New faculty officers

Auburn faculty this week elected Bill Sauser of the Department of Management as chair-elect of the University Faculty and Senate and Robin Jaffe of Theatre as secretary-elect for 2011-12. The leadership change takes place in July, when Claire Crutchley of Finance and Russ Muntifering of Animal Sciences end their terms as 2010-11 chair and secretary, respectively. Ann Beth Presley of Consumer Affairs will then become University Faculty and Senate chair for the coming year and Larry Crowley of Civil Engineering will become Faculty and Senate secretary. After a year of assisting the new officers, Sauser and Jaffe will move into those posts in July 2012. After leaving the chair position, Crutchley will serve for a year as faculty adviser to the Board of Trustees. The three sets of officers are, from left, Muntifering and Crutchley, Crowley and Presley, and Jaffe and Sauser.

Auburn growing new generation of Toomer’s oaks as potential replacements for endangered trees

While the future of Auburn’s 130-year-old Toomer’s oaks is uncertain, Auburn has had a plan since 2001 to grow potential replacements and to supply alumni and fans with their own Toomer’s oaks seedlings.

“Due to the age of the trees, we knew a day would come that new trees might be needed,” said Scott Enebak, professor of forestry. “We were anticipating sometime around 2020 at the earliest, but unfortunately the recent poisoning may create a new timetable. We are doing all we can to save the trees, but if the worst happens, we have a plan in place.”

In 2002, students collected acorns from the Toomer’s oaks, raised seedlings and planted them in a small orchard on Auburn forest property. Today, 46 offspring of the famed trees are 15 feet tall and almost 3 inches in diameter.

“There were two goals for these trees,” Enebak said. “Some of the trees could be used to replace the existing Toomer’s oaks when they reach the end of their normal life cycle, and the orchard could be used to produce acorns to provide a continuous supply of new Toomer’s oaks.”

The visionary plan also created the Toomer’s Oaks Seedlings Program that benefits the Toomer’s Endowed Scholarship Program for forestry students. Each fall, students in the Forestry Club, Wildlife Society and Xi Sigma Pi forestry honor society use a lift cart to collect acorns at Toomer’s Corner, grow the seedlings in a greenhouse and sell them to alumni and fans around the country. More than 2,000 of these “Baby Toomer’s Oaks” have been sold over the years.

Demand has grown substantially since the recent poisoning of the Toomer’s oaks, says Enebak.

“At present, we have sold out of our stock of ‘Baby Toomer’s Oaks,’” he said. “We have received more than 2,300 requests in the past two weeks. In May, we will have approximately 400 seedlings available from the 2009 Toomer’s acorns and approximately 600 available this September from the 2010 acorns.”

A lottery system has been established for the purchase of seedlings. Those wishing to buy a “Baby Toomer’s Oak” can fill out an online request form at http://www.sfws.auburn.edu/oaks/MainPage.htm. The winning names will be randomly selected; those chosen will be eligible to purchase one seedling. The cost is $100 per seedling at the time a person’s name is drawn in May or September, with the proceeds benefiting the scholarship fund.

Enebak says the famed Toomer’s Corner oaks may produce more acorns this fall, even if the trees have been fatally poisoned.

“When trees are stressed, they often produce a final crop of acorns,” he said. “It’s nature’s way of preserving a species. We will gather those acorns and grow more seedlings. If they don’t produce more, we have our orchard of Toomer’s offspring and we will grow the Toomer’s oaks grandchildren.”

Updates on the condition of the Toomer’s oaks are online at www.auburn.edu/oaks.

– Charles Martin
Campus Calendar

**MONDAY, MARCH 14**

**SPRING BREAK** No classes this week; offices remain open

**TUESDAY, MARCH 15**

**FILM & DISCUSSION** “Awake My Soul: The Story of the Sacred Harp Singers,” 6 p.m., auditorium, Jule Collins Smith Museum; part of the Southern Circuit Tour of Independent Filmmakers.

**TUESDAY, MARCH 22**

**PUBLIC LECTURE** “Invisible Legacy: The Women of Tuskegee,” with Vivian Carter, Caroline Gebhard, and Gwendolyn Jones, 2 p.m., Haley 3195; part of a Women’s Leadership Institute series

**PUBLIC LECTURE** “The Gravitas of the Graphic Novel in the Middle East,” Cynthia Kristan-Graham, Department of Art, 5 p.m., auditorium, Biggin Hall

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23**

**PUBLIC LECTURE** “Building Your Own Brand,” Kyra Sutton, College of Business, 11:45 a.m., Student Center 2225; part of the Lunch & Learn Lecture Series

**FILM & DISCUSSION** “No Impact Man,” 5 p.m., Student Center Ballroom

**THURSDAY, MARCH 24**

**PUBLIC LECTURE** Colin Beavan, author of the book and actor of the film “No Impact Man,” 5 p.m., Student Center Ballroom

**FRIDAY, MARCH 25**

Next Auburn Report

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**Staff awards**

Auburn University Human Resources has announced winners of Spirit of Excellence Awards for November. The monthly awards recognize exceptional performance by professional and university staff members at Auburn. Recipients for November were, from left, Morris Randolph of the Facilities Asbestos Unit, Scott Lowery of the Office of Information Technology, Sherry Ray of the Graduate School and Mary Couch of the Office of the Registrar.

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**Mazey names Chadwick to lead academic sustainability programs**

Auburn University Provost Mary Ellen Mazey has named Nanette Chadwick as director of academic sustainability programs.

Chadwick will work with faculty from a diverse range of departments on campus as she oversees sustainability academic programs, including various aspects of the sustainability minor. In addition, she will pursue grant funding to support and expand existing sustainability programming. She will work in conjunction with Michael Kensler, who serves in the new position of director of campus sustainability operations.

“Dr. Chadwick brings to the position a solid understanding of sustainability theory and its application,” Mazey said.

She added, “As an associate professor at Auburn, she draws on 20 years of experience as a researcher and educator in the fields of environmental sciences and aquatic ecology not only in her academic pursuits but also in her outreach to students in local schools.”

Chadwick joined the Auburn faculty in 2004 and is an associate professor in Auburn’s Department of Biological Sciences in the College of Sciences and Mathematics.

“I look forward to working with all of the academic units on campus to integrate sustainability more fully into our teaching and research activities,” said Chadwick.

“As our university prepares for the future, the concepts and practice of sustainability will become increasingly important, especially as we train the next generation to meet the challenges of a changing and internationally connected world,” she added.

Chadwick received a bachelor’s degree in biological sciences from the University of California at Santa Barbara in 1980 and a Ph.D. in zoology from the University of California at Berkeley in 1988. Before joining the Auburn faculty, Chadwick was an associate professor at Bar Ilan University in Israel, from 1994-2004.

In 2008, Auburn recognized sustainability as one of its core values by promoting what had been its Sustainability Initiative to the designation of the Office of Sustainability and also introduced the interdisciplinary minor in sustainability.

— Neali Vann

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**Duffy wins Lifetime Achievement Award from regional association**

Patricia Duffy, assistant provost for Undergraduate Studies at Auburn University and alumni professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, received the Southern Agricultural Economics Association’s Lifetime Achievement Award recently during the association’s 2011 annual meeting in Corpus Christi, Texas.

The award honors individuals who have made significant contributions to the association and to the agricultural economics profession. Duffy, who joined the faculty at Auburn in 1985, has earned recognition at Auburn, regionally and nationally for her widely published research on farm management and farm policy. She also has been cited for outstanding performance as a teacher at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Throughout her career, Duffy has taken an active role in several regional and national agricultural organizations and at Auburn has served as secretary of the University Senate and as a member or chair of more than 20 university committees, eight College of Agriculture committees and 13 departmental committees.
Innovations in design for low-cost housing bringing national recognition to School of Architecture head

David Hinson of Auburn’s College of Architecture, Design and Construction is earning national recognition for leadership of Auburn’s DESIGNhabitat program, which is influencing architects and students across the United States as well as the lives of families it has helped.

Hinson, head of the School of Architecture, last fall received the 2010 Auburn University Award for Excellence in Faculty Outreach. The university’s top outreach award recognized the associate professor for his leadership of the award-winning DESIGNhabitat program, an ongoing collaboration between the School of Architecture and Habitat for Humanity that focuses on innovative strategies for affordable housing design and construction.

“David Hinson certainly is the model for faculty engagement not only here, but also within his own discipline,” said Royrickers Cook, assistant vice president for University Outreach. “As head of the School of Architecture, he has been instrumental in making the school one of the most respected professional degree programs in America. David is transforming teaching and research in his discipline as well as improving living conditions across our state.”

Hinson, who is a registered architect in Alabama, earned bachelor’s degrees in architecture and environmental design at Auburn University and a master of architecture and environmental design at the University of Pennsylvania. Before he became a full-time educator, Hinson practiced for 15 years in Philadelphia. His work in the Philadelphia community earned him a Kellogg National Leadership Fellowship in 1991 and the Philadelphia Young Architect Award in 1993.

In addition to heading the School of Architecture, Hinson has taught upper-level design studios, lecture courses in professional practice and seminars on leadership and collaborative practice. Since joining the Auburn faculty in 1997, he has been actively engaged in research into the evolving challenges of architectural practices and how to best prepare students to succeed as professionals and community leaders.

Hinson describes outreach as a natural component of architecture. “Architecture is a service discipline,” he said. “We work to make the human condition better by helping our clients and our communities envision and create better environments for living, working, learning and all the other activities of our lives. My first duty as an architectural educator is to prepare our students for this role, and outreach and community engagement are critical tools in our tool box.”

Hinson’s signature project, DESIGNhabitat, is the embodiment of this principle. From its inception in 2001, the partnership has been a vehicle for applying the energy and talents of the School of Architecture to the challenge of designing and constructing high-quality, affordable housing across the state and region.

The program began via a request that the School of Architecture help address the problem of community resistance to the construction of Habitat for Humanity homes in some older neighborhoods in Alabama. Hinson worked with the Alabama Association of Habitat Affiliates to expand the focus of the program to include developing design strategies that build stronger neighborhoods, improve energy performance in Habitat homes, and provide for the exploration of new building materials and construction methods.

The partnership with Habitat has evolved over the last nine years to address new challenges faced by affiliates, using the talents of School of Architecture faculty and students to test new ways of designing and building Habitat homes.

The program is now in its fourth round of collaboration with Habitat for Humanity. DESIGNhabitat 1 focused on developing a prototype home aimed at improving the cultural and climatic “fit” of new Habitat homes built on sites within early 20th century neighborhoods in communities across Alabama.

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, DESIGNhabitat 2 and 2.1 centered on the incorporation of prefabricated construction strategies. Currently under way, DESIGNhabitat 3 incorporates the insights of the first two phases and gives added emphasis to advanced energy modeling and green building strategies.

Hinson’s outreach efforts have had a significant impact. For many Habitat affiliates, the program has increased their understanding of the relationship between design and energy performance. Consequently, they approach the design and construction of Habitat homes differently than they did prior to their partnership with Auburn.

The designs developed by the DESIGNhabitat program have been cited as exemplars of best practice standards in design and construction for Habitat affiliates and have established Energy Star standards as the performance benchmark for new Habitat homes.

The program also serves as an example to architectural educators of how service learning and design-based research can be incorporated into professional design education. For the past nine years, this methodology of “learning by doing” has afforded architecture students the opportunity to gain insight and understanding into the challenges of creating high-quality, affordable housing and experience, first hand, a powerful model for professional engagement and action in a field of practice where their talents and passion can have tremendous impact.

Hinson said this opportunity to expand students’ academic experiences by inclusion in the design and construction of Habitat homes is vitally important to the education of these future architects. “My outreach experiences have really helped me understand where the biggest gaps are in our traditional approaches to professional education,” he said.

He continued, “For example, feedback from student teams working on the Habitat projects and on projects at our Rural Studio program have highlighted the need to do a better job preparing our students for the experience of working in teams, to teach collaboration as a skill set. It has also made me more conscious of the need to teach students how to explain their ideas to non-architects – how to translate the code that professionals develop to communicate with each other back into lay terms that mean something to their community clients.”

Feedback from students shows a positive impact on their personal and professional development. For instance, former student Paul Kardous said, “Not only has the program helped the owners and Habitat for Humanity Affiliates across the state, it helped to ignite a public service awareness in scores of students who have participated in DESIGNhabitat. We were exposed for the first time to collaborative practice having architecture and building science students working together from the beginning bringing our specific knowledge to the table. This mirrors what we do now as architects on a daily basis working with consultants and contractors.”

His contributions in academia and design have been recognized with support from numerous grants totaling more than $338,000 for Auburn University and the Alabama Association for Habitat Affiliates. AAHA received one of eight Home Depot Foundation Partners in Sustainable Living grants awarded nationwide for 2009-2011, and credits the track record of collaboration with Hinson and the School of Architecture for their ability to win this grant.

Hinson’s efforts in the studio and classroom have earned him regional and national acclaim, including election to the AIA College of Fellows in 2008 and numerous other awards.

— Joyce Thomas-Vinson
Campus News Briefs

Rotfeld receives Auburn AAUP’s Academic Freedom Award for 2011

The Auburn University chapter of the American Association of University Professors has presented the 2011 Glenn Howze Academic Freedom Award to Herbert Jack Rotfeld, a professor of marketing in the College of Business.

Rotfeld received the award during the general faculty meeting on Tuesday.

The award is presented annually to a person who has demonstrated high ethical standards and professionalism in his or her field and has made significant contributions to advocating academic freedom at Auburn University.

Rural Studio project recognized as one of ‘World’s Most Beautiful Buildings’

“Travel + Leisure” cited the Auburn University Rural Studio’s Boys and Girls Club II in the Hale County town of Akron as one of the “World’s Most Beautiful Buildings” in its February online issue.

Students in the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Architecture designed and built the Akron Boys and Girls Club II. The building was included with such legendary designs as Gaudi’s Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, Spain, Gehry’s Guggenheim in Bilbao, Spain, van Alen’s Chrysler Building in New York City and Mont St. Michel in Normandy, France.

To view the magazine’s presentation on the Rural Studio project, see www.travelandleisure.com/articles/worlds-most-beautiful-buildings/1.

Workers to install new signs throughout campus during remainder of semester

During the months of March, April and May, the Office of Campus Planning and Space Management will place approximately 100 building identification signs and numerous signs for transit stops and pedestrian concourses throughout campus.

The magnitude of the project is not large, but installation activity will be widespread throughout the campus core. Placement of the signs is part of the Auburn University Comprehensive Campus Master Plan.

Poultry Science Club taking orders for smoked chicken delivery in mid-April

The Poultry Science Club is taking orders for brined and hickory-smoked chickens, which will be ready for delivery April 11-15.

The fully cooked chickens weigh about four pounds and cost $7 each and are ideal for reheating in the oven or on the grill or can be frozen for future use. Prepayment is required to reserve your order and must be submitted by April 1. Orders of 20 or more chickens will be discounted to $5 per chicken.

The order form can be found at www.ag.auburn.edu/poul/. For more information call 844-4133 or e-mail amartin@auburn.edu.

Agriculture professor wins professional group’s young scientist award

Scott McElroy, associate professor and researcher in turfgrass weed science in the College of Agriculture’s Department of Agronomy and Soils, won the Southern Weed Science Society’s 2011 Outstanding Young Weed Scientist Award at the organization’s recent annual meeting in Puerto Rico.

The society presents the award each year to a weed scientist from academia who is 40 years old or under and who has excelled in teaching, research, extension and/or other service to weed science.

McElroy joined the Auburn faculty in 2008. His research focuses on herbicide evaluation for use in turfgrass management and the development of sustainable pest management practices for turfgrass.

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Auburn Report

March 11, 2011

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