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A message from American University

The following message from President Alger was sent to students, faculty, and staff. We are sharing it with our alumni community so you remain informed.

Dear American University community,

It is with mixed emotions that I share the news today that I will be resigning as president of American University as of June 30, 2026, to accept a joint appointment with the American Council on Education (ACE) and American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) as the inaugural [America 250 Fellow](#)—a new national fellowship created to advance the role of colleges and universities in strengthening democratic institutions, civic learning, and informed citizenship as our nation commemorates its 250th anniversary while looking toward the future and the ongoing work of pursuing a “more perfect union.” I have worked closely with both organizations over many years and have great respect for their roles in shaping, guiding, and advocating for higher education. As of July 1, I will also transition to a new role at American University as Senior Fellow for Civic Leadership and will continue to assist with programming in that area.

As many of you know, I have long had a passion for the public purposes of higher education and its role in supporting and sustaining a vibrant, pluralistic democracy. Two years ago when I joined AU, we could not have predicted the challenges that emerged to that vital mission. As I contemplated how best to contribute in this pivotal moment, I was drawn to the opportunity to engage across the entire ecosystem. Building on my decades of frontline leadership, I am excited that my next chapter will help shape the national dialogue on the future of higher education.

When I first came to American University, I founded the Civic Life Initiative to build and blend skills of civil discourse, dialogue across differences, problem-solving, and seeking common ground with creativity and innovation. I also brought the nationally renowned Civic Learning and Democracy Engagement Coalition (CLDE) in-house to AU, which is accelerating the spread of college civic learning, providing

evidence on “what works,” and building educational and policy leadership for the movement. This past year, we also implemented the 250+ at American initiative to mark this critical juncture in our history by inviting our community to reflect on the nation’s past, engage in the present, and imagine the future through many different disciplinary lenses.

We are incorporating civic learning and civic skills across the curriculum and are part of national efforts to model how all students can learn to engage constructively across differences. AU has also become an active member of a consortium of institutions dedicated to emphasizing public-impact research. Given our mission, location in the nation’s capital, and historic commitment to public service, I believe these efforts have established AU as a national leader in this field at a time when our society sorely needs citizens who are committed to engaging thoughtfully and productively to address the grand challenges of the 21st century—challenges that do not fit neatly into traditional academic silos.

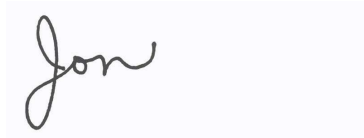
Over this period of time, we also developed and implemented the Meet Our Moment strategic plan with its bold set of pledges to current and prospective students and the world—providing tangible guarantees and experiences so that all our students will graduate with civic and career skills that prepare them for careers and for active engagement as citizens. We are making significant investments in financial aid, career counseling, local and global partnerships, and other forms of student support to make an AU education more accessible, affordable, and impactful than ever for students of all backgrounds. We have also initiated comprehensive reviews of our academic and operational programs to ensure that our offerings, structures, and systems match the needs of a rapidly evolving landscape.

I want to thank our students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees, and community members for coming together in pursuit of a vision for a future AU that is stronger, more adaptable, and more distinctive than ever. I have seen marked improvements in the climate and spirit on campus because you have leaned into the call for constructive engagement. Our overall national ranking has risen, and many of our academic programs are considered among the best in the country. We’ve also dedicated the newly named Baker School of Education as well as the Meltzer Center—the university’s first net-zero and LEED Platinum-certified building.

We all recognize that this is a turbulent time for higher education, and

that AU is not immune from the headwinds that are impacting colleges across the country. I am confident, however, that the institution has charted a clear, ambitious course and will emerge as an even more dynamic, resilient, and impactful university in the years to come. I will continue to support AU from this exciting new national vantage point and look forward to seeing all that AU accomplishes in the years ahead.

With gratitude and warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light purple rectangular background. The signature is cursive and reads "Jon".

Jonathan R. Alger

President, American University



American University

4400 Massachusetts Avenue NW

Washington, DC 20016

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