

# AU Planning 101 Session “From Strategic Planning to Campus Planning”

## THEMES & TAKEAWAYS From Table Discussions

On April 25th, 2019, American University hosted a Planning 101 Session at which Seth Grossman, AU Chief of Staff, shared an overview of the AU 5-year strategic plan and its connection to campus planning. This convening was attended by AU faculty and staff, AU alumni, and neighbors from adjacent communities. At this session, participants were given an opportunity to share their thoughts and opinions about the following question:

*“If we realize the aspirations of our Strategic Plan, what does success look like? What does AU look like in 5 years?”*

Below are the collective themes and takeaways from table discussions. The intention of the table discussions was to brainstorm and share perspectives. The sentiments expressed below are not agreements or conclusions of the session, but reflect varying viewpoints presented during discussion.

**Themes:**

<i>Student Experience</i>	<i>Sports &amp; Recreation</i>
<i>University Growth</i>	<i>Learning</i>
<i>Community Engagement</i>	

**Student Experience**

Proposed Idea of Success: Providing a student experience that engenders immediate pride at graduation of being an AU student

*“In 5 years, we want to ask recently graduated students and families what AU was like and hear overwhelmingly positive memories.”*

Proposed Idea of Success: Having AU be a campus where student consider living for all four years

*“We are more than the Quad.”*

One participant recognized the importance of relationships with students in campus policing and offered the possible opportunity for mentorship

Suggestion: Gainful employment as one of the measures of success for the university

- Another participant stated that the value of liberal arts is underappreciated in relation to employability

<p><b>University Growth</b></p>	<p><u>Proposed Idea of Success:</u> As the university grows and the strategic plan is implemented, neighbors feel limited adverse impact and continue to see AU as the same or better</p> <p><i>“We need to preserve what makes the community valuable.”</i></p> <p>An AU faculty member rose a concern about workspace:</p> <p><i>“We need to optimize the existing buildings for the way we actually work in the 21st century.”</i></p> <p>Several participants raised concerns about buildable space and emphasized a need for smart growth and effective real estate management, especially since neighbors may not know what is planned on and off campus</p> <p>One neighbor notes: <i>“My perspective as a neighbor is the concern that you don’t seek to grow forever in student number and overwhelm the community. There’s no focus on the impact of the community. We feel the impact all the time.”</i></p> <p><u>Question raised:</u> <i>How can we balance this growth with conservation and with what is best for our neighborhoods?</i></p>
<p><b>Sports &amp; Recreation</b></p>	<p><u>Proposed Idea of Success:</u> A vibrant AU community with infrastructure that supports both students’ academic growth and their growth outside the classroom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Many people agreed with the idea of athletic and recreational opportunities conjoining with academic learning</li> </ul> <p><u>Question raised:</u> <i>How do we build a recreational department that supports student health?</i></p> <p>Several participants expressed a desire for more robust sports and education experiences that are open to the neighborhood (e.g. neighbors can cheer on AU sports teams)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Idea:</u> Having a single university schedule of events</li> </ul>

<p><b>Community Engagement</b></p>	<p><u>Proposed Idea of Success:</u> For the neighborhood to love this university even more five years from now</p> <p>A couple neighbors shared a concern that AU’s presence in the neighborhood is primarily viewed as a negative one</p> <p><i>“It is important for neighbors to appreciate living near AU so that they are more understanding when issues and difficulties arise.”</i></p> <p>One AU staff member expressed a hope that, in 5 years, these types of conversations happening at these table will continue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition of need for a forum to engage in dialogue that is not combative, dig into true impacts, adapt to changes, and build relationships</li> </ul>
<p><b>Learning</b></p>	<p><u>Proposed Idea of Success:</u> Diversify learning experience and have more online students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One neighbor recommended that focusing on digital learning can help limit the impact on surrounding neighborhoods of a large on-campus student body</li> <li>• An AU faculty member suggested a connection between university growth and growth in online and off-campus students</li> </ul> <p>Several people agreed with enriching others through AU by bringing more people into the learning experience and expanding AU’s reach beyond traditional students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One person recommended taking advantage of being in DC and digging into building a better AU campus community</li> </ul> <p>Another suggestion was enhancing the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition of a potential opportunity for collaboration around housing students in OLLI households</li> </ul> <p><i>“Many of the best programs are stemming from AU faculty; we are looking to enhance and grow such programs.”</i></p>