



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC

CHANGE IN THE MAKING

YEAR 4
CHANGEMAKERS
FOR A CHANGING WORLD

THE PATH TO AU2025

Change in the Making: Year 4 of Changemakers for a Changing World showcases the important work led by changemakers across the American University community that advances our strategic priorities and moves us forward. Over the past four years, inspiring students, world-class faculty, dedicated staff, and expert alumni—changemakers all—answered the call to action outlined in our strategic plan, [Changemakers for a Changing World](#). This report highlights how we have worked to advance knowledge, foster intellectual curiosity, support student thriving, enhance our people-focused initiatives, and build community across DC and around the world in 2022.

The *Changemakers* strategy guides our work within the three strategic themes of scholarship, learning, and community and their strategic imperatives (SI). In year four, we expanded research opportunities, shaped creative approaches to support student thriving, augmented our unique vision for experiential learning, enhanced lifelong learning initiatives, fostered a greater sense of inclusion among our campus community, strengthened our partnerships across DC and the region, and bolstered how AU works in support of students, faculty, and staff.

AU student, faculty, and staff changemakers address pressing challenges and lead impactful change every day. This report highlights some of the many ways our campus community is making change. We are proud to share a snapshot of how far we have come—and the stories that exemplify our progress—and look forward to all our community will accomplish as changemakers in our rapidly changing world.

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

STRATEGIC PLAN YEAR 4 IMPACT

SCHOLARSHIP

SI 1: AREAS OF STRATEGIC FOCUS

“Researchers at AU address society’s most pressing challenges through innovative scholarship and targeted collaborations and with the support of a growing array of sponsors and partners. Investing in an increasingly efficient and comprehensive research enterprise will enable AU faculty and student researchers to expand their impact on our global community.”

—**Diana Burley, vice provost for research and innovation and director of SI 1, 2**

Advanced Research Focus

- Distinguished AU’s scholarship in its **areas of strategic focus**—health, data science and analytics, security, social equity, and sustainability—through innovative, cross-disciplinary research that tackles some of the most significant issues facing society today and challenges that also impact our local community.
- Developed new initiatives to harness the collective strength of our existing research enterprise, academic programs, investigators, and partners, and target our efforts at specific societal challenges, including:



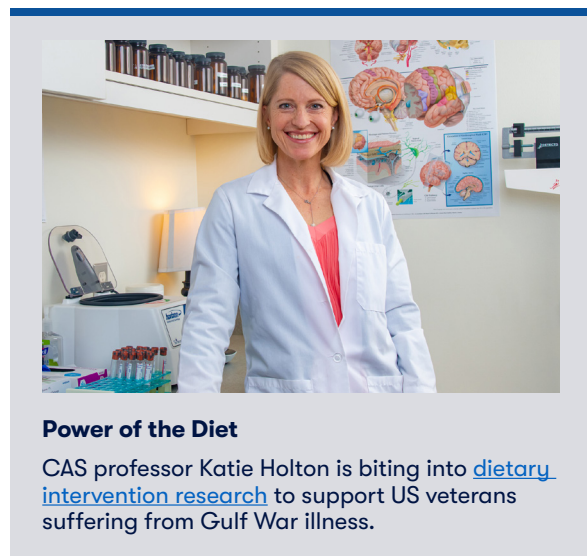
The newly-launched [Center for Environment, Community, and Equity](#) is a network of cross-disciplinary faculty working toward a more just and sustainable world.

- » **Improving the health of vulnerable communities** with a [\\$6.4 million grant](#) from the Department of Defense for a clinical trial to confirm the efficacy of a dietary intervention to treat up to 250,000 US veterans suffering from Gulf War illness.
- » Incubating innovative ideas, generating impactful and equitable actions, and preparing the next generation of thought leaders in the field of sustainability by launching the [Center for Environment, Community, and Equity](#), a network of faculty who work toward **a more just and sustainable world**.
- » **Supporting research efforts and collaboration** with experts from an array of disciplines in the field of neuroscience by establishing the [Center for Neuroscience and Behavior](#). The center's new podcast, [Lobes and Robes](#), brings together scientists and policymakers to discuss how to tackle our most pressing challenges.

SI 2: RESEARCH

Diversified Sponsored Research

- Secured 265 grants totaling more than \$58.9 million in direct and indirect funding—a **48 percent increase from year three**.
- Exceeded sponsored research award target of \$5.5 million for indirect costs one year early.
- Received 14 DC government grants totaling \$1.95 million to support research that impacts our local community, including investigating local participation in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children and efforts to advance health equity and nutritional literacy among youth and seniors.



Power of the Diet

CAS professor Katie Holton is biting into [dietary intervention research](#) to support US veterans suffering from Gulf War illness.

Expanded Operational Infrastructure

- Created the **Office of Sponsored Awards and Research Administration** to ensure greater collaboration between the Office of Sponsored Programs and the Office of Grants and Contracts Administration, provide seamless support through the entire grants process, and increase efficiency.
- Established the **Research Leadership Council**, a consultative group of senior research representatives from each academic unit, to spur continuous improvement in the policies, programs, and procedures of the research infrastructure and identify strategic opportunities for collective advancement.

Grew Research Collaborations

- Introduced two [Signature Research Initiatives \(SRI\)](#)—**Inclusive Technology Policy and Changing Aid: Understanding and Transforming Aid in Violent, Insecure, and Crisis Affected Environments**—to target investment in areas of strategic focus where the university can make an extraordinary impact. SRIs will help distinguish the AU research brand, increase sponsored research opportunities, grow research-related philanthropy, and provide additional opportunities for students to participate in research endeavors alongside our faculty.

- Brought together six scholars from four schools for the Inclusive Technology Policy SRI that aims to **sustainably increase diversity in digital and cyber policies** through research, gatherings of key stakeholders, and academic professional development opportunities. This group honored Pamela Wright, chief of innovation at the National Archives and Records Administration, with its [2022 Outstanding Inclusive Technology Policy Changemaker Award](#). The inaugural award winner, Doreen Bogdan-Martin, SIS/MA '91, the first female [secretary-general of the International Telecommunication Union](#), delivered the event's keynote address.
- Convened four scholars from three schools through the Changing Aid SRI to produce innovative research on international aid, refugee resettlement, and irregular migration and **help push the aid industry** to become more evidence-driven, equitable, sustainable, and accountable. They presented Women's Migrations Between the Horn of Africa and Middle East: Empirical, Legal, and Policy Challenges as part of AU's Changing Aid event series.

LEARNING

SI 3: STUDENT EXPERIENCE

“Day in and day out, we are committed to ensuring that students thrive while at AU and beyond. We strive to recruit future Eagles who are committed to our values. And by focusing on this, along with retention efforts, we are expanding opportunities for student well-being and will enhance the student experience for years to come.”

—**Andrea Felder, vice provost for undergraduate enrollment and director of SI 3**

Diversified Student Recruitment

- **Increased the number of [first-generation students](#)** to 9.6 percent of the incoming class and finalized partnership agreements with College Track and IDEA Public Schools, which are committed to serving low-income, first-generation, and students of color, as well as Service to School, which focuses on student veterans.
- **Removed barriers in the application and enrollment processes**, including offering an enrollment and early housing deposit waiver to Pell-eligible students.

Improved Student Retention

- **Launched a robust family engagement strategy**, including 15 webinars for nearly 3,000 family members on topics ranging from COVID-19 protocols to fire alarms.
- **Designed initiatives to help students engage in new ways** like the new AU Cornerstone Program, which provides first-year students an option to intern or study abroad. AU has seen very high rates of retention among students who participated in the inaugural year of the program.



Empty Nest

What have parents missed about their AU Eagles since they [flew the nest](#)? And what have students come to love about their campus community? We asked this—and more—during Family Weekend.

- **Refined new student registration protocols and communications** to better inform students and families throughout the process, resulting in a nearly 100 percent reduction in inquiries and negative feedback.
- **Updated operations to support student thriving**, including adding an assistant vice president for student success and retention, streamlining continuing student registration, pursuing removal of GPA requirements for internal transfer between schools, and implementing student experience policy changes.
- **Expanded opportunities for students who may have interrupted their studies** by piloting the Finish Line Project, which encourages former students to complete their degrees.
- **Established the disabled student work stream** to ensure the university is focused on disabled students' thriving.

Focused on Well-Being

- **Embraced a more integrated approach to student wellness** by creating the Center for Well-Being Programs and Psychological Services, a one-stop-shop for expanded psychological services and therapy, wellness programming, drug and alcohol abuse prevention and sexual violence prevention programs, and more to help students thrive at AU.
- Initiated planning and development of the **AU Student Thriving Complex (STC)**, which aims to create new and renovated spaces to enhance resources for all students' well-being. STC will include the Mary Graydon Center; the [Meltzer Center for Athletic Performance](#), made possible by a \$15 million gift from AU trustee Alan Meltzer, CAS/BA '21, and his wife, Amy; and the Well-Being Commons.



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

“Nothing will accelerate AU’s momentum more than promoting—and further building upon—the outstanding experiential learning opportunities available to our students. Learning by doing is truly at the heart of AU’s mission and has been from the start.”

—Peter Starr, provost and chief academic officer, member of the Strategic Implementation Steering Committee, and executive sponsor of SI 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Fostered Experiential Learning

- **Convened a working group** to advance AU’s vision, goals, and strategy around experiential learning for students by creating an inventory of 200-plus experiences and developing a website to share a dynamic portfolio of stories and resources.
- **Inaugurated a student-led experiential learning conference**, which drew 80 members of the AU community who shared details of their work at the intersection of experience and education and connected with others undertaking similar projects.

Cultivated Faculty-Student Collaborations

- Sponsored—through the second year of the **dean of faculty's grant program**—collaborative research projects involving undergraduate students and faculty, including one focused on policies that will help end the HIV epidemic for Latino immigrants across the Mid-Atlantic. Identified and simplified existing opportunities and created and promoted new ones.
- Developed and implemented the infrastructure to enter and track information about faculty-student research collaborations. The new reporting system, Elements, offers a view of publication activity across scholarly and public platforms.
- Piloted a program to provide five grants to faculty-student teams to test the feasibility and desire for such partnerships. Collaborative research projects delved into a diverse range of topics from maternal mortality in the Dominican Republic to potentializing the skills of Afghan refugees to a documentary on nonprofit Martha's Table through AU's Community Voice Lab.



This Just In...

Alisyn Camerota, SOC/BA '88, began her broadcasting career at AU. A dedicated alumna, Camerota has made a generous Change Can't Wait [campaign gift](#) to support the School of Communication's experiential learning opportunities, from internships to unique programs like Classroom in the Wild.

SI 5: LIFELONG LEARNING

“We are committed to serving our community of learners, whether on campus or beyond, by providing them with the knowledge, training, and skills that will empower them to make an impact in the world.”

—Wendy Boland, dean of graduate and professional studies and director of SI 5

Built Lifelong Learning Infrastructure

- **Expanded our portfolio of lifelong learning offerings** to include a variety of certifications, credentials, and trainings in cybersecurity, digital marketing, software development, and executive coaching.
- **Invested in the operational structures** necessary to deliver programs and developed a marketing strategy to tout these focus areas—leadership, policy, analytics, sustainability, business, and education.

Augmented Online Programs

- **Achieved digital growth targets with a \$10.6 million net revenue increase** across both online degree programs and non-degree lifelong learning offerings. Planned for separate strategic goals for online degree programs and the non-degree lifelong learning portfolio, including credentials and skills.
- **Instituted new marketplace system for executive education**, Canvas Catalog, which allows students to browse non-degree offerings, register, and pay. It separates non-degree and traditional offerings, allows flexibility with pricing, and serves as a new revenue stream—for example, the [School of Education's Go Alliance partnership](#).

- **Broadened our portfolio of offerings**, formalizing the operational processes for payments and honing the marketing strategy to distinguish AU in the online space.
- **Added two programs with ThriveDX**—programming and digital marketing—as well as additional Washington College of Law offerings, including an academy on human rights and an international commercial arbitration program.
- Established digital outreach strategies for **two new in-house graduate online learning programs in sustainability management and data science**, set to launch in fall 2023.

COMMUNITY

SI 6: INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

“Inclusive excellence must be a foundational commitment in everything we do. We are still on our journey and remain focused on actions that increase student access, enhance faculty and staff learning, and create a sense of belonging for all.”

—**Amanda Taylor, assistant vice president of diversity, equity, and inclusion and director of SI 6**

Promoted an Inclusive Culture

- Awarded the **National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education’s 2022 Inclusive Excellence Award** for efforts to improve students’ sense of belonging and address structural inequities. The recognition reminds us that, while we still have much work ahead of us, AU is headed in the right direction.
- Organized a workshop for a cross section of the campus community about **how to identify and disrupt hate in the classroom**, led by the Center for Teaching, Research and Learning and Professor Cynthia Miller-Idriss, director of the Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab.
- Held a Community Circle event about **building an inclusive campus community in which diverse voices and perspectives are heard and respected**. More than 75 students, faculty, and staff attended the event hosted by Inclusive Excellence and the Office of Campus Life.
- Received several grants, including those from the **Gates Foundation and the National Science Foundation**, to support faculty diversity and research in racial equity, including a **\$1 million ADVANCE** grant to help AU retain and nurture women and members of underrepresented communities as part of its STEM faculty.



Diversifying Policy Leadership

The School of Public Affairs’ new [Summer Diversity Academy](#) provides training, mentorship, and motivation to scholars from underrepresented backgrounds to help them advance their careers in public administration and policy.

Empowered Inclusive Leaders

- Welcomed six doctoral students and faculty members from underrepresented backgrounds to the School of Public Affairs' inaugural [Summer Diversity Academy](#) to **help advance their careers in public administration and policy.**
- Convened the first [Summit on Fostering Indigenous Spaces at AU](#) with faculty, students, and staff **identifying opportunities for improved support for Native students.**
- Hosted the **first pride flag raising ceremony** sponsored by the LGBTQ+ Faculty and Staff Affinity Group to celebrate Pride Month.
- Gathered 85 educators from across the country to become [antiracist changemakers](#) through the School of Education's doctoral education policy and leadership program.
- Trained nearly 700 faculty and staff members who attended at least one diversity, equity, and inclusion training session. Eighty percent said the training helped in their work or teaching.

SI 7: WORKING WITH WASHINGTON

“AU takes great pride in its role as an anchor institution in DC, and we are excited by the substantial progress we have made over the last four years to deepen and expand the roles our students, faculty, and staff play in strengthening the DC community and the region as a whole.”

—**Seth Grossman, vice president of people and external affairs, counselor to the president, chair of the Strategic Implementation Steering Committee, and executive sponsor of SI 7, 9**

Strengthened Community Partnerships

- **Partnered with 190 organizations** across the Washington area, volunteering more than 20,000 student service hours to the community.
- Facilitated the Center for Community Engagement and Service's annual [Explore DC](#) event, with more than 100 incoming students participating in a day of service with eight community-based organizations.
- Presented a career academy, where members of the AU community, including undergraduate students, provided advice, mentoring, and tutoring as part of a signature partnership with the Latin American Youth Center. The academy included a [Know Your Rights](#) workshop to help these charter school students understand their immigration status and pathways to US citizenship.
- **Donated a portion of Airlie's [Berkshire Farm](#) harvest** to local nonprofit Martha's Table, which distributed it to food-insecure Washingtonians.



DC Impact

More than 100 AU students, including first-year Eagles, fanned out across the city to volunteer with eight community-based partners as part of AU's annual [Explore DC](#) program.



Latin American Youth Center Career Academy students join AU Eagles for a tour of campus as part of a signature partnership between the DC charter school and the university.

Solidified DCPS Relationships

- Continued strengthening our partnership with DC Public Schools (DCPS) and **our commitment to improving the educational experience for all students.**
- Prepared young Washingtonians to return to DCPS after graduation and meet the educational needs of the community that nurtured them through the School of Education's Teacher Pipeline Project. The **dual-enrollment program** invites DCPS and area charter school seniors to earn six transferable academic credits at AU while still in high school.

SI 9: HOW AU WORKS

“Our people are central to our work. And their work is central to building a stronger community and a brighter future, using data and technology to improve our processes and culture.”

—**Vicky Wilkins, dean of the School of Public Affairs, member of the Strategic Implementation Steering Committee, and director of SI 9**

Invested in Our Future

- Launched the inaugural **Supervisor Academy** with more than 100 managers developing their leadership skills to build a culture of belonging and thriving for AU staff.
- Implemented Hybrid 2.0 initiative to **expand the flexibility of workplace options**, furthering our commitment to meeting the needs of the people who make AU work while increasing satisfaction and productivity and advancing AU's key missions.
- **Invested university budget resources** to support an additional \$32 million in financial aid for our students and \$76 million in compensation for our workforce over the next two years.
- **Augmented space governance principles and utilization approaches** that will enable optimization with the Hybrid 2.0 workplace initiative.
- Administered the **Budget and Financial Management Certification Program with 93 percent of the 40 budget and financial managers completing the program recommending it to others—**exceeding the original target.
- **Supported ongoing community engagement with a new and expanded University Budget Committee** that features a regular, year-round meeting schedule, a defined portfolio of annual responsibilities, and balanced representation from across campus.
- **Completed planning and design phases for AU's new cloud-based enterprise resource planning solution, Workday.** Seven undergraduate and graduate students will participate in a new internship program, assisting with Workday's continued implementation.

- Raised \$375 million—or **75 percent of our \$500 million Change Can't Wait campaign goal**. Highlights included AU trustee Alan Meltzer, CAS/BA '21, and his wife, Amy, [making a transformative \\$15 million gift](#) to name the new Meltzer Center for Athletic Performance. Also, unrestricted funds increased by 200 percent since the beginning of the campaign, and AU Funds for Excellence brought in \$982,931 in FY2022—or 229 percent of the amount raised in the campaign's first year.

Enhanced AU's Reputation

- Penned by AU president Sylvia M. Burwell, an opinion piece in *Inside Higher Ed* featured her views about how to lead in the face of the higher education's many challenges.
- **Recognized with the prestigious James Beard Award for audio**, WAMU 88.5's *Dish City* podcast is one of many ways DC's NPR affiliate supports a rich civic life in media and the community and elevates AU's reputation.
- Named among *U.S. News & World Report's* top 10 public affairs programs (School of Public Affairs).
- Returned to *U.S. News & World Report's* top 10 specialty rankings for five law school programs (Washington College of Law). WCL faculty are also among the top 50 for scholarly impact, according to the Sisk Rankings.
- Moved up 23 spots to #47 in *Bloomberg Businessweek's* annual top business schools rankings (Kogod School of Business).
- **Ranked #12 for first-year experiences** by *U.S. News & World Report*, rising 27 spots.



Patrick Fort, left, and Ruth Tam host the James Beard Award–winning podcast [Dish City](#), one of many ways WAMU enriches the DC community and elevates AU's reputation.