



THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ROME STRATEGIC PLAN

OUR TIME IS NOW II: 2026-29

Rooted in Rome. Ready for the world.



THE AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY OF ROME

September 2026



Scott Sprenger
President



President's Message

"There are really only two choices for graduates who want a lot of options, to be a technically savvy liberal arts graduate or a liberally educated technical graduate."

Philip Gardner, Former Director of the Collegiate Employment Research Institute, Michigan State University.

The American University of Rome enters the period covered by *Our Time Is Now II: 2026–2029* from a position of confidence, momentum, and opportunity. Yet this is also a period of profound transformation in higher education, requiring continued vigilance, strategic discipline, and nimble adaptation. Technological disruption, geopolitical uncertainty, demographic change, evolving workforce expectations, and growing concern about the return on investment of a university education are dramatically reshaping what students and families expect for their tuition dollars. At the same time, artificial intelligence is changing how we work, learn, and create, bringing renewed attention to the distinctly human capacities at the heart of a liberal arts education: critical thinking, creativity, articulate communication, ethical judgment, intercultural understanding, and the ability to make informed decisions amid complexity and change.

I am confident that AUR is well positioned to navigate the challenges of this moment, and I remain optimistic about our prospects for the long term. For nearly sixty years, the University has drawn on the extraordinary

opportunities afforded by its location in Rome, its international community, and its broad network of alumni and professionals. AUR's distinctive educational experience brings together intellectual breadth and disciplinary expertise, experiential learning, close faculty mentorship, and meaningful engagement across cultures. Underpinning it all are an exceptionally talented faculty and staff, a committed leadership team, and a deeply devoted Board of Trustees.

The basis for this continued confidence is clear. During the 2022–2025 strategic planning period, AUR grew from an institution serving approximately 400–450 students to one serving approximately 800. Over the same period, we increased and strengthened the University's faculty, curriculum, and academic profile; expanded its financial capacity; made substantial investments in leadership roles and career readiness; and broadened our institutional partnerships and philanthropic support. Perhaps most significantly, AUR secured, for the first time in its history, a fully-fledged campus in Rome's historic Barnabite monastery, with the capacity to eventually serve approximately 1,200–1,300 students.

This next planning phase, however, must be about more than growth. Our challenge is to convert momentum into mission-driven institutional strength and demonstrable student value: to become more intentional about whom we serve, more distinctive in what we offer, more rigorous in measuring graduate outcomes, and more sustainable in how we prioritize our activities and deploy our resources.

At AUR, one of our most important distinctive strengths -- following on the Philip Gardner quote above -- is our rejection of the false choice between liberal education and preparation of students for successful lives and careers. We believe the education needed for a rapidly changing, AI-enabled world must provide both. Students need career-focused disciplinary expertise and technological fluency, but they also need judgment, adaptability, communication,

creativity, ethical reasoning, and the capacity to engage constructively across disciplines, cultures, and points of view. In this respect, our contemporary mission also speaks powerfully to AUR's founding internationalist vision: a belief in education as a means of reaching across national and cultural boundaries and transcending the forces of polarizing political ideologies. In a world once again marked by deep divisions, that purpose has renewed relevance.

Ultimately, the measure of this plan will be the students we send into the world. Our aim is not simply to prepare them for their first job, but to equip them with the knowledge, judgment, adaptability, confidence, and global perspective to navigate change, create value, contribute across cultures, and lead lives of purpose. That is the enduring value of an AUR education—and the standard against which our success should be judged.

THE AUR MISSION

The American University of Rome prepares students to live and work across cultures as skilled and knowledgeable citizens of an interconnected and rapidly changing world. AUR is a private, independent, not-for-profit institution of higher education, offering undergraduate and graduate liberal arts programs to degree-seeking and study abroad students from around the world.

Taking the best of the American approach to interdisciplinary, student-centered learning, our international faculty and staff use Rome as our classroom and Italy and Europe as invaluable resources. AUR's innovative programs promote intellectual excellence, personal growth and an appreciation of cultural diversity in an international environment.

Where will AUR be in 2029?

From growth to purposeful, sustainable development

By 2029, AUR will have translated the momentum of recent growth into a stronger, more distinctive, and more sustainable university. We envision an institution that:

Educates approximately 1,000 students per semester while preserving the advantages of a small university.

Growth will be deliberate and will proceed only as academic quality, housing and campus capacity, student experience and wellness, human capacity, and long-term financial sustainability permit.

Offers a distinctive educational model built around Rome.

Every undergraduate program will intentionally use Rome, Italy, or Europe as an educational resource, and students will repeatedly connect academic learning with experience beyond the classroom.

Integrates liberal education with technical and professional preparation.

Students will develop the enduring intellectual capacities of the liberal arts and social sciences alongside disciplinary expertise in business, technological and AI fluency, professional experience, and clear pathways toward employment or further study.

Makes excellent graduate outcomes an institutional priority.

Curricula, advising, experiential learning, career preparation, and co-curricular experiences will increasingly work together to prepare students for satisfying careers, strong graduate and professional programs, and lives of purpose.

Utilizes its international community as an educational, career-readiness, and philanthropic asset.

AUR will intentionally develop language and intercultural competencies, global communication skills, and multiple cultural perspectives required to work and lead across borders.

Preserves a highly personal student experience as it grows.

Small classes, faculty engagement, individualized advising, responsive services, and a strong sense of community will remain defining characteristics of AUR.

Operates from an expanded and transformed campus supported by updated technologies and a stronger housing strategy.

Campus expansion and renovation will support, rather than compromise, academic quality, community, and the student experience.

Possesses stronger and more diversified financial foundations.

Enrollment will remain an important economic driver while philanthropy, partnerships, graduate and short-format programs, and other mission-aligned revenue opportunities strengthen institutional resilience.

Is increasingly data-informed, accountable, and agile.

Strategic planning, budgeting, assessment, institutional research, risk management, and Board oversight will operate as parts of an integrated institutional planning process that is accountable to our accreditor, the Middle States Commission of Higher Education.

From Growth to Sustainable Development

Our Time Is Now I established the framework for a period of significant institutional growth. *Our Time Is Now II* begins from a different starting point: greater scale, stronger capacity, increased visibility, and new obligations to ensure that growth advances rather than erodes the bespoke qualities that distinguish AUR.

ENROLLMENT

Growing from approximately 400–450 students to approximately 800, moving toward the goal of 1000 established in 2022.

CAMPUS

Secured a fully fledged campus within the historic Barnabite monastery, doubling the campus size and creating new possibilities for academic and community life.

ACADEMIC & CAREER CAPACITY

Strengthened faculty and academic profile and invested in career-readiness personnel, advising, and programming.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

Expanded financial capacity, partnerships, and philanthropic support, creating a stronger platform for next phase long-term financial sustainability.

Three broad questions that will guide this planning period:

Mission and Market Relevance: Our unique success to this point has been grounded in maintaining a balance between mission and popular market demands. As the scales continue to tip in the direction of career-signposted majors and immediate return-on-investment, how will AUR remain true to its liberal arts mission while also remaining current—or a step ahead—of competitors in a rapidly changing global higher education marketplace?

Competitive Advantage: What are AUR's most compelling differentiators, how can we strengthen them, and how can we communicate them more effectively to broader markets?

Student Value and Outcomes: What tangible return does an AUR education provide to students and families, and how can we strengthen, measure, and make that value more compelling in terms of graduate outcomes, either as acceptance to excellent graduate or professional schools or entry into a satisfying career path?



STRATEGIC CONTEXT



Assumptions for the Next Three Years and Beyond...

1. Enrollment remains essential, but growth alone is not the goal.

The next objective is controlled growth toward approximately 1,000 students, subject to institutional capacity, while improving the composition, quality, retention, and sustainability of enrollment. AUR will continue to prioritize right-fit students attracted by immersive international experience, experiential learning, academic rigor, close faculty engagement, and personal growth.

2. Study abroad remains strategically important.

Strong demand for study abroad in Italy, combined with pressures facing liberal arts institutions globally, means study abroad will remain important to AUR's enrollment, partnerships, and financial model. The appropriate balance among degree-seeking, study abroad, and graduate students should in the long term be curated deliberately rather than determined by market demand alone. In the short term, we will accept some imbalance.

3. Students and families increasingly expect demonstrable career outcomes.

AUR's response is not to become narrowly vocational. It is to make the professional value of its distinctive liberal arts education more intentional, more integrated, and more visible while shifting some of the curriculum toward professional and pre-professional programming.

4. Capacity conditions a sustainable pace of growth.

Housing, academic capacity, faculty and staff workload, student services, technology, and physical infrastructure must grow in appropriate relationship to enrollment. Housing is a significant strategic constraint affecting recruitment, affordability, competitiveness, and student experience.

5. Recruiting for global diversity remains key to institutional identity and the AUR experience

Recruitment must continue to broaden our geographic reach and ensure a genuinely international student body in which students develop intercultural competencies, creative skills, and problem-solving methods.

6. Technology will change both education and work.

AUR must prepare technologically fluent graduates while reinforcing the human capacities that become more important as technology automates or reshapes more tasks: management of people and complex systems, coordination of teams, judgment, ethical reasoning, creativity, communication, research, and intellectual curiosity.

7. Improved data collection and analysis will be essential for institutional effectiveness and Middle States compliance.

AUR must continue to strengthen its capacity to collect, analyze, and use reliable data to support evidence-based decision-making, assess outcomes, and demonstrate continuous institutional improvement.

8. Strong Board governance and effective Board-administration collaboration are essential to institutional success:

Clear roles, shared priorities, transparent communication, and timely access to reliable information will improve results while maintaining appropriate governance and accountability.

9. Teaching excellence and personal engagement remain non-negotiable.

Teaching excellence, small classes, faculty mentorship, personalized advising, and student-responsive services are defining features of the AUR experience and must be protected as the institution grows.

10. Long-term institutional sustainability requires diversification of revenue, investment, and budget discipline.

Enrollment growth, housing, advancement, partnerships, budget management, operating efficiency, the creation of a quasi-endowment, and disciplined resource allocation must be integrated around mission, strategic priorities, and measurable institutional outcomes.

PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS



STUDENT VALUE

An AUR Graduate's Attributes

AUR's mission, curriculum, advising, experiential learning, career preparation are designed to produce these attributes:

Combine intellectual breadth and disciplinary expertise

Critical thinking, creative problem-solving

Effective written and oral communication

The ability to apply quantitative reasoning to complex real-world problems

Intercultural competence, supported by meaningful second-language development

Ethical reasoning and social responsibility

AI and digital fluency

Professional competencies and career readiness

Adaptability and a capacity for lifelong learning

Global awareness and citizenship



The Strategic Plan's Six Priorities

1 PLACE: LEVERAGING ROME, ITALY, AND EUROPE AS AUR'S DISTINCTIVE EDUCATIONAL ADVANTAGE

Make Rome, Italy, and Europe a defining curricular and pedagogical resource across AUR degree programs.

2 LEARNING: DELIVERING ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND OPTIMAL GRADUATE OUTCOMES IN A CHANGING WORLD

Integrate liberal education, professional preparation, technological fluency, and experiential, career-focused learning.

3 COMMUNITY: CULTIVATING A CAMPUS & GLOBAL COMMUNITY

Leveraging AUR's campus and international community as a developmental, professional, and lifelong-engagement advantage.

4 INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY: STRENGTHENING AUR'S FINANCIAL FOUNDATIONS AND PARTNERSHIP IN SUPPORT OF MISSION

Enhance enrollment, strategic partnerships, philanthropy, diversified revenue, and financial resilience.

5 CAMPUS: PROVIDE A SECURE, ADEQUATELY SIZED, AND INSPIRING CAMPUS

Expand and enhance the Barnabite campus through renovation, technology, disciplinary-relevant spaces, and housing capacity aligned with enrollment goals.

6 INSTITUTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND EFFECTIVENESS: STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE, DATA ANALYSIS, AND OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

Establish an Institutional Effectiveness Office and strengthen governance, data and outcomes assessment, and integrated planning to improve effectiveness, align resources with priorities, build organizational capacity, and meet Middle States expectations.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY I: PLACE

Leveraging Rome, Italy, Europe, and beyond as AUR's distinctive educational advantage in place-based learning.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Establish AUR as a leading international liberal arts university for place-based education by intentionally integrating Rome, Italy, and Europe into teaching, research, experiential learning, professional development, and community engagement.

OUR COMMITMENTS

1. Integrate place-based learning across the curriculum.

Every undergraduate program will identify meaningful ways to incorporate Rome, Italy, or Europe into its curriculum. Departments will map these experiences so that place-based learning is intentional, progressive, academically rigorous, and aligned with program outcomes.

2. Ensure meaningful experiential learning for every student.

Students will connect theory with practice through experiences that may include on-site learning, internships, research, consulting projects, community-based learning, field schools, laboratory work, international study, entrepreneurship, creative work, and interdisciplinary capstones.

3. Build partnerships that create educational and career-readiness value.

AUR will prioritize cultivating relationships with businesses, cultural institutions, governmental and non-governmental organizations, universities, international

agencies, research centers, and other partners that expand academic, research, internship, and professional opportunities for students and faculty.

4. Connect Rome with contemporary global challenges.

AUR will use Rome and the wider Mediterranean, European, and global context to engage questions including migration, sustainability, diplomacy, cultural heritage, entrepreneurship, climate change, food sustainability, public health, religion, urban development, and social innovation.

5. Strengthen language and cultural fluency.

Language learning will increasingly extend beyond classroom instruction through immersion, community partnerships, professional settings, and cultural engagement, with bilingual or multilingual communication treated as a core graduate attribute.

2029 OUTCOMES

- Every undergraduate program intentionally integrates place-based education.
- Every degree-seeking student participates in multiple meaningful experiential-learning opportunities.
- Partnerships measurably expand opportunities for internships, research, and community engagement.
- AUR will actively position itself as a global leader in place-based education through faculty scholarship, conferences, public lectures, mission-driven summer and January-term programs, and communication of best practices and student outcomes.
- Graduates demonstrate strong intercultural competence, professional confidence, and the ability to apply learning in complex real-world environments.
- AUR increases its external recognition for international place-based education.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: LEARNING

Delivering academic excellence and optimal graduate outcomes in an interconnected, rapidly changing world

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Provide an innovative, interdisciplinary education that combines the liberal and creative arts, business, applied social sciences, and experiential learning to prepare graduates for lives and careers of purpose in an AI-enabled and interconnected global economy.

OUR COMMITMENTS

1. Design education around graduate outcomes.

Academic programs will define the intellectual, disciplinary, professional, and personal outcomes expected of graduates and align curriculum, advising, experiential learning, and assessment accordingly. The goal is to equip students to pursue fulfilling careers or progress to high-quality graduate and professional study.

2. Leverage General Education for improved graduate outcomes.

Streamline and strengthen the purpose of General Education around clearly articulated, measurable learning outcomes—including writing, critical thinking, quantitative and ethical reasoning, and global awareness—with 100% of core GE courses mapped to shared outcomes.

3. Strengthen BA–MA pathways and internal pipelines.

Provide clearer pathways to graduate study, and use institutional data, market analysis, mission alignment, and external program review to guide selective program development and growth, including assessment of the new Psychology program.

4. Preserve and strengthen teaching excellence.

AUR will continue to invest in faculty development, active and interdisciplinary learning, undergraduate research, academic technology, assessment, and innovative pedagogy while protecting close faculty-student engagement.

5. Align strategic faculty hiring with enrollment and program needs.

Continue to expand faculty and create development workshops in experiential pedagogy, assessment, responsible technology use, interdisciplinary teaching, and visiting-scholar and artists residencies.

6. Integrate professional preparation and experience throughout the student journey.

Career development will begin early and be integrated across the student experience through advising, internships, applied projects, student consultancies, mentored research, networking, entrepreneurship, and other professional experiences. Students will learn to translate these experiences into compelling career portfolios, narratives, and CVs.

7. Develop career-relevant skills and credentials.

AUR will provide targeted opportunities to strengthen AI literacy, professional communication, research skills, project management, and intercultural effectiveness, supported by alumni mentoring and systematic tracking of career engagement and outcomes.

8. Develop strategic centers as sites of research, scholarly convocation, and curricular innovation.

Academic Affairs, Advancement, and the President's Office will continue to develop and seek support for the Center for Food Studies, AUR Careers, and the Center for Archaeology and Heritage where they advance academic, professional, research, or philanthropic priorities.

9. Strengthen coordination among academic, career, and student-success advising.

AUR will improve advising standards, coordination, capacity, and tracking to support retention, timely degree completion, professional preparation, and graduate outcomes.

10. Prepare technologically and AI-fluent graduates.

AUR will integrate responsible AI and digital fluency into curricula, applied learning, and faculty and staff development in ways appropriate to each discipline.

2029 OUTCOMES

- Every academic program is explicitly connected to defined graduate outcomes.
- Meaningful professional and experiential learning is an expected component of the degree-seeking student experience.
- AI literacy and ethical digital fluency are integrated across the curriculum.
- AUR systematically tracks employment, graduate-school placement, and other post-graduation outcomes
- Academic quality, teaching excellence, and student learning remain defining characteristics of the AUR experience.
- Academic infrastructure supports these goals through strengthened digital library and research resources, information literacy, discipline-appropriate laboratories and media facilities, and learning technologies aligned with teaching, assessment, and student need.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: COMMUNITY

Building a connected campus and global community

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Cultivate a connected campus and global community in which students develop a strong sense of belonging and engagement, learn to communicate and collaborate across cultures, and build lifelong relationships that support them as globally minded citizens and professionals, who remain actively connected with AUR.

OUR COMMITMENTS

1. Expand development of student engagement and leadership.

AUR will expand opportunities for students to participate, lead, and contribute to the life of the University through student government, clubs and organizations, leadership roles, campus activities, and community initiatives.

2. Preserve an exceptional student experience as AUR grows.

Small classes, personal relationships, responsive student services, faculty mentorship, student organizations, leadership opportunities, wellbeing, and belonging will remain institutional priorities.

3. Deepen engagement with Italian language, culture, and society.

Students will have greater opportunities to use Italian and engage meaningfully with Italy through professional, civic, academic, and cultural experiences.

4. Strengthen intercultural learning across AUR's international community.

AUR will more intentionally use its international student body and location to create opportunities for students to learn across cultures, perspectives, and experiences and develop the skills to communicate and collaborate across difference.

5. Build a lifelong global AUR community.

AUR will strengthen connections among students, alumni, faculty, staff, and institutional partners through mentoring, internships, professional networking, lifelong learning, philanthropy, and community events.

6. Engage alumni, parents, and guardians as partners in the AUR community.

AUR will engage alumni, parents, and guardians more deliberately as partners in student success and ambassadors for the University through structured communications, events, the Parents' Council, mentoring, networking, recruitment, and philanthropy.

2029 OUTCOMES

- Students are more engaged in the life and leadership of the University
- AUR maintains a highly personalized student experience as the University grows.
- Student retention, wellbeing, graduation rates, and satisfaction with support services continue to strengthen.
- Graduates demonstrate measurable intercultural competence and global awareness.
- Students are more deeply connected to Italy and Italian society.
- AUR has a stronger and more active global alumni network.
- Parents and guardians are more actively engaged as partners and ambassadors.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Strengthen AUR's long-term institutional sustainability through purposeful enrollment growth, enhanced advancement and philanthropy, diversified revenue, strategic partnerships, responsible financial stewardship, and capacity aligned with mission.

OUR COMMITMENTS

1. Manage enrollment toward approximately 1,000 students within institutional capacity.

AUR will grow toward this range only as academic, service, and financial capacity permit. Enrollment strategy will emphasize right-fit students, strengthen retention, diversify recruitment markets, and deliberately manage the balance among degree-seeking, study abroad, and graduate populations.

2. Strengthen long-term financial planning and align resources with strategic priorities.

AUR will maintain disciplined multi-year financial planning that aligns budgets, investments, resource allocation, enrollment projections, and institutional capacity. Financial performance, key assumptions, and emerging risks will be regularly assessed to support responsible growth and long-term sustainability.

3. Diversify mission-aligned revenue and strengthen financial resilience.

AUR will reduce reliance on tuition by developing appropriate short-format and summer programs, externally funded projects, on-campus conferences, and other mission-aligned opportunities while strengthening cash reserves and financial flexibility.

4. Treat housing as a strategic capacity priority.

AUR will expand and diversify access to high-quality housing through partnerships and other residential opportunities. Housing will be approached strategically, supporting student recruitment, affordability, retention, and the student experience while addressing risk management and institutional capacity.

5. Build advancement and philanthropy into an enduring institutional strength.

AUR will successfully conclude its \$10 million campaign by 2029 while broadening engagement with trustees, alumni, parents, foundations, corporations, and other supporters. The campaign will expand the donor base, strengthen AUR's culture and capacity for philanthropy, and build momentum for the next comprehensive campaign.

6. Develop high-value strategic partnerships.

AUR will expand and deepen mission-aligned partnerships that create measurable value through enrollment and academic collaboration, internships and career pathways, research and externally funded projects, shared programs and resources, philanthropy, and institutional visibility.

2029 OUTCOMES

- Enrollment reaches approximately 1,000 students while maintaining academic quality, financial sustainability, and the high-quality student experience.
- AUR achieves greater financial strength and resilience, with disciplined multi-year planning, systematization, stronger cash reserves, and a more diversified revenue base.
- Access to high-quality student housing expands and diversifies in line with enrollment, affordability, risk-management, and student-experience goals.
- Mission-aligned programs and new educational opportunities generate additional revenue while extending AUR's reach and impact.
- AUR successfully completes its \$10 million campaign, expands philanthropic participation and capacity, and builds momentum for its next campaign.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5: CAMPUS

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Develop and maintain an inspiring, up-to-date and secure campus. The campus grounds and infrastructure will be aligned with enrollment goals, mission, and student expectations.

OUR COMMITMENTS

1. Complete the campus transformation as a strategic institutional asset.

AUR will continue to invest in attractive, functional, technology-enabled, and discipline-appropriate spaces that enhance teaching, learning, and student life while strengthening the University's market position, supporting enrollment goals, and contributing to student satisfaction, belonging, and retention.

2. Manage campus expansion and refurbishment.

Advance the planned work for Building B, Masina, and the Theatre/oratory through phased construction, project management, and completion according to specifications, schedule, and budget.

3. Maintain campus functionality during refurbishment.

Ensure continuity of student, faculty, and staff operations during construction through clear project management, disruption-mitigation planning, communication, and monitoring of the community experience.

4. Align learning environments, campus technology, and digital capability.

Align furniture, equipment, instructional technologies, the IT strategic plan, and faculty and staff technology upskilling with campus planning, academic needs, and student expectations.

5. Create campus spaces that connect community.

Identify and improve physical and virtual spaces that increase faculty-student connection, collaboration, engagement, and community exchange.

6. Diversify housing for risk management and growth.

Expand and diversify access to high-quality student housing through partnerships and other residential opportunities, reducing concentration risk while providing the capacity necessary to support enrollment growth, recruitment, retention, and the student experience.

2029 OUTCOMES

- Major elements of the Barnabite campus transformation are completed on approved scope, schedule, and budget.
- Learning and community spaces measurably support innovative teaching, collaboration, belonging, and the student experience.
- Campus technology and digital infrastructure meet defined academic and operational requirements.
- Housing capacity and diversification support planned enrollment growth while reducing concentration risk.
- Construction and refurbishment are managed without material deterioration in the student, faculty, or staff experience.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6: INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Strengthen AUR's institutional effectiveness through strong governance, improved board-administration collaboration, transparent communication, integrated planning, data-informed decision-making, responsible innovation, and a culture of continuous improvement in line with Middle States standards and expectations.

OUR COMMITMENTS

1. Integrate strategy, budgeting, and assessment.

Strategic priorities will inform annual operational plans and budget decisions. Results will in turn inform future priorities and resource allocation.

2. Establish an Institutional Effectiveness Office.

AUR will establish a focused institutional effectiveness function to coordinate institutional research, accreditation support, strategic assessment, reporting, and evidence-based continuous improvement.

3. Strengthen systematic learning-outcomes assessment.

AUR will institutionalize annual program-level learning-outcomes assessment, quantitative General Education assessment, graduate-outcomes and experiential-learning dashboards, and documented curricular improvements based on results, using appropriate learning technologies to support the work.

4. Build institutional data capacity and use technology responsibly.

AUR will maintain a concise institutional dashboard focused on the indicators that matter most to mission, student success, financial sustainability, capacity, and strategic progress, and will adopt data and AI technologies

that improve learning, services, administrative effectiveness, and decision-making while protecting privacy, integrity, transparency, and human judgment.

5. Invest in faculty and staff.

AUR will foster a collaborative institutional culture characterized by shared responsibility, open communication, accountability, continuous learning, and succession planning for increasing institutional complexity.

Professional development, leadership development, organizational effectiveness, employee wellbeing, and succession planning will receive increasing attention as the University grows.

6. Strengthen governance and accountability.

Enterprise risk management, policy review, strategic reporting, and Board-administration collaboration will become increasingly integrated into annual planning and governance. Trustees will receive timely, meaningful information about strategy, finances, academic quality, institutional performance, major risks, and corrective actions. Management will translate strategic priorities into annual objectives, budgets, measures, and results.

2029 OUTCOMES

- Strategic planning, budgeting, assessment, and institutional research function as an integrated management process.
- Reliable data routinely informs institutional decision-making.
- Faculty and staff development supports organizational capacity and succession.
- AI and digital technologies enhance teaching, administration, and student services while supporting ethical and responsible practice.
- Board will receive three quarterly RAG reports with comments on strategic planning implementation progress.

The 2029 Institutional Scorecard

A limited set of stable, mission-aligned indicators will define institutional progress.

The scorecard is deliberately concise. It is intended to give the Board and University leadership a stable view of whether strategy is producing the outcomes that matter most—not to measure every activity of the institution.

STRATEGIC MEASURE	2026 POSITION	2029 DIRECTION / TARGET
Total enrollment	Approximately 800	Approximately 1,000 subject to academic, residential, human, service, physical, and financial capacity
Enrollment composition	Degree-seeking, study abroad, graduate mix managed across programs	Board-approved mix aligned with mission, capacity, student success, and financial sustainability
International diversity	More than 50 nationalities represented	Maintain or strengthen international diversity
First-to-second-year retention	Baseline confirmed through institutional reporting	Demonstrable multi-year improvement
Graduation / completion	Baseline confirmed through institutional reporting	Demonstrable multi-year improvement
Positive graduate outcomes	Methodology and baseline formalized during implementation	Consistent tracking and improvement in employment / graduate-study outcomes
Professional & experiential learning	Multiple forms already available across programs	Meaningful professional and experiential learning becomes an expected degree-seeking student outcome
Place-based learning	Present across many programs	100% of undergraduate programs intentionally integrate place-based learning
Student experience / belonging	Existing survey and institutional evidence	Sustained high performance with improvement where gaps are identified
Housing capacity	Current capacity constrains growth and student experience	Capacity and diversification increase in line with the 1,000 enrollment range and approved risk thresholds
Philanthropic support	Current campaign and growing advancement capacity	Sustained growth and broader donor / alumni engagement
Financial sustainability	Tuition-dependent model with strengthened recent capacity	Board-defined operating, liquidity/reserve, and capital indicators demonstrate greater resilience

ACCOUNTABILITY



Strategic Risks and Institutional Responses

RISK	WHY IT MATTERS	STRATEGIC RESPONSE
Enrollment and market risk	Demographic pressures, affordability concerns, competition from English-language programs in Europe, and continued challenges facing liberal arts institutions may affect demand.	Diversify markets through enrollment strategy, including new program-ming; improve right-fit recruitment and retention; strengthen differentiation among American universities abroad, enhance experiential learning, career outcomes, and the international student experience.
Housing and capacity risk	Enrollment growth without sufficient housing, faculty and staff capacity, course availability, facilities, or student services could undermine quality and the personal character of AUR.	Treat academic, residential, human, service, physical, and financial capacity as conditions for growth; link enrollment scenarios to explicit capacity thresholds and corrective actions.
Financial risk	Tuition dependence and limited financial margin heighten vulnerability to enrollment volatility and major investment requirements.	Integrate enrollment, budgeting, philanthropy, partnerships, and major investments; strengthen reserves and diversify mission-aligned revenue.
Human-capital risk	Rapid growth can create unsustainable workload while salary constraints and hiring challenges may limit institutional capacity.	Prioritize workforce planning, organizational efficiency, professional and leadership development, employee wellbeing, and succession planning for critical roles.
External and technological risk	Geopolitical instability, visa and regulatory challenges, cybersecurity, AI disruption, and changing expectations around teaching and assessment require institutional agility.	Embed enterprise risk review into annual planning; maintain clear policies for responsible AI, information security, privacy, academic integrity, regulatory compliance, and business continuity.

BOARD OVERSIGHT

Strategic risks will be incorporated into AUR's enterprise risk process, with management responsible for mitigation and appropriate Board committees responsible for oversight. Significant changes in risk exposure will be reflected in regular Board reporting.

Implementation and Board Oversight

The Strategic Plan establishes direction. Annual operational planning translates that direction into action.

Management accountability

The President's Leadership Council will translate each strategic priority into annual objectives, responsible owners, performance measures, resource requirements, and budget priorities. Academic and administrative units will align annual plans with institutional priorities.

Integrated planning, assessment, and budgeting

Budget decisions will identify the strategic priorities and intended outcomes they support. Subsequent review will document results, actions taken, and whether those actions improved performance.

Board reporting

The Board of Trustees will oversee progress through a concise strategic dashboard and Red-Amber-Green reporting supported by key performance indicators, multi-year trends, major risks, and annual operational plans.

Continuous improvement

Assessment will be used as a management and learning tool rather than a separate compliance exercise. When results fall short, management will document the interpretation, corrective action, resource implications, and follow-up evidence.

For each strategic priority, Board reporting will answer four questions:

1. What did we commit to accomplish?
2. What does the evidence show?
3. Where are we off track or encountering risk?
4. What action or resource adjustment follows?

MAJOR STRATEGIC DECISIONS

Materials for major strategic investments will identify the strategic objective being advanced, evidence supporting the proposal, financial and human-resource implications, principal risks, intended outcomes, and the measures by which success will subsequently be evaluated.



Conclusion

AUR enters this planning period with opportunities that previous generations of the University worked hard to create: substantially increased enrollment, a stronger financial and academic foundation, a transformed physical campus, growing partnerships and philanthropic support, and a clearer understanding of the students and educational experiences that distinguish the University.

The next challenge is to use those advantages wisely. Success in 2029 should not be defined by size alone. It should be evident in the quality of the students AUR attracts and retains; the education they receive; their ability to translate that education into purposeful lives, careers, or further study; the strength of the faculty and staff who educate and support them; and the University's capacity to sustain its mission for decades to come.

At a time when higher education is increasingly asked to choose between intellectual breadth and professional utility, AUR can demonstrate that the strongest education provides both. At a time when technology makes information increasingly abundant, AUR can place greater emphasis on judgment, creativity, ethical reasoning, communication, and human understanding. And at a time when societies and workplaces increasingly cross national and cultural boundaries, AUR can make international experience and intercultural competence fundamental rather than peripheral to a university education.

Rome makes this possible in ways few institutions can replicate.

Our task over the next three years is to make that distinctive educational promise more intentional, more rigorous, more visible, and more consequential for every student we serve.

By doing so, AUR will enter its next chapter not simply as a larger institution, but as a stronger and more distinctive university—one capable of demonstrating what an international liberal arts education can and should accomplish in a rapidly changing world.



OUR TIME
IS NOW



APPENDIX A

STRATEGIC SWOT

The SWOT is presented as a decision tool: each observation is linked to its strategic implication.

STRENGTHS

OBSERVATION	STRATEGIC IMPLICATION
Intense focus on student success	Protect the high-touch model as scale increases.
Rome as an academic and professional hub	Make place-based education more intentional and visible across programs.
Experiential learning	Expand quality, access, and integration with academic outcomes.
Global orientation and diversity	Turn international diversity into an intentional learning outcome.
Academic credibility and value	Use accreditation, quality, and relative affordability to support partnerships and recruitment.

WEAKNESSES

OBSERVATION	STRATEGIC IMPLICATION
Tuition dependence and limited financial margin	Diversify revenue and maintain disciplined resource allocation.
Fragmentation and too many initiatives	Reduce priorities, strengthen cross-divisional ownership, and focus resources.
Human-capital constraints	Work with HR to strengthen workforce planning, development, salary strategy, and succession.
Advising and career-support gaps	Coordinate academic, career, and student-success advising.
Housing and infrastructure constraints	Treat housing and capacity as strategic conditions for growth.

OPPORTUNITIES

OBSERVATION	STRATEGIC IMPLICATION
Purposeful enrollment growth and market diversification	Grow selectively while increasing right-fit recruitment and retention.
Academic innovation aligned with mission and demand	Develop selective programs, pathways, and credentials that reinforce distinction.
Short-format and experiential programs	Where relevant, use summer and short-form programs as academic, enrollment, and revenue opportunities.
Strategic partnerships and centers	Prioritize partnerships and centers that create measurable academic, career, research, or philanthropic value.
AI and digital leadership	Integrate responsible AI into curriculum, pedagogy, and operations

THREATS	
OBSERVATION	STRATEGIC IMPLICATION
Demographic and liberal-arts market pressures	Differentiate more sharply and diversify recruitment markets
Tuition affordability pressure	Demonstrate outcomes and value while protecting financial discipline.
Increasing European and Rome-based competition	Compete on a coherent and distinctive educational model that is difficult to replicate.
Visa, regulatory, and geopolitical volatility	Strengthen scenario planning and enterprise risk management.
Operational strain during growth and campus expansion	Align pace of growth with human, physical, and service capacity.

APPENDIX B

ANNUAL STRATEGIC REPORTING FRAMEWORK

The annual dashboard will remain concise and stable enough to show trends over time. Measures may be refined as definitions and baselines are validated, but the core reporting categories should remain consistent throughout the planning period.

REPORTING CATEGORY	ILLUSTRATIVE MEASURES
Mission & Academic Quality	Program learning outcomes; external program review findings; teaching quality; place-based learning integration; AI/digital fluency integration.
Student Success	Retention, persistence, credit progression, completion, time to degree, student experience, advising effectiveness, and appropriate cohort-level analysis.
Graduate Outcomes	Employment, graduate/professional-school placement, experiential/professional-learning participation, alumni outcomes, and employer/partner feedback where available.
Enrollment	Inquiry-to-enrollment funnel, degree-seeking/study-abroad/graduate mix, geographic diversity, yield, retention, and right-fit indicators.
Financial & Capacity	Operating performance, cash/reserves as determined by the Board, tuition dependency, housing capacity, campus utilization, staffing and course capacity, and major investment outcomes.
Advancement & Partnerships	Philanthropic support, donor and alumni engagement, strategic partnership value, internships and professional opportunities generated through partners.
Institutional Risk & Effectiveness	Integrated planning and assessment; institutional research and data quality; accreditation; enterprise risks; safety; academic integrity; cybersecurity and privacy; responsible AI; governance; people and succession; and progress on major strategic initiatives.

REPORTING PRINCIPLE

The purpose of strategic reporting is not to generate more data. It is to make evidence useful: to show what changed, why it matters, what action follows, and whether that action improved results.



THE AMERICAN
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