



## Postsecondary Sustainability Award Nominee Presentation Form

### ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATIONS

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#### College or University Certifications

The signature of college or university President (or equivalent) on the next page certifies that each of the statements below concerning the institution’s eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of their knowledge.

1. The college or university has been evaluated and selected from among institutions within the Nominating Authority’s jurisdiction, based on high achievement in the three ED-GRS Pillars: 1) reduced environmental impact and costs; 2) improved health and wellness; and 3) effective environmental and sustainability education.
2. The college or university is providing the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a compliance review.
3. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the college or university concluding that the nominated college or university has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan to remedy the violation.
4. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the college or university has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
5. There are no findings by Federal Student Aid of violations in respect to the administration of Title IV student aid funds.
6. The college or university is in good standing with its regional or national accreditor.
7. The college or university meets all applicable federal, state, local and tribal health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and is willing to undergo EPA on-site verification.

### U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Postsecondary Sustainability Award

Name of President/Chancellor: President Sylvia Burwell

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official College or University Name: American University

(As it should appear on an award)

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(President’s/Chancellor’s Signature)

Date: 02/02/22

#### Nominating Authority’s Certifications

The signature by the Nominating Authority on this page certifies that each of the statements below concerning the college or university’s eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of the Authority’s knowledge.

1. The college or university has been evaluated and selected from among institutions within the Nominating Authority’s jurisdiction, based on high achievement in the three ED-GRS Pillars: 1) reduced environmental impact and costs; 2) improved health and wellness; and 3) effective environmental and sustainability education.



2. The college or university meets all applicable federal, state, local and tribal health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and is willing to undergo EPA on-site verification.

Name of Nominating Agency: DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education

Name of Nominating Authority: Tia Brumsted  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify to the best of my knowledge that the school meets the provisions above.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Nominating Authority's Signature)

Date: 2/15/2022

## **SUBMISSION**

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The nomination package, including the signed certifications, narrative summary, documentation of evaluation in the three Pillars, and photos should be submitted online according to the instructions in the Nominee Submission Procedure.

OMB Control Number: 1860-0509  
Expiration Date: December 31, 2023

### **Public Burden Statement**

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1860-0509. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 37 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit P.L. 107-110, Sec. 501, Innovative Programs and Parental Choice Provisions. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20202-4536 or email [ICDocketMgr@ed.gov](mailto:ICDocketMgr@ed.gov) and reference the OMB Control Number 1860-0509. Note: Please do not return the completed ED-Green Ribbon Schools application to this address.

# American University Green Ribbon Schools 2022 Application

## Summary Narrative

American University holds sustainability as a core value and works to ensure that every member of the community contributes to its sustainability progress. From campus infrastructure to programming and academics, sustainability themes run through the campus culture.

In 2018, American University became the first urban campus and the first research university, as well the largest higher education institution in the United States, to achieve carbon neutrality. In addition, American University is home to 10 LEED certified buildings. Three additional buildings have solar thermal located on the roofs which in total generate 969.10 MMBtu of thermal energy per year. In 2019, 56.66% of total energy consumed came from renewable sources. American University uses both on and off-campus photovoltaic panels for about 50% of its electricity demand and the remainder of AU's electricity use is matched with RECs, so the university operates on 100% green electricity. Ongoing efficiency projects across campus continue to drive down campus energy demand as well. Campus has experienced a ~30% decrease in energy demand per square foot as a result of these projects which include efficient lighting. Three carbon offset programs help to balance the remainder of AU's emissions. These programs include the Paradigm Project, which provides financing for efficient cookstoves in Kenya, a landfill gas capture project, and a third project focused on eliminating commuter carbon emissions.

Beyond green energy and efficiency projects, campus also houses rain gardens, bioretention basins, green roofs, cisterns, rain barrels, and other stormwater management features to reduce runoff and decrease stormwater in the combined sewage system. AU also offers a comprehensive alternative transportation program including a Metrorail and Metrobus pass for students, discounts on biking programs, and electric vehicle charging stations. AU's entire campus is an accredited arboretum featuring plants from around the world but prioritizes species that are adaptive and do not require extra watering or chemicals. Over time, many surface level parking lots have been converted to green spaces, ultimately reducing the total number of parking spaces available while expanding tree canopy.

American University has not only created a sustainable physical environment on campus but actively works to create a sustainable environment of *learning*. In 2019-2020, the Office of Sustainability collaborated with the Center for Teaching, Research and Learning to create a Campus Sustainability Lesson Plan that instructors can use in the classroom. Nearly 300 courses on campus have been identified as sustainability courses or courses that included sustainability. Overall, 38 of the 50 academic departments at AU include sustainability focused or inclusive courses.

There are many examples of sustainable courses and programs that are offered on campus, including the *Environmental Sustainability and Global Health* concentration offered by the School of International Service, where undergraduate students may gain a broad

understanding of the connections between planetary and human health. The *Global Environmental Politics* program is an interdisciplinary master's degree where students expand on their knowledge of environmental politics through fields of study such as development, urban ecology, food and agriculture, and climate. The School of Public Affairs is home to the Center of Environmental Policy which convenes dialogues and workshops on such issues as regulating critical chemicals used in the semiconductor industry, reauthorization of the Toxic Substances Control Act, and financing innovation in the water sector. The School of Communication hosts the Center for Environmental Filmmaking (CEF), which is one of the leading environmental, wildlife, and conservation film programs in the world. For graduate students, the Kogod School of Business offers a Master's in Sustainability Management degree program (MSSM), which is designed to integrate business education with environmental science and public policy.

In addition to academics, there are a number of clubs and student organizations dedicated to improving sustainable outcomes around campus and within the greater DC community. They are as follows: AU Beekeeping Society, AU Community Garden, AU Outdoors, AU Sunrise Hub, AU Student Zero Waste Club, Climate and Conservation Policy Club, Climate Reality, Engineers for a Sustainable World, Kogod Sustainability Club, Nourish International, Re-Volv Solar Ambassadors, Society of Environmental Leaders, and the WCL (Washington College of Law) Community Garden. Additionally, student leaders on campus can get involved with the Learning by Leading (LxL) program. In this recently revitalized program, AU utilizes a partnership between the arboretum and Smithsonian Gardens to build leadership skills of the next generation of environmental leaders. The current LxL program includes AU's Edible Campus project which helps to maintain and improve the gardens on campus. AU's campus features both a community garden and a companion garden, which focuses on growing complementary plants in close proximity. Students involved in these clubs have the opportunity to grow and maintain the gardens while learning about sustainable practices and how to facilitate healthy gathering places for other students and the community.

AU's Office of Sustainability also administers a *sustainability fund*, which advances the university's active pursuit of sustainability by providing financial and administrative support for campus projects developed and proposed by members of the community. This program encourages students, faculty, staff, alumni, and neighborhood residents to propose and implement projects that help to advance the university's sustainability goals.

American University's long-standing commitment to sustainability is evident in all of these programs across campus. Students learn about sustainability efforts during the admissions process and staff and faculty are engaged in ongoing programs and new efforts. AU is also proud to share our stories with our peer institutions and to partner with other universities and organizations as we all work together on climate action.

**Nominee Information**

School, District (LEA), or Postsecondary Institution Name: American University

Category of Nomination (School, District, or Postsecondary): Postsecondary

Address: 4401 Massachusetts Ave NW City: Washington State: DC Zip: 20016

Twitter: @GreenAU, @AmericanU

Facebook: American University Sustainability, American University

Top Official Title (Mr./Ms./Mrs./ Dr.): President First Name: Sylvia Last Name: Burwell

Position/Role (Principal/ Chancellor/ CEO/ President): President

Lead Applicant (if different)

Title (Mr./Ms./Mrs./ Dr.): First Name: Megan Last Name: Litke

Position or Role: Director of Sustainability

Email: [meganzl@american.edu](mailto:meganzl@american.edu), [sustainability@american.edu](mailto:sustainability@american.edu) Phone: 202.885.6262

Check all that apply:

Early Learning

Magnet

Elementary

**Non-Public**

Middle

Two-Year

High

**Four-Year**

Public

Community College

Charter

Career and Technical

Provide percentages, if any are relevant to your school, district, or institution:

Pell Recipients: 20%

Free and Reduced-Price Lunch:

Minority:

Limited English Proficient:

Special Education:

Graduation Rate: 78.8 in 6 years, first year retention rate: 90.5

Attendance Rate:

Provide the following:

Total Enrolled: 14,318 Number of Schools: Buildings: 54 Campuses: 1

## **Documentation of Sustainability Achievement**

### **Pillar I: Efforts to Reduce Environmental Impact and Costs**

#### **Carbon Neutrality**

In 2018, American University became the first urban campus, the first research university, and the largest higher education institution in the United States to achieve carbon neutrality. AU achieved carbon neutrality two years ahead of an ambitious target of 2020 by approaching the goal with three innovative strategies: 1) Reduce our overall emissions, 2) use renewable energy, and 3) offset the small remainder.

This milestone was achieved through commitment, leadership, and community effort. Students led every step of this journey; they have always encouraged the university to broaden how we think about sustainability and strive for more. Staff who build and manage our campus embraced the commitment to sustainability, while faculty integrated sustainability into classes and processes to reflect their sustainability commitment.

#### **Energy Efficiency and Renewable Sources**

From 2005 to 2017, AU decreased electricity use per square foot by more than 20%. AU accomplished this through the modernization of numerous buildings on campus, as well as the construction of new energy-efficient buildings. American University is home to 10 LEED certified buildings. In addition, three buildings (Mary Graydon Center, Letts, and Anderson/Centennial) currently have solar thermal on the roofs which in total generate 969.10 *MMBtu* of thermal energy per year. AU's most recent campus innovation occurred in 2020 with the construction of an on-campus combined heat and power (CHP) plant. This system will reduce dependence on the electrical grid, which is especially important during peak demand. With its more efficient CHP system, AU will avoid peak demand charges as well as provide electricity from a more efficient source than "Peaker plants" that are used to assist peak demand times. Additionally, the CHP uses waste heat to produce hot water in the winter time, further reducing energy consumption.

In addition to 2500 photovoltaic panels on campus, AU's largest renewable project to date is the Capital Partners Solar Project. In 2016, solar-generated power from a partnership between American University, George Washington University, and George Washington University Hospital supplied 50% of each partner's electricity. Approximately 243,000 solar panels are located across three sites in North Carolina to supply the partnership members with over 123 million kWh of solar power over a 20-year period. Not only was this the largest commitment to solar energy of any university in the region, but the largest solar power project by a non-utility company constructed east of the Mississippi River at the time. In addition to the renewables, the remainder of AU's electricity use is matched with renewable energy credits (RECs), so that the university uses 100% green electricity. In 2019, 56.66% of total energy consumed came from renewable sources.

## **Water Efficiency**

Across campus, bathrooms and shower spaces use low-flow faucets and showerheads, dual flush toilets, and waterless urinals. Facilities staff replaced old washing machines with ENERGY STAR models which use 43% less water than a standard washing machine. Between FY06 and FY18, AU achieved a 51.94% reduction in potable water use on campus. Notable stormwater management sites on campus include the nine green roofs on campus, two bioretention ponds at the School of International Service and several rain gardens by Kogod School of Business, Centennial Parking Garage and Clark/Roper Halls. AU also has a computerized irrigation system which adjusts water usage based on the weather and rainfall patterns of our campus.

Additionally, individual building level water meters are located in several buildings to allow staff to quickly identify and remedy leaks. Faculty, staff, and students can also use an online 2FIX Facility Repair Request form to report leaks.

## **Zero Waste**

In 2010, AU adopted a Zero Waste Policy for reducing campus waste and diverting the university's waste stream from landfill. AU's waste management system aims to utilize renewable materials, enhance the campus environment, and protect the health of the University community. The university tracks and audits waste metrics, develops strategies to improve sustainable purchasing, and engages with the community.

Additionally, the university utilizes a three-bin system with landfill, compost (organic waste), and mixed recycling in all campus buildings. On each bin, there are guidelines for what can and cannot be thrown inside. Between baseline measurements (calendar year 2005) and FY18, consumption of waste was reduced by 17.93%. In FY18, the percentage of waste diverted from the landfill (through recycling, composting and resell) totaled 38.62%. For larger events, the Sustainability Office offers a new program, called the EcoRep Program, where students are available to assist individuals not familiar with the campus waste sorting. EcoReps also hold pop-up events for clothing drives, recycling programs, and waste education in the dining hall. Recycling is also available for e-waste, batteries, clothing, plastic bags, and ink cartridges.

## **Transportation**

AU is committed to minimizing transportation impacts on the environment and local communities by offering a wide variety of resources to reduce transportation emissions. First, the Metro University Pass, or U-PASS, was adopted in 2016 to provide students with unlimited use of the Metrorail and Metrobus at a flat fee throughout the entire school year. All full-time undergraduate, graduate, and law students have access to this program. For bikers, AU students are eligible to save \$70, or 73% off the price of a regular Capital Bikeshare membership, while employees who commute by bike are eligible for a \$20 monthly benefit to use for bike-related equipment, maintenance costs and other expenses. Additionally, AU has nine EV charging

stations (18 total ports). Finally, the American University Shuttle brings students, staff, and faculty around the campus community to our Spring Valley, Washington College of Law, and Main Campus buildings. This system provides easy access to the Metro and classes to help eliminate the need for student-owned cars. AU Shuttles are fueled using a B20 biodiesel blend of 20% biofuel and 80% diesel.

### **Campus Grounds**

As the No. 4 Most Beautiful Urban Campus by Best Choice Schools, it is no secret that American University is known for its commitment to making a positive ecological impact. AU's campus is an 84-acre accredited arboretum and public garden featuring more than 3,700 trees.

Through the Learning by Leading (LxL) program, AU utilizes a partnership between the arboretum and Smithsonian Gardens to build leadership skills of the next generation of environmental leaders. Over 50 students participated in the first year of the LxL program culminating in the maintenance and improvement of the AU Edible Campus project. AU's campus features both a community garden and a companion garden, which focuses on growing complementary plants in close proximity. Both gardens grow a variety of produce like onions, garlic, spinach, loofah, kale, turnips, grapes, figs, raspberries, and a variety of fresh herbs. Students involved in these clubs have the opportunity to grow and maintain the garden while learning about sustainable practices and creating and facilitating a healthy community and gathering place for students.

### **Carbon Offsets**

To address remaining carbon emissions after the use of renewables and reductions, the university purchases carbon offsets through four key programs. The first program offsets the carbon emissions of AU study abroad programs. For more than 17 years, AU has operated the Nairobi Center to serve hundreds of AU students and develop strong connections with Kenyan communities. AU's investment in the Paradigm Project helps fund financing for families in Kenya to own efficient cook stoves which reduces deforestation. The second program is targeted at eliminating waste emissions through landfill gas capture projects and efficient trucking. The third program is targeted at commuter carbon emissions. In 2018 American University worked alongside the Anacostia Watershed Society to plant and nurture trees. The remaining offsets include a landfill electric generation project.

## **Pillar 2: Efforts to Improve the Health and Wellness of Students and Staff**

### **Cleaning and Maintenance**

AU requires all cleaning products, equipment and practices conducted or contracted by the university to adhere to the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), Leadership in Environmental Engineering and Design EB: O&M 2009 standards, which outline Green Cleaning Policies.

Staff, faculty, and students can request maintenance or report problems through the 2Fix system. 2Fix requests are prioritized based on whether they are an emergency, sensitive, or routine. In the case of an emergency or sensitive situation such as an elevator trap call, fire, flood, power outage, or equipment failure, the 2FIX emergency hotline is available.

### **Chemicals & Contaminants: General**

University policy requires individuals in control of chemicals used in research on campus to maintain an accurate chemical inventory in order to minimize waste, track reporting limits, and comply with hazard communication laws. The Office of Environmental Health and Safety manages the chemical inventory software for the university. Hazardous waste must be handled according to national and local guidelines and no amount of hazardous waste may be thrown into the regular trash or poured down the drain. Additionally, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is practiced throughout campus. Natural pest prevention strategies are prioritized, and chemical pesticides are used only as a last resort after other options have been exhausted.

### **Ventilation**

Since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, Facilities Management has expanded campus processes to provide additional protection for the AU community. To achieve optimum air quality, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning, all buildings have undergone preventative maintenance and performance testing. The team also upgraded all air handling units by changing out more than 7,700 air filters to meet Center for Disease Control guidelines. Third-party engineering companies inspected and signed off on AU's compliance with those guidelines at the end of 2020.

AU increased the outside air flow to all buildings as much as possible, while monitoring room temperatures and humidity to avoid extremes and potential mold growth. As part of their preventive maintenance program, Facilities Management visually inspects all dormitories and residential spaces annually for signs of moisture and mold growth.

### **Physical Health & Wellness Services**

AU offers a robust assortment of services to ensure the educational experience of students runs uninterrupted by health and safety concerns. Beginning with the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, all students living on campus or attending in-person classes must be

vaccinated. Over 98% of the AU population is fully vaccinated. In addition, mask, social distancing, and indoor gathering policies are strongly enforced.

The Student Health Center offers scheduled office visits with accommodations that range from testing for common illnesses to STI testing, injury treatment, prescription refills and other illnesses. For survivors of sexual violence, AU offers a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) exam. Telemedicine and same-day appointments are also available, if necessary. The Health Promotion and Advocacy Center (HPAC) ensures students are aware of these resources and have the guidance necessary to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Within HPAC is the Peer Health Educators program, a group of undergraduate students trained to interact, inform, and engage the campus through educational programs, workshops, class discussions and residence hall events with individual students, athletic teams, and student organizations.

### **Mental Health & Wellness Services**

The Counseling Center provides a variety of mental health services to the campus community, including short-term psychotherapy, crisis intervention, group counseling, outreach and consultation, and referral resources. We provide intervention and prevention services, both within and outside the Center. At the Counseling Center, all individual and group therapy sessions are free to AU students, regardless of full- or part-time status, and regardless of whether it's during the academic year or summer break.

We constantly evaluate best practices and changing community needs with the goal of ensuring and expanding accessibility. In October 2019, we added services with ProtoCall, which provides all day urgent care clinician access by phone to our students. In 2020, our staff members became certified as suicide prevention training instructors and are actively training faculty and staff to strengthen the competency of community members in suicide prevention. We have consistently reduced wait times over the past two academic years, and added a clinical case manager to our staff to assist students in accessing off-campus therapy when desired or recommended. Access involves many factors, including providing quality care and diversity and inclusion. The Counseling Center staff is a multicultural and multi-theoretical staff who deeply value a diverse community. Their social justice approach recognizes they have an obligation as a mental health agency to provide an inclusive and supportive environment for all students.

## **Pillar 3: Efforts to Ensure Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education**

### **Academic Programs**

AU offers a variety of academic programs across all disciplines that prepare students for careers in sustainability. From world-class professors to hands-on work and research, AU students in these programs are dedicated to making a difference for our planet.

### **School of International Service (SIS)**

Offered by the School of International Service, undergraduate students may pursue a concentration in Environmental Sustainability and Global Health which provides students with a broad understanding of the connections between planetary and human health and ways to respond to each. Students develop the intellectual and applied tools needed to simultaneously work towards a both a healthier Earth and healthier human population.

Graduate students in SIS can choose from over a dozen master's degrees, each with the opportunity to have an environmental focus. The Global Environmental Politics program, founded by SIS professor Paul Wapner, is an interdisciplinary degree where master's students expand on their knowledge of environmental politics through fields of study like development, urban ecology, food/agriculture, and climate. 81% of graduates of this program are employed or seeking further education six months post-graduation. Other prominent environmental degrees through SIS include the MS in Development Management, and MA in International Development.

### **School of Public Affairs (SPA)**

SPA is home to the Center of Environmental Policy. Since its launch in 2010, the Center has convened dialogues and workshops on such issues as regulating critical chemicals used in the semiconductor industry, reauthorization of the Toxic Substances Control Act, monitoring lead in drinking water, better monitoring to support water quality trading, and financing innovation in the water sector. The Center is also a leader in applied research and policy analysis. They have done this by developing an exploratory State Air, Climate, and Energy Index, being part of a book-length project on conceptual innovation in environmental policy, an analysis of policy options for managing hydraulic fracking, and a book on the political economy of green growth for the United States and globally.

Finally, the Center has brought educational opportunities to American University and its students and by developing the next generation of environmental leaders. They do this, of course, through classes in the School of Public Affairs, but also in sponsoring student internships with environmental and energy organizations, recognizing promising students through the William K. Reilly Scholarships, and providing practical experience to students through projects. The Center also brings environmental leaders to the campus community; distinguished guests have included five former EPA Administrators, leaders from the water utility and climate change community, environmental and sustainability investors, and corporate environmental leaders.

### **School of Communication (SOC)**

The Center for Environmental Filmmaking (CEF) is one of the leading environmental, wildlife, conservation film programs in the world. Its mission is to advance filmmaking, photography, and new forms of media as vital catalysts for raising awareness, promoting solutions, and mobilizing movements. The center provides an outstanding array of courses, experiential learning opportunities, creative media labs, film and speaker series, and internships. In addition to accomplished and award-winning faculty, CEF partners with conservation and advocacy organizations, media companies, and a vast network of experts, scholars, and policymakers to create and innovate high-impact storytelling that makes a meaningful difference.

CEF offers a “Classroom-in-the-Wild” course, which is an experiential, field-based workshop open to all students and the public that provides participants the opportunity to expand and improve their photography and filmmaking skills. Whether a week-long spring break workshop in the Chesapeake Bay or West Virginia, a ten-day summer Alaska experience, a two-week kayak adventure in Maine, or trips to Cuba, the Galapagos, and Costa Rica, the course challenges students to thrive in sometimes difficult conditions and succeed in filming in the wild.

### **Kogod School of Business (KSB)**

Offered by the Kogod School of Business, the Sustainability Minor provides students with a solid understanding of sustainability as it relates to management and operations of public and private enterprises worldwide. The program prepares students for graduate studies in sustainability and/or careers in corporate responsibility, social entrepreneurship, sustainable development, and related areas.

For graduate students, the Master's in Sustainability Management degree program (MSSM) from the Kogod School of Business is designed to integrate business education with environmental science and public policy. The MSSM is the only interdisciplinary business-based degree of its kind in the country. Graduates of the program will be well poised to successfully lead in developing and implementing multi-faceted solutions to environmental, societal, and other cross-sector problems in business organizations, nonprofits, or the government.

### **College of Arts & Sciences (CAS)**

CAS is home to the Environmental Studies (BA) and Environmental Science (BS) programs. The goal of the Department of Environmental Science is to inspire and train leaders in the sustainability of our planet. The program offers rigorous and interdisciplinary curricula that are firmly grounded in the natural sciences and provide both the knowledge and critical thinking skills to make sound, rational decisions and to effectively engage in public discourse concerning current and emerging environmental issues.

The Environmental Studies (BA) program begins with a set of foundational courses in both the natural (biology, chemistry, and mathematics/statistics) and social sciences (economics,

anthropology, government, sociology). Then students build on this foundational knowledge with a wide variety of courses available suited to their interests and professional goals. Graduates are prepared for employment in a broad range of fields where scientific information is applied in the development and implementation of environmental policies and procedures.

The Environmental Science (BS) program draws principally from the natural sciences, including biology, chemistry, earth sciences, physics, mathematics, and statistics. Nine credits in the social sciences (communication and economics) are required in addition to the courses in natural sciences. In addition to classroom work, the program provides students with training in both field and laboratory techniques applicable to the study of the natural environment. Graduates are prepared for a broad range of opportunities, from serving as a scientist for public or private environmental organizations, to professional school in health, law, or engineering, to graduate school in either natural or social sciences.

### **Creating an Immersive Sustainability Experience**

The Sustainable Development program, a theme of the Washington Semester program is a unique course of study that combines engaging seminars, visits with numerous activists and leaders, study of strategies to achieve change, and valuable interactions among students. Students learn about key actors in the global community, study specific issues such as education, inequality, the Sustainable Development Goals, social entrepreneurship and public/private partnerships, conservation, and climate change.

The Natural Resources and Sustainable Development (NRSD) master's program at the School of International Service includes a year-long abroad program at the University of Peace in Costa Rica and allows them to conduct on-site research there. This dual degree program allows students pursuing a career in the environment to be educated from experts in both the Global North and Global South. AU offers several sustainability-focused immersion experiences through Alternative Breaks (spring break, winter break, and summer) in themes of sustainable development, conservation, environmental filmmaking, social justice, environmental justice, food security, women's empowerment, and public health.

### **Guidance in Sustainability**

In 2019-2020, the Office of Sustainability collaborated with the Center for Teaching, Research and Learning to create a *Campus Sustainability Lesson Plan* that instructors can use in the classroom. The lesson plan guides educators with a narrated video, interactive map, multiple activities, discussion questions, and a variety of resources to help instructors incorporate aspects of campus sustainability into their courses. Following an academic audit in 2019, nearly 300 courses were identified as sustainability courses or courses that included sustainability. 201 course sections were specifically labeled as sustainability-inclusive courses, which incorporate social responsibility, the role of businesses, environmental issues, and governmental responses to environmental issues into lessons. 93 course sections were specifically labelled as sustainability-focused courses which make pollution, climate action, environmental justice, energy and

environmental policy, and STEM aspects of sustainability the central theme of a course. Overall, 38 of the 50 academic departments at AU included sustainability focused or inclusive courses.

### **American University Sustainability Fund**

The fund advances the university's active pursuit of sustainability by providing financial and administrative support for campus sustainability projects developed and proposed by members of the university community. This program allows any member of the university community, including students, faculty, staff, alumni, and neighborhood residents to propose and enact sustainability projects. Projects must have a research or implementation component on the American University campus or in the community and must help advance the achievement of the sustainability plan.

Projects can request between \$500 - \$1500 to be used for materials or products required to implement the project, professional work, installation, or design, research and testing or monitoring equipment, and student wages. Previous projects that received support from the fund include a new mural for the Community Garden, composting pilots, training for the AU Beekeeping Society, bike maintenance stations, student documentaries, rain barrels, and more.

### **Student Organizations**

American University has over a dozen sustainability-related clubs on campus. They are as follows: AU Beekeeping Society, AU Community Garden, AU Outdoors, AU Sunrise Hub, AU Student Zero Waste Club, Climate and Conservation Policy Club, Climate Reality, Engineers for a Sustainable World, Kogod Sustainability Club, Nourish International, Re-Volv Solar Ambassadors, Society of Environmental Leaders, and the WCL (Washington College of Law) Community Garden.

### **Academic Support and Access Center (ASAC)**

Educating students on the importance of sustainability is not possible without a strong foundation of support. ASAC is committed to promoting access for individuals with disabilities within the university's diverse community. For academic support, students have access to tutoring services administered by peer assistants who have previously taken classes or have developed a strong background in your field of study. Additionally, professional academic services are offered through the Writing Center and Math & Stats program. Students with disabilities can request testing accommodations, assistive technology, registration support, and other assisted learning services through ASAC. ASAC faculty are prepared to meet with students over a variety of concerns to best guide them throughout their college experience.