New faculty officers

Laura Plexico was chosen as secretary-elect and Larry Teeter as chair-elect in this month’s faculty election for new University Senate officers. Effective July 1, Senate leadership will consist of, from left, Plexico, Teeter, 2014-15 Chair Patricia Duffy and Secretary Gisela Buschle-Diller, and Larry Crowley, soon-to-be immediate past chair and faculty advisor to the Board of Trustees. Judy Sheppard, the outgoing Senate secretary, was out of town.

Academic Freedom Award

Auburn University President Jay Gogue received the 2014 Glenn Howze Academic Freedom Award from the Auburn chapter of the American Association of University Professors during the spring meeting of the University Faculty on Tuesday. Gogue is the second Auburn president to receive the award. The chapter’s first Academic Freedom Award went to President William Muse in 1994. Herb Rotfeld, right, president of the Auburn AAUP chapter, cited Gogue for active and ongoing support for the faculty’s role in shared governance. The award is named for the late Glenn Howze, a leading advocate for shared governance who served as the 1998 chair of the University Senate.

Corner to be closed for redevelopment

Phase I of the redevelopment and enhancement of Samford Park at Toomer’s Corner is scheduled to begin April 2.

In preparation for the work, the iconic eagles perched on top of the 1917 brick gates will be temporarily taken down Thursday morning by The Lathan Company Inc., a Mobile-based firm which restored the eagles in 2012.

The eagles will be stored on campus and returned to the corner upon completion of the project. The gates will remain on site during construction.

The project will begin with the installation of fencing around the perimeter of the worksite and the closure of a number of sidewalks in Samford Park as well as the crosswalks at the corner of West Magnolia Avenue and South College Street. Public safety officials ask pedestrians to use the midblock crosswalks on West Magnolia Avenue and South College Street for access to the downtown area from the university.

At times during construction, the right-hand, southbound lane on South College Street will be temporarily closed to accommodate construction traffic. Motorists are urged to use caution when traveling near the worksite.

Phase I includes the installation of new pavers, soil replacement and a circular seating wall. This work is projected to be complete by the start of the fall 2014 semester. Phase I also includes the planting of new trees, which will take place in early 2015.

Fashion designer to present Grisham-Trentham Lecture

New York fashion designer Hilton Hollis will be at Auburn on Thursday, March 27, as the keynote speaker for the 27th annual Grisham-Trentham Lecture Series. The public lecture will be at 11 a.m. in the Student Center ballroom.

Hollis, a native of Natchez, Miss., attended New York’s Fashion Institute of Technology. Since graduating in 1999, Hollis has collaborated with many notable designers, including Dana Buchman, Ralph Lauren and John Bartlett.

He started his self-titled women’s wear company more than seven years ago.

The Grisham-Trentham Lecture Series was started at Auburn University in 1987 by Professor Gary Trentham as a way of bringing world-class designers and business leaders to campus to share their experiences with Auburn students. It is supported by an endowment created by the late Charles Grisham, an Auburn alumnus, and Betty Grisham, an artist and textile designer, from Huntsville.
Pioneer electronics inventor and Auburn writer to speak at Archives program

Prolific inventor and Auburn physics alumnus C. Harry Knowles will be the featured guest Thursday, March 27, at an Auburn University Libraries event marking the publication this month of his biography, “Genius in America: The Story of C. Harry Knowles, Inventor.”

At 3 p.m. in the Special Collections and Archives Department of the Ralph Brown Draughon Library, the author of “Genius in America,” Mary Ellen Hendrix, will read from the book. Knowles will discuss his career and answer questions from the audience.

A reception and book signing will follow their remarks.

Knowles recently donated his personal papers and photos to the university. Some of those photos will be on display at the event; they include glimpses of Auburn life from 1945 to 1951.

Receiving his physics degree from Auburn in 1951, Birmingham native Knowles went on to earn more than 400 patents in transistor, laser and barcode scanning technology. As founder of Metrologic Instruments Inc. in New Jersey in 1968, and head of the global barcode scanning company for nearly 40 years, Knowles introduced some of the earliest handheld barcode scanners, profoundly altering the marketplace for retailers and consumers alike.

Knowles’ scientific contributions include not only innovative scanner technologies, but also transistors that served the nation’s first satellite and computers of the late 1950s and 1960s. His star transistor, universally recognized as the “2N2222” transistor, became an industry workhorse manufactured in the billions. In addition, Knowles developed and presented in 1964 the basic concepts of and precursor to the global barcode scanning company.

Knowles was honored by Auburn University in 2006 as a College of Sciences and Mathematics Distinguished Alumnus; in 2007, with a Lifetime Achievement Award; and, in 2008, with an honorary doctorate.

Hendrix, an award-winning writer who retired from the university in 2007, worked with Auburn University alumni for many years in her capacity as associate editor for The Auburn Alumnus and its successor, Auburn Magazine. During her Auburn tenure, Hendrix, who holds a dual degree in journalism and English from Auburn, interviewed some of the university’s brightest and most successful alumni, ultimately leading to the book on Knowles.

— Jayson Hill

Visiting diplomat

Auburn University President Jay Gogue welcomed Christoph Sander, consul general of the Federal Republic of Germany for the southeastern United States, to campus in March. Sander, who is based in Atlanta, was on campus to meet with students, faculty and administrators as part of a program to enhance the international education of Auburn students. Bob McGinnis, who organized and led the program as special counsel to the president since 2008, is retiring and will be succeeded by Anna Gramberg of the College of Liberal Arts.

McGinnis retiring, Gramberg named special counsel to Auburn president

Auburn University President Jay Gogue has named Anna Gramberg as special counsel to the president, effective April 1. She will succeed Bob McGinnis, who is retiring for the second time from Auburn.

McGinnis returned to the university as special counsel following his retirement as vice president for development in 2008. As special counsel, he organized and administered a university program that brought distinguished international diplomats to Auburn from their countries’ consulates in Atlanta, Miami, Houston and other U.S. cities.

The program is part of a larger university initiative to expand the international experience for students who are unable to travel abroad, as well as those who travel to other countries but do not come into contact with high-level diplomats of those countries.

“Dr. McGinnis served Auburn well by helping us broaden the international awareness of students and providing them with exposure to countries that will prove important in their careers,” said Gogue. “I’m pleased that Dr. Gramberg has agreed to step forward to continue and expand these efforts. She is another member of the Auburn Family with strong ties in the international community, and we look forward to continued growth of opportunities for students to gain international experiences.”

Gramberg, who is a professor of German in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures and a senior fellow in the Women’s Leadership Institute, served from 2005-13 as dean of the College of Liberal Arts. A member of the Auburn faculty since 1992, Gramberg holds dual German and U.S. citizenship.

Her university service includes the Budget Advisory Council, the University Strategy Review Council, and the Advisory Board of the Research Initiative for the Study of Diversity, and she is a University Senate presidential appointee. Beyond the university, she serves on the Alabama Germany Partnership Executive Board and is a member of the Committee on Research Universities of the Council for Colleges of Arts and Sciences. She is also frequently invited to give public presentations, such as a recent talk at the Annual Conference of the Centers for International Business Education and Research.

As part of the initiative, Gramberg will develop a class to start in 2015 on Global Strategies. The class, which will integrate visiting international diplomats, executives and others into a broad study of international issues, will complement existing classes and programs in the international arena, she said.

Gramberg said she looks forward to working in partnership with the faculty and staff of both the Honors College and the Office of International Education in providing an additional dimension to international experiences of Auburn students. While expanding the number of contacts with foreign countries’ diplomats in the United States, she will reach out to American diplomats with Auburn or Southeastern ties in several countries. She said future visitors to campus could include executives from abroad at major corporations in the United States, as well as Auburn alumni who are executives in foreign lands.
Elizabeth Wood, a second-year student in Auburn’s Harrison School of Pharmacy, will work this summer at one of the most prestigious hospitals in the country.

Wood will spend the summer in Rochester, Minn., at Mayo Clinic. She was selected as one of four students nationwide to work in the clinic’s outpatient pharmacy program.

“When I found out I was selected for the program, I was so excited and in absolute awe,” said Wood. “Mayo Clinic has such a wealth of opportunities, and I can’t wait to see what experiences I’ll have this summer.”

While internships are not required for Auburn pharmacy students, Wood said she saw the opportunity as an important one for helping her reach her long-term goals.

“I applied to two programs, Johns Hopkins and Mayo. I was not sure if I was going to be competitive for them or not, but I thought ‘why not go for it,’” Wood said. “I am interested in doing a residency eventually, so I thought it would be good to get clinical experience beyond working in a retail setting over the summer.”

“For this program in particular, I was attracted to the outpatient setting because that is what I am interested in. I want to work in ambulatory care or in a clinic some day and this program is going to allow me to shadow an ambulatory care pharmacist with preceptors, work in all the different outpatient pharmacies they have at the Mayo Clinic and I will get to do a project and learn from the preceptors that are there.”

Mayo Clinic’s outpatient pharmacies employ about 200 people, including approximately 60 pharmacists. The pharmacies operate seven days a week and provide a variety of pharmaceutical services, including patient counseling, pharmacy specialty practices, investigational drug studies, patient education programs, prescription compounding, drug information programs, in-service education and pharmacy and therapeutics formulary committee support.

The Pharmacy Internship Clinic/Outpatient program provides a number of experiences related to the unique practice of each outpatient pharmacy located on the Mayo Clinic campus in Rochester. The program provides a variety of experiences, including providing patient counseling on medication, working with a pharmacist preceptor to gain hands-on experience with reviewing doctors’ orders, entering orders and participating in pharmacists’ interventions, providing drug information to healthcare providers and medical writers, training in the pharmacy compounding department and preparing a presentation for staff pharmacists on a topic related to outpatient pharmacy.

“I have shadowed a lot of clinical pharmacists and that has really shown me that I am interested in ambulatory care, and I thought the outpatient program would be a good fit for me,” said Wood. “Another big thing is that Minnesota is one of the more progressive states for pharmacists. They have more responsibilities, including the opportunity to offer clinical services. I thought it would be good to go off far away and get some experiences that I could not necessarily get as of now in Alabama.”

Also included in the internship curriculum are mini-rotations of one to two days to acquaint the interns with specialty practices in the hospital or outpatient pharmacy. Available specialty practices to choose from may include anticoagulation, cardiac surgery, cardiology, critical care, drug information, hematology/ oncology, hospice, medication therapy management, neurology, nutrition support, operating room, organ transplantation, patient education, pediatrics, psychiatry and surgery.

The application process for the internship runs from November until January. Wood did her phone interview with Mayo Clinic on Jan. 28, Auburn’s first snow day of the year. By the following Friday, she had an offer.

Along with the traditional application, phone interview and recommendation letters, Wood also had to submit a letter of intent on why she should be selected for the internship. She outlined her accomplishments at Auburn, but also discussed how the clinical work offered at Mayo Clinic plays into her future plans.

“I talked about my five-year career goal, which is basically to pursue a post-graduate year one residency and a post-graduate, year-two residency, potentially specializing in ambulatory pharmacy, though I am not exactly sure what specialty area beyond that at this point,” Wood said. “Eventually, I would like to work in a clinic setting, maybe also for a school of pharmacy as a professor and precept students, but also see patients at the same time.”

In her two years at the Harrison School of Pharmacy, she has been a supplemental instruction leader for Drugs and Diseases I and II, an HSOP Ambassador, president-elect of the Student College of Clinical Pharmacy and a member of American Pharmacists Association Academy of Student Pharmacists and Auburn University Student Society of Health-System Pharmacy.

She earned the Phi Kappa Phi Outstanding First Professional Year Award last year and is a recipient of the Harrison School of Pharmacy Golf Tournament Scholarship.

— Matt Crouch

Spy catcher for FBI returning for public lecture

Former FBI investigative specialist Eric O’Neill, an Auburn University alumnus who was instrumental in the capture of one of the most notorious Russian spies in the U.S. since the end of the Cold War, will deliver the Graduate School’s New Horizons Lecture at 3 p.m. Friday, March 28, in the Foy Hall Ballroom.

O’Neill’s lecture, “The World is Not Enough: Lessons in Courage, Confidence and Determination From a Spy Hunter,” relates to his role in helping the FBI obtain evidence against Robert Hanssen, a 25-year FBI veteran who was arrested and convicted on espionage charges in 2001 for divulging national secrets to Russia and the former Soviet Union. O’Neill’s exploits were brought to the big screen in 2007 as part of the movie “Breach,” starring Ryan Philippe as O’Neill.

“Eric O’Neill is an excellent example of an Auburn student who has gone on to do great things in the world,” said George Flowers, dean of the Graduate School. “We look forward to his lecture and hope it helps to inspire greatness in the next generation of Auburn men and women.”

While at the FBI, O’Neill was planted in the Information Assurance Section working directly under Hanssen, whom FBI officials suspected of spying for Russia. O’Neill was able to draw Hanssen out of deep cover and steal files off his Palm Pilot, which ultimately lead to Hanssen’s arrest and conviction.

After leaving the FBI in 2001, O’Neill went on to earn a law degree at the George Washington University Law School. He is the founding partner of The Georgetown Group, a Washington-based investigative and security services firm.

As part of the New Horizons Lecture, the Graduate School will also hold a public film screening of “Breach” on Thursday, March 27, at 7 p.m. in the Foy Hall Ballroom.

Sponsored by the Graduate School, the New Horizons Lecture Series seeks to promote the exchange of ideas among students, faculty and the greater Auburn community through interaction with engaging speakers whose ideas and deeds have inspired or influenced others.

— Chris Anthony