

**2025—2030
Strategic Plan**

A Bold New Chapter

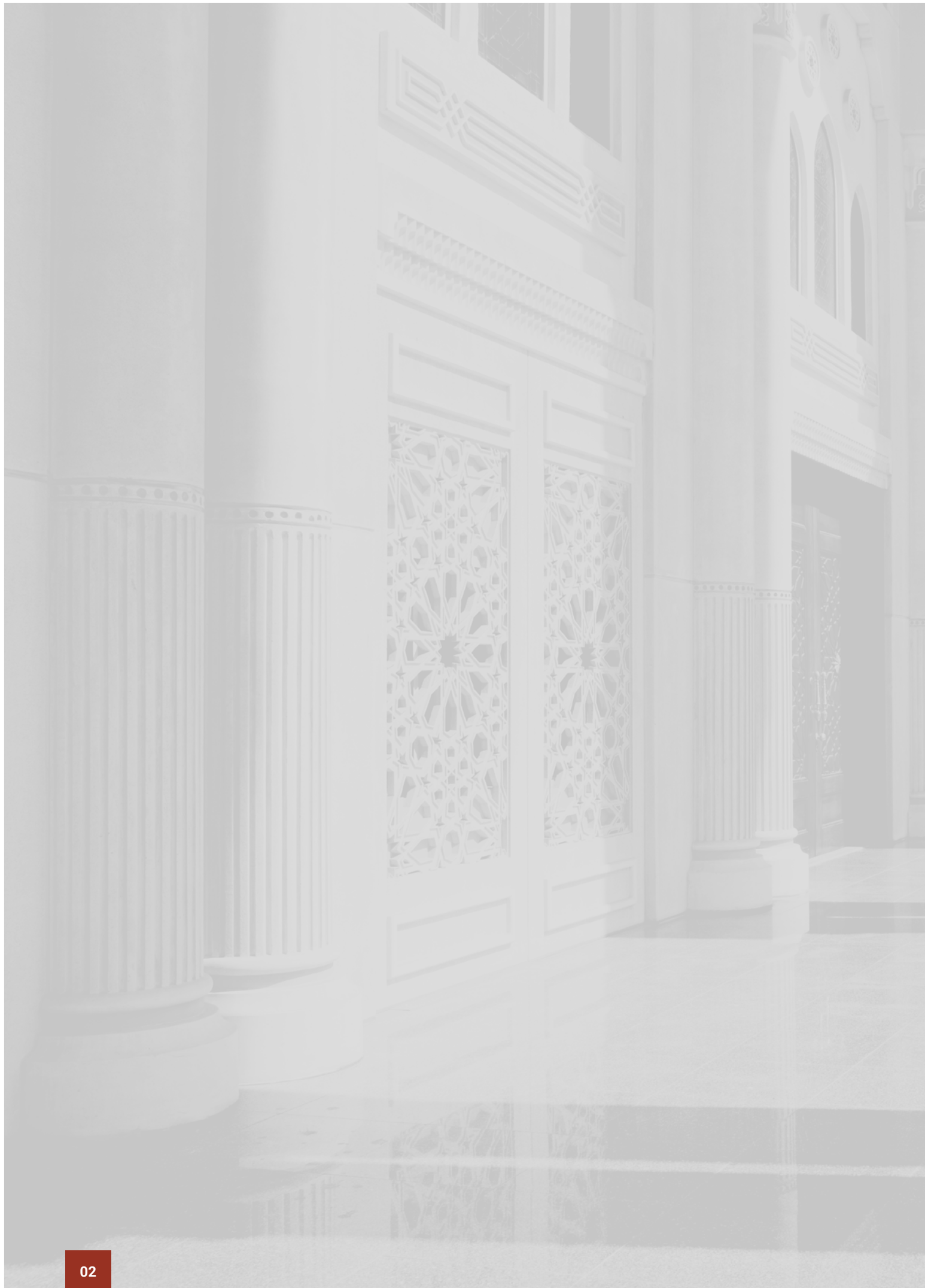


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Message from the President

The future of the American University of Sharjah shines brightly. It rests on the enduring vision of our founder, His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Sharjah. That vision, rooted in knowledge, service, and respect for humanity through education, has flourished in the remarkable environment of Sharjah, a place where learning and creativity thrive, and where education connects heritage with progress.

Building on this legacy, the AUS 2025-2030 Strategic Plan translates our founding principles into action. It marks a defining moment in our evolution as a university that leads with purpose, embraces innovation, and serves with integrity. More than a roadmap, it is a shared commitment to prepare graduates who can thrive in complexity, advance research that enriches knowledge and policy, and nurture a community defined by collaboration, excellence, and responsibility.

Through its five strategic pillars, this plan unites us around a shared mission: to transform education, expand our research impact, empower our people, strengthen our partnerships, and ensure sustainable resource management.

What makes this plan truly powerful is its collective ownership. It belongs to every member of our community: to our students who dream big, our faculty who challenge convention, our staff who demonstrate unwavering dedication, our alumni who carry our values into the world, and our partners who believe in our mission.

AUS has been a beacon of knowledge and inspiration for nearly three decades. As we move forward, we remain committed to this legacy, continuing to shape a university that is globally connected, locally grounded, and human at its core.

Her Highness Sheikha Bodour bint Sultan Al Qasimi



Message from the Chancellor

As we look ahead to the next five years, AUS stands at the threshold of a bold new chapter in its journey. Our 2025–2030 Strategic Plan reflects a shared vision for what we can accomplish together as a community of learners, educators and innovators.

Building on nearly three decades of excellence, we are ready to take AUS to new heights: globally influential, locally impactful and a leader in innovation and sustainability. This plan calls us to harness the strengths that define us, our diverse community, our dedication to teaching and research, and our commitment to serving the UAE and the wider world.

For our students, this means a more dynamic and agile learning experience that prepares them not only for their first job but for lifelong success in a rapidly changing world. For our faculty and staff, it means the conditions to flourish through collaboration, research and professional growth. And for our partners and global peers, it signals that AUS is stepping forward with confidence, becoming a catalyst for positive change and impact, ready to contribute solutions to the challenges of our time.

As we approach our 30th anniversary, this plan honors the vision of our founder, His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, while charting an ambitious path toward the future under the leadership of our president, Her Highness Sheikha Bodour bint Sultan Al Qasimi.

This is more than a strategy, it is a commitment: that AUS will continue to be a place where knowledge transforms lives and where innovation and responsibility shape a better tomorrow. I invite each of you—students, faculty, colleagues, alumni and partners—to join us in bringing this vision to life. Together, we will write the next bold chapter in the AUS story.

Tod A. Laursen

Introduction

The world of higher education is undergoing rapid, constant transformation; AUS learns from it and leads within it. Across the Arab World, AUS has earned its place as a leading institution recognized for academic excellence, a highly engaged and collaborative community and a bold upward trajectory, as evidenced by rising international standing, a notable increase in research output and impressive employability rates for our graduates. Our students, faculty and alumni take pride in being part of an institution known for outstanding teaching and impactful scholarship and creative work.

But beyond our gates, we also know the global higher education landscape is shifting. Universities around the world are being called upon to do more: to drive innovation and leverage transformative technologies like artificial intelligence, to advance sustainability, to build inclusive communities, to foster interdisciplinary research that addresses societal challenges and to prepare graduates for a complex, rapidly evolving world. The demand for flexible, lifelong learning is reshaping educational models, while geopolitical and economic shifts challenge institutions to remain resilient and agile.

We will do all of these; we are choosing this moment to act decisively, and we know that timing is critical. Our upcoming 30-year anniversary is a milestone for both reflection and reinvention. Our foundation is strong. Our vision is clear.



“The opportunities before us are significant.”



Our Board of Trustees

- **Bodour bint Sultan Al Qasimi**, President and Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, American University of Sharjah, UAE
- **Abdulfattah M. Sharaf, Chairman**, HSBC Bank Middle East Limited, Dubai, UAE
- **Abhijit Choudhury**, Board Member, RAKBANK (PSC), UAE; Bank ABC Islamic, Bahrain; JSC Terabank, Georgia
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- **Bedour S. Al Raqbani**, Social Entrepreneur, Dubai, UAE
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- **Mohamed A. Alabbar**, Founder and Managing Director, Emaar Properties, Dubai, UAE
- **Mohamed Khadiri**, Chief Executive Officer, Bank of Sharjah, UAE
- **Mohammed Alhuraimel Alshamsi**, Seasoned Investment Professional and Board Member, UAE
- **Nawal K. Al-Hosany**, Permanent Representative of the UAE, International Renewable Energy Agency, Abu Dhabi, UAE
- **Rania A. Al-Mashat**, Minister of Planning, Economic Development and International Cooperation, Egypt
- **Sultan Sooud Al-Qassemi**, Founder, Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah, UAE
- **Tod A. Laursen, Chancellor**, American University of Sharjah, UAE
- **Tony F. Chan**, Global Higher Education Leader and Former University President, Los Angeles, California, USA

The Case for Change

Higher education today is transforming at an unprecedented pace. Around the world, universities are being asked to do more than ever before: to harness the disruptive power of technologies like artificial intelligence, to advance sustainability, to champion diversity and inclusion, and to equip graduates for careers that do not yet exist. Within this dynamic landscape, AUS has earned its place among the Arab world's leading universities, recognized for academic excellence, impactful research and the strength of our multicultural community. As AUS approaches its 30-year milestone, we see this as a pivotal moment to reflect, reimagine and act boldly.

The AUS 2025–2030 Strategic Plan is our commitment to bold action at a defining moment for higher education. It embeds growth across teaching, research, innovation and sustainability, ensuring that AUS not only keeps pace with change but helps shape it.



Our Strategic Framework

Vision

To be a globally influential and locally impactful university where lifelong learners, engaged scholars and community leaders collaborate to advance innovation and excellence in education, research and creative work.

Mission

To harmonize an American educational model with Sharjah's heritage and culture by advancing knowledge, fostering innovation and preparing AUSers to lead with purpose, competence and open dialogue.

Values

Our values are more than guiding principles—they are who we are. Together, they form **AUSer**, a reflection of the spirit and aspirations that unite our community:

Achievement: Striving for excellence in all we do.

Understanding: Embracing diversity of people, perspectives and ideas.

Service: Empowering individuals and communities through action.

Entrepreneurship: Fueling innovation and initiative.

Responsibility: Acting with integrity, ethics and a commitment to sustainability.

Strategic Planning Process

We see strategy as a living process that connects our ambition with action and ensures that every step forward is grounded in evidence and community input. The development of the AUS 2025–2030 Strategic Plan was a collective effort, shaped through a rigorous three-phase journey: **Assess**, **Strategize** and **Plan**.

Phase One: Assess

We began by conducting a comprehensive review of our current position. This meant reviewing past achievements, identifying current priorities and listening closely to the voices of our community through surveys and focus groups. We benchmarked AUS against leading universities locally, regionally and globally, producing a comprehensive “Current State Assessment” that highlighted both our strengths and our opportunities for growth. This analysis was presented to our Board of Trustees in October 2024 as the foundation for what was to come.

Phase Two: Strategize

With this groundwork in place, we turned toward the future. Through workshops with AUS leadership, we refined our vision, mission and values, and identified the strategic pillars that now anchor this plan. Each proposed initiative was carefully assessed for impact and feasibility, ensuring alignment with our long-term goals. To maintain accountability, we created a framework for monitoring progress through clear, measurable KPIs. This framework was endorsed by AUS’ President and Board Chair in February 2025.

Phase Three: Plan

The final phase focused on translating our vision into action. Detailed roadmaps were developed for each initiative, with clear milestones, timelines and resources. We also built a process that links strategic priorities directly with annual budgets, ensuring that this plan is not only ambitious, but also achievable. Throughout every stage, AUS leadership and stakeholders remained deeply engaged, ensuring transparency, alignment and community buy-in.

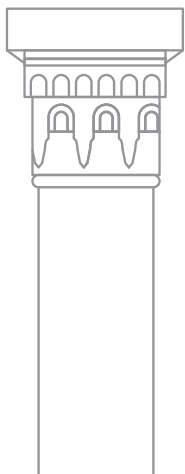
This process was about charting a course for the future together. It reflects our commitment to evidence-based decisions, our dedication to excellence and our determination to shape the next chapter of AUS with clarity and purpose.

Strategic Pillars

Our strategy is built on five pillars that will guide AUS into the future. Together, they strengthen our academic excellence, expand our research and creative impact, empower our people, extend our partnerships and ensure that we steward our resources responsibly and sustainably.

PILLAR A Transformative Educational Experience

1



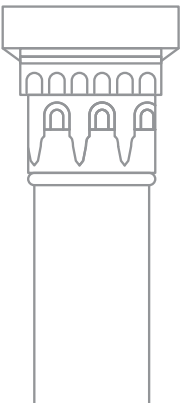
We are enhancing the academic journey at AUS, making it even more rigorous, relevant and future-focused.

- For undergraduate students: cutting-edge curricula, inclusive student life and flexible, technology-enhanced learning will prepare them for a world shaped by digital transformation and social change.
- For graduate education: expanded programs and residential offerings will nurture a research-intensive environment that attracts top-tier scholars.

By investing in both undergraduate and graduate experiences, AUS affirms its position as the first-choice destination for ambitious students, outstanding faculty and global partners.

PILLAR 2 Growing the Impact of Our Research and Creative Work

2



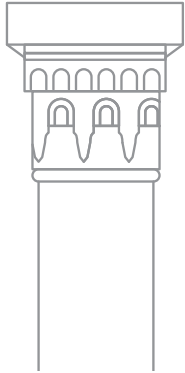
AUS is advancing knowledge that speaks to the world.

- We are building a culture of interdisciplinary discovery, supported by strategic investment in people, infrastructure and partnerships.
- Our faculty and students will be empowered to produce work that drives innovation, shapes policy, addresses global challenges and enriches society.

This pillar positions AUS as a forward-looking producer of research and creative work defined by rigor, influence and relevance.

PILLAR An Empowering Working Culture

3



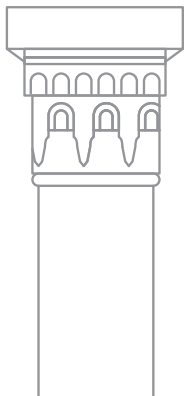
Our people are our strength.

- AUS will cultivate an environment where faculty and staff thrive through balanced workloads, streamlined operations and continuous professional growth.
- Diversity, equity and inclusion will underpin everything we do, ensuring a workplace that empowers excellence.

By valuing collaboration, wellbeing and innovation, AUS will be known as a place where talent flourishes and ideas thrive.

PILLAR Leveraging Community Engagement and Outreach

4



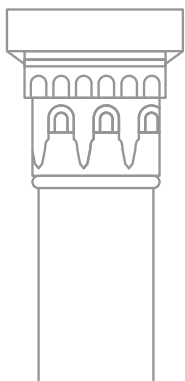
AUS will expand its influence across academia, industry and society.

- By strengthening partnerships, mobilizing our global alumni and advancing international recruitment, we will amplify our reach and reputation.
- Our commitment to sustainability will guide how we collaborate with communities and contribute to positive change.

Through these efforts, AUS will remain a destination of choice for talent, investment and meaningful partnerships.

PILLAR Effective Stewardship of Our Resources

5



Great institutions are defined by how they manage themselves and their legacy.

- AUS will pursue operational excellence, fiscal discipline and environmental responsibility.
- Through digital transformation, sustainable planning and careful stewardship, we will ensure resilience and agility.

This pillar safeguards AUS' future while fueling our evolution into a premier global institution prepared for transformative change.



Delivering the Strategy

Strategic Objectives

Our vision will be brought to life through ten strategic objectives aligned with our five pillars. These objectives translate ambition into action, ensuring that every member of the AUS community sees progress and impact.

Pillar 1. A Transformative Educational Experience

- **Objective 1:** Enhance teaching, learning and academic support by updating curricula, enriching student life and introducing flexible, inclusive learning models.
- **Objective 2:** Expand graduate education to establish AUS as a globally recognized research institution, with new academic and residential opportunities that attract top scholars.

Pillar 2. Growing the Impact of Our Research and Creative Work

- **Objective 3:** Advance high-quality, interdisciplinary research and creative work that addresses pressing local and global challenges.
- **Objective 4:** Translate research into real-world solutions by strengthening innovation, entrepreneurship and research support systems.

Pillar 3. An Empowering Working Culture

- **Objective 5:** Support faculty by redefining workloads, streamlining processes and enabling stronger integration of teaching and research.
- **Objective 6:** Create a culture of empowerment for employees through professional development, clear pathways for growth and rewarding working conditions.

Pillar 4. Leveraging Community Engagement and Outreach

- **Objective 7:** Grow AUS' international profile by expanding recruitment, mobilizing our alumni and strengthening our global reputation.
- **Objective 8:** Diversify and optimize revenue streams through partnerships, commercialization opportunities and innovative fundraising.

Pillar 5. Effective Stewardship of Our Resources

- **Objective 9:** Safeguard AUS' core mission through disciplined financial management, sustainability and operational excellence.
- **Objective 10:** Transform operations and governance with digital infrastructure that fosters agility, accountability and efficiency.

Measuring Success

Our Strategic Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) over the next five years:

- First-year undergraduate retention rate
- Six-year undergraduate graduation rate
- (i) Number of doctoral degrees awarded annually, (ii) with the median time-to-degree(TTD) for completers less than or equal to four years
- Percentage of graduates employed or pursuing further education within nine months of graduation
- Undergraduate to graduate student ratio
- Composite student satisfaction rate
- (i) Total research spending per faculty/researcher FTE and (ii) proportion of research expenditures from external sources
- (i) Percentage of papers in top 10 percent journals; (ii) percentage of books and book chapters with top publishers; (iii) increase the number of creative works presented, exhibited or performed at mid- to high-level venues
- Median Field-Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI) score (six years)
- Percentage of (i) published research and (ii) creative works with international collaboration
- Innovation and entrepreneurship output: (i) number of patents filed and/or granted and (ii) number of startups
- Percentage of students engaged in research: (i) undergraduate; (ii) graduate
- Average teaching load (credits/course sections per academic year) for rolling-contract faculty with a professorial rank
- Undergraduate student-to-faculty ratio
- Employee satisfaction and engagement
- Percentage of total institutional revenues generated from non-tuition and non-government sources (e.g., institutional grants, research grants, externally sponsored scholarships, consulting, executive education, endowment contributions, commercialization, AUSE)
- Percent increase in (or overall amount of) funds raised through alumni and partner contributions
- Total endowment
- International academic mobility (based on the percentage of graduating students who participate in an international academic experience and the percentage of faculty involved

in international academic activities during the academic year)

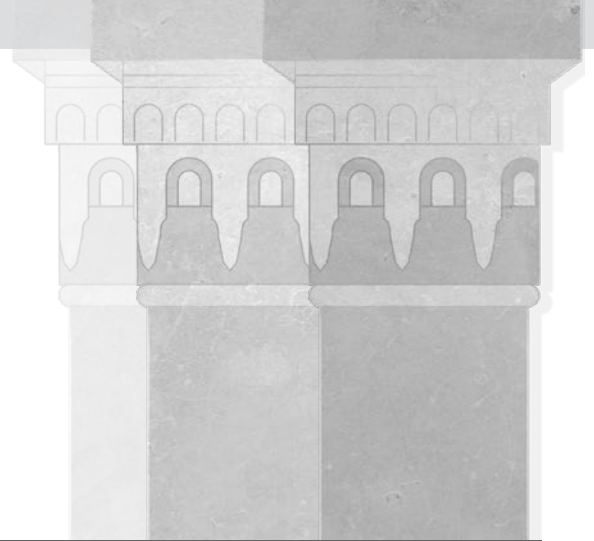
- Number of (or percent increase in) learners served through executive and continuing education programs annually
- Brand awareness in target markets
- Operating margin
- (i) Student financial support (merit and need-based) as a percentage of institutional operating budget and (ii) percentage of students receiving financial support
- Discount rate
- Average turnaround time efficiency for core administrative processes (HR, Finance and Procurement processes)



Phases of Implementation

We expect to deliver our strategic objectives in three clear phases, ensuring measurable progress and the flexibility to adapt as priorities evolve. Beginning in Academic Year 2025–2026, AUS will roll out initiatives that align with the five strategic pillars, with clear milestones set for the short, medium and long term.

	Phase 1 Building Momentum (2025–2026)	Phase 2 Driving Growth (2026–2029)
Pillar 1 A Transformative Educational Experience	• Future Ready Curriculum Comprehensive Review • Admissions and Enrollment Analysis • Student-facing Digital Transformation Delivery • Career Services Assessment	• Launch of Future Ready Curriculum • Graduate Education Planning • Graduate Residential Planning
Pillar 2 Growing the Impact of Our Research and Creative Work	• Research Administration Capacity Development • Research Infrastructure Development Planning	• Research Infrastructure Development • External Funding for Research • Research Excellence Framework
Pillar 3 An Empowering Working Culture	• Faculty Teaching Excellence • Faculty Workload Models • Employee Engagement and Wellbeing	• Faculty Administrative Efficiency • Faculty Recruitment
Pillar 4 Leveraging Our Community Engagement and Outreach	• Revenue Diversification Strategy • Alumni and Partner Mobilization Strategy • Brand Building and Reputation • Community Connect	• AUS Asset Commercialization • Corporate/Alumni Partnerships
Pillar 5 Effective Stewardship of Our Resources	• Administrative Services Digital Transformation • Operational Governance and Optimization • Cost Control Framework • Campus Planning • Sustainability Study	• Campus Facilities Improvements • Updated Operational and Budget Model • Implementation of Sustainable Governance



Phase 3 Preparing for the Future (2029–2030)

- Trial of Admissions and Enrollment Funnel
- Updated Mentoring and Advising: Student Success
- Comprehensive Career Services

Establishing a New Baseline and Roadmap for Post-2030 Ambitions

- Strategic Research Partnerships
- Research Faculty Recruitment
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship Activation

Establishing a New Baseline and Roadmap for Post-2030 Ambitions

- Updated Talent Management and Professional Development Framework
- Digitalization of Employee Services

Establishing a New Baseline and Roadmap for Post-2030 Ambitions

- Alumni Fundraising Campaign
- 30th Anniversary Planning and Activation

Establishing a New Baseline and Roadmap for Post-2030 Ambitions

- Updated Campus Sustainability Plan
- Completion of AUS Digital Transformation
- Campus-wide IT Infrastructure

Establishing a New Baseline and Roadmap for Post-2030 Ambitions

By the end of this five-year journey, we will measure our progress against clear milestones and indicators for each pillar, ensuring AUS is prepared not only to meet its goals, but to set the stage for even greater achievements beyond 2030.

Monitoring and Evaluation

A strategy is only as strong as its execution. We are committed to turning ambition into measurable progress through a transparent, data-driven system that keeps us focused, agile and accountable.

At the center of this effort is a unified digital platform that tracks every facet of the strategic plan—our pillars, objectives, initiatives and milestones—in one place. This allows us to monitor progress in real time, ensure alignment across the university and provide a clear line of sight from daily actions to long-term goals.

Core Principles

Clarity:

Every contribution is connected to institutional priorities.

Efficiency:

Automated reporting frees our people to act, not just administer.

Agility:

Early signals allow us to adapt and make timely decisions.

System Features

Five-Year Central Hub:

A living digital environment that preserves our institutional memory.

Accreditation-Ready:

Transparent, auditable reporting aligned with international quality standards.

Unified Documentation:

Board reports, plans and approvals stored in one intelligent repository.

Review Cadence



Biannual Reviews:

Track initiatives, milestones and key performance indicators.



Annual Reviews:

Evaluate AUS' overall progress against strategic objectives.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Board of Trustees:** Provides oversight and governance.
- **Executive Leadership:** Monitors performance and drives responsiveness.
- **Pillar Leads:** Ensure execution and maintain data integrity.
- **Strategy Office:** Coordinates systems, reporting and review cycles.

The Journey Ahead

We believe knowledge must be cultivated, questioned, shared and applied with purpose. This strategy reflects our belief that education transforms lives and shapes a better world. As we enter a new chapter defined by refinement, reach and responsibility, we invite all who believe in the enduring power of scholarship and community to join us in shaping what comes next.

To our students: your aspirations are our mission, and your success—on campus and beyond—is our legacy.

To our faculty and staff: your intellect and dedication define us. This strategy is a testament to your role in shaping future generations.

To our alumni: your journey reflects our values. We call on you to remain engaged, lead by example and open doors for those who follow.

To our partners and trustees: your commitment and investment empower us to think boldly and act decisively. You are co-authors of our future.

As AUS approaches its 30-year milestone, we stand firmly anchored in our values and ambitious for what lies ahead. Together, we will write AUS' bold new chapter.



THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF SHARJAH

الجامعة الأميركية في الشارقة



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