

# STRATEGIC PLAN



2018–2022

Students and  
scholarship at  
the heart of  
everything we do

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## HIS HIGHNESS SHEIKH SULTAN BIN MUHAMMAD AL QASIMI, PHD

PRESIDENT OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF SHARJAH

Our goal to transform AUS into a comprehensive research university is ambitious. I am confident that you will succeed.

### Dear AUS Community,

I am proud of what American University of Sharjah has achieved over the past 20 years, and I would like to thank each and every one of you for your contribution to its success.

I now call on you to help implement an ambitious strategy for the university that sets out our objectives for the next five years.

My vision for a liberal arts institution of excellence is now being realized in the graduates who go on to become productive members of society. Today, this core vision remains the same, but my expectations have grown.

I have designated a significant investment over the next five years to transform AUS into a comprehensive research university. The establishment of four new research institutes and the development of the Sharjah Research, Technology and Innovation Park will enable the university to generate resources for the future endowment of AUS.

The goal I have set for all of you is ambitious, but I am confident that you will succeed.

## CONTEXT

*Science and education must regain their rightful place in the advancement of our society and in shaping the lives of our children.*

As one of our region's leading intellectuals and academics, His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council of the United Arab Emirates, Ruler of Sharjah and President of AUS, had a distinct vision for AUS. His dream became tangible reality when AUS opened its doors to its first students in 1997.

Our university's meteoric rise in the short span of time since its inception is due solely to our adherence to the vision of our founder, which is clearly enunciated by the following values that define our institution's identity:

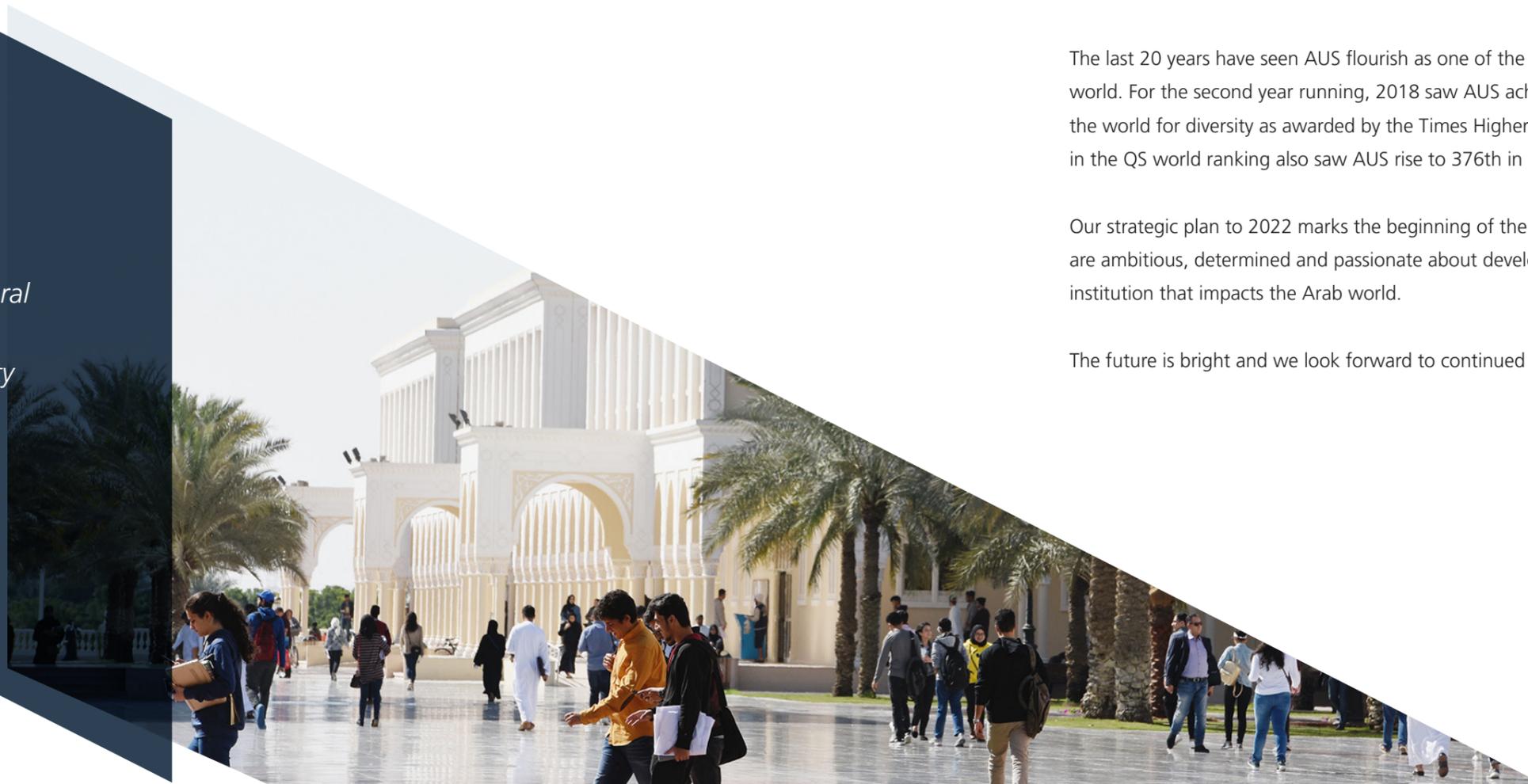
1. *Science and education must regain their rightful place in the advancement of our society and in shaping the lives of our children.*
2. *The purpose of higher education is to reshape the minds of our youth in order for them to address personal and social challenges using the scientific method.*
3. *AUS must be a center of research for addressing the problems faced by society.*
4. *AUS will have the autonomy and freedom needed to flourish as an independent university.*
5. *AUS must be organically linked with the economic, cultural and industrial sectors of society in productive cooperation.*

*AUS must be organically linked with the economic, cultural and industrial sectors of society in productive cooperation.*

The last 20 years have seen AUS flourish as one of the leading institutions in the Arab world. For the second year running, 2018 saw AUS achieve the number one position in the world for diversity as awarded by the Times Higher Education rankings. Our position in the QS world ranking also saw AUS rise to 376th in the world.

Our strategic plan to 2022 marks the beginning of the next 20 years in our journey. We are ambitious, determined and passionate about developing AUS into a comprehensive institution that impacts the Arab world.

The future is bright and we look forward to continued success.





## BJÖRN KJERFVE, PHD

CHANCELLOR OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF SHARJAH

Our core mission is to provide the best student experience and deliver outstanding scholarship.

### Dear Colleagues,

The Strategic Plan 2018-2022 takes effect as AUS moves into its third decade. The plan goes into effect as a companion piece to the Research Agenda 2018-2022, which is the detailed strategic plan for the research focus and action during the initial five years, 2018-2022.

A year ago, AUS celebrated its 20-year anniversary. We paid tribute to faculty and staff for what we had achieved as one of the top teaching-centric universities in the Arab world, with an emphasis on liberal arts education for the benefit of our diverse students. Our ambition is to become a truly world-class university by improving further on the delivery of an excellent undergraduate liberal arts education. Part of our core mission is to provide the best student experience possible, including focus on student mentoring as a means to improve student retention, especially from the freshman to sophomore year.

As AUS moves into its third decade, we have set our vision to become the leading graduate research university in the Arab world within five years. We have embarked on an ambitious research agenda with a dedicated US \$ 500 million research budget. The AUS research effort will seek to address critical global issues in health sciences, materials sciences and engineering, marine sciences, and computer intelligence, and to explore the effects of climate change on the environment. Four new interdisciplinary STEM research institutes will drive this research agenda, focusing on relevant regional research with a global impact, with world-class scholarship as the outcome and successful research collaboration with companies located in the adjacent Sharjah Research, Technology and Innovation Park.

AUS has recently created four interdisciplinary research institutes, as the core of the research agenda. These are the Biosciences and Bioengineering Research Institute; Gulf Environments Research Institute; Materials Science and Engineering Research Institute; and Smart Cities Research Institute. In addition, AUS has created three support centers: the Geospatial Analysis Center, High-Performance Computing Center, and Genomics Research Center. The first PhD degree program in Engineering Systems Management is operating, a second PhD degree program in Finance will enroll students in Fall 2019, and another four PhD programs will also be offered in the near future.

This Strategic Plan outlines our identity and how we will focus the university to achieve our goal of becoming the leading research university with a solid foundation in the liberal arts. The journey that AUS is embarking on in its third decade is exciting, and I am looking forward to share the journey with you.

## VISION

**Renewing  
the promise**

*American University of Sharjah (AUS) seeks to be globally recognized as the leading university in the Arab World, renowned for outstanding teaching, learning, research and scholarship while fostering innovation that positively impacts society.*

## MISSION

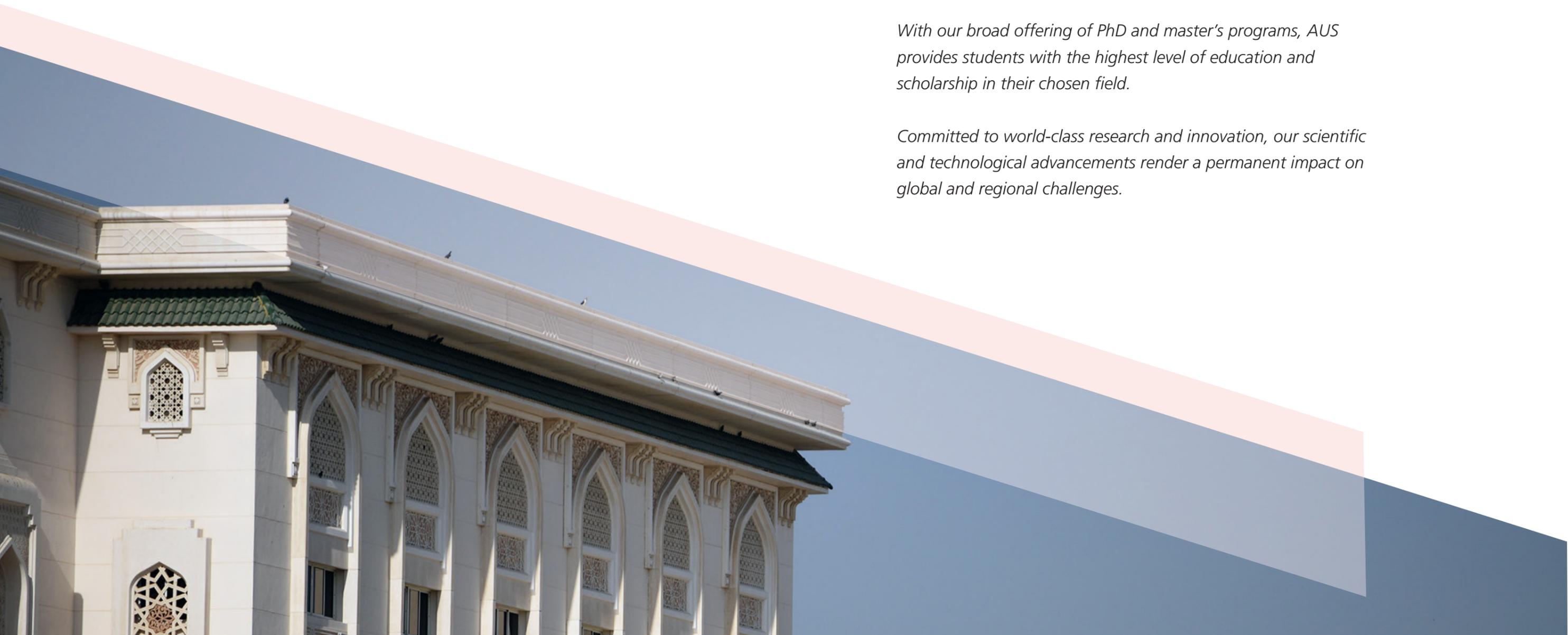
**Trust and  
integrity**

*American University of Sharjah provides distinctive teaching, learning, research and scholarship, educating and mentoring lifelong learners who contribute to society through intellectual inquiry, ethical behavior and civic responsibility.*

*Delivering an American-style liberal arts based undergraduate education in the context of UAE culture and society, AUS ensures our graduates are well-rounded, versatile, critical thinkers with the ability to compete on a global scale.*

*With our broad offering of PhD and master's programs, AUS provides students with the highest level of education and scholarship in their chosen field.*

*Committed to world-class research and innovation, our scientific and technological advancements render a permanent impact on global and regional challenges.*



## INSTITUTIONAL VALUES

*AUS embraces the multicultural community of the United Arab Emirates with approximately 100 nationalities represented in our student body.*

*Incorporating regional traditions of openness, diversity, respect and tolerance, we pursue shared governance and merit-based decisions.*

### **Leadership**

*We advocate the development of the leaders of the future, and believe in demonstrating leadership through action.*

### **Respect**

*We foster a supportive environment that develops respect among all members of our community.*

### **Distinction**

*We strive for excellence and innovation in our teaching, learning and scholarship, and place high value on inspiring and delivering excellence.*

### **Integrity**

*We subscribe to merit-based ethical standards, honesty and transparency in our demonstration of fairness in practices.*

### **Inclusiveness**

*We recognize and celebrate the differences between people and value the opportunities they create.*

**Shared  
responsibility**

# Strategic Themes



THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF SHARJAH

STRATEGIC THEME ONE

# THE AUS EXPERIENCE

*At AUS, a culture of personal development, critical thought and societal responsibility informs our academic programs, support services, communications and interactions.*

*Borne out of our core values, the AUS experience is exacting, rewarding, transformative and lifelong. It is an experience built on standards of excellence, through which individuals gain the confidence, knowledge and desire to change the lives of those around them and make an impact in the wider community.*

*AUS is committed to continually reviewing and enhancing the experiences encountered by all stakeholders.*

Rewarding and  
transformative

# Goals

1. *An outstanding student experience from first awareness to life as alumni, based on an in-depth understanding of the student journey.*
2. *World-leading teaching and learning, with personalized mentorship and a curriculum embedded in global needs.*
3. *The highest level of service with all stakeholders and university partners, aligning AUS with international best practice.*
4. *A balanced, accommodating, and aspirational living and working environment to continue to attract and retain the highest quality faculty and staff, providing excellence for all students and stakeholders.*

Mentorship  
leading to  
success

## STRATEGIES

- i) Ensure that students receive a tailored experience and progression guidance through the establishment of discipline-specific advising and mentorship initiatives.*
- ii) Continue to develop excellence in teaching and learning through the promotion of innovative approaches that support creative and critical thinking.*
- iii) Optimize the efficiency of our processes and systems through the implementation of proven technology to improve the enrollment and admissions process, on-campus operations and services, delivery of academic programs, and communication across the community.*
- iv) Define and develop a range of appraisal processes to ensure an efficient and precise evaluation experience for all employees that optimizes individualized and continuous professional development to continue to attract and retain the highest quality faculty and staff for the benefit of our students.*
- v) Expand on-campus facilities and services to meet the needs of the AUS community, leading to improved health, vitality and well-being.*

## STRATEGIC THEME TWO

# RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

*With our exciting ambition to become the region's leading institution, the need to grow our research agenda producing high-quality research and scholarship with local relevance and a global impact is critical.*

*Through the support of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council of the UAE, Ruler of Sharjah, and President of American University of Sharjah, AUS is well positioned to expand its research infrastructure, faculty resources and expertise, and graduate program offerings with the aim of becoming the region's leader in research, scholarship and creative activity.*

Regional relevance  
with global impact

# Goals

1. *A comprehensive university integrating a research and scholarship agenda with the on-going commitment to an undergraduate education with an innovative liberal arts foundation.*
2. *A research and scholarship culture that empowers faculty to deliver high productivity and quality.*

Transforming  
society

## STRATEGIES

*i) Establish four interdisciplinary research institutes in the areas of Biosciences and Bioengineering, Gulf Environments, Smart Cities, and Material Science and Engineering, offering master's degree and PhD programs in each institute. Support the research institutes through the development of three centers specializing in geospatial analysis, genomics and high-performance computational power.*

*ii) Develop the administrative structure and operational services required to support a comprehensive university.*

*iii) Establish methodology and infrastructure to enable internal and external dissemination and promotion of knowledge and ideas leading to enhanced research visibility. Encourage the exploration of interdisciplinary research opportunities through collaboration with international academia and industry.*

*iv) Use a broad range of metrics to gauge the productivity and impact of research and scholarship output across all disciplines. Assist the realization of our research targets through a framework of faculty development initiatives and financial support.*

## STRATEGIC THEME THREE

# SUSTAINABILITY

*AUS recognizes that environmental, societal and economic sustainability are key pillars that support our operations and endeavors.*

*As we grow into a comprehensive research university, a diversification of revenue streams will add to the strong foundation we have built over the first 20 years of our history and will further enable our institution to support research and education that meet the needs of current and future generations.*

*A commitment to an environmentally responsible campus will ensure that AUS can carry out its mission while protecting the community in which it is embedded. Through its research and educational mission, AUS, in collaboration with partners and alumni, is committed to leading the way on environmental sustainability issues and practices in the region.*

Awareness and  
adaptability

# Goals

1. *The region's leader in environmental sustainability through on-campus practices and research into the wider issues of human impact on the natural and man-made Gulf environment.*
2. *A socially responsible alumni body with a lifelong commitment to addressing societal challenges.*
3. *Fiscal sustainability through the diversification and strengthening of revenue streams.*

Foundation  
for the future

## STRATEGIES

- i) Align the university with international best practice in sustainability to advance efficiencies. Through the critical analysis of operational practices and the use of space and physical resources, implement energy saving and waste reduction initiatives.*
- ii) Enhance awareness of environmental challenges within the AUS community through knowledge-sharing platforms. Collaborate with experts on Middle East sustainability to remain current on the methodologies and techniques required to work towards a zero-carbon footprint.*
- iii) Infuse the curricular content and extra-curricular experiences with the tools to recognize and address societal needs*
- iv) Expand undergraduate student recruitment into new markets to strengthen the tuition revenue stream, providing a sustainable financial position allowing for future growth in the pursuit of the educational mission.*
- v) Grow the endowment through international best practice in fundraising, strengthening our ability to offer merit and need-based scholarships. Through individual, family and corporate donors and sponsors, AUS will establish a culture of philanthropy that will aid in the future success of our student body.*
- vi) Explore and implement a range of additional revenue streams including socially sustainable off-campus commercial ventures and start-up investment, expansion of professional programs and entry into the online education market.*

## STRATEGIC THEME FOUR

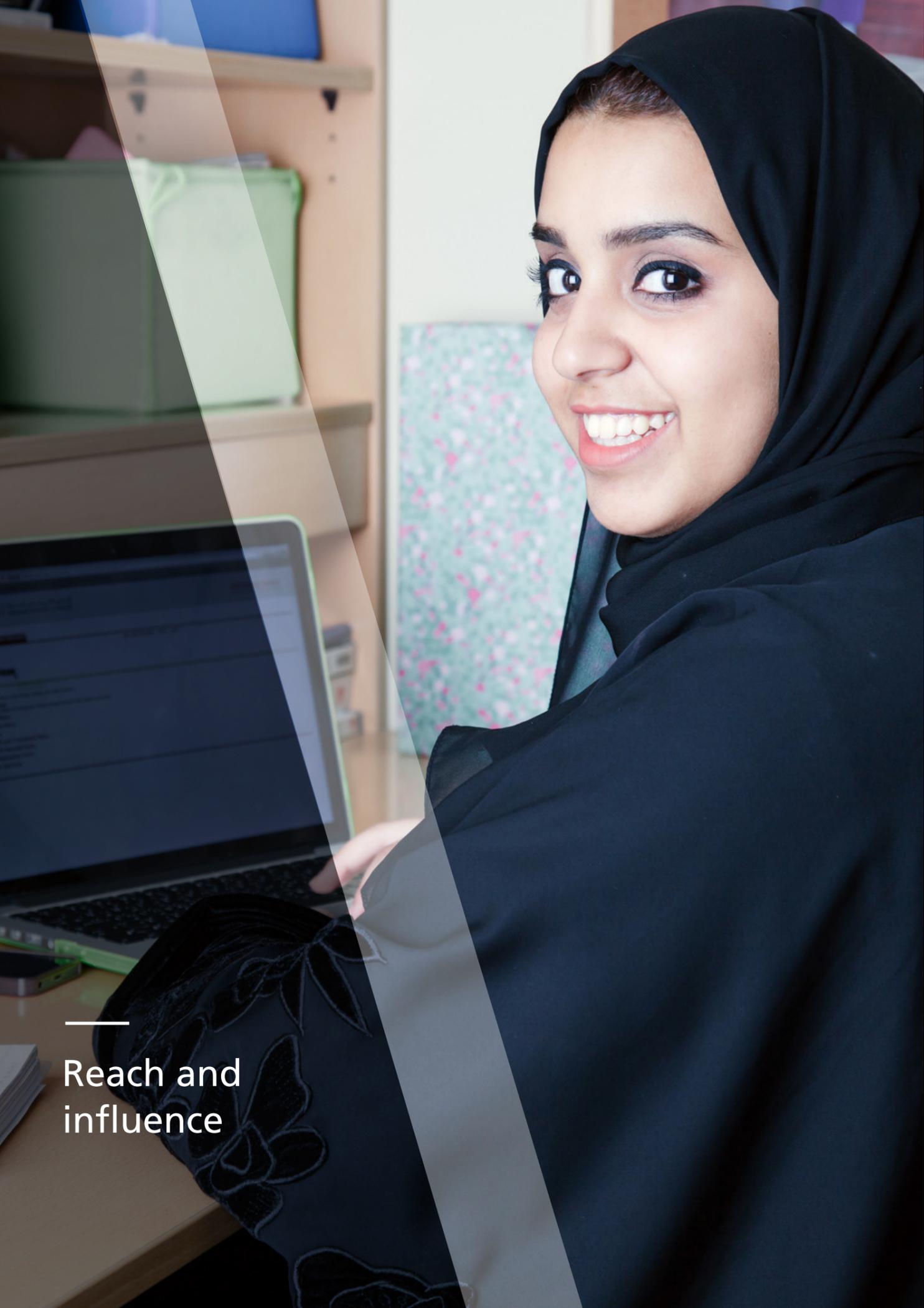
# ENGAGEMENT AND IMPACT

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*AUS is continuously engaged with all stakeholders to maximize the impact of our educational mission.*

*The greatest impact is realized through the work of our graduates as they contribute to the growth and success of their communities. We further impact society through our extensive research and scholarship, which provide innovative approaches to modern day challenges.*

*Communicating the achievements of students, faculty and alumni to a global audience will foster the continued rise of AUS on the international stage, and position the university as an educational leader.*



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Reach and  
influence

# Goals

1. *A comprehensive engagement with external stakeholders coupled with a culture of active internal engagement to maximize opportunities for students, alumni and the wider community.*
2. *An intellectual leader and influencer that ensures continuous institutional relevance, with high regional impact across all levels of the educational mission.*

The journey  
together

## STRATEGIES

- i) Collaborate with industry to ensure relevance and viable career pathways for AUS graduates.*
- ii) Sustain and build relationships with alumni, drawing on their knowledge, experience and resources to contribute to the future development of the AUS community.*
- iii) Contribute to cultural, economic and social prosperity in Sharjah and the Middle East through engaging in institutional and organizational partnerships.*
- iv) Enhance the profile of AUS through faculty-driven and university-supported exposure of academic expertise and scholarship and individual research outputs.*
- v) Augment the AUS reputation through effective strategic communications at a regional and international level.*

## STRATEGIC THEMES

1

**THE AUS EXPERIENCE**

*Enhancement of the AUS experience will be measured against international benchmarks for:*

Student satisfaction

Freshman-year student retention

Alumni engagement

2

**RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP**

*Success in research and scholarship will be indicated by:*

Institutional-wide increase in publication and scholarly output

Increase in and diversification of research funding

Global recognition of scholarly achievements across all disciplines

3

**SUSTAINABILITY**

*Progress towards a sustainable institution will be attained through:*

A significant increase in our endowment

Improved sustainability ratings from professional bodies

Regional and international recognition of the influence of our alumni

4

**ENGAGEMENT AND IMPACT**

*Augmentation of the AUS profile will be demonstrated by:*

Increased exposure on digital media

An increase in external entities that benefit from the expertise of AUS leadership

Increased global awareness of reputational excellence among aspirational peer institutions and markets

# Measurements of Success



Bringing different  
worlds together

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