



THE AMERICAN  
UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO

100 YEARS



# GREEN GUIDE

An introduction to campus  
sustainability at AUC

# CONTENTS

- Sustainability@AUC ..... 3
- Energy ..... 4
- Transportation ..... 5
- Waste Management ..... 6
- Water Use ..... 7
- Wellness ..... 8
- Campus Outreach and Awareness ..... 9
- Academics and Research ..... 10
- Global Focus ..... 11

# SUSTAINABILITY@AUC

## **What is Sustainability?**

Sustainability focuses on meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The concept of sustainability is composed of three pillars: economic, environmental, and social — also known informally as profits, planet, and people.

## **The Office of Sustainability Overview**

You might be surprised to find a green guide among the beige, yellow and cream of AUC's campus and desert environs. However, it is because of — not in spite of — our location between the Nile's fertile valley and the empty desert that we, as an institution, are dedicated to the principles of sustainability. In the face of global climate change, AUC seeks to be a regional and global leader in reducing our impact on the planet. One of the biggest parts of that effort is the Office of Sustainability. Established in 2011, the Office has been working since then to reduce AUC's resource use and waste production through a variety of measures.

## **The Office of Sustainability Mission Statement**

Our office serves the University's larger mission and strategic plan, both of which emphasize safeguarding the environment. The Office of Sustainability's objective is to integrate environmental and social sustainability into the culture and structure of the University. The office strives to reduce the University's use of natural resources and operating costs and to instill a mindset of sustainability in the AUC community by supporting University programs in education, research and operations. It seeks to weave sustainability into the culture, mission and activities of the University and gain international recognition for its successes.

## **What Does the Office of Sustainability Do?**

Sustainability is a crucially important goal, but it can be so multifaceted that it can be confusing. What exactly does an office of sustainability do? The short answer is a lot! Throughout this Green Guide, we will break down the diverse projects our office works on and show you how you can also get involved in our mission of making AUC's campus, community and planet happier and healthier.



# ENERGY

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

### Turn off the lights!

Whenever you leave a room, turn out the lights. It's common sense!

### Chill out!

Always close all doors and windows when running the air conditioning and be sure to set it no lower than 26 degrees in the summer and no higher than 20 degrees in the winter. If your temperature isn't right, change your fashion, not the thermostat!

In order to maintain daily operations, AUC consumes a significant amount of energy. Most of this energy is used for air-conditioning and heating, as well as the lighting system and other equipment. But, the University is a diverse and dynamic place, and energy is also used for anything from running physics experiments to preserving rare books in the University Library. The Office of Sustainability keeps meticulous data about how much energy is being used, where and how. Every month, the Energy and Resource Conservation and Efficiency (ERCE) committee meets to discuss energy consumption trends and brainstorm how we can reduce our demand.

Energy reduction is already happening all around campus. Most of our electricity comes from an on-campus co-generation plant. Running on natural gas, which burns cleaner than coal, this sophisticated system produces both electricity and steam, which, instead of being wasted like in traditional plants, is reused for things like heating. This reduces the overall amount of energy we need and the amount of fossil fuel we burn to generate it. The Office of Sustainability also places informational signs in offices and residences to remind users to turn off their lights, turn down the air conditioning and practice other sustainable habits.

AUC intends to introduce solar panels on campus in an effort to resort to clean energy alternatives that save resources, as well.

# TRANSPORTATION



Cairo is known for its traffic jams and air pollution, mostly because of the huge number of private cars clogging the roads. When AUC moved to its new home in New Cairo, 35 kilometers east of downtown, we committed ourselves to providing more sustainable options for our community members to get to and from work and school. AUC currently provides multiple buses a day along 13 routes that serve greater Cairo, connecting New Cairo to Maadi, 6th of October, Downtown and more. The bus service is available to staff members six days a week, at peak commute times, free of charge, and students can use it for a small fee. More information about the bus system can be found at [www.aucegypt.edu/services/bus](http://www.aucegypt.edu/services/bus). Once people are on campus, it is completely walkable — most areas are pedestrian-only, making it a more pleasant and safer experience. Students, faculty and staff get to stretch their legs, enjoy the fresh air and take in the beautiful architecture and landscaping by walking between classes and meetings.

While the Office of Sustainability does not run the bus system, we do work to increase ridership and encourage people to make smarter choices about their commute through designed campaigns such as the “Go Green, Go Bus” campaign that was designed to educate students, faculty and staff about the bus options available to them. For people whose busy schedules do not quite align with the bus schedule, we have worked to promote carpooling through a publicity campaign and various projects to connect AUCians to potential carpool partners. We also waive the parking fee for carpoolers to incentivize ride sharing.

As Cairo and the campus community grow, sustainable transportation solutions are encouraged. As a result, the Office of Sustainability spearheads the bikeshare system at AUC. The bikeshare system is a service that provides bicycles for the AUC community to share and use for short periods of time. The aim of the program is to promote a healthy lifestyle and well-being through exercise to community members, lower environmental impact through emission reduction and endorse community-oriented transportation. Hundreds of universities in the United States and other countries employ bikeshare projects for their faculty, staff and students to promote cycling as a viable and sustainable transport option. AUC stands to benefit from a bikeshare program through an embodied commitment to sustainable practices, such as the improvement of air quality, the increased accessibility of its campus and the increased availability of alternative transportation modes in its growing suburban community.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

### Take the bus!

AUC buses go all over the city at convenient commuting times. Check out all 13 routes; you will surely find one that gets you close enough to home to take local public transit, walk, or take a short taxi ride.



# WASTE MANAGEMENT

One of the biggest challenges to sustainability on any campus is waste. Every day, students, faculty and staff produce a considerable amount of waste: packaging from study-snacks, scratch paper from exams and more. The Office of Sustainability works to reduce our waste stream and divert as much recyclable material away from landfills as possible. Around campus, we have installed full waste-sorting stations, with options for plastic, cans, waste and other trash, all in one place. Additionally, we have individual recycling and trash bins around campus. We also work with administrative offices to ensure that every office has a paper-recycling bin.

Collecting recyclables and waste is only half the battle. Luckily, the Office of Sustainability has partnered up with the Clean and Green Committee, a group of dedicated faculty and staff members, to ensure that we do the right thing with the recyclable materials we collect. In 2015, AUC purchased a compactor to further process recyclable goods on campus. Some paper is donated to local charities like Resala and The Association for the Protection of the Environment (APE); the remaining paper, aluminum and plastic is compacted in our on-campus compactor and sold, with proceeds going back into sustainability efforts on campus.

In an effort to reduce plastic water bottle usage on campus, the Office of Sustainability has installed water dispensers that supply filtered, chilled drinking water for students, faculty and staff to fill their reusable bottles at. The office plans to add more chilled water dispensers in high-traffic areas of campus to decrease AUC's solid waste emissions.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

### **BYO (Bring Your Own)!**

The first step to sustainability is to USE LESS! Bring a reusable bottle, mug and cutlery to work. You will avoid all the waste of single-use plastic, paper and Styrofoam.

### **Go e-green!**

Do you really need to print that? Use email and keep things online or print two-sided to avoid wasted paper, ink and energy.

# WATER USE

Our campus water consumption has major environmental impacts. Not only is water a scarce resource here in the desert, but also pumping water throughout campus requires energy, which contributes to our overall carbon footprint. Because of this, the Office of Sustainability works to keep track of water use. The Energy and Resource Conservation and Efficiency (ERCE) committee meets monthly to discuss water use levels and ultimately reduce how much water our campus consumes.

One of the most exciting parts of AUC's water conservation efforts is our use of treated wastewater. For the last several years, we have been using treated wastewater to irrigate the many beautiful landscaped areas on campus. Treated water is cheaper than using drinking-grade water and has a smaller carbon footprint. It also reuses water that otherwise would have gone to waste, which helps protect Egypt's water sources. These efforts help us keep up a beautiful campus while reducing our impact and hopefully can serve as a model for more universities and other institutions to switch to treated wastewater landscaping. We have also installed low-flow fixtures (faucets and showerheads) and informational signs to reduce domestic water use across campus.

In its efforts to follow the international campuses practices, the Office of Sustainability and the Office of Facilities and Operations have installed Elkay filtered ezH2O bottle filling stations on campus to reduce lead and other harmful particulates, putting cleaner, healthier water within everyone's reach. Besides reducing the waste of single-use plastic bottles, these stations also allow for minimal splashing when filling reusable bottles and cups.



## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

### **Turn it off!**

Make sure to turn off the faucet while shaving, brushing teeth, scrubbing hands, or doing dishes. Only turn it on when you need to rinse. You will save lots of water!

### **Shorten your shower!**

Your shower should not be longer than 3 minutes. If you want to be even more conscious, turn off the water while using shampoo and body wash.



# WELLNESS

The ultimate goal of all sustainability efforts is a healthy planet that will allow more people to live happier and more productive lives. At AUC, the wellbeing of our community members is a goal for both sustainable efforts and their own health and wellness. Our New Cairo campus, with large plazas and extensive garden areas, provides students, faculty and staff ample opportunity to walk around for fresh air and exercise. For AUCians in need of a snack, several food outlets on campus offer healthy and nutritious options like salads, smoothies and fruit. People can also make use of our beautiful, three-mile running and biking path that winds around inside the campus gates, providing a safe and comfortable place for anyone wanting to run outside (**View the map here: <https://www.aucegypt.edu/maps/>**).

AUC also offers many team sports at the club and intercollegiate level for students who want to get exercise while developing teamwork skills and friendships. In an effort to make AUC a healthier campus by the centennial celebration in 2019, the University has launched an initiative in early 2018 to ban smoking and tobacco use on campus in phases. Eventually, there will be no smoking or tobacco use of any kind allowed anywhere at AUC. Having a tobacco-free campus is designed to clear the air for the majority of those who work and study at AUC, who are non-smokers, in addition to encouraging smokers to take steps to reduce their dependence on tobacco (**View the Tobacco-Free Community Policy here: <https://www.aucegypt.edu/about/university-policies>**).

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

### Eat green!

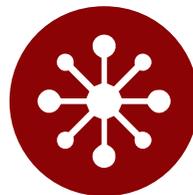
Meat is one of the biggest contributors to greenhouse gases and raising animals uses a lot of water and resources. You do not have to be a vegetarian to make smart choices and cut down on your meat intake. Grab a salad or a piece of fruit. It is better for the planet and for you!

### Get outside!

Enjoy the sunshine and fresh air in our campus gardens. It is a great way to relax, recharge and reconnect with nature.

In addition to easing into the new policy, AUC is also providing free smoking cessation services at the Office of Medical Services, which is open every day during the week. All of these efforts help to make our campus healthier. Furthermore, many choices that are healthy for your body are also better for the planet. The Office of Sustainability continues to push students, faculty and staff to understand the intersection between human health and global sustainability and support any new initiatives that can help our community and planet thrive.

# CAMPUS OUTREACH AND AWARENESS



AUC community members are our most important partners in building a sustainable campus. As much work as the Office of Sustainability does behind the scenes, we need students, faculty and staff to help us by practicing sustainable habits and fostering a broad-based culture of awareness. To ensure this, the office does a lot of outreach across campus to instill in AUCians a lasting respect for sustainable principles. Because we are developing leaders who will one day make a change outside campus, in Egypt and around the world, we hope our efforts are giving the next generation of changemakers the tools and knowledge to build a more sustainable and just world.

Our outreach takes many forms and every semester we have exciting, new events. Our Clean and Green Committee of faculty and staff members is an important interface with the academic community on campus as faculty members help in giving training sessions at orientation, spread information about sustainable events and initiatives and even lead a nature walk through our beautiful campus gardens! Every year we celebrate Earth Week in April with several days of diverse programming about the environment, climate change and how individuals can make an impact. One of our favorite events each year is Earth Hour, where we let the entire campus go dark for one hour to help people understand how much electricity they use on a daily basis. All year round, we make sure to periodically send out sustainable resolutions and awareness tips at NEWS@AUC, through which people can make small, lasting changes in their daily routine to reduce their impact.



# ACADEMICS AND RESEARCH

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

**Sustainability is a topic that cuts across all disciplines!** Even if a course does not have “environment” or “sustainability” in its title, it could touch on important principles and topics related to our impact on the planet. Be sure to browse all of our course offerings to see what classes in your major will give you the critical thinking skills to engage with sustainability and environmental thinking!

Many of AUC’s sustainable initiatives are concerned with the kinds of internal operations that occur in any large institution or company. But what truly makes AUC unique is its position as a leading liberal arts university in the Middle East and the world at large. Because of this, the University’s commitment to sustainability extends into its educational mission as well. Across the University, professors, students and researchers are probing what sustainability means through a variety of course offerings and contexts.

AUC was the first in the Middle East and North Africa to offer a Master of Science in sustainable development degree. The program is coordinated and offered by the Center for Sustainable Development, in collaboration with the School of Business, School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, School of Humanities and Social Sciences and the School of Sciences and Engineering.

In addition to the theoretical and analytical components of the program, students carry out community-based activities that allow for concentrations in engineering, business studies, public policy or social sciences depending on the student’s interests and background.

AUC’s Research Institute for a Sustainable Environment dedicated its efforts towards research on sustainable water use and agriculture in Egypt’s various rural areas. Their work included an on-campus community farm plot and various projects with communities outside of Cairo.

Currently, the Center for Sustainable Development (CSD) and the Research Institute for a Sustainable Environment (RISE) have merged to form the Center for Applied Research on the Environment and Sustainability (CARES).

In addition to CARES, professors across the University are including sustainability and environmental ideas in their courses from architecture to business.

# GLOBAL FOCUS



Since the founding of AUC in 1919, it has been a distinctly global University. While many of our sustainability efforts are internally focused, throughout all of our work we maintain an outward, global outlook. Our office is a member of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) and we participate in multiple international sustainability rating programs. AUC has been listed and ranked by both the Universitas Indonesia (UI) GreenMetric, a global listing of universities dedicated to sustainability, and the Princeton Review's "375 Green Colleges," where AUC was the only University outside of North America to be listed in 2016 and 2017. The UN Environment Programme also recognized AUC as a global exemplar of University sustainability, one of only two schools in Africa chosen for inclusion in their "Greening Universities Toolkit."

Central to all of these global rankings is AUC's biennial carbon footprint report. First published in 2012, this report is the only one of its kind in the Middle East and North Africa. The Office of Sustainability works each year to update the report with measurements from across campus to get a comprehensive understanding of our contributions to climate change. By publishing this report, we aim to be regional leaders and encourage other universities in the region to begin compiling and analyzing their own carbon footprint data. AUC also engages continuously with the UN Global Compact, the world's largest sustainability initiative, which urges global organizations to align operations with principles on human rights, labor, the environment and transparency.



# Get in touch!

Reach out to us with any questions and ideas.

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**Office of Sustainability**

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