Auburn Report
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For the Faculty and Staff of Auburn University
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Development officers have observed that a high participation rate on campus often encourages alumni and friends to support the university or increase the level of their support. Campaign leaders say this occurs because alumni and other potential donors view the participation rate on campus as a sign of the level of commitment by faculty and staff toward the institution.

Auburn, which had a faculty-staff participation rate of 60 percent last year, has historically far outpaced peer Southeastern Conference institutions in on-campus support efforts.

Gogue says Auburn preparing for more cuts in budget

With the global economic recession forecast to continue into 2010, Auburn President Jay Gogue told the University Faculty on Tuesday that the university must cut expenses to offset a deep drop in revenue.

The largest revenue decline would be in the state education budget, which accounted for most of a $69 million shortfall for the current fiscal year. Gogue said cuts are likely again in the 2009-10 budget because of declining state revenues, but the final impact will not be known until late spring, when the Legislature finishes work on the budget, which goes into effect on Oct. 1.

The Auburn president noted that tax collections for the state education budget are down about $800 million from a year ago, and Gov. Bob Riley and the Legislature face a lot of uncertainty in budgeting for the coming year. Citing a worst-case scenario, Gogue said if the Legislature allocates revenues like it did last year, putting a disproportionate share of the burden on higher education, the current $69 million shortfall in state funding for the Auburn University System would rise to approximately $100 million.

The university is seeking a more balanced allocation this year, but Gogue said Auburn must be prepared for deep cuts regardless of the final budget number. The university was able to limit the impact of cuts this year through a tuition hike and tuition reserves that were set aside during more prosperous times for use during a short-term financial setback. He said the university strives to maintain a tuition level that is near the average for its peers across the region.

Gogue said federal funds through the stimulus package recently passed by Congress and the long-delayed 2008-09 omnibus spending bill passed Tuesday by the Senate will provide some relief for Auburn, but those funds will not be nearly enough for the university system to close the expected gap between revenues and expenditures. To close the gap, the entire university community will need to look for ways to cut expenses, he added.

Every operation in the university will receive some level of cuts in next year’s budget, but teaching areas will be impacted less than administrative and support areas, he said. Although some universities across the nation have announced large-scale layoffs of employees and elimination of large numbers of programs, Gogue says Auburn preparing for more cuts in budget

See Budget cuts, page 2

Campaign asks faculty, staff to set example for alumni in giving

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The campuswide campaign has 80 team captains and is led by Debra Dowdell of University Libraries, Harold Cummings of the Facilities Division, Michael Tullier of the College of Education and Gary Waters of the College of Business.

Campaign volunteers are distributing packets with information on the campaign and ways of supporting it; faculty and staff may also participate online at https://develop.auburn.edu/auburnfund/campaign09.html.
‘The America Play’ coming to theatre stage in early April

The Department of Theatre in Auburn’s College of Liberal Arts will present “The America Play” by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Suzan-Lori Parks on April 1-5 at Telfair Peet Theatre.

Show times are 7:30 p.m. April 1-4, and 2:30 p.m. on April 5. The Thursday, April 2, performance will be preceded by a panel discussion, “He Hoped He’d Be of Interest to Posterity: Defining Greatness in American History,” at 6 p.m. in Telfair Peet’s Theatre Upstairs, and followed by a post-show discussion with actors and other members of the creative team in Telfair Peet Theatre.

Various theatre critics describe “The America Play” as an allegorical tale that raises questions about the extent to which black, family and general American identity become distorted or lost when mythology is presented as history.

In the play, a theme park called the Great Hole of History has captured the imagination of an African American gravedigger, known as the Founding Father, who finds a more lucrative calling as an Abraham Lincoln impersonator. The first act follows the man as he presents in third person his life history, including discussion of his family life and profession. The account describes how he came to be alone in a strange land while pursuing his dream of imitating Lincoln.

In the second act, the man’s wife, Lucy, and their son, Brazil, go in search of the Founding Father. Along the way, the woman and son share their memories of the husband and father who abandoned them. In their search for him, they uncover artifacts from American history, including relics from their personal history; they use these items to create a new narrative that integrates personal and national history.

The theatre’s production of “The America Play” features A.K. Murtadha, a guest artist from Los Angeles in the role of the Founding Father. Murtadha has numerous stage, television and film credits, including a Best Actor award from the Big Easy Film Festival for his role in the short film “In the Wind.”

Survey ranks Management faculty in top 40

For the second year in a row, the management faculty in the College of Business has ranked among the top 40 business schools for research productivity.

The rankings are based on a joint study by Texas A&M and the University of Florida that looks at the research productivity of management departments in U.S. and Canadian universities in the top eight management journals, including Academy of Management Journal, Academy of Management Review, Organization Science, and Strategic Management Journal.

Other Southeastern Conference schools in the top 40 were the University of Florida, the University of South Carolina and the University of Georgia.

Budget cuts

said that approach is unlikely at Auburn. Instead, he said, the university is looking for ways to hold down the costs of purchasing, utilities, travel, health care and other areas.

Gogue commended Executive Vice President Don Large for conservative budgeting that left the university better prepared for economic setbacks than many of its peers. As a result, Auburn can take a systematic approach to holding down costs, he said.

Current construction costs are covered with existing, targeted funds from bond issues, private gifts and federal government allocations and will continue without interruption, he said. In addition, operating costs are factored into plans for new buildings. However, he said, university planners will look at all construction projects to be sure that they will not hurt the university’s budget.

Program urges preventative checkups

The Healthy Tigers program encourages Auburn employees to have preventative care checkups. Preventative care coverage through Blue Cross Blue Shield includes certain immunizations, physicals, pap smears, HPV testing for women who are age 30 and over, mammograms for women who are age 35 and over, prostate specific antigen tests for men who are age 40 and over, colorectal cancer screening for people who are age 50 and over, and other routine screenings such as TB skin testing and cholesterol testing.

For updates and a list of available health resources, see the Healthy Tigers Web site, www.auburn.edu/administration/business_office/payroll/healthytigers.

Center adds parenting skills group

Auburn’s Psychological Services Center is offering a second parenting skills group for parents with children, ages 2 to 10. Group members will learn skills to improve their relationships with their children and learn how to use effective discipline strategies with them. Participation requires a one-time $20 fee. To sign up or for more information, contact Kay Webster at 844-4889 or by email at aupsc@auburn.edu.
New provost

Mazey cites planning, budgeting advantages of mid-semester start

Normally, senior administrators in higher education wait until a semester break or summer to move to a new job at a different university. As she completes her first month at Auburn, Provost Mary Ellen Mazey says she is pleased she started in mid-February instead of waiting.

“I knew it would be challenging, but the timing was right,” said Mazey, who came to Auburn from West Virginia University, her alma mater, where she had been dean of the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences.

She noted that John Heilman had retired as provost at the end of 2008 and Senior Associate Provost Sharon Gaber will leave Auburn soon to become provost at the University of Arkansas. By starting right away as Auburn’s provost, Mazey said, she was able to look to Gaber for assistance during the transition. “Dr. Gaber has been a great help, and it has benefited me greatly to work with her before she leaves for Arkansas,” she said.

Mazey said she found additional advantages to the mid-semester start. As provost and vice president for academic affairs, she is second only to the president as the university’s chief academic officer. Since much of the budgeting and preparation for the next academic and fiscal year occurs during spring semester, she said the winter arrival enables her to get involved in planning for the next academic year, which starts in August, and budgeting for the fiscal year that starts Oct. 1.

The timing was also right for her at West Virginia, which was getting a new president and provost. Although her position as a dean was secure, Mazey would have been working with the third WVU president and third provost in her four years at the institution. Since she would be working with a new administration, anyway, Mazey said she was eager to get started at Auburn.

Mazey comes to Auburn with an extensive record in administration at Wright State University and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, as well as at WVU.

In her first month at Auburn, she has been meeting with deans, other administrators, faculty leaders and others to discuss the responsibilities and priorities of her office. She has also been working with President Jay Gogue and Executive Vice President Don Large on budgeting matters as the university develops plans for confronting a deepening economic recession that is worldwide in its scope. Also this semester, she will meet with student leaders and begin a series of meetings with faculty in their academic departments.

In the next few weeks, Mazey will seek an interim associate provost to succeed Gaber when she leaves for Arkansas. To ensure a smooth transition, the interim appointee will work closely with Gaber in her final weeks on campus.

Mazey said Auburn’s new strategic plan will play a central role in the priorities and operations of the Provost’s Office as well as the colleges and schools and academic support units of the university. “My number one priority is to work with the president, faculty, staff and students to promote the university’s academic reputation, and the strategic plan provides an outline for doing that,” she said.

A proponent of strategic planning in her previous positions in higher education, Mazey said a well-designed strategic plan can provide a roadmap for university advancement in terms of improved academics, growth in research funding, expansion of services beyond the campus and enhancement of the university’s academic reputation.

Last fall, in conversations with the search committee and later with faculty and with the president, Mazey says she saw an exceptional level of collegiality and an intensive commitment to advancing the university’s academic quality and reputation. “It wasn’t just a few people; everyone wanted to do more,” she said.

The new provost said one of the things that caught her attention when she first interviewed with the search committee for the position was the commitment of its members to a strategic plan that was designed to bring major changes to the university.

Stating that many institutions with Auburn’s national reputation would be content to rest on their laurels, Mazey said she was inspired by comments from search committee members. “The search committee told me the institution wants to change, to move forward instead of maintaining the status quo,” she recalled. “That is unusual and refreshing in any institution.”

— Roy Summerford

Auburn Report

The Auburn Report is published by the Office of Communications and Marketing at Auburn University. Executive Director of Communications and Marketing: Deedie Dowdle. Auburn Report Editor: Roy Summerford. Communications and Marketing contributing editors, writers and photographers: Mike Clardy, Katie Wilder, Charles Martin, Neali Vann, Jeff Etheridge and Melissa Humble. Other contributors are based in colleges and schools throughout the university.

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Outside classroom

Not all classes at Auburn are inside a classroom. Some, such as this Building Science class, spend a significant amount of time viewing the application of theories and techniques covered in books and lectures. These students inspected construction methods in Auburn’s new arena, which will replace the coliseum in the background. For an overview of the site, see page 5.
Nation’s BEST
Program for future scientists, engineers moving headquarters to Auburn

A national program to interest teens in technology-based careers is moving its headquarters to Auburn with an Auburn engineering administrator as its executive director.

The governing board of BEST Robotics Inc. has appointed George Blanks, director of K-12 engineering outreach in the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering, to lead its national program, which began in Texas in 1982 and will now be headquartered at Auburn.

An acronym for Boosting Engineering, Science and Technology, BEST is a non-profit, volunteer-based organization whose mission is to inspire middle and high school students to pursue careers in engineering, science and technology. To help these students realize that these careers can be interesting and fun, BEST volunteers invite them to participate in science- and engineering-based robotics competitions at the local level and beyond.

The BEST program at Auburn has evolved into one of the most prominent BEST programs nationally under the leadership of Blanks in Engineering and Mary Lou Ewald in the College of Sciences and Mathematics. Ewald is also a member of BEST's board of directors.

“George Blanks and Mary Lou Ewald have been the driving force to develop BEST hubs east of the Mississippi, and I could not be more pleased that their efforts have been rewarded by George’s appointment to the executive director position and the relocation of the headquarters to Auburn,” said Larry Benefield, dean of the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering.

Benefield added, "BEST is a critical component of our K-12 outreach activities. Participation in this activity helps students understand what engineering is all about and provides us with a wonderful opportunity to bring students from around the country to the Auburn campus."

Each September, through local leaders of the national program, more than 700 middle and high school teams from 15 states receive kits of standardized parts along with details of the year’s game. The 2008 game, Just Plane Crazy, challenged the teams to design a robot that can assemble aircraft in a simulated manufacturing plant using Lean Manufacturing and Just-in-Time Inventory production strategies.

The teams have six weeks to design and build a robot for head-to-head competition at their local competition hub. A second part of the competition tests the ability of teams to market their creations using presentations, notebooks, displays and t-shirt designs. The top six teams from each of these competitions advances to one of three regional championships.

The BEST program pairs an experienced engineer with each team. These mentors advise the students and faculty advisers. For many students, it is their first face-to-face experience with an engineer.

“They are often surprised to find out that we are normal people who love our jobs, lead interesting lives and earn a good living,” said Dave DeBaets, vice president of the North American Operation Engine Power Products Group for Briggs and Stratton. “This program is hands-down one of the best we have seen for helping students understand that careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics are exciting and fulfilling.”

Next fall, BEST will operate 39 competition sites in 16 states, including five sites in Alabama. Nationally, more than 750 schools and 12,000 students will participate in the program. From Auburn, the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering and the College of Sciences and Mathematics co-direct two competitions —War Eagle BEST for schools in Central Alabama, and Tennessee Valley BEST for schools in North Alabama. Also, each December, Auburn hosts South’s BEST, one of the national organization’s three regional championships.

In 2008, more than 200 Auburn faculty, staff and students volunteered at these annual events.

— Sara Borchik

Building a better robot
Teams of high school students design and build small robots for head-to-head competition in BEST-sanctioned events around the nation.

Art critic from The New Republic to present views on art and culture


Perl will present the public lecture at 6 p.m. as part of the museum’s annual spring reception, and his presentation will be followed by a reception from 7 p.m.-9 p.m.

The nationally prominent art authority has served as art critic for The New Republic since 1994. Perl, who studied art history and painting at Columbia College and Brooklyn College, has since written extensively on art and the art scene for periodicals such as The Atlantic, Harper’s, The New Criterion, Partisan Review, Salmagundi, The New York Times Book Review and Vogue. He has also discussed art and related issues on Charlie Rose, CNN and National Public Radio.

The poet John Ashbery has said that Perl covers “the art world with tremendous empathy and unsparing accuracy. His ability to recognize the traditional forms of art behind their continual transmutation has made his an almost solitary, essential voice.” Perl’s book “New Art City,” a study of art and culture at mid-twentieth-century, was a New York Times Notable Book and Atlantic Monthly Best Book of the Year in 2005. Author Jonathan Safran Foer characterized Perl’s most recent book, “Antoine’s Alphabet: Watteau and His World,” as “a history and a fairy tale, a work of criticism, and, itself, a work of art.”

The museum’s spring reception celebrates the 2009 exhibition by faculty of the Department of Art in Auburn’s College of Liberal Arts; their work will be on display from March 14-May 30.
Campus Calendar

**MONDAY, MARCH 16**

**SPRING BREAK** No classes this week; offices remain open; classes resume on March 23

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25**

**PUBLIC LECTURE** Distinguished Visiting Faculty Member Douglas Casson Coutts, special adviser on child hunger to United Nations World Food Programme, noon, Student Center 2218; part of Office of Sustainability’s Green Lunch Series

**MEETING** Administrative and Professional Assembly, 1 p.m., Student Center 2222

**MONDAY, MARCH 23**

**DARWIN COMMEMORATIVE EVENT** Great Books Film “The Origin of the Species,” 3 p.m., 112 Rouse Life Sciences Building

**THURSDAY, MARCH 26**

**MEETING** Board of Trustees, time TBA, The Hotel at Auburn University

**CONCERT** Classical guitarist Richard Todd, 6:30 p.m., Jule Collins Smith Museum; tickets available at door, $10 for non-members and $5 for members

**MONDAY, MARCH 30**

**DARWIN COMMEMORATIVE LECTURE** “Evolution and Development,” Ken Halanych of Biological Sciences, 3 p.m., 112 Rouse Life Sciences Building

**FRIDAY, APRIL 3**

**NEXT** Auburn Report

**EXHIBITIONS**

**JULE COLLINS SMITH MUSEUM** “Uniform Proof: 19th Century Photography in the Collection of William Wiese,” through April 4; “El Alma Mexicana: The Mexican Soul,” selections from the museum’s permanent collection, through May 30; “Department of Art Faculty Exhibition,” March 14-May 30

Westside development

The west side of campus is changing rapidly as construction progresses on The Village student housing, a new dining hall and the new arena. These new photos present an aerial view of the three developments and a closeup of the new student housing. The eight residence halls for 1,600 students are scheduled for occupancy next fall and will be Auburn’s first facilities designed around a learning communities theme. In the above photo, the dining hall takes on a blue hue as it awaits a brick exterior. In its present stage of construction, the arena looks like a smaller version of Jordan-Hare Stadium in the background, but the building’s appearance will change when it gets a roof.

Museum to showcase floral designers in ‘Art in Bloom’

The Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art will host its fourth annual “Art in Bloom” exhibition featuring art-inspired floral designs from April 2-4.

The exhibition will showcase floral designers and garden club representatives from East Alabama and across the Southeast with their interpretations of the museum’s permanent collection. Lectures and demonstrations from experts on floral design will enhance the exhibition of paired floral arrangements and artwork.

For more information about “Art in Bloom” or the museum, see the Web site www.jcsm.auburn.edu. To purchase tickets for the events, call 844-3085.
Winter’s parting shot

Winter took a final, parting shot at the South on March 1, with a rare storm that dumped five inches of snow on Auburn. Jeff Etheridge, manager of Photographic Services, ventured out to record the snowscape for posterity, and some of those scenes are shown here. Within a few days, temperatures were back in the 70s and daffodils were in bloom, signaling the start of spring. As students and faculty enjoy spring break next week, these two pages present a reminder of winter.
New associate vice president

Pinkert named to coordinate research activities among colleges

Vice President for Research John Mason has announced the selection of Carl Pinkert as associate vice president for research at Auburn.

Pinkert will promote and develop multidisciplinary research initiatives across the university, coordinate activities among the associate deans for research and work on projects to improve proposal development and submission. He will also represent the Office of the Vice President for Research in certain external roles across the state and in the national arena.

The new associate vice president has experience promoting research initiatives and working with faculty researchers in his most recent position at Auburn as associate dean for research and graduate studies and professor of pathobiology in the College of Veterinary Medicine.

He has served on numerous federal research panels including chair of the Comparative Medicine Review Committee at the National Institutes of Health, as an ad hoc specialist for the Association for the Advancement and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care and on various Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges committees.

Before joining the Auburn faculty in 2006, Pinkert was a professor in the Center for Aging and Developmental Biology and director of the transgenics program at the University of Rochester. Previously, he spent nine years on the faculty of the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Pinkert holds a Ph.D. from the University of Georgia and was a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Pennsylvania before embarking on his professional career. His awards include the Doerenkamp-Zbinden Foundation Research Prize which is awarded for biomedical research that significantly impacts the welfare and well being of research animals.

Pinkert succeeds Ralph Zee who held the position on a temporary basis while an internal search was conducted.

— Heather Finch

Award winner

Philosophy Professor Richard Penaskovic received the Academic Freedom Award for 2009 on Tuesday from the Auburn chapter of the American Association of University Professors. Penaskovic accepted the award from David Carter of History, who cited his advocacy for stronger academics and support for faculty interests while serving as chair of the University Senate and later as faculty adviser to the Board of Trustees. Carter noted that Penaskovic was instrumental in gaining administrative support and board approval for a professional improvement leave policy at Auburn.

Winter took one last blast at Auburn before giving way to spring. See pages 6 and 7.

www.ocm.auburn.edu/au_report/aureport.html

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