China identifies AU’s fisheries programs as best in the world

The government of China has recognized AU’s Department of Fisheries and Allied Aquacultures as housing the premier program of its type in the world.

Out of that recognition has emerged a partnership between AU and the university housing China’s most prestigious fisheries programs.

The recognition is part of a Chinese initiative to establish educational partnerships with institutions worldwide that carry the distinction of premier universities in select fields, which China has deemed of major importance to the country’s economic and cultural development.

Following that designation and with funding support from the Chinese government, AU and China’s Ocean University are establishing a five-year exchange program for graduate students and faculty.

David Rouse, head of the Department of Fisheries and Allied Aquacultures in the College of Agriculture, said the Chinese government is investing heavily in its educational system. As part of that commitment, that nation’s government established a federal plan to identify 100 Chinese universities as tops in their disciplines and expand their international role through partnerships with the best universities in the world in those disciplines.

The Ocean University of China received national recognition for its work involving fish, shrimp, shellfish and similar species. Other universities across China have or will be chosen for fields of study ranging from business and engineering to the liberal arts.

Once a Chinese university obtains the prestigious designation, it receives funding from the country’s government to send graduate students or faculty members, or both, to the top university in the world in the selected discipline. As the top Chinese university in the fisheries area, Ocean University will send 10 scholars per year for five years for fisheries study at Auburn.

Last June, officials from Ocean University visited Auburn and several other universities in the United States and around the world to evaluate the potential for partnerships. Afterward, they asked Auburn to form a partnership with their university.

Ocean University sought input from scientists of Chinese origin around the world. “Every one of

See China partnership, page 3

Auburn Abroad
AU student Courtney Jamieson, left, a veteran of the College of Human Sciences’ Ariccia, Italy, program and CHS staff member Sue Ann Fox discuss the Ariccia program with students Matt Traywick, bottom right, and Clay Merritt during the Study Abroad Fair in Haley Center last week. AU students are signing up in increasing numbers for Auburn Abroad programs. See related story on page 2.
Students are planning to study abroad from the time they consider international programs, many of today’s educational opportunities for Auburn students. AU President Jay Gogue has noted that 10 percent of Auburn’s students, clockwise from left, were Susie Hall of Auxiliary Services, Danne Townsend of the College of Business, student volunteer leader Kylee Patrick and Bill Sauer of the College of Business. Sauer said the program includes stochastic rise in support during its closing weeks in December.

Celebrating success

Campus volunteers last week celebrated the success of the 2007 AU United Way Campaign, which raised a campus-record amount of more than $148,000 to support local relief and social service organizations. The AU campaign exceeded its goal by more than $8,000. Representing dozens of volunteers, campus campaign leaders, clockwise from left, were Susie Hall of Auxiliary Services, Danne Townsend of the College of Business, student volunteer leader Kylee Patrick and Bill Sauer of the College of Business. Sauer said the program includes stochastic rise in support during its closing weeks in December.

JUC’s Museum exhibits unique collection of Alabama pottery

The exhibition “Alabama Folk Pottery” is on view at AU’s Jule Collins Smith Museum through March 29. Joey Brackner, Director of the Alabama Center for Traditional Culture, a division of the Alabama State Council on the Arts, is the guest curator.

“The work of Alabama folk potters reflects the many cultural influences that have come together in Alabama over the last 200 years,” said Brackner. “During that time, the state developed several unique pottery regions and produced individual potters with enormous skill and creativity.”

The majority of the examples for the show came from private collections, but there are also pieces from the Birmingham Museum of Art, the High Museum of Art in Atlanta and the Gardisden Museum.

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, February 19

NEW PERSPECTIVES LECTURE “Traditional Signs in African American Cemeteries, Homes and Churches,” Judith McWillie of the University of Georgia, 4 p.m., AU’s Jule Collins Smith Museum

PUBLIC LECTURE “The Arts of Citizenship in a Diverse Democracy: The Public Work of the Arts and Humanities,” David Soble of the advisory board of the imagine America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life, 3 p.m., Foy 202

THEATRE “A Shyama Maid,” 7:30 p.m., Telfair Peet Theatre; also Feb. 20-23

Thursday, February 21

BOOK SIGNING “Atomic Lobster” by author and AU alumnus Tim Densley, 1:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m., AU Bookstore

PUBLIC LECTURE “Community in Alabama: Architecture for Living Together,” architecture historian Alice M. Bowsher, 5 p.m., Jule Collins Smith Museum

Friday, February 22

FINAL DAY Museum exhibition “Monuments: Images by Jerry Siegel,” images of Selma by one of the South’s most prominent photographers, Jule Collins Smith Museum

Monday, February 25

Next AU REPORT

Tuesday, February 26

NEW PERSPECTIVES LECTURE “Road Trip: Touring Public Art of Alabama,” George Greer, state Council on the Arts, 4 p.m., Jule Collins Smith Museum

PUBLIC LECTURE “Election Administration’s Role in Preserving and Electing Democracy,” Doug Lewis of The Election Center, 4 p.m., AU Hotel

ANNUAL MEETING AU Federal Credit Union members, 7 p.m., AUPCU Building

Wednesday, February 27

FACULTY SEMINAR “How to Get Small Groups to Work Effectively,” from “Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education,” led by James Croce of the Biggins Center, 12:15 p.m., Foy 203; bring your lunch; call 844-8530

China partnership continued from page 1

them said Auburn was the one for fisheries, which was the reason they had made a second offer for us,” said Rouse.

AU President Jay Gogue added, “This appears to be a great opportunity to enrich students and faculty for both countries.”

Rouse and John Liu, associate dean for research in AU’s College of Agriculture, visited China in August to meet with Ocean University officials. Liu, a native of China, is also a faculty member in the Department of Foreign Languages and Allied Aquacultures. Following that visit, officials from Ocean University and AU signed an official memorandum of understanding in December.

The first 10 Chinese students will be selected by finances from both institutions and will arrive in Auburn fall 2008. While some will be in the fisheries department at AU, Rouse said others will be in agricultural economics and poultry science.

While Auburn has long hosted foreign graduate students and visiting faculty, Rouse said this is the first time that a foreign country has paid the way for so many students and for faculty exchanges.

In addition to sending Chinese fisheries scholars to Auburn, the Chinese government will pay for AU professors to travel to China to teach short courses. To kick off the program Ocean University will host AU fisheries faculty in May for meetings with faculty at the Chinese campus.

Several other colleges and schools, including the colleges of Agriculture, Business and Education, offer credit courses in foreign lands for majors in their disciplines and related academic fields.

The U.S. dollar is still strong in Mexico, and travel costs are less for the Spanish-language program in Cuernavaca, Mexico. That program attracted 23 AU students last summer and will enroll 28 to 30 in 2009.

Finances should not deter any student from considering study abroad, Weiss said. Several scholarships for European study, such as Engineering’s Birdsong scholarships, are available at AU, and there are many opportunities for financial aid for students who look beyond Europe, especially those who participate in international programs in Central or South America, Asia or Africa. Those who apply for financial assistance have a good chance of success if they start the process a year in advance, she said.

The Office of International Education in Hargis Hall assists faculty as well as students, Weiss added. For information on starting or joining a program or to apply for financial aid for study abroad, contact the International Education at 844-5766.

Celebrating success

Campus volunteers last week celebrated the success of the 2007 AU United Way Campaign, which raised a campus-record amount of more than $148,000 to support local relief and social service organizations. The AU campaign exceeded its goal by more than $8,000. Representing dozens of volunteers, campus campaign leaders, clockwise from left, were Susie Hall of Auxiliary Services, Danne Townsend of the College of Business, student volunteer leader Kylee Patrick and Bill Sauer of the College of Business. Sauer said the program includes stochastic rise in support during its closing weeks in December.

JUC’s Museum exhibits unique collection of Alabama pottery

The exhibition “Alabama Folk Pottery” is on view at AU’s Jule Collins Smith Museum through March 29. Joey Brackner, Director of the Alabama Center for Traditional Culture, a division of the Alabama State Council on the Arts, is the guest curator.

“The work of Alabama folk potters reflects the many cultural influences that have come together in Alabama over the last 200 years,” said Brackner. “During that time, the state developed several unique pottery regions and produced individual potters with enormous skill and creativity.”

The majority of the examples for the show came from private collections, but there are also pieces from the Birmingham Museum of Art, the High Museum of Art in Atlanta and the Gardisden Museum.

###

**More students opt for summer study in Auburn Abroad**

Auburn students are signing up in increasing numbers for study abroad this summer, undeterred by the decline of the United States dollar against the euro.

Auburn Abroad summer programs in Europe are registering as many or more students for 2008 than last year, and some programs are showing significant growth.

Europe’s largest AU program for international study, located in Salamanca, Spain, has registered 107 students, the same as last summer, while the Paris program, new in 2007, is increasing by seven students to 30 participants in 2008.

The Salamanca and Paris programs, along with several other popular programs, originate in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures in the College of Liberal Arts but are open to students in any AU college or school. The programs do not require previous courses in the language of the host country.

Several other colleges also offer international study opportunities to students in other disciplines, and their enrollment, which is sometimes capped, is also holding steady or increasing for 2008. For example, the College of Human Sciences’ Joseph Bruno Aubrun Abroad program in Arca, Italy, has 20 students registered for this summer, the same as in 2007.

At the current pace, the number of Auburn students in study abroad activities this summer will exceed the summer 2007 total, which was more than 440. Three-fourths of those participating in programs led by Auburn faculty, and the remainder received credit for international courses from other institutions registered by AU to provide additional educational opportunities for Auburn students.

The first draft of AU’s strategic plan includes a proposal to increase international study, research and instruction by faculty and students. AU President Jay Gogue has noted that 10 percent of AU undergraduate participate in international programs, of which summer programs are the most popular, and he has said the number could rise significantly in the future.

Students and their families increasingly see international study as an important part of their education, Weiss explained. "Instead of waiting until they get to college to learn about the world, they want the international academic experience to be better prepared for life and careers in a global environment," he said.

Weiss said, "Instead of waiting until they get to college to consider international programs, many of today’s students have a strong interest in study abroad before the time they enroll," she said. Those students start planning

See Summers abroad, page 3

###

**Summer abroad**

for international study before they graduate from high school, and their parents factor the study into the costs of their children’s education, Weiss explained.

Robert Weigel, head of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, said most students who sign up for study abroad consider the benefits of international exposure to far exceed the cost. "It is not just the students who think study abroad is important," Weigel said. "In many cases, their families encourage them to sign up, and sometimes even grandparents pitch in to help." In addition to the programs in Spain and France, the College of Liberal Arts maintains popular interdisciplinary European summer programs in Vienna, Austria, and Taormina, Sicily, Italy. Also, the College of Human Sciences has a summer backpacking program for so many students and for faculty exchanges. While Auburn has long hosted foreign graduate students and visiting faculty, Rouse said this is the first time that a foreign country has paid the way for so many students and for faculty exchanges.

In addition to sending Chinese fisheries scholars to Auburn, the Chinese government will pay for AU professors to travel to China to teach short courses. To kick off the program Ocean University will host AU fisheries faculty in May for meetings with faculty at the Chinese campus.

Several other colleges and schools, including the colleges of Agriculture, Business and Education, offer credit courses in foreign lands for majors in their disciplines and related academic fields.

The U.S. dollar is still strong in Mexico, and travel costs are less for the Spanish-language program in Cuernavaca, Mexico. That program attracted 23 AU students last summer and will enroll 28 to 30 in 2009.

Finances should not deter any student from considering study abroad, Weiss said. Several scholarships for European study, such as Engineering’s Birdsong scholarships, are available at AU, and there are many opportunities for financial aid for students who look beyond Europe, especially those who participate in international programs in Central or South America, Asia or Africa. Those who apply for financial assistance have a good chance of success if they start the process a year in advance, she said.

The Office of International Education in Hargis Hall assists faculty as well as students, Weiss added. For information on starting or joining a program or to apply for financial aid for study abroad, contact the International Education at 844-5766.
Preschool is not a numbers game; teacher-training, community count

By Lora Bailey, associate professor, AU College of Education

Some may argue that having too much of a good thing is fine, and, for some things, it might well be. However, recent considerations by the state of Alabama to increase the number of preschool programs in the name of expanding services to reach more preschool children and families may not be fine. This is especially true if such an expansion does not incorporate the emphasis on quality curricula or on the need for qualified teachers.

The focus of any increase should be clearly on increasing school readiness for Alabama’s preschool-aged children. Recent research regarding school readiness shows that there is indeed a direct correlation between teacher and program quality and school readiness. In fact, teacher quality and an appropriate early childhood curriculum are the pillars of an effective preschool program.

Regardless of how teachers earn certification, it is incumbent upon teacher educators and teacher education programs to equip future teachers with the ability to understand how children grow and develop. No matter what route early childhood teachers take to earn early childhood teaching credentials, we must be assured they begin their teaching careers as highly qualified and capable of developing high-quality programs suitable for preparing the children they teach for school success.

Characteristics that denote teacher quality include advanced levels of content knowledge and the appropriate use of teaching methods. For early childhood teachers, this content and pedagogy is related to how children grow and develop socially, emotionally, cognitively, culturally and physically. Regardless of preschool teachers’ level of certification or the route they choose to earn early childhood credentials, teacher education programs must help teachers understand how children learn. Preschool and primary level teachers must understand how children grow and develop across these domains.

In college, future teachers learn how children construct new knowledge and how they grow and develop. In order for early childhood teachers to design environments and curricula suitable for children at that age, these teachers must understand best practices. These are practices which require appropriate knowledge about early childhood educational content and pedagogy.

Recent research related to advancing teaching and learning in early childhood settings focuses on the use of an integrative approach to designing curricula. There is much evidence that this is the most effective method for assuring that children will experience high-quality instruction.

Schools of education, universities and teacher trainers must focus on helping new and experienced teachers weave preschool subject matter together in a level appropriate for each child’s education if these teachers’ efforts are to lead to increased learning and school readiness. This is especially important for effective teaching of preschool and primary grade children, especially those who lack access to high-quality programs.

Thus, there is a need to focus teacher training on research-based methods such as integrative curriculum to improve the quality of new and existing early childhood teachers.

There is also a need for parent training to help families become more involved in student learning. While increasing teacher quality is important, there is also a need to develop a nucleus of support for young children and their families.

Reform initiatives must be centered on connecting schooling efforts to informal home learning activities already in place. We must establish a system for connecting families with existing state and private sources of help. School administrators, higher education institutions, parents, families and communities can and should work collaboratively to advance student learning and increase school readiness.

There is no guarantee that simply increasing the number of preschool programs in a given state increases overall school readiness. Neither is there a guarantee that simply increasing funding to early childhood programs assures better education. Poor students suffer when per-child spending is inadequate, and they suffer if funds are misused. However, the likelihood of improving the quality of preschool programs and school readiness improves markedly when two conditions are met. First, funds must be used to increase teacher quality using practices grounded on sound research. Equally important, funds must be spent to establish sources of support for children and families.

If we are to move our state in a direction where school readiness is no longer an issue, we must give an equal amount of attention to preparing highly-qualified teachers and high-quality programs with community involvement as we do to increasing the number of programs in the state.

Editor’s Note: Campus Forum is a periodic column expressing the views of individual faculty, staff or administrators on issues in education with implications for Auburn University that are seldom presented in the commercial media. In all cases, views expressed are those of the contributor and do not necessarily represent the views of the university or the AU Report.