensive student thriving strategy that examines the student experience from admission to graduation. AU is working to increase undergraduate and graduate retention, improve four-year graduation rates, reduce transfer rates, and improve indicators of student inclusion, belonging, and satisfaction. AU is using multiple strategies to continue to attract a robust population of international students who bring a global perspective to our campus.

- **Improving Student Retention:** AU's comprehensive student thriving strategy examines the student experience and aligns admission, wellness, and retention strategies to improve student retention and timely graduation.
- **Creating Opportunities for DC Students:** AU has established the American University District Scholars, dedicating \$3 million to award 10 full scholarships annually to high-achieving, low-income DC residents attending Washington, DC public and charter high schools. Two of these scholarships will be awarded to students interested in teaching in the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), with the remaining eight scholarships awarded to students intending to major in any discipline.
- **Developing Robust Recruitment Strategies:** AU is developing tailored recruitment strategies to attract a diverse population of students.

IMPERATIVE: LEARNING FOR UNDERGRADUATE, GRADUATE, AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

AU is creating a rigorous learning and scholarly environment that attracts and retains faculty and students. Students will demonstrate greater satisfaction with teaching, learning, and mentoring.

- **Expanding Faculty Professional Development:** AU continues to expand our faculty professional development work around inclusive learning, establishing inclusive pedagogy faculty fellows and scholarship of teaching and learning programs, hosting a faculty learning community on anti-racist pedagogies, and developing a research program on inclusive pedagogy in higher education for faculty and postdocs.
- **Addressing Interdisciplinary Barriers:** We are working to understand and address existing barriers to interdisciplinary teaching and research and encouraging flexible, innovative approaches to transdisciplinary teaching and scholarship. This ongoing work includes collaborating with the Office of the University Registrar to streamline processes for cross-listing courses in the university catalog and engaging with AU Core faculty leaders to improve the approval process for cross-disciplinary courses. We are also developing research centers and building out a faculty-centered research culture to reduce barriers.
- **Supporting the Scholar-Teacher Ideal:** To best support our commitment to the scholar-teacher ideal, we are identifying multiple paths of excellence that adapt the requirements of teaching and research. We are committed to developing more expansive and reliable methods for evaluating teaching excellence and creating opportunities to integrate scholarship and teaching by enabling faculty to teach specialty courses in their areas of interest.
- **Encouraging Civil Discourse:** AU has a unique role to play in civil discourse, due to our location in the center of the nation's capital, and as a university community, where learning, listening, and the exchange of ideas should lead to constructive and respectful dialogue. Projects like the School of Public Affairs's (SPA) Project on Civil Discourse, designed by SPA's Lara Schwartz, are helping students learn to communicate, listen, learn, and engage in our community based on our values and goals. In the same spirit, SPA recently launched the Madison Prize for Constitution Excellence, which recognizes lawmakers who work across the aisle to resolve difficult issues. In 2019, SPA was a partner on *Looking for America*, a six-city project that brings together artists and a group of cross-political citizens to flex their discourse muscle in conversations about challenging issues.

IMPERATIVE: LIFELONG LEARNING

AU is developing face-to-face and digital strategies for degree and nondegree lifelong learning experiences and programs for adult learners that reflect the future of work and learning, reaching students at multiple phases of their professional development, and enhancing the university's reputation and revenue.

- **Supporting Student Learning Needs:** Through the lifelong learning effort, we will engage with organizations, businesses, government, and non-profits to support students' learning needs. We will launch the following courses in 2020:
 - Cybersecurity bootcamp academy with 25 students - February
 - Healthcare project management course (non-degree) with Dignity Health Global Education (DHGE) - May
 - Master's in professional studies (MPS) in healthcare administration with DHGE - August
- **Expanding Our Online Capacity:** This semester, AU will welcome its first vice provost and chief online officer to help synthesize the university's broad set of offerings for graduate studies and our aspirations to expand our capacity for non-degree adult learners and undergraduate students. We are improving access, flexibility, and convenience for students at all levels and experiences through digital learning.

COMMUNITY

IMPERATIVE: INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

AU's Plan for Inclusive Excellence is guiding efforts across campus and our community that build a culture where everyone has a sense of belonging, collectively contributes to a positive climate, and uses inclusive practices to advance educational outcomes for all. Since the plan's inception, we have begun building the initial structures, systems, and culture to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion, though this work is only the beginning of the journey.

- **Improving Faculty Hiring:** AU's focus on improving faculty hiring and development continues to build, even as much work remains to be done. One area of growth includes increased racial diversity among tenure-line faculty hires. In fall 2019, 56 percent of new tenure-line hires and 31 percent of new term faculty identify as faculty of color. In fall 2019, the Center for Teaching, Research and Learning (CTRL) increased its capacity to support faculty learning about inclusive teaching by adding an associate director and two new faculty fellows focused on inclusive pedagogy.
- **Emphasizing College Affordability:** The budget for fiscal years 2020 through 2021 emphasizes college affordability. The overall increase for tuition, room, and board is 2.3 percent in FY20 and 2.4 percent in FY21—the lowest increase on AU's records. We will continue our efforts to support socioeconomic diversity with an emphasis on need-based aid.
- **Encouraging Inclusive Collaboration:** In March 2018, the President's Council on Diversity and Inclusion (PCDI) launched the Inclusive Excellence Mini-Grant program that encourages collaboration among staff, students, faculty, and alumni across divisions, departments, and student organizations to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion. Nearly \$40,000 has been awarded across 33 university collaborations to date. The number of applicants to this promising program increased 43 percent in the current academic year. Examples of the mini-grant programs include the Disability, Access, and Teaching Symposium; AU Si Se Puede! academic research conference by AU Latinx/a/o students, faculty, and staff; and the Promoting Inclusivity Through Data Governance Management initiative.
- **Expanding Student Training:** The Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) has expanded training and support for students, offering six educational trainings and six intergroup dialogue programs in fall 2019 focused on issues of diversity and inclusion and drawing more than 700 student participants. CDI also expanded programming for first-generation AU students, helping them establish and grow their support systems by linking them with first-generation faculty and staff.

- **Building a Sense of Belonging:** The faculty-staff affinity group program continues to grow with five community-led groups working to build a sense of belonging among staff and faculty. These include two new groups that focus on international faculty and staff and faculty and staff of color. In addition, many of the affinity groups mentor students and are increasingly partnering with alumni.

IMPERATIVE: WORKING WITH WASHINGTON

AU is making its relationship with our local community and communities throughout the DC region a top priority as it seeks to become an anchor institution in Washington. AU is partnering with the District and local governments, non-profit organizations, businesses, policymakers, and others to support local schools and improve engagement with DC students; enrich arts and culture; and promote economic development.

- **Helping Undergraduate Students Compete Today:** As a member of the Greater Washington Partnership, AU launched a digital technology generalist credential program at the Kogod School of Business and the School of Public Affairs (SPA) that will help undergraduate students develop the skills they need to compete in today's economy. This partnership includes other local DC universities who also offer their own credential program to students.
- **Engaging Students in Addressing Community Challenges:** Through the Community Based Research Scholars Program, nearly 40 AU students provided technical assistance to local non-profits that address community challenges, including homelessness, literacy, and access to health and wellness services.
- **Preparing High School Seniors for Post-Secondary Education and a Teaching Career:** American University's School of Education launched a dual enrollment program—the first phase of the AU Teacher Pipeline Project—in partnership with DCPS and DC Charter Schools. The Dual Enrollment Program exposes DC high-schoolers to the education field while they earn early college credits alongside future educators undergoing rigorous teacher preparation training. This academic year, five seniors from DC Public Schools and Friendship Charter Schools enrolled in the Dual Enrollment Program. The second phase of the Teacher Pipeline Project will allow two students through AU District Scholars to earn a bachelor's degree in teaching and/or education. AU admitted two dual enrollees into the 2019–2020 freshman class.
- **Facilitating Community-Based Research/Scholarship and Exhibitions:** AU launched the community advisory board for the Humanities Truck, a platform that facilitates collaborative community-based research, scholarship, and exhibitions by documenting stories of diverse, underserved communities throughout the DC region.
- **Collaborating with the Mayor's Lab @ DC:** AU's data-driven collaboration with The Lab @ DC, a scientific team within the mayor's administration, has relaunched and is driving SPA undergraduate classroom conversations, projects, and events focused on local and federal policy issues. The program funds graduate students to work in The Lab and also supports The Lab with faculty. In addition, SPA faculty formed a Research Council to advise The Lab and the city on evidence-based policy decisions.
- **Curating the Corcoran Legacy:** AU continues to be a place where local arts and culture thrive. The American University Museum received 9,000 works of art valued at \$29 million from the Corcoran Art Collection in 2018, showcasing masterpieces from the 16th-century Italian painter Titian, 19th-century American painter Thomas Prichard Rossiter, American artists Ansel Adams and Helen Frankenthaler, and more. The first exhibition curated by graduate students and dubbed by the *Washington Post* as “deeply personal and as a coming-out party for the dormant collection,” highlights Rossiter's work in “*Moves Like Walter: New Curators Open the Corcoran Legacy Collection*.”
- **Convening the Best and Brightest:** The second class of Sine Institute Fellows began their engagement with the campus this spring. They include Alphonso Jackson, former secretary of housing and urban development for President George W. Bush; Cody Keenan, chief speechwriter for President Barack Obama; Susan Molinari, strategist and former vice president of Google and former member of Congress; John Tass-Parker, head of politics and government at Instagram; Katherine Miller, vice president of impact at the James Beard Foundation; and Janet Rodriguez, White House correspondent for Univision. Distinguished lecturers are Dina Powell, management committee for Goldman Sachs and former US deputy national security advisor for strategy and Joseph Hockey, ambassador of Australia to the United States.

HOW AU WORKS

AU is changing the culture of how we work. We are adopting a nimble and responsive approach that supports teaching, learning, and research by improving our employee hiring, onboarding, and advancement; modernizing our technology; and enhancing how we use our space. We will tell the story of AU's enduring and emerging strengths through a new branding strategy.

- **Reinventing the Employee Experience:** The Office of Human Resources launched Reinventing Hiring, an initiative designed to improve the hiring and onboarding experience for prospective employees and hiring managers, diversify our applicant pool, utilize new tools to improve efficiency, and develop a job architecture that will create the foundation for providing transparent career paths for staff, implement effective workforce planning, and support equity across the university. This initiative has shifted pre-boarding online for all staff, including adjunct hiring, saving valuable personnel and processing time and modernizing the early experiences for new AU employees.
- **Modernizing Our Technology:** We are building data governance capability to ensure that we have universally defined data that we trust. The university will evolve the Faculty Activity Reporting System (FARS) by finding a new vendor and implementing a new system that is easier for faculty to use for reporting and provides additional functionality by linking to other actions such as hiring, reappointment, and promotion.
- **Examining How We Use Space:** After a review of the space usage policy, the university is evaluating space and classroom quality and analyzing alternative teaching and scheduling plans to maximize space, improve technology for room reservations, and set priorities for space use.
- **Empowering the AU Community:** We are developing training programs to help the AU community better understand the budget process and examine return on investment on current and new program offerings.