الجامعة الأميركية في الشارقة AUS | معية الأميركية في الشارقة American University of Sharjah

SUSTAINABILITY REPORT



2023-2024



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AUS Harden and

A sustainability frontrunner in higher education

First GCC university rated in the Association for of Sustainability in Higher E Sustainability Iracking, Ass System (STA pr.)

First UAE S

of all AUS component

< Pearl (rating for

Executive Summary

Introduction

American University of Sharjah (AUS) is a proactive advocate for the pivotal role that higher education institutions play in championing sustainability and climate action through education, research and operations.

In Academic Year 2023–2024, AUS upheld its commitment to sustainability by reinforcing its dedication to decarbonization and community engagement. This report outlines our progress, achievements and ongoing initiatives towards a more sustainable campus.



Key highlights of this report

Climate Action

 $\left(\bigcirc \right)$

Analysis of our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions report and community engagement initiatives.

Quality Education

An overview of how AUS is actively contributing to excellence in teaching, research and extracurricular activities.

Good Health and Wellbeing:

A look at our initiatives that promote a healthy campus community.

Partnerships for the Goals:

A look at how AUS has fostered strong external partnerships.

continu



Future Outlook



Looking ahead, AUS remains committed to advancing sustainability at the university through ambitious goals and continuous improvement by focusing on four strategic themes:







Messages from Leadership

Chancellor's Foreword

It is with great pride and enthusiasm that I present our Sustainability Report for Academic Year 2023–2024. This reporting period holds particular significance as the UAE celebrated the Year of Sustainability and hosted COP28 during that period.

In 2022, AUS embarked on an ambitious journey with the launch of our Climate Action Plan, a strategic initiative that aligned our sustainability efforts with the UAE's Net Zero by 2050 strategic plan. This plan represents our pledge to integrate sustainability into every facet of university life, from the classroom to the operational infrastructure. Over the past year, the AUS Office of Sustainability has diligently refined our processes for measuring and tracking carbon emissions and understanding our water and energy use, while ensuring that our actions are both impactful and transparent. As a result, we ranked third in the UAE and among the world's top 600 universities for sustainability according to OS World University Rankings 2024, up from fifth in 2023.

This document is not merely a collection of data and statistics; it is a testament to our commitment to fostering a sustainable future for our campus, community and world. Sustainability at AUS is not confined to reducing greenhouse gas emissions alone; it encompasses a holistic approach that includes innovative research, sustainable campus operations and active community engagement around topics like waste minimization, and health and wellness.

Our commitment to sustainability is also reflected in our partnership with the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), where we proudly hold a STARS gold rating. Additionally, AUS was recognized as one of the top seven institutions worldwide for community engagement in sustainability by AASHE in 2024, a testament to the dedication of our faculty, students and staff. Our partnerships with key stakeholders, such as the Universities Climate Network (UCN) and the UAE Alliance for Climate Action (UACA), further amplify our efforts to promote sustainable development practices and foster a culture of environmental stewardship. These collaborations have allowed us to contribute meaningfully to the global dialogue on climate action, particularly in the lead-up to events like COP28.

In this report, you will find detailed accounts of our greenhouse gas emissions, broken down by scope and category, as well as insights into our initiatives to reduce these emissions, such as integrating green building practices and promoting electric transportation on campus.

Moreover, the academic achievements highlighted in this report demonstrate our commitment to embedding sustainability into our educational offerings. With numerous sustainability-focused and sustainabilityinclusive courses, our students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to drive positive change in their future careers. Our three new world-class research centers focused on materials research; energy, water and sustainable environment; and entrepreneurship, innovation and sustainable development—further underscore our role as a leader in sustainability research and development.

This report reflects our collective efforts and calls on all members of our community to continue striving towards a greener, more sustainable world. As we look to the future, we are dedicated to maintaining our focus on building a sustainable and resilient campus.

Tod A. Laursen Chancellor American University of Sharjah

Message from the AUS Head of Sustainability

Sustainability has become a central topic in global dialogue that all institutions, regardless of their industry or where they are, need to pay attention to. At AUS, we acknowledge the importance of sustainability and its crucial role in ensuring the future well-being of our campus and our world.

To achieve the goals we have set for ourselves as an institution, we know we must prioritize sustainability. In the coming year, we are committed to refreshing AUS' sustainability strategy to better serve the communities on campus and beyond.

Although our new strategy is being developed, we have not slowed down. This year, our focus has been on better understanding and mitigating our environmental impact, improving the health and well-being of the students and colleagues we serve, and continuing to integrate sustainability into our academic curricula and campus life. Our approach has been pragmatic and holistic. We focus on raising awareness and mobilizing our community while finding and implementing practical solutions to our sustainability challenges. By harmonizing these elements, we strive to create a unified direction toward our sustainability goals and share learnings with the wider UAE and global sustainability communities.

Looking ahead, we intend to collaborate even more closely with the communities and stakeholders we serve, to develop solutions that serve others within and outside the education sector. While I am conscious of the many challenges ahead, I am confident in our collective abilities to join hands and make meaningful progress toward a more sustainable AUS.

Omar Al Nuaimi AUS Head of Sustainability American University of Sharjah



Sustainability at AUS

Institutional Overview

AUS was founded in 1997 by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, UAE Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah.

It is a comprehensive, independent, non-profit, coeducational institution of higher education renowned for its excellence in teaching, learning, research and creative work. It aspires to be globally recognized for its innovative contributions and positive impact on the Middle East region and beyond.

AUS follows the American model of higher education, integrating liberal arts and professional programs while grounding its vision in the context of UAE culture. The university prepares engaged and effective members of society who excel in their fields, communicate clearly, think critically, solve problems creatively and care about the future of the planet and the next generations.

Sustainability is a core component of AUS' vision and mission, embedded in the AUS Strategic Plan and every aspect of campus life. The university community celebrates diversity and is committed to open intellectual inquiry, ethical behavior and civic responsibility-all essential foundations for a sustainable and inclusive campus. With 95 percent of its academic departments offering at least one sustainability-inclusive course, AUS also equips students with the right academic knowledge to impact various industries and help move them toward a greener future.

AUS' commitment to sustainability is evident through numerous initiatives outlined in this report. Since the AUS Office of Sustainability was launched in 2008, notable sustainability achievements include launching the UAE's first university single-use plastics campaign in 2019 and receiving a 2 Pearl rating for its Engineering and Sciences Building by Estidama. The university has also repeatedly won the Green Audit Award from the Abu Dhabi Environmental Agency's Sustainable Campus Initiative.

AUS students actively participate in sustainability-related extracurricular activities, such as the AUS EcoRep program, which promotes waste reduction, energy conservation, diversity and inclusion, and personal health.

Through its sustainability initiatives, AUS is committed to being a leading voice for sustainability in the Gulf region and beyond.



Key Institutional Characteristics

The table below summarizes AUS' key institutional characteristics that reflect the scope of the university's sustainability initiatives during Academic Year 2023-2024.

Total Number of Students¹

Total number of nationalities represented among students

Number of Students **Residing on Campus**

Total Number of Faculty²

Total number of nationalities represented among faculty

Number of Faculty **Residing on Campus**

Total Number of Staff²

Number of Staff **Residing on Campus**

Number of Dependents Living on Campus²

Total Campus Size (m²)³ (inclusive of academic buildings, student services, student residen halls and employee housing)

Sources

¹AUS Fast Facts Fall 2023 ² AUS Human Resources Department, August 2023 ³ Campus Development Department, February 2024

	E 076
	(of which 53.1% female and 46.9% male)
	97
	1,387
	336
	49
	322
	545
	45
	1,200
tial	363,728.27

AUS Sustainability Framework

AUS is widely recognized for its holistic approach to sustainability in higher education. Since 2018, the AUS Office of Sustainability has been following the international framework provided by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) for defining its sustainability strategy and initiatives, tracking progress over the years and benchmarking its success.

The AASHE STARS framework focuses on five key areas:

- **1.** Academics and Research: Ensuring sustainability is embedded throughout the university's teaching and research
- 2. Engagement: Building awareness of the importance of sustainability and climate action among students, faculty and staff as well as external stakeholders
- **3. Operations:** Understanding the impact of AUS' campus operations, with a focus on energy, water and waste reduction
- **4. Planning and Administration:** Ensuring that sustainability is integrated in every aspect of institutional governance
- **5. Innovation and Leadership:** Encouraging leadership in campus sustainability through innovative initiatives

AASHE Membership

AUS is an active member of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) and serves on the AASHE Advisory Council.

AUS was the first university in the Gulf region to be rated in AASHE's Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS). In 2018, AUS received a rating of Bronze, followed by a Silver rating in 2021. Thanks to its dedication to continuous improvement over the years, AUS achieved a STARS Gold rating in 2024. AASHE STARS is considered to be the most comprehensive sustainability assessment available for higher education institutions.

Highlight: Community Engagement

According to AASHE's 2024 Sustainable Campus Index, AUS was one of the top seven institutions worldwide for community engagement in sustainability, scoring 97.6 percent.





ABOUT STARS

The AASHE STARS (Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System) program is a way for institutions to be tracked and ranked on their progress in developing sustainable solutions for their communities. An institution can be awarded a Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze or Reporter designation. The STARS program tracks multiple factors in an institution's overall sustainability across five key areas: academics , engagement , operations , and planning and administration, as well as innovation and leadership points for exemplary and path-breaking initiatives.



ABOUT AASHE

The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE, pronounced AY-shee) is an association of higher education institutions headquartered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA. The association aims to improve sustainable practices in higher education by advocating sustainable innovation. AASHE encourages people involved in education to promote sustainable development in their communities. AASHE is an official partner of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals program.

Alignment with UN Sustainable **Development Goals**

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a powerful aspiration for improving the world, outlining what needs to be done and how to do it. Educational institutions and companies globally can play a significant role in achieving this transformational change. Throughout this report, AUS' alignment with the UN SDGs is highlighted by featuring one or several icons in each section, indicating the SDGs supported by the changes the university has made or is currently making.

AUS contributes to the SDGs in several ways:



SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being: AUS actively ensures healthy lives and promotes well-being for all at all ages through initiatives such as orientation week cooking classes for students, the AUS X Manbat Farmers' Market on campus and various workshops on food and health.

SDG 4: Quality Education: AUS' commitment to guality education is evident in its high-guality and wide-ranging degree programs, with about 72 percent featuring a sustainability component.

SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth: AUS contributes to decent work and economic growth by preparing and employing a skilled workforce, and fostering interdisciplinary education, entrepreneurship and strong industry partnerships, many of which fund or support research aligned with the UN's sustainable development goals.

SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure: AUS prioritizes innovation and research in developing countries, aligning with Target 9.5 of SDG 9, contributing to increasing the number of researchers in the Middle East. Additionally, AUS' academic research addresses various important societal challenges related to the UAE and the wider Middle East, with students regularly participating in sustainability-related research, developing innovations that range from green building practices to solar-powered technology.



CASE STUDY: AUS AND THE SHARJAH NATIONAL OIL CORPORATION

AUS and the Sharjah National Oil Corporation (SNOC) have joined forces to accelerate research in sustainability. SNOC is funding six projects at the AUS College of Engineering and one at the College of Arts and Sciences. One of these projects is working on fuel cell electric vehicles-which utilize hydrogen as a power source-to promote the adoption of low- or zero-emission vehicles in the UAE in future, in alignment with the UAE's hydrogen strategy, which aims to produce 1.4 million tons of hydrogen annually by 2031.



&

collaborates with government agencies, nonprofits, industry partners and international institutions to advance sustainable development goals through joint projects and research initiatives.

By aligning with the SDGs, AUS demonstrates its commitment to a sustainable and just future and ensures that its commitments are impactful and resilient in the long term.





SDG 13 aims to "Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts by regulating emissions and promoting developments in renewable energy."



SDG 17: "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development."

AUS Climate Action Plan

In 2022, AUS launched a Climate Action Plan, aligning the university's sustainability efforts with the UAE's Net Zero by 2050 strategic plan. Since then, the AUS Office of Sustainability has continuously refined the measurement and tracking of the university's carbon emissions. The plan has also seen the AUS sustainability team deliver many awareness-building and engagement activities on- and off-campus.

Local Partnerships

To achieve its sustainability goals, AUS has sought to partner with several key external stakeholders in the UAE. Through these partnerships, AUS and its partners hope to advance innovative solutions for environmental challenges, promote sustainable development practices and foster a culture of environmental stewardship within the community.

AUS' main partnerships include:

1. UNIVERSITIES CLIMATE NETWORK (UCN)

Following its advocacy at COP27, AUS became an inaugural member of the UCN, which comprises 33 UAE-based universities and higher education institutions. These institutions all worked together to drive engagement among youth and academia in the lead-up to COP28 and beyond.

Together, they delivered many workshops, public events and other engagement initiatives. Given AUS' extensive expertise in campus emissions reporting, AUS has been leading the Campus Carbon Neutrality Pillar, one of the four network pillars.

2. UAE ALLIANCE FOR CLIMATE ACTION (UACA)

UACA is a domestic alliance of stakeholders led by Emirates Nature-WWF. UACA is the UAE's flagship non-state actor program launched in the lead-up to COP28, which aims to increase momentum towards achieving net zero targets in line with scientific evidence and the Paris Agreement. Not only was AUS the first university to join UACA, but it also represents UAE higher education institutions on the UACA Advisory Committee.



Operational Highlights

Annual Emissions Reporting

As part of the initial launch of the Climate Action Plan in 2022, AUS worked with Southpole, a third-party service provider, to conduct an initial greenhouse gas (GHG) study to calculate its baseline annual emissions and set reduction targets aligned with the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi).

The latest report closes previous data gaps and improves data quality in a number of areas. This was achieved by working with internal stakeholders across AUS to continuously improve data collection for the annual AUS GHG report.

In 2023, AUS started using the eMission by UACA reporting tool to track and report its annual GHG emissions across all three scopes to better align with UAE reporting standards.

Defining Scope 1, 2 and 3 Emissions

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are classified into three scopes:

Scope 1 relates to emissions directly managed by the organization. For AUS, this includes emissions from combustion of fossil fuels in mobile and stationary sources (owned vehicles and power generators) and fugitive emissions (refrigerants) from cooling and air conditioning equipment.

Scope 2 relates to indirect emissions from purchased electricity through external energy providers. For AUS, this includes electricity provided by Sharjah Electricity, Water, and Gas Authority (SEWA).

Scope 3 relates to other indirect emissions, such as emissions from vehicles not owned or controlled by AUS, outsourced activities and waste disposal. This report splits Scope 3 emissions into nine categories.

GHG Emissions in 2023

The table and figure below summarize the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions produced by AUS operations from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023 (FY 2023). The calculated emissions per stakeholder (this includes students, faculty, staff and their dependents) is 6.88 tco2e/stakeholder in 2023.

Scope 2 emissions represent the largest percentage of emissions at AUS, due to the indirect GHG emissions from purchased electricity that fall under this scope.



Let's talk abo

CLIMATE ACTION



Emissions (tCO2e)				
E1				
80				
2,387				
2,467				
E 2				
28,598				
E 3				
362				
763				
747				
0				
5,922				
454				
1,721				
510				
13,185				
23,664				

54,729





SDG 9: "Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation."



SDG 11: "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable."



SDG 7: "Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all."

Emissions Reduction Initiatives: Green Buildings and Sustainable Transportation

In 2022, AUS launched a Climate Action Plan, aligning the university's sustainability efforts with the UAE's Net Zero by 2050 strategic plan. Since then, the AUS Office of Sustainability has continuously refined the measurement and tracking of the university's carbon emissions. The plan has also seen the AUS sustainability team deliver many awareness-building and engagement activities on- and off-campus.

GREEN BUILDINGS

AUS recognizes the need for improved building energy efficiency to meet its net zero emission targets. Over the past years, the AUS Campus Development team has worked on improving building thermal efficiency, upgrading cooling and water systems and implementing efficient air distribution controls. In addition, all major renovation projects in the last five years followed ESTIDAMA guidelines, a green building rating system used to evaluate sustainable building development practices across the UAE.



SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

AUS recognizes stakeholder commuting as a major source of emissions and strives to incentivize the use of electric vehicles around campus. In January 2023, AUS teamed up with TIER to provide between 50-60 electric scooters and 25-30 e-bikes on campus. In addition, an increasing number of electric vehicle chargers have been added around campus.

5 Community Engagement Highlights



SDG 9: "Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation." The AUS Office of Sustainability hosted a wide range of community engagement initiatives on campus and beyond. Below are some of the highlights from Academic Year 2023–2024. A full list of initiatives can be found in <u>Appendix B</u> and <u>Appendix C</u>.

EcoRep Program

The <u>EcoRep Program</u> was set up by the Office of Sustainability to enable students passionate about sustainability to:

- educate their student peers on issues such as waste, energy, health and well-being, and community
- organize events, guest speakers and field trips
- raise awareness about how their peers can contribute to a greener campus
- build lifelong habits around sustainable practices

66

"The EcoRep program has paved the way in my journey towards sustainability. The program has also provided me with the necessary skills that would allow me to follow my passion of working in the field of sustainability."

Sameera Khan, Senior, Environmental Sciences

"I have been in the EcoRep program for three semesters, each opening new doors into the world of sustainability. From awareness events, to fundraising and conferences, my engagement with the community through the office has helped me hone my creative thinking and managerial skills. I joined the program with hopes of making an impact on our students. I can confidently say that it has been a very positive and eye-opening experience with every initiative, event and challenge."

Aamuktha Samrajyam, Senior, Chemical Engineering



WE ARE LOCATED AT GROUND FLOOR SEA BUILDING

8AM TO 9PM







Manbat Farmers' Market

Manbat is a partnership between the Sharjah-based property developer Arada and the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment that promotes healthy, locally-grown produce and supports the UAE's National Food Security Strategy.

AUS has partnered with Manbat since September 2023 to bring an exclusive farmers' market to campus every week.

The initiative benefits the campus community in many ways. It provides students and campus residents with fresh, locally grown produce weekly and connects the AUS community directly to the farmers who produce their food, helping to build a campus culture centered on health, nutrition and sustainability.



Cook for Change

The <u>Cook for Change</u> initiative is a collaboration between the Office of Sustainability and the Student Residential Life Department that helps students and faculty recognize modern food systems' impact on environmental and human health.

The cooking classes, offered for students during orientation, teach them strategies for budget-friendly meal preparation with locally sourced ingredients that have a positive impact on planetary and human health.

Later in the semester, master chef competitions were held in the residential halls, allowing students to showcase their newly learned culinary skills in a fun environment.



SDG 2: "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture."

SDG 3: "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages."



"Cook for Change was an innovative yet collaborative event experience" that not only sparked the interest of students in the residential halls, but also provided knowledge on the importance of a home-cooked

Sameera Khan, Senior, Environmental Sciences



Higher Education Climate Dialogues (HECD)

In May 2024, AUS hosted the fifth annual Higher Education Climate Dialogues (HECD) under the theme "Collaborating for Climate Resilience: Sustaining the Legacy of COP28." Organized in partnership with New York University Abu Dhabi, the HECD provided a platform for university students across the UAE to engage in climate resilience discussions.

A highlight was a debrief by the Youth Climate Champion (YCC) Team on the "UAE Consensus," an important outcome of COP28 aimed at transitioning away from fossil fuels. The YCC team, which connects youth stakeholders with governments and international bodies like the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, also conducted a workshop offering practical insights and actionable steps for youth involvement in climate advocacy.



Conference of Youth (COY) 18 AUS students co-hosted the prestigious Conference of

Youth in November 2023 at

Expo City Dubai. COY18 is the largest youth conference on multilateral UN climate processes. The conference served as a space for youth to engage in capacity-building and policy training to prepare them to participate in COP28. COY18 formally united their voices to help shape intergovernmental climate change policies and contribute to climate negotiations via the official youth policy paper.



regulating emissions and promoting developments in renewable energy."

"I found the Higher Education Climate Dialogue (HECD) inspiring and enriching. Taking part in all those different workshops and activities helped increase my understanding of different aspects of climate change. Additionally, the narrative of the event that the youth can take collective action on climate change was something that personally resonated with me."

Usaid Ameenuddin, Computer Engineering, Sophomore

"HECD was nothing short of an awe-inspiring event. It provided a platform that inspired young minds like mine to bring about a change in the environment and positively contribute to the betterment of the world. These sustainable events have set a stepping stone of change of thought."

Sai Satvik, Computer Science, Sophomore



opportunities for all."





SDG 17: "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development."

WHAT IS THE CONFERENCE OF YOUTH

28th Conference of the Parties (COP28)

AUS had a significant presence at <u>COP28</u>, which occurred at Expo City Dubai from November 30 to December 12, 2023. Focusing on youth participation and the pivotal role of education in accelerating progress to achieve global climate ambitions, AUS students, faculty and staff engaged in a myriad of events and activities in hubs located in COP28.

At the Greening Education Hub-(Erth), Legacy from the Land of Zayed, hosted by the UAE Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Greening Education Partnership and UNESCO, AUS faculty showcased their expertise in embedding sustainability into curricula and research.

The AUS sustainability team also led a joint panel discussion with sustainability professionals from New York University Abu Dhabi and Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi on the progress being made in measuring and tracking greenhouse gas emissions in higher education institutions in the UAE.

AUS students were active in various panel discussions at COP28, with topics ranging from youth ambitions for climate action, climate impact on culture and national identity, eco-anxiety and eco-grief in a climate crisis, to smart cities and UAE youth perspectives on learnings from COP.





Sustainability-Related Academic Courses

Sustainability is embedded throughout the curriculum at AUS. As of Academic Year 2023–2024, 22 percent of undergraduate and graduate courses offered at AUS feature sustainability. It is important to highlight that these courses are offered across all disciplines, with 21 out of 22 academic departments at AUS having at least one sustainability course offering.

The table and charts below break down AUS' course offerings into "sustainability-focused" and "sustainability-inclusive" courses.

	Undergraduate	Graduate
Number of courses offered	766	187
Number of sustainability- focused courses ¹	26	13
Number of sustainability- inclusive courses ²	152	15
Number of sustainability- inclusive courses ²	152	15

Summary of undergraduate and graduate courses for Academic Year 2023-2024 (STARS 2024)

¹ To count as a sustainability-focused course, the course title or description must indicate a primary and explicit focus on sustainability. The course title or description does not have to use the term "sustainability" to count as sustainability-focused if the primary and explicit focus of the course is on the interdependence of ecological and social/economic systems or a major sustainability challenge such as climate change. ² If the course title and description do not unequivocally indicate such a focus, but it is evident from the course description or syllabus that the course incorporates sustainability challenges, issues, and concepts in a prominent way, the course may qualify as "sustainability-inclusive."

Academics & Research Highlights

 $\left(\begin{array}{c} \\ \\ \\ \\ \\ \\ \end{array}\right)$



The graphs below summarize the statistics above:



courses

offered

Sustainability Research Centers

In Spring 2024, AUS launched three new research centers dedicated to addressing sustainability challenges and driving innovation in their respective fields.

The Materials Research Center

was set up to nurture and promote groundbreaking interdisciplinary research and education activities in the field of advanced materials and sustainable structures. The center focuses on providing novel solutions and developing highly skilled human resources critical to the UAE's economic growth, particularly as it transitions from a petroleum-based economy to a diversified knowledgebased economy.

The Center for Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Sustainable

Development is dedicated to enhancing the UAE's entrepreneurial ecosystem and promoting sustainable development. Its work focuses on environmental, social and governance themes, and the role of entrepreneurship and innovation in driving sustainable growth.

The Energy, Water and Sustainable Environment Research Center aims

to develop world-class research addressing global energy, water and environmental sustainability challenges. Faculty and scholars at the center are dedicated to finding practical solutions to the growing demands on resources in urban areas. The research enables AUS to contribute to several UAE strategic plans, such as UAE Net Zero 2050.

offered



Seminars, Conferences and Events

Several conferences and events related to sustainability themes were hosted during the reporting period at AUS.



Please see **Appendix B** for more examples of seminars, conferences and events held at AUS during the reporting period.

Green Library Manifesto

to careers in these fields

In Spring 2024, the AUS Library became the first university library in the Middle East to join the <u>Green Libraries initiative</u>. By signing this manifesto, libraries commit to integrating sustainability principles into their operations, collections, services and facilities.

In addition, the AUS library has committed to highlighting sustainability research. Through the library-supported D-Space platform, students and faculty can access a curated list of sustainability-focused faculty publications and sustainability-focused student theses.

Class Collaborations

Class collaborations with the AUS Office of Sustainability are vital to providing students with hands-on experience to address real-world environmental challenges. These collaborations encourage students to develop their critical thinking skills and provide them with a deeper, interdisciplinary understanding of sustainability.

These partnerships also seek to achieve greater student awareness of sustainability issues, develop practical skills for solving environmental problems and nurture a sense of responsibility and engagement with the community.

Additionally, class collaborations are essential in demonstrating how environmental health is interconnected with all aspects of life, particularly how environmental well-being directly affects students' physical health.

For a full list of class collaboration events, please see <u>Appendix C</u>.



Looking ahead, AUS remains committed to positioning itself as a leader in higher education sustainability.

After a series of operational and structural changes in Academic Year 2022–2023, the Office of Sustainability began redefining the scope of its strategic framework to align with the forthcoming AUS Strategic Plan 2025 to 2030.

The following AUS Sustainability Core Values and Commitments will guide the strategic direction, academic and operational priorities, as well as key areas of engagement and communication going forward:



Climate Action, recognizing the unique responsibility of higher education institutions in addressing climate change challenges through teaching, research and community engagement



Waste Minimization, building a strong mindset of resource conservation and responsible consumption on campus



Water Conservation, highlighting water scarcity as a major sustainability challenge for the region



 \oslash

 \oslash

 (\checkmark)

Health and Wellness, educating community members on how personal health is deeply connected to planetary health

For Academic Year 2024–2025, the AUS Office of Sustainability remains fully committed to supporting four out of the five strategic themes of the current AUS Strategic Plan 2020 to 2025 through the following goals and objectives:



offer extracurricular experiences to students addressing societal and environmental needs

 $\langle \rangle$ support energy-saving and waste-reduction initiatives

promote AUS as leader in climate action and environmental stewardship

engage the wider community in addressing environmental and societal challenges

Future Plans

refine on-campus facilities and services to enhance the

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

Building enveloping: Sustainable building envelopes contribute to a more environmentally friendly construction industry. Choosing ecofriendly materials and implementing energyefficient designs reduces a building's carbon footprint.

COP28: The 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference or Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC, more commonly known as COP28, was the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference, held from November 30 to December 13, 2023 at Expo City, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Decarbonization: Reducing or eliminating carbon dioxide emissions from a process such as manufacturing or energy production. Emirates Green Building Council (EGBC) guidelines: EmiratesGBC is a non-government organization formed in 2006 to advance green building principles for protecting the environment and ensuring sustainability in the United Arab Emirates. It is the official Green Building Council for the UAE, endorsed by the World Green Building Council.

Estidama: Estidama is a building design methodology for constructing and operating buildings and communities more sustainably. It aims to form a framework for measuring sustainability performance beyond the usual planning and construction phases. The program is a key aspect of the "Abu Dhabi Vision 2030" drive to build the Abu Dhabi emirate according to innovative green standards.

EV: An EV is defined as a vehicle that can be powered by an electric motor that draws electricity from a battery and can be charged from an external source. An EV includes both a vehicle that can only be powered by an electric motor that draws electricity from a battery (all-electric vehicle) and a vehicle that can be powered by an electric motor that draws electricity from a battery and by an internal combustion engine (plug-in hybrid electric vehicle).

Appendices

Fugitive emissions: Emissions from the use of cooling systems and air conditioning equipment, leakage from CO2 tanks or methane (CH4) tubes.

GHG emissions: Greenhouse gasses (also known as GHGs) are gasses in the earth's atmosphere that trap heat. The gasses act like the glass walls of a greenhouse-hence the name, greenhouse gasses. Without this greenhouse effect, temperatures would drop to as low as -18°C (-0.4°F), too cold to sustain life on earth. However, human activities are changing Earth's natural greenhouse effect, with a dramatic increase in the release of greenhouse gasses due to industry and other human activities. Scientists agree that greenhouse gasses are causing global warming and climate change. As a result, global temperatures have accelerated in the past 30 years and are now the highest since records began.

LED: LEDs are a bright, attractive lighting solution with a long lifespan and energy-saving design.

Net zero: Put simply, net zero means cutting carbon emissions to a small amount of residual emissions that can be absorbed and durably stored by nature and other carbon dioxide removal measures, leaving zero in the atmosphere.

Science-Based Targets Initiative (SBTi):

Science-based targets provide a clearlydefined pathway for companies and institutions to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, helping prevent the worst impacts of climate change.Targets are considered 'science-based' if they are in line with what the latest climate science deems necessary to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement limiting global warming to 1.5°C above preindustrial levels.

Scopes: Scopes 1, 2 and 3 categorize the different kinds of carbon emissions a company creates in its operations and wider value chain. The term first appeared in the 2001 GreenHouse Gas Protocol, and today, Scopes are the basis for mandatory GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions reporting in many industries and countries.

Appendix B: Events in Academic Year 2023–2024

SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES

- <u>NGN 110 Competition</u> at American University of Sharjah (AUS), which challenged 110 first-year College of Engineering (CEN) students to innovate and construct model solar-powered electric cars.
- The <u>2024 AUS-Chalhoub Symposium on Luxury</u>, held at AUS, centered on sustainable innovation within the industry with the theme Reimagining the Way We Live.
- **2024 Frontiers in Materials Science and Engineering Conference**, held at AUS, delved into the latest advancements at the intersection of materials science and engineering.

ON-CAMPUS EVENTS

- EcoRep Quiz Night, Fall 2023
- COP28 Speaker Series and COP28 Alumni Spotlight Series, Fall 2023
- Green Living Learning Community, Fall 2023
- SHAMS Media Day, Fall 2023
- Sharakah: Climate Action Awareness Day, Fall 2023
- Future17 Program, Academic Year 2023-2024
- Nutrition for Mental Health, Fall 2023
- Coffee Morning COP28: Why Does It Matter?, Fall 2023
- Higher Education Climate Dialogues, Spring 2024
- Manbat Farmers' Market, Academic Year 2023–2024
- Cook for Change Cooking Classes, Academic Year 2023–2024

OFF-CAMPUS EVENTS

- Women in Tech Forum, Fall 2023
- Climate Ambassadors Program, Fall 2023
- COY 18 Youngo UAE, Fall 2023
- UCN Student Affair Roundtable, Fall 2023
- COP28, Fall 2023
- Greening Education Hub COP 28, Fall 2023

Appendix C: Class Collaborations in Academic Year 2023–2024

- BIO 330: Ecosystems Management
- ENV 150: Introduction to Environmental Sustainability
- ENV 354: Assessment and Management of Environmental Impacts
- MCE 446: Refrigeration and Air Conditioning
- MCM 381: Digital Storytelling for Journalists
- MCM 479: Multimedia Journalism
- WRI 102: Academic Writing II



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