

AUS | الجامعة الأميركية في الشارقة
American University of Sharjah



Roadmap to COP28

2022–2023

Introduction

American University of Sharjah (AUS) was named as a member of the COP28 University Taskforce by the UAE Special Climate Envoy to COP28. Being part of the taskforce allowed AUS representatives, including staff, faculty, students and alumni, to participate in key debates on climate change. With world leaders and global scientific experts who attended COP28 to discuss how climate change can best be addressed, it was an honor for AUS to be a part of a taskforce that had a direct and positive impact on some of the world's greatest challenges.

COP28 was held in Dubai from November 30 to December 12, 2023. With a reputation as one of the region's most sustainable universities, AUS was well-placed to contribute expertise at COP, an international climate conference held each year by the United Nations. AUS has been ranked by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) as one of the top five institutions worldwide for community engagement in sustainability, according to AASHE's 2022 Sustainable Campus Index. In addition, AUS was the first university in the MENA region to achieve an AASHE STARS sustainability ranking. The university was the first in the UAE to begin to ban all single-use plastics on campus, and in 2021 announced its Climate Action Plan, which aligns the university's sustainability efforts with the UAE'S Net Zero by 2050 strategic initiative.

COP28 provided a unique opportunity for AUS to showcase its sustainability achievements and disseminate the climate-related research breakthroughs of its faculty. Such achievements are wide and varied and include increased efficiency of hydrogen production (an alternative fuel source) through femtosecond laser technology; using AI to make solar energy capture more effective; and investigating how traditional building techniques can reduce air conditioning use in hot climates, among many others.

November 23, 2022 | COP27: American University of Sharjah students share plan for embedding sustainability awareness in higher education



Students and alumni from American University of Sharjah (AUS) have called for greater collaboration between university communities and governments to tackle pressing sustainability issues. The group used the 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27), held in Egypt, to share their ideas with an international audience.

Facilitating an event hosted by the UAE Pavilion at COP27, the group of current AUS students and AUS alumni presented to COP27 attendees about how sustainability competencies could be more comprehensively integrated into higher education learning. Students included Sabiha Ameen of the College of Architecture, Art and Design; Dana Malouf of the College of Arts and Sciences; Alina Anas and Muhammad Junaid, both of the College of Engineering.

The group called for the establishment of a network to connect UAE students, faculty, alumni, industry and government to work together to ensure knowledge about sustainability was more integrated into university curricula. Such a network would help to embed UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goals into higher education programs. This would help students to achieve a broad mind set around sustainability that they can take with them after graduation into their future workplaces.

Nour Attia, who graduated from AUS in 2018 with a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science, is now working as a Sustainability Associate at Majid Al Futtaim. She took part in this event, saying of her experience:

“AUS has shaped my sustainability career by providing opportunities, exposure and education beyond my student years. COP27 was an experience of a lifetime where I sat in on the negotiations representing the UAE and attended intellectually stimulating discussions that reignited my passion and drive beyond COP27. The call to action and implementation beyond commitments and promises was reflected in the energy and ambition of the public and private representations equally.”

AUS was invited by the UAE Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MOCCE) to be a part of the country’s official delegation to COP27. Along with current students, AUS Chief Operating Officer Dr. Jeannette Vinke, AUS Head of Sustainability Rose Armour, and AUS Professor of Environmental Sciences Dr. Fatin Samara were also part of the delegation.

A number of AUS alumni were also present at COP27, showcasing the UAE’s achievements in addressing climate change. One of these alumni included Maissam El Kouche, Sustainability Manager at Majid Al Futtaim and an Arab Youth Council for Climate Change Member. She said of her participation at COP27:

“Youth inclusion was very apparent at COP27. There were plenty of opportunities for youth to voice their opinions and showcase their climate solutions. It goes without saying that the role of youth is crucial in driving climate action, and the Arab Youth Council for Climate Change is a fundamental medium in facilitating that.”

Armour said of the AUS contribution to COP27:

“Having the voices of students heard in an environment like COP27 is so important. It helps students shape the global conversation around climate change and contribute solutions that they believe will have impact. The AUS students involved came from a variety of university programs, showing that sustainability can very much be a part of the student experience at AUS, regardless of the major a student chooses. I look forward to working with these students and the wider student community over the coming months to prepare for AUS’ contribution at COP28, to be held next year in the UAE.”

February 27, 2023 | Al Khedery shares insights into national carbon emissions modeling at AUS COP28 Speaker Series



Renowned Climate Change Advisor at GHD Group Abu Dhabi Muwaffaq Al Khedery delivered an inspiring lecture to students at American University of Sharjah (AUS) about carbon emissions modeling and shared insights into the challenges and opportunities in transitioning to a low-carbon economy.

The lecture, entitled “National Carbon Emissions Modeling–How National Commitments are Developed,” is the initial lecture in the AUS COP28 Speaker Series, which aims to educate the AUS community on the climate change challenge, the role this change plays in shaping our environment and how these findings can facilitate organizations’ efforts to reduce their emissions and foster their climate commitments.

Al Khedery is an expert in climate science, greenhouse gas inventory compilation and modeling. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Ocean Science and a Master of Science in Environmental Modelling. In his role, he focuses on advancing government and company positions to combat climate change while possessing a diverse skill set in all aspects of climate change, including policy and negotiations. Prior to GHD, he worked as a climate change analyst at the UAE’s Ministry of Climate Change and Environment, where he led the modeling team responsible for developing the emissions model for the UAE’s second Nationally Determined Contributions and co-authored the UAE State of Climate Report.

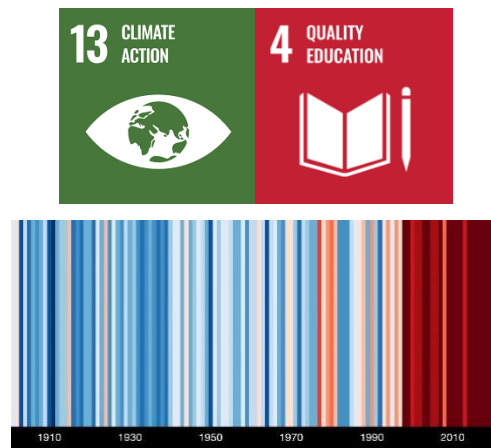
During the lecture, Al Khedery emphasized that addressing climate change requires a multidisciplinary approach.

"Climate change does not belong to any particular discipline. It is a phenomenon that has integrated itself into every facet of our natural and societal boundaries. To truly strive towards excellence in the field, one must be ready to explore concepts and disciplines far outside their preferred area of study," Al Khedery said.

The lecture saw students eager to learn about the scientific methods and tools used to analyze and quantify carbon emissions from various sources, which will help them to develop a comprehensive understanding of the causes and effects of climate change and to identify opportunities for reducing emissions through policy, technology and behavior change.

Sara Barbarm, a third-year student majoring in environmental chemistry, a mentor in the Department of Biology, Chemistry and Environmental Sciences mentorship program and a loyal volunteer for environmental sustainability programs, noted: "I had the privilege of attending the lecture delivered recently by Mr. Muwaffaq Alkhedery, which proved to be an enlightening experience. My particular area of interest revolved around the methodology employed in calculating emissions, and the distinct tiers implemented by various nations in this regard, given my tendency towards climate change issues. I am grateful for this opportunity and looking forward to participating in similar future events."

March 2, 2023 | American University of Sharjah to showcase climate credentials in lead-up to COP28



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CLIMATE
COFFEE PODCAST

The community is invited to learn more about AUS' climate change research and sustainability achievements in the run-up to COP28 through the university's newly launched Climate Coffee podcast. Experts from science, business, government and the NGO-sector are invited to take part in the podcast, sharing their insights into how all sectors of society can better work together to address and mitigate climate change, from the smallest individual actions, through to intergovernmental agreements. Rose Armour, Head of Sustainability at AUS, and Dr. Jeannette Vinke, AUS Chief Operating Officer, both passionate about sustainability and the changing climate, use the first episode to educate listeners about the history of COP and what we might expect from this year's event.

"Climate change will impact the future of our students regardless of where they are located in the world or what industry they work in. Understanding climate change—not just from a scientific perspective but also its geopolitical ramifications, is therefore essential to any young person's education. As future leaders it is important that our students are aware of the many complex issues surrounding climate action and have the skills and confidence needed to ensure the organizations or industries in which they will work are best equipped to deal with the challenges climate change presents, and ultimately act in a way that is beneficial for our planet. There is no better way to learn about climate action than by taking part in COP. This is a great opportunity for our students, and all our community, to make a difference on a global stage," said Armour.

March 7, 2023 | AUS Environmental Day 2023 discusses scientific challenges of food security



Aiming to foster knowledge about environmental sustainability and global food security among high school students considering careers in the biological, chemical and environmental sciences, American University of Sharjah (AUS) hosted its annual Environmental Day.

Featuring a range of informative sessions and fun-filled competitions on the theme of food security, the event, which was sponsored by BEEAH Group and Petrofac and organized by the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) and the AUS Sharakah Program, was attended by 531 high school students and teachers from 26 schools.

"We are excited to host the Environmental Day and provide students with the opportunity to learn about the critical connection between environmental sustainability and global food security," said Dr. Mahmoud Anabtawi, Dean of CAS. "Through this event, high school students can explore the scientific challenges of food security and consider how to ensure society has access to safe and nutritious food, while minimizing harmful impact on the planet."

The day-long event showcased innovation and creativity, with a wide range of exhibits displaying cutting-edge ideas and solutions in the fields of science, sustainability and food security. The

booths, which were set up by AUS students, faculty and staff, along with local industry participants from the food sector, offered an opportunity for students to interact with experts.

Among the main highlights of the event were two interactive competitions: the Environmental Jeopardy Quiz Competition and the Food Security in UAE Schools Video Competition. Around 45 high school teams participated in the quiz, demonstrating students' knowledge of environmental issues. In the video competition, 20 teams presented their innovative ideas and solutions to address food security challenges through engaging videos.

Winners of the Environmental Jeopardy Quiz Competition were Abu Dhabi Indian School Muroor (first place), Cambridge International School (second place) and Greenwood International School (third place).

Abid Ahmad from Abu Dhabi Indian School Muroor said, "Teamwork and efficiency were key in our functioning as a team. Quick thinking skills combined with our knowledge on the topic helped us win the event."

Winners of the video competition were Wesgreen International School (first place), Sharjah American International School–Sharjah (second place) and Al Durrah International School (third place).

Ali Shuhaimy, Executive Director of the Office of Enrollment Management, spoke about the importance of such opportunities for students.

"AUS is committed to sustainability and to engaging with the wider community to find solutions to the challenges we face. The Sharakah Program invited school students to join us in reflecting on the scientific challenges of food security and to learn more about the importance of sustainable food systems. We believe that youth have an important role to play in finding solutions to these critical issues, and we encourage them to get involved and take action," Shuhaimy said.

Another highlight of the day was the "Climate Impact and Food Security" panel discussion, moderated by Rose Armour, Head of Sustainability at AUS. Panelists were Mohamed Alhosani, AUS alumnus and Chief Sustainability Officer at BEEAH Group; Donna Glasper, Co-founder and COO of HeroGo; Luca Cobre, Executive Chef and Manager at Healthy Farm Eatery; and Nathalie Curabba, Clinical Nutritionist and Sustainability Project Coordinator at AUS.

March 9, 2023 | AUS student to represent UAE in global climate action at COP28



A passion for climate change advocacy has seen American University of Sharjah (AUS) student Manal Nadeem, selected to represent the UAE at the Conference of the Parties (COP) 28 as part of the UAE Youth Climate Delegate Program (YCDP).

The YCDP, launched by the UAE Federal Youth Authority (FYA) in partnership with the Office of the UAE Special Envoy for Climate Change, aims to increase youth participation in the multilateral climate process. The program embeds them in the UAE's negotiations and partnerships teams at COP and engages them in public and private sector initiatives, to enhance upskilling and create awareness of the UAE's climate action track record.

COP28 refers to the 28th session of the Conference of Parties, a global meeting of countries to discuss climate change and take action.

A second-year international studies student at AUS, Nadeem's passion for climate change advocacy was ignited when she became an Orwell Youth Fellow in November 2020. One of the highlights of her fellowship was writing and designing a 50-page magazine on climate change, which opened her eyes to the diverse ways people from all backgrounds and fields can participate in climate action.

"I had always thought of climate change as a scientific and environmental issue that was too complicated for me to understand, let alone attempt to solve. However, approaching climate change from a creative angle opened my eyes to the myriad of ways in which everyone, regardless of background and field, can and should get involved in climate action," said Nadeem.

Her AUS studies have also helped fuel her passion for climate change issues. She took a course in Oil and Energy in the Contemporary World, which sparked her interest in the intersection

between climate change and international studies. Additionally, AUS Sustainability's event AUS Insights on COP27 motivated her to apply for the UAE YCDP.

"I committed myself to crafting the best application I could. What started as late-night drafts on my phone turned into a 1000-word application. I channeled my genuine interest into the application, and spoke about my climate engagement in the past, the intersections I had observed between the climate cause and my academic field of international affairs and how I hoped to utilize this role to equip youth like me to engage in climate conversations," added Nadeem.

Nadeem is thrilled to be part of this global climate action and looks forward to representing the UAE as a Youth Climate Delegate. As part of the YCDP, she aims to empower and equip other young people like her to engage in climate conversations confidently and critically. She hopes to bridge the generational gap between climate change decision-makers and stakeholders.

She said: "It is an honor to be part of the UAE YCDP. This role will give me insight into the role that diplomacy and negotiation play in helping the world accomplish its climate goals. I am grateful to AUS for contributing to my journey and to the YCDP for this opportunity to make a difference in the fight against climate change."

In addition to her studies, Nadeem also holds the position of Co-Director of Research at the Higher Education Climate Dialogues (HECD), a student-led climate conference at AUS taking place on March 21, 2023. The conference will see students from universities across the UAE come together to exchange the best sustainability practices through panel discussions, a Youth Climate Negotiation Simulation in partnership with Masdar's Youth 4 Sustainability initiative and Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy, a research exhibition and a circular economy competition for aspiring entrepreneurs, in partnership with dnata.

Nadeem's selection for the UAE Youth Climate Delegate Program is a testament to AUS' firm commitment to sustainability and the empowerment of young leaders to drive meaningful change towards a sustainable future. As part of the COP28 University Taskforce, AUS representatives will have the opportunity to participate in key climate change debates and shape the global conversation around sustainability.

March 30, 2023 | American University of Sharjah student named UNICEF Climate Change Youth Advocate



Abdul Muqet, a final-year computer engineering student at American University of Sharjah (AUS), has been appointed as one of seven UNICEF Youth Advocates for Climate Change, selected from across UAE universities and schools. All seven advocates will play an integral role in Dubai's upcoming COP28, advocating for climate action and sustainability. The designation is part of UNICEF's Youth Advocacy Program supported by the Supreme Council of Motherhood and Childhood under Her Highness Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak.

As a UNICEF Youth Advocate for Climate Change, Abdul Muqet will represent children's rights in sustainability and climate action. As COP28 approaches, he will create opportunities for young people to be involved in climate action and facilitate platforms for them to do so. His main objective as an advocate is to inspire young people to become more involved in climate causes.

"The main motivation and goal for my work is to inspire young individuals to voice their concerns for sustainability, helping them to realize that they are the decision makers of the future. We are running out of time to act on climate change. There is only one Earth, and hence I am very motivated to work with the youth, finding innovative ways we can work together to reduce climate change and its impact."

Abdul Muqet was officially inaugurated as a UNICEF Youth Advocate for Climate Change at a ceremony held at Expo 2020 City. He expressed his gratitude at being named a UNICEF Youth Advocate for Climate Change, "It was an immensely happy moment for me to be announced as

a UNICEF Youth Advocate for Climate Change as I am now officially connected with UNICEF, a widely respected international organization. I am greatly honored to be a face of the youth in advocating for a sustainable future. I am looking forward to working with UNICEF to make sure the rights of the youth in the country and elsewhere are met. Following the inauguration event, representatives from the UNICEF Supreme Council of Motherhood and Childhood took us for a special dinner at Dubai Mall, where they surprised us by adding our images to Burj Khalifa, something that I will never forget for the rest of my life.”

April 10, 2023 | AUS hosts HECD conference discussing UAE's path to net zero and career readiness in a climate-conscious world



The Higher Education Climate Dialogues (HECD) Conference, a student-led conference on sustainability, was hosted by American University of Sharjah (AUS) on March 21 in partnership with New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD). More than 150 attendees, including university students, prominent experts and government officials, gathered to prepare for meaningful engagement at COP28, which will take place in Dubai in December.

Focusing on the UAE's journey to Net Zero by 2050, prominent speakers included Her Excellency Mariam bint Mohammed Saeed Hareb Almheiri, Minister of Climate Change and the Environment; Fatma Al Habshi, Acting Head of International Affairs at the Ministry of Climate Change and the Environment; Gregory Ross, the Head of Sustainability at Petrofac; Hanan AlSakr, the Head of Private Sector Engagements at COP28; Philipp Rosenthal, the Associate Director of Environment and Sustainability at Williams Sale Partnership (WSP) Global and Moustafa Bayoumi, Research Fellow at Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy and Xan Northcott, Project Manager at COP28 Youth Climate Champion Team.

Panelists Kritika Kadekodi, Assistant Vice President for Environment, Social and Governance Strategy at First Abu Dhabi Bank, and Wissam Kadi, Global Initiatives Director at SAP, spoke about how students can prepare themselves for careers at the forefront of sustainability.

"At AUS, we are committed to promoting sustainability and environmental stewardship. We realize the urgency to address climate change and are proud to be a member of the COP28 University Taskforce. As we prepare for this important global conference, we continue to engage our students, faculty and staff in sustainable practices and initiatives. We believe that by leading by example, we can inspire others to take action and create a more sustainable future for all," said Dr. Juan Sanchez, AUS Provost and Chief Academic Officer.

Among the highlights of the conference was a Car-go to Waste Competition, organized by dnata, which challenged students to find innovative sustainable solutions to repurpose or reuse cargo belts, cargo nets and thermal blankets that are currently being sent to the landfill.

Lilian Alawar, an AUS student and competition winner, stated that her team's commitment to creating a more sustainable future motivated them to participate in the competition.

"By proposing a solution to recycle polyester materials into eco-friendly tote bags, we aimed to reduce waste, conserve materials and promote sustainable practices. Through this competition, we learned valuable lessons about the importance of considering the environmental impact of waste generation, the power of innovative solutions and the benefits of collaboration and critical thinking in developing sustainable practices," Alawar said.

The winning team received a cash prize and a three-month internship opportunity at dnata and will present their solutions at the Airport Show 2023 and COP28.

Also part of the conference was the Youth Climate Negotiation Simulation, organized in collaboration with Masdar's Youth 4 Sustainability initiative and Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy. By representing a particular country's climate stance in discussions aimed to reduce global climate emissions, students enhanced their negotiation skills and shared ideas to fight climate change.

Additionally, the conference featured an exhibition of student research on a broad range of topics, from quantifying food waste in Al-Ain households to measuring carbon emissions from university travel. Some of the projects were carried out in partnership with well-known organizations such as BEEAH and the Roads and Transport Authority (RTA).

April 19, 2023 | AUS research team to design thermal energy storage systems for a more sustainable future



As part of American University of Sharjah's (AUS) ongoing focus on energy and sustainability, a collaborative research team at AUS is working on designing thermal energy storage systems that will assist in the transition to renewable energy.

"Due to environmental concerns, the world is shifting from fossil fuels towards more renewable energy sources, but unlike fossil fuels, which can be used to produce energy when required, solar and wind energy have variable supply, which makes energy storage a critical component in the transition towards clean energy. Recent improvements in battery technology have advanced energy storage capacity, but batteries also have their own issues in relation to safety and the relative scarcity of materials used in their production. This is why it is essential to use a mixture of other energy storage solutions to complement the use of batteries," said Dr. Paul Nancarrow, Professor in Chemical and Biological Engineering and lead researcher.

The team's focus is on ionic liquid technology, which are salts that can melt at room temperature and turn into liquid. Their wide range of applications are being studied in AUS labs, including thermal energy storage.

“There are theoretically millions of different ionic liquids that can be synthesized in the laboratory, each with different properties. However, lab synthesis is time consuming and costly. To overcome this problem, we were successful in developing several new data-driven predictive models to help us narrow the selection of optimal ionic liquid structures to synthesize and test and design new classes of ionic liquids to be used as energy storage systems,” Dr. Nancarrow said.

The work involves designing ionic liquids as phase change materials, which absorb and store energy when they melt at a particular temperature matched to the application, and release the energy again when the temperature drops, and they cool and solidify. They can be incorporated into buildings, industrial facilities, electronic devices and clothing to help control temperature, store energy and reduce energy needs. For example, phase change materials that melt at room temperature can be incorporated into building walls to keep the building cool during hot days and warm during cool nights, maintaining a constant temperature and reducing the building’s heating and cooling energy requirements.

“The current systems have many problems that limit their applications including corrosion, loss of efficiency over time, loss by evaporation, degradation and large thermal expansion. What we are working on is designing ionic liquids with optimal properties for various applications to overcome these issues and provide an additional energy storage solution to reduce energy consumption and complement renewable energy production. This will help lead to a faster introduction of clean energy and reduce fossil fuel consumption on the global scale. Our next step in our research is to incorporate the optimized ionic liquid into solar energy systems and analyze the improvement in efficiency that can be achieved,” said Dr. Nancarrow.

The collaborative research involved AUS graduate and undergraduate students Samira Zeinab, Mohammad Tajiki and Mohammed Shahin and research associates Shehzad Liaqat, Sarika Reghunadh and Dhruve Mital. It also involved professors Dr. Taleb Ibrahim and Dr. Nabil Abdel Jabbar from the Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering; and Dr. Mustafa Khamis, Professor in the Department of Biology, Chemistry and Environmental Sciences. It also involves collaboration with the Solar Energy Applications Group in Trinity College Dublin. The research work was carried out in the labs of the AUS College of Engineering (CEN), with partners at the Trinity College Dublin conducting tests on novel ionic liquids to improve the efficiency of solar energy systems.

April 27, 2023 | AUS students join UAE's Climate Ambassadors Program to help combat climate change



Eight students from American University of Sharjah (AUS) have been selected to participate in the UAE's first university edition of the Climate Ambassadors Programme (CAP) held recently at Expo City Dubai. With 40 student ambassadors in total forming the program, AUS is well-represented in this important initiative.

The Ministry of Climate Change and Environment in collaboration with the Expo University Programme. CAP is a simulation program that aims to provide an authentic and novel experience for students so that they can better understand the decision-making process of climate change issues, while fostering awareness about the impact of climate change and the importance of coordination among different agencies to address climate challenges.

During a roleplay simulation of the proceedings of the United Nations (UN) Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties (COP) session, AUS students acted as representatives from Brazil, China, India, Mauritius, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman and Qatar. The students engaged in negotiations, drafted action plans and sought consensus on critical climate issues related to carbon and greenhouse gas mitigation.

"We are dedicated to preparing our students for meaningful careers and empowering them to make a positive impact on the world. CAP provided invaluable opportunities for the eight students with diverse academic backgrounds to align their majors with the critical need for climate action. We are partnering with Expo City Dubai to broaden the scope of CAP

opportunities for AUS students in the near future." said Julia Carlow, the Acting Head of Sustainability at AUS.

Saleh Al Shamsi, an international studies student, commented on his participation: "Being part of CAP as Oman's representative was eye-opening. I engaged in real-world negotiations and action planning, gaining insights into global climate challenges. It empowered me to actively contribute to combating climate change and make a positive impact on the world."

"As a student participating in CAP, I was able to enhance my public speaking and negotiation abilities while gaining insight into the upcoming COP28. As an environmental sciences student, this experience provided me with a practical application of my coursework, allowing me to witness its real-world relevance," said Sameera Khan, who represented Brazil at CAP.

May 1, 2023 | Universities Climate Network launched to support youth-focused objectives of COP28



Aimed at encouraging youth engagement in the United Arab Emirates in the lead up to COP28, the Universities Climate Network (UCN), which is chaired by NYU Abu Dhabi, is comprised of 12 UAE-based universities and higher education institutions, including the American University of Sharjah, Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy, Higher Colleges of Technology, Khalifa University, Masdar Institute, Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence, Mohamed bin Zayed University for Humanities, National Defence College, NYU Abu Dhabi, Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates University, and Zayed University.

H.E. Amb. Majid Al Suwaidi, Director General and Special Representative of COP28 UAE commented: "The Universities Climate Network will support our goal of creating a more inclusive and participatory environment for young people to be leaders in climate action. Continuing the positive legacy established at previous COPs, the Universities Climate Network will mobilize young people through meaningful dialogue and amplify the efforts of the COP28 Presidency including our Youth Climate Champion. Incubators of the next generation, universities play a key role in nurturing innovation and providing young voices platforms to express their views and to contribute to policy shaping discussions that are most important to their needs."

The UCN's inaugural activation, Ramadan Talks takes place at various institutions and will welcome key speakers from the industry to discuss climate change related topics, including climate diplomacy, the hydrogen economy, urban modernity in the contemporary Gulf, and why COP28 matters, among others.

Supporting young people, in March this year, the COP28 UAE Presidency launched the 'International Youth Climate Delegate Program'. Elevating the voices, perspectives, and priorities of the global youth in the multilateral COP process, the International YCDP will select 100 youth delegates primarily from least developed countries (LDC) and small island developing states (SIDS), to participate in climate negotiations and related public-private partnership initiatives. Registrations closed on April 7, 2023.

May 25, 2023 | AUS students debate climate change at the second session of the Climate Ambassadors Programme



Forty students from American University of Sharjah (AUS) took part in the second session of the Climate Ambassadors Programme (CAP) 2023 held recently at Expo City Dubai where they discussed some of the most pertinent issues impacting climate change.

Simulating the climate negotiations that take place during COP events, CAP helps university students better understand the decision-making process related to climate change issues, their impact and the importance of coordination among different stakeholders to address climate challenges. It is an immersive educational experience where students collaborate with other student representatives to find solutions before drafting an action plan that will be shared with the Ministry of Climate Change and the Environment. This session focused on curbing greenhouse gasses by identify how countries are affected by the increase in greenhouse gas emissions and what can be done to reduce these emissions.

During the program, students acted as representatives of countries taking part in four negotiation groups including G77+China, which is the largest coalition in the United Nations, providing the developing world with means to articulate and promote its collective interests; Arab States; European Union; and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), which comprises

small island and low-lying coastal countries that share their vulnerability to the negative effects of climate change. These four groups are representative of actual groups taking part in COP28.

"In the lead up to COP28, it is AUS Sustainability's mission to increase climate literacy among the AUS community and empower our students to become the environmental leaders of tomorrow. Thanks to the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment and the Expo School Programme, AUS students have the opportunity to obtain unique insights at the discussions and negotiations that take place between nations at a COP. AUS Sustainability is working with Expo City Dubai to host more CAP sessions in the coming months, and we encourage all students, regardless of their major, and participate in this unique learning experience," said Julia Carlow, Acting Head of Sustainability at AUS.

Fatima Abdelrahman, a finance student in her second year who was part of the German delegation at CAP, spoke about her experience.

"These sessions incentivized students to be more aware of the issues contributing to climate change and how to combat them. They also helped us familiarize ourselves with the way discussions at COP conferences take place and the terminology employed so that we can have more understanding at the upcoming COP28 and benefit the most," she said.

Her discussions at CAP centered on several issues, including greenhouse gas mitigation, adaptation strategies and climate smart goals.

"We discussed the various issues and developed strategies in a group setting within an unmoderated caucus, with everyone having the opportunity to speak. We argued and counter argued until we reached the strong points we wanted to present. I did a lot of research on greenhouse gas mitigation and read many articles about Germany's approach to climate control," she said.

Abdelrahman noted that ever since she joined AUS, she started participating in student clubs and volunteering, which eventually led her to the path of sustainability.

"AUS hosts many events around the theme of sustainability making information always accessible. The first sustainability-related event I attended as part of my active campus life was the Youth Speak Forum held by the International Association of Students in Economics and Business. It immediately drew my attention to the climate change conversation, and ever since then I have been preparing to participate in events such as CAP. I have learned a lot about how to communicate in formal settings, how to debate and negotiate, about the amount of collaboration and work that goes into working these sessions," she said.

Sania Shanavaz, an urban planning graduate student, was part of the UAE delegation at CAP. "This was a unique experience, and I am glad that I was part of it. It was enlightening on many levels, especially in relation to decorum and protocol that must be followed during the actual COP conference. This experience also showed me, as a student of urban planning, the kind of support students from other academic disciplines could provide for in the fight against climate change," she said.

Shanavaz also noted that her AUS education provided a strong foundation to build upon during her participation. "Through the thoughtfully designed curriculum, AUS has ingrained within us the fundamentals of sustainability, issues with climatic change, environmental planning and so on, which equips us to handle the challenges the future holds," she said.

June 1, 2023 | AUS becomes the first university to join the UAE Alliance for Climate Action, reinforcing its commitment towards decarbonization and net zero targets



American University of Sharjah (AUS) continues to advance its mission of creating a more sustainable future, announcing a new membership with the UAE Alliance for Climate Action (UACA), a domestic alliance of stakeholders led by Emirates Nature-WWF.

UACA is the flagship non-state actor program for the UAE in the lead up to COP28, which aims to increase momentum towards achieving net zero targets in line with science and the Paris Agreement. The alliance is endorsed by the UAE Ministry of Climate Change and Environment and convened by Emirates Nature-WWF who is the leading environmental NGO in the UAE. By bringing together stakeholders, UACA facilitates greater collaboration, mobilizing the whole of society towards achieving the UAE's Net Zero by 2050 strategic initiative. The alliance's priorities include supporting non-state actors in implementing and raising their net zero targets at any stage of their decarbonization journey, and engaging policy makers to address key gaps in the policy environment.

As a member of UACA, AUS commits to participate in dialogue and information sharing and to work towards credible targets in the university's decarbonization journey. AUS is one of the

region's most progressive universities in the field of decarbonization and net zero initiatives. The university released its Climate Action Plan in 2022, which aligned the university's sustainability efforts with the UAE's Net Zero Strategic Initiative 2050. As part of its Climate Action Plan, AUS started to conduct a yearly greenhouse gas study to measure and track the university's carbon emissions. Based on the data generated from this study, AUS has set reduction targets for 2030 and defined projects to meet its targets, including reducing energy consumption, using alternative energy sources, making greener decisions on material usage and wastage, and mandating sustainable construction practices when building or renovating. AUS is the first university to join the group, and its faculty and administrators are committed to providing expertise on many decarbonization issues linked to climate change, to assist UACA members in their decarbonization journey. Membership of UACA will help to ensure that AUS research is transferred to organizations and governments seeking to reduce emissions and realize other sustainability commitments. Joining UACA will also allow members of the AUS community to learn more about the best practices for decarbonization and to align research efforts with industry needs.

Dr. Fatin Samara, a leading figure in the UAE's climate change research community and Professor of Environmental Sciences at AUS, spoke about the role universities play in addressing climate change issues. "Scientific research is key to us being able to reduce the rate at which climate change is occurring and in being able to mitigate the impacts of climate change on communities. AUS is a source of many exciting research projects that seek to understand how carbon emissions can be reduced and how communities can better prepare for what's ahead," Dr. Samara said.

Julia Carlow, Acting Head of Sustainability at AUS, said of AUS' membership of the group: "The education sector plays an important role in facilitating the global decarbonization process. As a UACA member, we are committed to increasing our ambition and implementation to achieve our climate change targets. We are also looking forward to sharing our decarbonization journey with the wider UACA community and advancing innovation for climate change mitigation and adaptation. We look forward to seeing how AUS can learn from other UACA members and also explore how our expertise will contribute to the realization of net zero targets in the UAE."

July 10, 2023 | AUS student named as Student Energy Summit Delegate



Maitri Dharmendra Lalai, a student in the Bachelor of Arts in International Studies program at American University of Sharjah (AUS), has been named as a delegate for the Student Energy Summit, the world's largest youth-led energy summit.

New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD) will host the summit this year, which will run just prior to COP28. Under the theme Reimagining the Future, hundreds of students will gather at the summit from November 28 to December 1. The aim of the summit is to create a sustainable outlook for the energy transition by connecting the youth of today to leaders of the energy sector to educate the leaders of tomorrow. Hundreds of young leaders from all over the world will gather at the summit to cultivate innovative ideas, collaborate, and reimagine the future of the energy sector and pathways to sustainability. It is hoped that the summit will empower a new generation of energy sector leaders and highlight the success story and the vision of the UAE's energy transition.

Maitri said of her selection, "I find that there are a number of sustainability-focused opportunities arising around me as a student of AUS, particularly with COP28 set to take place in Dubai later this year. As a keen proponent of sustainability and having taken numerous efforts to build my portfolio in the domain, I believe the summit will facilitate my participation in, and further strengthen my knowledge of, the energy sector in our evolving world."

"As a delegate, I am expected to actively contribute to the discourse around energy as a resource and as an opportunity for development and innovation. Since I am a student, I believe that my role will also be to build on my knowledge of the energy sector and draw from my

experiences in sustainable climate action. The summit further grants access to many global energy leaders under one roof, in the form of meet-and-greets, upskilling workshops, and panel discussions.”

“I extend my immense gratitude to my professors, AUS leadership and the AUS Office of Sustainability for facilitating student participation in sustainability-related events and forums. I am currently representing AUS as a Future Sustainability Leader in the Youth 4 Sustainability (Y4S) program, a climate-action themed initiative by Masdar, Abu Dhabi. Furthermore, events like the AUS Farmers' Market and the AUS-wide drive to inculcate sustainability among students shows commitment to the cause. My commitment to sustainability has been reinforced by AUS' own mission, and I strive to uphold our shared values,” Maitri said.

July 13, 2023 | AUS students' car sharing app wins Hackathon 2023 held as part of Total Energies' Al Reyada Energy Seminar



American University of Sharjah (AUS) students were part of the winning team at the highly competitive Hackathon 2023, a highlight of Al Reyada Energy Seminar organized by Total Energies Foundation in the UAE, in partnership with Institut Français. The Career Services Unit at the AUS Office of Advancement and Alumni Affairs played a crucial role in providing this opportunity to AUS students.

The Al Reyada Energy Seminar, held recently at Khalifa University Abu Dhabi, brought together students from renowned universities in the UAE, including American University of Sharjah, Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi, Khalifa University, United Arab Emirates University, Abu Dhabi 42, Zayed University and Mohammed Bin Zayed University for Humanities, providing a platform for students to engage in meaningful discussions and develop innovative solutions to address pressing environmental challenges.

AUS College of Engineering (CEN) students Habibelrahman Hassan and Faizan Multani were part of a team of seven students from participating universities who placed first in the youth hackathon on carbon footprint solutions. Their project, titled "Sustain-a-Ride," focused on developing a groundbreaking car-sharing application powered by an AI algorithm. The aim was to facilitate carpooling among AUS students, thereby reducing greenhouse gas (GHG)

emissions and aligning with the AUS Climate Action Plan, as well as supporting the UAE government's goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.

In an impressive display of knowledge and dedication, the team presented their project to a distinguished panel of judges, highlighting the potential impact of their solution in reducing CO2 emissions. "Winning the hackathon at the Al Reyada Energy Seminar is a tremendous achievement for us. Our team's expertise and collaborative spirit played a crucial role in our success. AUS provided us with the necessary knowledge and skills to tackle such challenges, and we are grateful for the university's support," said Habibelrahman Hassan, a Master of Science in Civil Engineering student at AUS.

Faizan Multani, who recently graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering from AUS, emphasized the broader impact of their participation, stating: "The seminar and hackathon have enlightened us about the various ways university students can contribute significantly to reducing CO2 emissions and promoting a greener future. We are eager to leverage the knowledge and skills gained to inspire and engage our fellow students at AUS and beyond."

The winning team received a Rocketbook Fusion Executive Reusable Smart Notebook and will receive specialized training from experts at Climate Fresk, a French non-profit organization that aims to raise public awareness about climate change, that will equip them to serve as official facilitators in future awareness-raising workshops.

"The remarkable achievement of our AUS students, who emerged as winners in the Hackathon, demonstrates their remarkable talent and determination. Their success not only showcases their ability to develop innovative solutions but also underscores AUS' commitment to fostering sustainability and environmental awareness. We are proud of their accomplishments and their significant contribution to shaping a more sustainable future," said Dr. Fadi Aloul, Dean of the AUS College of Engineering.

July 26, 2023 | AUS student named as ambassador for Student Energy Summit



In November 2023, Abu Dhabi will host the Student Energy Summit, the world's largest youth-led energy summit, coinciding with COP28, which is also being hosted by the UAE this year, highlighting the vision and success of the UAE's energy transition. The summit's international and interdisciplinary programming aims to empower youth from 120 countries, enabling them to establish important relationships with peers and industry professionals while collaborating on energy solutions.

Among the nine students selected as ambassadors for the Summit from various universities across UAE, Khadijah Minhas, a mechanical engineering at American University of Sharjah (AUS), proudly represents the university.

The Summit's ambassador program will equip students like Minhas with the knowledge, skills and support necessary to effectively advocate for a sustainable energy future. Participants receive the tools and support necessary to raise awareness about climate change, the energy transition and the need to take action to address these challenges on a local and global scale. Through a series of interactive activities, workshops and online resources, the program aims to foster an understanding of the causes and consequences of climate change while identifying and implementing strategies for mitigating its impacts and accelerate the energy transition. The program also seeks to prepare youth for the energy workforce in the UAE and involvement in strategic initiatives such as the Dubai Clean Energy Strategy and Abu Dhabi's Energy Plan. Participants will also gain access to Student Energy's vast network of energy experts and 50,000 young energy leaders worldwide.

The Summit's ambassadors have a vital role in raising awareness about global climate issues and the energy transition among university students in the UAE. They facilitate partnerships and promote collaboration among students from different universities and encourage community engagement. Additionally, they provide a platform for young people to voice their opinions, network and develop leadership skills.

Minhas expressed her enthusiasm for the role, stating, "I will be spreading awareness and conducting events within the university during the upcoming fall semester, as well as creating a hub for students interested in energy sustainability. Although a commonly discussed topic, there is still much to know and do to effectively bring sustainable changes in our lives and communities. In the future, I will be given the chance to attend COP 28 and participate in the immersive COP experience at Expo City Dubai. I look forward to learning from experts in the field and networking with professionals and policymakers. It is crucial that the voices of young people are heard in climate-focused debates, and the summit's ambassador program is one way to ensure this happens."

September 8, 2023 | Manbat Farmers' Market at AUS supports sustainable living



American University of Sharjah (AUS) and Arada, a prominent real estate company in the UAE, have embarked on a partnership, launching the Manbat Farmers' Market at a ribbon cutting ceremony on September 7 on campus. The initiative supports the UAE's National Food Security Strategy 2051 in an era of increasing global challenges.

Not only will the weekly market bring fresh, locally grown produce to the AUS community, it will connect students, faculty and staff directly to the farmers who produce their food, emphasizing the importance of sustainable living.

A partnership between Arada and the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment that aims to promote healthy, home-grown produce, the first Manbat farmers' market was launched in Aljada in 2021. Manbat markets now take place every weekend at multiple venues across Dubai and Sharjah during the cooler months of the growing season.

The Manbat market grand opening at AUS was attended by Dr. Susan Mumm, Chancellor of AUS, Dr. Ray Tinston, Managing Director of Manbat and Director at Arada, Dr. Lisa Moscaritolo,

Executive Director of Student Experience at AUS, and other senior officials from both institutions.

"In alignment with the UAE's visionary National Food Security Strategy 2051, the Manbat Market reflects AUS' unwavering commitment to experiential learning and sustainable practices, resonating with our ethos of fostering a resilient and conscious community. By uniting local vendors and our community, we're not only championing healthier food choices but also nurturing a sense of collective stewardship for our environment. This initiative stands as a testament to our dedication to promoting sustainability and aligning with the UAE's comprehensive approach to ensuring a sustainable and self-sufficient food system," said Dr. Mumm.

"We're delighted to bring the Manbat farmers' market to AUS, which is another step in Arada's longstanding partnership with one of the Gulf's most prestigious educational institutions. By introducing the freshest and most nutritious products to market, we are aiming to convince local buyers that 100% home-grown ingredients not only boost the UAE's long-term food security but are also great for the environment and your health as well," said Dr. Tinston.

By emphasizing health and wellbeing and aligning with the UAE's National Food Security Strategy, the Manbat Market underscores AUS' pledge to shape a greener, more interconnected future. As the AUS community connects directly with local farmers and revels in fresh, locally sourced produce, this initiative also underscores AUS readiness for the Conference of the Parties 28 and the collective impact of embracing locally grown products in reducing carbon footprints.

The Manbat Market is a new milestone in the evolution of the AUS Sustainability Farmers Market that has been held on campus since 2018, and supports AUS Sustainability's key strategic priority centered around nutrition, health, and wellbeing.

September 11, 2023 | Fostering a sustainable lifestyle: AUS students learn to eat green and prepare for COP28



American University of Sharjah (AUS) computer science student Shourya Maithani learned far more than how to make a delectable pita bread pizza during the recent Cooking for Climate classes that AUS Sustainability held on campus.

“The classes offered me valuable insights into the realm of sustainability and its profound impact on cooking practices. The classes not only expanded my culinary repertoire but also instilled in me the art of resourcefulness, demonstrating how one can maximize their culinary capabilities with minimal cooking utensils,” said Maithani.

Guided by Nathalie Montoya Curabba, AUS Sustainability Coordinator and accomplished Clinical Nutritionist and Chef, the cooking classes are part of the university’s efforts to instill in students the importance of a sustainable lifestyle while also offering them the opportunity to learn how to cook delicious recipes. Held as part of the AUS’ Week of Welcome student activities, the cooking classes were especially helpful for students, who are developing their independent living skills, raising their awareness about the relationship between food, climate change and sustainability.

“This was an exceptional experience that I would eagerly welcome on a recurring basis. I wholeheartedly endorse the idea of hosting this event every semester, as it not only broadened my horizons but also left a lasting impression on the importance of sustainable cooking practices,” said Maithani.

The Cook for Change classes are part of Eating with Intent, a larger, ongoing campaign on campus.

"The campaign was developed to raise awareness about food and its bi-directional relationship to climate change. The cooking classes in the residential halls were a natural progression where the focus is on teaching students how to nourish themselves while also benefiting the planet. We focus on locally grown and raised whole foods, increasing food literacy, cooking skills and strategies, and developing communities around food," said Curabba.

She added: "This year, we emphasized the connection between food and climate change specifically and demonstrated the ways in which our food choices make an enormous impact on the health of the environment, which incidentally impacts our personal health as well."

Dedicated to inspiring students to develop and lead a sustainable lifestyle, AUS Sustainability has been an active advocate through its many student-focused initiatives and faculty engagements.

September 13, 2023 | AUS' Green Living Learning Community: An immersive environment for sustainable living and long-lasting connections



Sustainable living is not only about drinking your coffee from a reusable cup, but rather how your lifestyle choices can impact the world around you. From how you prepare your food to the fashion you choose to wear, your habits may potentially help save polar bears.

With the hope of applying her knowledge about sustainable living to her life, American University of Sharjah (AUS) student Tasneem Shafeeq Khuzai is grateful to be part of the Green Living Learning Community (GLLC) launched on September 6 in the AUS residential halls.

Coordinated by Dr. Dr. Lisa Bardill Moscaritolo, Executive Director of Student Experience at AUS; Kristina Katsos, Lecturer in International Studies; and Julia Angelika Carlow, Head of AUS Sustainability, GLLC offers an immersive environment for students to connect with like-minded peers who share interests in climate change and sustainable living.

"I am ambitious and excited to share what I learned about ecology and sustainability from my courses, previous internships and research with others who have similar interests to me. Most importantly, I hope to reconnect with those like me who care about being as sustainable as

possible. I also hope to focus more this semester on volunteering and internships to be able to excel academically and be more involved with the community,” said Khuzai.

With the aid of AUS Residential Assistants (RA), GLLC members sharing the same floor in their respective residential halls will engage in a variety of activities and social opportunities that are focused on sustainability. These opportunities range from promoting events on sustainability to making GLLC-related bulletin boards and working closely with residential hall coordinators and the Office of AUS Sustainability to organize events.

“The GLLC fits well within our mission to create Living Learning Communities (LLC) where students can share common interests on various subjects. Research shows that having LLCs in the residential halls strengthens students’ sense of belonging at university. Naturally, there is much interest in climate action by the youth, and with the UAE hosting COP28, this is an important link for our students. The GLLC will empower students to make informed, impactful choices and develop personal living habits,” said Dr. Lisa Bardill Moscaritolo, Executive Director of Student Experience at AUS.

Members of the GLLC will have the opportunity to also take part in community service activities, such as working in the AUS community garden and the AUS Manbat Farmers’ Market, and other volunteer opportunities.

Using the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a guide, the GLLC is organizing educational workshops by AUS faculty and staff throughout the semester that highlight the challenges and tools for a more sustainable world. Discussion sessions topics and speakers will include climate change, led by Dr. Fatin Samara, Professor in Biology, Chemistry and Environmental Sciences; water insecurity, led by Dr. Sandra Knuteson, Senior Lecturer in Biology, Chemistry and Environmental Sciences; fashion and consumerism, led by Dr. Rania Semaan, Associate Professor in Marketing and Information Systems; sustainable cities and communities, led by Camilo Cerro, Associate Professor in Architecture; good health and well-being, led by Nathalie Montoya Curabba, AUS Sustainability Coordinator; and reduced inequalities, led by Sana Sayed, Senior Instructor in English.

“I have been an eco-conscious person for a few years now, but it can be challenging to always incorporate sustainability into my daily life. I aim to learn more about sustainability on a budget and finding sustainable ways to be sustainable, especially that being a student means we need to rethink the way we use plastic, the food we eat and recycling. I hope to gain a stronger sense of community as part of the GLLC to make a difference. I would love to exchange knowledge and ideas regarding sustainability and living. I would also like to learn more about sustainability in the UAE through the discussions we would be participating in,” said AUS student Vibhuti Mathur.

September 18, 2023 | AUS announces new student sustainability leaders



American University of Sharjah (AUS) has a proud tradition of naming a new cohort of student sustainability leaders each academic year, known as EcoReps. The EcoReps for the 2023–2024 academic year are: Amal Haneef, majoring in English language and literature; Jawaad Sheikh, majoring in mechanical engineering; Sameera Khan, majoring in environmental sciences; and Aamuktha Samrajyam, majoring in chemical engineering.

"The AUS EcoRep program is our most impactful initiative to engage AUS students in sustainability and climate action. Every year we hire four students with a diverse range of backgrounds and train them on our key strategic priorities, such as energy, waste, health and diversity. Throughout their tenure, these EcoRep students engage with their peers through a series of events and campaigns to promote awareness and behavior change on campus. With COP28 taking place in the UAE later this year, we are excited to train our EcoReps in climate action and the COP process, and let them lead the various climate education initiatives on campus," explains Acting AUS Head of Sustainability, Julia Carlow.

EcoReps are students with a desire to promote sustainable change on campus. EcoReps educate their student peers on issues such as waste reduction, energy conservation, diversity and tolerance. Through guest speakers, events and outings, EcoReps deepen their own

understanding of how to create a more sustainable campus and become better advocates for environmental action.

“I aim to show that even small changes in our daily lives, such as reducing single-use plastic or supporting local and sustainable food options, can have a significant positive impact on our environment,” said Haneef.

With COP28 being held in the UAE later this year, the role of EcoRep holds particular importance for this academic year, with the university involved in many sustainability-related initiatives in the lead up to COP28. The EcoReps will be involved in passing on information about COP28 to students.

The students chosen to be EcoReps look forward to furthering their own understanding of sustainability issues and leading positive environmental change in their communities.

“To me, sustainability transcends mere linguistic trends; it embodies a dynamic philosophy that emboldens my proactive engagement in shaping our world. Rather than waiting for others to take the lead, I see our team as the architect of this transformation, armed with a unique arsenal of abilities to ignite a potent wave of positive change,” said Sheikh.

The EcoReps also have plans for how they will encourage more sustainable practices among their peers.

“To stimulate sustainable thinking, it is essential that we first experience an ecologically sound lifestyle—a lifestyle that demands knowledge and motivation. These are the two key ingredients that I would like to intensify in the recipe for shaping sustainable mindsets on our campus,” said Samrajyman.

For Khan, the EcoRep program is all about gaining and transferring knowledge that will further sustainable outcomes.

“At AUS, I have had the opportunity and privilege to learn from not only the faculty, but the staff, my friends and other students. As an EcoRep, I hope to pass on the knowledge I learn to others, and be a medium for students, staff and faculty who would like to make a difference in this world,” said Khan.

September 20, 2023 | AUS leads UAE university discussions on student engagement in COP28



Fourteen universities from around the UAE came together at the American University of Sharjah (AUS) Student Affairs and Services Roundtable on September 12 to discuss areas of collaboration and student engagement in the lead up to COP28.

“As a member of the Universities Climate Network (UCN), AUS is taking the lead on the Student Youth Engagement pillar. This roundtable brought student affairs professionals of UCN member institutions together for the first time to share what we are working on in preparation for COP28 and exchange experiences on how our students are engaging through initiatives, volunteer opportunities and more. Our roundtable focused on the importance of co-curricular activities and climate literacy for students,” said Dr. Lisa Bardill Moscaritolo, Executive Director of Student Experience at AUS.

Held in collaboration with AUS Sustainability, the roundtable event kicked off with an overview of university engagement opportunities during COP28, including the Greening Education Hub, Youth Hub, and Technology and Innovation Hub. It also highlighted special upcoming pre-COP28 events, such as simulation sessions for university students to meet each other as part of the Climate Ambassadors Program, and a webinar hosted by the Association for the

Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) on engaging faculty in reorienting curriculum around sustainability.

University representatives also shared the activities and programs they have built around sustainability and climate action in preparation for COP28, such as youth leadership networks, student clubs, competitions and many more.

In addition to AUS, participating universities included Abu Dhabi University, Ajman University, American University in Dubai, Canadian University in Dubai, Gulf Medical University, Khalifa University, New York University Abu Dhabi, Rabdan Academy, Rochester Institute of Technology in Dubai, University of Dubai, Zayed University, American University of Ras Al-Khaimah, Al-Ain University and Higher Colleges of Technology.

“The first UCN roundtable event has been extremely useful to share experiences and ideas. AUS Sustainability, in collaboration with AUS’ departments and colleges, has been actively engaging students through an array of events and initiatives that aim to educate them on climate action and encourage them to seize every opportunity to participate in COP28’s many events,” said Julia Carlow, Acting Head of Sustainability.

October 16, 2023 | AUS strengthens climate commitment through UACA Advisory Committee participation



An engaged stakeholder in the upcoming COP28, American University of Sharjah (AUS) participated in the inaugural meeting of the UAE Alliance for Climate Action (UACA) Advisory Committee held recently. UACA, led by Emirates Nature-WWF, is a flagship non-state actor program that aims to accelerate the UAE's journey toward a net-zero carbon emissions future.

The UACA Advisory Committee, chaired by Her Excellency Razan Al Mubarak, UN Climate Change High-Level Champion for COP28 and President of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, brings together eminent leaders from diverse sectors. Members of the committee include Laila Abdullatif, AUS alumna and Director General of Emirates Nature-WWF; Her Excellency Dr. Nawal Al Hosany, AUS Board of Trustees member and Permanent Representative of the UAE, International Renewable Energy Agency; Mohammed Al Marzouqi, Chief Executive Officer of HSBC UAE; Dr. Nasser Saidi, Chairman of the Clean Energy Business Council; Dr. Leila Hoteit, Managing Director and Senior Partner at Boston Consulting Group (BCG); and Dr. Fadi Aloul, Dean of the College of Engineering at AUS.

The inaugural meeting of the UACA Advisory Committee focused on charting a strategic path forward to accelerate the UAE's transition towards a net-zero carbon emissions future. The

committee's discussions revolved around the importance of collaborative efforts, knowledge sharing and innovative solutions to address the pressing challenges posed by climate change.

Dr. Aloul represented the university in the UACA discussions in his role as a committee member. Julia Carlow, Acting Head of AUS Sustainability, also attended the meeting as a senior working level representative.

Dr. Aloul said: "AUS is honored to participate in the UAE Alliance for Climate Action's Advisory Committee. Climate change is a global challenge that requires collective efforts. Our presence reflects AUS' commitment to leveraging our academic and research expertise to contribute to climate solutions and shape a sustainable future."

"At AUS, sustainability is at the core of our mission. Joining the UACA Advisory Committee aligns with our commitment to drive sustainability initiatives that extend beyond our campus. We believe that through collaboration and innovation, we can make a lasting impact on climate action and support the UAE in achieving its net zero by 2050 target," said Carlow.

AUS is dedicated to supporting the UAE's sustainability endeavors through robust initiatives and active faculty and student engagement. Recognized for its commitment, AUS is a valued member of the Universities Climate Network, uniting UAE-based institutions to foster dialogues, workshops, public events and youth involvement in preparation for COP28. AUS' commitment to reducing carbon emissions is demonstrated through its pioneering Climate Action Plan, which aligns with the UAE's Net Zero by 2050 strategic vision.

November 14, 2023 | Students address climate change through AUS-Shams Media Day competition



American University of Sharjah (AUS) announced the winners of the highly anticipated media competition held as part of AUS-Shams Media Day on campus on November 8. The event brought together talented youth who addressed climate change through creative media projects.

Held under the theme of "Immediacy," the competition received entries from more than 65 high school and university students from across the UAE who created innovative works that underscore the urgency of tackling climate change.

The event was jointly organized by Sharjah Media City (Shams) and the AUS Department of Media Communication in the College of Arts and Sciences, in collaboration with the Department of Art and Design in the College of Architecture, Art and Design and the Office of Enrollment Management—Sharakah Program. National Network Communications (NNC) played a pivotal role as the Awards Sponsor for this initiative.

The winners were selected for their innovative approaches, impactful storytelling and commitment to raising awareness about climate change.

His Excellency Dr. Khalid Omar Almidfa, Chairman of Sharjah Media City (Shams), said: "In a world where media plays a pivotal role in shaping our understanding of pressing issues, it's truly heartening to witness the power of youth, creativity and innovation in addressing the urgent challenge of climate change. I've always believed in the unique value that young minds bring to the table. They offer fresh perspectives on age-old problems and lead us to resolutions we may have never considered."

His Excellency continued: "At Shams, we honor and empower these young voices, offering them the tools and opportunities to collaborate and make a difference. Together, we can harness the potential of the media to educate, inspire and drive positive change, not only in our region but on a global scale. Today, as we gather to showcase 'Immediacy' in the context of climate action, I'm excited to witness the incredible value each project holds."

AUS students Marim Sharaf and Wenxuan Sui took home top honors in the categories of Best Video and Best Fictional Narrative with their thought-provoking project "Man vs Nature." AUS student Aziza Kashash's photo essay, "Decay & Climate: A Captured Urgency," earned her recognition in the Best Photo Essay category.

Sharaf said: "Winning these awards gave us a great sense of accomplishment. Making 'Man vs Nature' had its ups and downs, but the grind never stops."

Other notable university winners included Manipal Academy of Higher Education's team for their "Fashion Show" project, which claimed first place in the Best Social Media Project category. Yujie Zhang from University of Birmingham Dubai captivated audiences with her innovative "Biodiversity Loss" animation, securing the Best Documentary Technique award.

High school students also excelled in the competition, with Zainah Alireza from Al Mawakeb School winning first place in the Best Video category for her project "Heatwave." A team from Al Maaref Private School impressed the judges with their "Combating Climate Change with Desert Wind Energy" project, earning them the Best Social Media Project award. Komila Kadirova from GEMS Metropole School won the Best Photo Essay award for her entry "Urgency." Laya Samaha from Sharjah American International School, Dubai, secured the Best Fictional Narrative award for her project "Wake Up." A team from Ras Al Khaimah American Academy for Girls took home the Best Documentary Technique award for their project "Sustainability Revolution."

"We are delighted to witness the incredible talent and dedication of the participants in addressing one of the most critical challenges of our time—climate change. The media competition showcased the power of creative expression in raising awareness and driving positive change. AUS is proud to be at the forefront of initiatives that empower the youth to make a difference through their media projects," said Dr. Sohail Dahdal, Head of the Department of Media Communication at AUS.

Each category winner will receive a 2,500 AED cash prize.

AUS-Shams Media Day featured a diverse range of activities, including screenings of thought-provoking media projects, talks from industry experts and an awards ceremony that recognized the outstanding contributions of the winners.

Yousef Al Taweel, Founder and CEO of NNC, noted: "I congratulate the competition's winners, and am truly impressed by the originality and creative passion exhibited by each young contestant. As a homegrown media agency, NNC has been deeply committed to turning the spotlight on the remarkable vision and strategies led by Sharjah and the UAE to promote climate responsibility and sustainability. We fully trust the nation's education system, particularly AUS,

to nurture successive generations of conscientious young women and men who are socially minded and passionate about channeling their talents to design impactful solutions. And therefore, we are here to support and endorse a unique initiative that is harnessing the potential of young changemakers approaching the pressing global issue of climate change through their unique storytelling.”

November 23, 2023 | AUS at COP28: Empowering youth, advancing education and driving innovation



As a sustainability education leader in the UAE, American University of Sharjah (AUS) is gearing up for the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) opening November 30 at Expo City in Dubai.

Focusing on the importance of youth participation and the pivotal role of education in accelerating progress to achieve global climate ambitions, AUS students, faculty and staff will be engaging in a myriad of events and activities in hubs located in COP28's publicly accessible Green Zone.

In the Greening Education Hub – (Erth), Legacy from the Land of Zayed, hosted by the Ministry of Education in partnership with the Greening Education Partnership with its secretariat at UNESCO, AUS faculty will share their expertise on incorporating sustainability into curricula. They will participate in panel discussions on eco-literacy, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), using the activity-based learning approach FunDoo-GreenPal to enhance adolescents' digital climate action skills, implementing the Greening Education Partnership in Higher Education, and the role of scientific research and research networks in climate change. AUS has been particularly successful in integrating sustainability into the curriculum, with approximately 72 percent of all AUS undergraduate and graduate courses having at least some component related to sustainability.

The AUS Office of Sustainability will lead a joint panel discussion with sustainability professionals from New York University Abu Dhabi and Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi on the progress made in measuring and tracking greenhouse gas emissions in higher education institutions in the UAE.

Visitors to the Greening Education Hub will also learn about the sustainability-focused research of AUS students and faculty, including the prominent work of the university's Dana Gas Chair in Chemical and Biological Engineering, Petrofac Research Chair in Renewable Energy and Riad T. Sadek Chair in Civil Engineering. AUS' commitment to advanced research and academic excellence will also be underscored as it spotlights its PhD programs in bioscience and engineering, and materials science and engineering, as well as its three newly established research institutes: the Energy, Water and Sustainable Environment Research Center in the College of Engineering; the Center for Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Sustainable Development in the School of Business Administration; and the Materials Research Center in the College of Arts and Sciences.

AUS students will tackle some of the issues closest to the hearts of the youth at the First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB) Pavilion in the Climate Finance Hub, 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.

AUS student work will also be on display at the Dubai Municipality Pavilion and the Prototypes for Humanity project.

AUS will also be present at COP28's exclusive Blue Zone, the formal conference and negotiation space managed by the UNFCCC. Julia Carlow, Acting Head of AUS Sustainability, will represent AUS in an UAE Alliance for Climate Action (UACA) event on "One Year of Impact: UAE Alliance for Climate Action." A group of AUS faculty members will also take part in a workshop on climate policy-science addressing the gaps analysis on climate change research in the UAE.

"Universities can be powerful catalysts for change by integrating sustainability in the classroom, fostering impactful research and innovation, and championing environmental practices within their own operations. Our many activities in the lead up to this global conference and our diverse participation in COP28 reflect the many aspects that led AUS to become a sustainability education forerunner. AUS believes in advocating for policies that support sustainability and climate education both within the institution and beyond. It is through these collaborative efforts that we play a pivotal role in instilling a sense of responsibility and stewardship in the leaders of tomorrow," said Carlow.

November 26, 2023 | Co-hosted by AUS, Global Conference of Youth 18, the world's largest youth climate conference, opens today



Co-hosted by American University of Sharjah (AUS), the Global Conference of Youth (COY18), the most extensive youth conference dedicated to multilateral UN climate processes, kicks off its activities today, November 26, fostering global youth engagement and discourse on critical climate issues.

Along with co-hosts New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD) the Arab Youth Center, the annual conference is held until November 28 under the observance of YOUNGO, the official children and youth constituency to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It emphasizes the imperative of engaging and empowering the younger generation in the pursuit of sustainable solutions as the world gears up for the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) taking place November 30 to December 12 in Dubai.

“The involvement of youth in climate change action is not symbolic but instrumental in driving meaningful change and fostering a collective commitment to environmental stewardship. The centrality of youth in this context becomes a catalyst for innovation, advocacy and a more

inclusive approach towards addressing the challenges posed by climate change,” said student Jahnvi Doshi, AUS’ lead representative in the COY18 Steering Committee and scope lead in media and communications.

She added: “As students representing AUS, we take immense pride in our role on the global stage, actively contributing to the development of climate change policies aligned with the UNFCCC.”

Participants in COY18 will be contributing to the Global Youth Statement, which is a collective statement representing the perspectives of youth from around the world that will be presented to decision-makers in COP28.

They will also be creating on-ground campaigns, and brainstorming climate solutions and initiatives; networking through roundtable discussions, focus groups, fun activities and bilateral meetings with decision-makers; and building capacity through workshops, training, courses, and plenary sessions on negotiations, leadership, policy, fundraising, media training and advocacy.

Working group sessions will cover a variety of issues held under the themes of climate equity and justice transition; technology and innovation; water, food and agriculture; climate action plans, global stocktake and nationally determined contributions; nature and biodiversity; climate finance and markets; health; migration; adaptation and resilience; action for climate empowerment; and energy transition.

AUS Sustainability is organizing a capacity-building workshop as part of the conference on November 27 titled "Whole Foods at the Center of Health and Climate," addressing escalating health concerns and the urgent need to address climate change. The session is designed to empower individuals, communities and organizations with the knowledge and skills necessary to integrate sustainable and health-centric practices into their daily lifestyles and operations. It aims to foster a comprehensive understanding of the interconnectedness between nutrition, health and climate. It encourages participants to explore how adopting a whole foods approach not only promotes individual well-being but also contributes to mitigating climate change and building more sustainable communities.

The AUS student leadership team co-hosting COY18 comprises Jahnvi Doshi, AUS lead representative in the COY18 Steering Committee and scope lead in media and communications; Jawwad Sheikh, AUS co-lead in the COY18 Steering Committee and scope lead in volunteer management; Aamuktha Samjyaraman, scope lead in programs, opening and closing ceremonies; Sameera Khan, scope lead in programs and partners; Mohamed Amaan Siddiqui, scope lead in research and reporting; Manal Nadeem, scope lead in the Global Youth Statement; Tavishi Doshi, working group advisor on finance; Siraj Mecci, working group advisor on logistics and the Global Affairs Unit; and Mahasen Mudallali, working group advisor on delegate relations.

November 28, 2023 | Empowering youth in climate advocacy: AUS hosts first Climate Action Awareness Day for Sharakah Schools



American University of Sharjah (AUS) hosted its first AUS Climate Action Awareness Day for partner schools from the university's Sharakah program.

Attended by 250 students from eight Sharakah schools across the UAE, the event aimed to deepen their understanding about environmental issues and inspire innovative solutions for a sustainable future. The transition to clean energy was a primary focus of the event.

Organized in collaboration with the College of Engineering and the Student Energy Summit (SES) Ambassadors, the event offered students the opportunity to engage with AUS faculty and students who are making great strides in the field of climate action. Dr. Amani Al-Othman, Professor in Chemical Engineering at AUS, provided an insightful introduction to climate change and the imperative of clean energy transition. Students also attended a panel discussion about the role of youth in climate action. Moderated by Julia Carlow, Acting Head of AUS Sustainability, panelists were AUS students Khadijah Minhas, Muhammad Junaid, Jawwad Sheikh and Sathya Aamuktha Samrajyam.

The event also showcased the Clean Energy Transition Ideathon, where students from Delhi Private School Sharjah, Dubai International Private School, Al Nahda National School and Al Ittihad Private School Jumeirah, displayed their innovative spirit. Students from Delhi Private

School, Sharjah, won the top prize for their Communlon E-Fabric System project, which is a sustainable energy storage and transportation system. It contains small units of printable batteries which can communicate with each other and direct the flow of energy to the location where energy demand is the highest.

"I'm truly grateful to AUS for giving me and my team a chance to present our idea, Communlon E-Fabric System, which bagged the first prize. It was inspiring to explore and understand the ideas of other students, which showcased the youth's stance on Sustainable Development Goals seven and symbolized the sustainable future lying ahead," said Meer Shamdasani from Delhi Private School Sharjah.

"This AUS Climate Action Awareness Day is a crucial step in AUS' ambition to engage the wider community in climate action. It is a testament that our efforts in sustainability education and engagement extend beyond the campus and shows that we are eager to integrate the local youth community in the global climate dialogue. We are very pleased with the enthusiasm and innovative ideas presented. It's inspiring to see these young minds eager to contribute to a sustainable future," said Carlow.

Hala Al Jundi, Sharakah Program Officer, applauds the impact left by students during the Climate Action Awareness Day for Sharakah schools.

"Empowering youth in climate advocacy is not just a step but a leap towards a sustainable future. The innovative ideas and enthusiasm displayed by these young minds are indispensable contributions as we approach COP28, reinforcing the vital role of the youth in the global climate dialogue," she said.

Dr. Aishwarya Raina Sharma, Environment Incharge (Grades 6 to 12) at Delhi Private School Sharjah, reflected on the collaboration: "Celebrating unity in purpose, Delhi Private School, Sharjah proudly stands with AUS on Climate Action Awareness Day. Through education, awareness and sustainable initiatives, we cultivate a shared commitment to environmental stewardship. Together, let us inspire change, sow the seeds of consciousness and foster a community dedicated to preserving our planet for generations to come."

November 30, 2023 | AUS faculty showcase sustainable education initiatives at COP28: Bridging research, curriculum design and youth engagement



Drawing on their expertise in sustainability, environmental science and climate change, faculty members at American University of Sharjah (AUS) are poised to provide significant research contributions, pioneering solutions and intellectual guidance to the discussions and initiatives at COP28.

Their active participation in panels and collaborative efforts with global stakeholders showcases AUS' commitment to addressing climate challenges, aligning its efforts with the UAE's Net Zero 2050 strategic initiative and enhancing the collective understanding and action towards achieving sustainable outcomes through education.

Dr. Norita Ahmad, Professor of Information Systems and Business Analytics, and Director of the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning, is organizing a session on curriculum design

and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and is part of a workshop with the UNICEF Office of Innovation on developing green skills in children and youth learners using a game-based learning approach. She is also a jury panel member in the Masdar global initiative Youth 4 Sustainability (Y4S), which is part of the four-month program for youth that aims to accelerate the development of 10 innovative solutions that can help tackle the most pressing climate and energy-related issues.

“As educators and researchers, we play a crucial role in shaping the future of sustainable practices and mindsets. COP28 provides a platform to share best practices, collaborate with like-minded peers, and hopefully influence policy decisions. Our involvement can bridge the gap between research and actionable strategies, fostering a more sustainable and informed approach to education at both local and global levels. By actively engaging in COP28, we can help highlight the region's achievements, share innovative approaches, and foster collaborations that align with the UAE's sustainability goals,” she said.

Dr. May Zaki, Associate Professor in Arabic and Translation Studies and certified trainer with the Association for Learning Design and Education for Sustainable Development, is joining Dr. Ahmad in the discussion on curriculum design and ESD, which she described as a “cross-cutting” topic in all areas of education “since it can be directly translated into curriculum enhancements, ensuring that educational programs align with current global sustainability goals and challenges.”

“Let's not forget that faculty members and researchers play a pivotal role in shaping educational policies. By participating in COP28, we can contribute evidence-based research and advocate for policies that integrate sustainability into education systems on various levels,” said Dr. Zaki.

Organizing and moderating panels throughout five days of the conference is Dr. Fatin Samara, Professor in Biology, Chemistry and Environmental Sciences. While she will discuss impactful climate interventions through transformative innovations in the education sector and the opportunities and potential for integrating actions for climate and biodiversity, Dr. Samara is particularly focused on the role of scientific research and research networks in climate change collaborations and youth education. Organized by Dr. Samara in collaboration with the UAE Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MOCCA), Abu Dhabi University and Umm Al Quwain University, the session highlights the role of education in accelerating research and discoveries in areas related to climate change and sustainability, spotlighting how research has contributed to climate action knowledge among youth.

Dr. Samara is also organizing and facilitating a session in collaboration with MOCCA's Climate Change Research Network, which she co-chairs, on gap analysis on climate change research in the UAE, gathering the region's experts on climate research and climate change studies to discuss the challenges and advances in climate change research. Also participating in this session are AUS faculty members Dr. Ivonne Bejarano, Assistant Professor in Biology, Chemistry and Environmental Sciences; Dr. Yuting Wang, Professor and Head of the Department of International Studies; and Dr. Adil Al-Tamimi, Professor in Civil Engineering.

“The outcomes of these sessions are expected to foster collaborative initiatives between local, regional and international experts to enhance the research in areas of importance, but where current advances are lacking and to encourage commitments from policy makers to support scientific research in gap areas,” said Dr. Samara.

Taking part in Schneider Electric's Sustainability Roundtable on Catalyzing Decarbonization: Digitalization and Strategy Technology is Dr. Fadi Aloul, Dean of the AUS College of Engineering (CEN). He will discuss the key challenges and opportunities for engineering students and professionals in contributing to decarbonization efforts in the Middle East and beyond and how

academic institutions can play a pivotal role in fostering collaboration between students and industries to address the technical challenges of decarbonization.

“We are working on changing the mindset of students and spreading a culture that makes them think of sustainability in everything they do, which means acquiring a better understanding of climate change, its impact and challenges. This is our role as an academic institute. Further, our research confronts challenges in navigating the transition towards sustainable energy, and we at AUS are engaged in multifaceted research to understand the many dimensions of this shift and developing methodologies that integrate social, economic and environmental considerations to create comprehensive frameworks for sustainable energy adoption. CEN continues to partner with Schneider Electric, synergizing efforts to advance sustainable practices through a combination of student training and cutting-edge research initiatives, and we are happy to be contributing to the global climate dialogue in COP28,” said Dr. Aloul.

From December 10-12, visitors to the Greening Education Hub, hosted by the Ministry of Education in partnership with the Greening Education Partnership with its secretariat at UNESCO, can also learn about the sustainability-focused research of AUS faculty, including the prominent work of the university’s Dana Gas Chair in Chemical and Biological Engineering, Petrofac Research Chair in Renewable Energy and Riad T. Sadek Chair in Civil Engineering. AUS’ commitment to advanced research and academic excellence is also underscored as it spotlights its PhD programs in bioscience and engineering, and materials science and engineering, as well as its three newly established research institutes: the Energy, Water and Sustainable Environment Research Center in the College of Engineering; the Center for Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Sustainable Development in the School of Business Administration; and the Materials Research Center in the College of Arts and Sciences.

AUS students will also be tackling some of the issues closest to the hearts of the youth at the First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB) Pavilion in the Climate Finance Hub, 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. They will also take part in a special edition of the Global Youth Forum, under the theme "Empowering Youth for Sustainability", in celebration of the “Year of Sustainability, held under the patronage of H.E. Sheikh Nahayan Bin Mubarak Al Nahayan, Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence.