Spring campaign asks faculty, staff to help support their favorite programs, setting example for alumni

Auburn’s 2013 Faculty Staff Campaign is under way as volunteers seek to build on last year’s record 72.4 percent participation rate in a demonstration of support for the university by its own faculty and staff.

The Faculty Staff Campaign, which runs through May 31 in its public phase, is an annual fundraising campaign in which faculty and staff members donate funds to support those aspects of the university that are of special importance to each individual.

Rather than suggesting a minimum or maximum on the size of the gifts, volunteers ask all faculty and staff members to choose a gift level and donate either through payroll deduction or other financial gift to an area of each donor’s choice.

Sharon Awtry, director of annual giving for the Office of Development, said there are numerous programs, departments and organizations on campus that could benefit from a gift to the campaign. “Faculty and staff are asked to give a gift that is meaningful to them and to support something they are interested in,” she said.

More than 125 campaign volunteers gathered in March for the official campaign kickoff. Volunteers heard encouraging remarks from this year’s three campaign chairs: John McGuckin of Facilities Management, Maria Witte of the College of Education and Mike Reynolds of the Business Office.

McGuckin said he has been a campaign volunteer in the past and is happy to be serving as a co-chair this year. “Why do I participate? Because I think Auburn is great,” he said. “We’re not asking for the most money but for the biggest participation rate. It’s proof that we think Auburn is great and a great place to work.”

Witte and Reynolds echoed McGuckin’s remarks and both commented about how participation in the campaign is a living example of the Auburn Creed through the ideas of “mutual helpfulness” and “believing in Auburn.”

Development officers say feedback from alumni and friends of Auburn, as well as other universities, shows that they are more willing to give and to contribute larger amounts when they see a significant proportion of faculty and staff contributing to the university.

“The overwhelming support we receive from Auburn’s faculty and staff, and the fact that consistently more than 70 percent of our employees support the university philanthropically, serves as a call to action to many alumni and friends from which we seek the same support,” said Jane Parker, Auburn’s vice president for development and president of the Auburn University Foundation.

With a faculty-staff participation rate of more than 72 percent in 2012, Auburn has the highest participation rate among all its peers in the Southeastern Conference and one of the highest rates nationwide among large public universities.

The campaign reaches every division on campus plus the Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension.

Campaign volunteers have distributed packets about the campaign and details on ways of supporting it. Additional information about the campaign is available at https://develop.auburn.edu/facultystaffcampaign.

— Katie Wilder

Lall wins Auburn Faculty Achievement Award, nominated for 2013 SEC Professor of Year

Auburn University and the Southeastern Conference on Wednesday named Professor Pradeep Lall of the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering as winner of the SEC’s Auburn University Faculty Achievement Award for 2012-13.

Lall, the T. Walter Professor of Mechanical Engineering and director of the Center for Advanced Vehicle and Extreme Electronics at Auburn, will receive a $5,000 honorarium, and he becomes Auburn’s nominee for the SEC Professor of the Year, who will be selected from 14 nominees representing SEC universities.

“Dr. Lall is an outstanding faculty member who is truly dedicated to his students, colleagues and his profession,” said Timothy Boosinger, Auburn University provost and vice president for academic affairs. “His work is exceptional and we are pleased to recognize his accomplishments.”

The SEC Faculty Achievement Awards, created to recognize faculty accomplishments, scholarly contributions and discoveries, were established by the SEC presidents and chancellors and are administered by the SEC provosts. The awards were first presented in 2012.

A recipient must be a full professor at an SEC university, have a record of extraordinary teaching and have a record of scholarship that is recognized nationally or internationally. The SEC Professor of the Year receives an additional $15,000 honorarium.

“The SEC Faculty Achievement Awards provide an opportunity for each SEC university to showcase the strengths of its faculty, who excel in many disciplines with varying areas of expertise,” said Jay Gogue, president of Auburn University and president of the Southeastern Conference.

Gogue added, “In the SEC, we are fortunate to have professors who understand the value of classroom
Maobing Tu, an assistant professor in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences at Auburn University, has received a National Science Foundation Faculty Early Career Development Award and grant of $401,155 for his research in biofuels and bioenergy.

The CAREER program offers the NSF’s most prestigious awards, honoring junior faculty who excel in research and teaching and integrating these roles at their institutions.

Tu joined the Auburn faculty in 2008. He earned a doctorate from the University of British Columbia in 2007. He is the first CAREER award recipient from the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences.

Tu said the five-year project promises to improve efficiency in the biorefining process for butanol production from forest and agricultural biomass. The study is titled “Carbonyl Inhibition of Butanol Production from Biomass Hydrolysates by Clostridium Acetobutylicum.”

“This will be a significant step toward making butanol production economically viable,” Tu said.

The work also will be helpful in the design and manufacturing of machines used to produce butanol, and is expected to advance understanding of the chemical processes involved in biomass processing,” he added.

“Butanol is one of the promising advanced biofuels being pursued by industry for the next generation of alternative fuels,” Tu said. “However, cost-effective production of butanol from lignocellulosic biomass is still challenging. In particular, hydrolysate inhibition limits butanol fermentation efficiency.”

Tu said butanol has several advantages over ethanol, including a higher energy content that is closer to gasoline. Unlike ethanol, butanol can be used in cars directly, without mixing or altering the vehicle.

In addition, because ethanol can absorb water, it rusts pipes, making transportation a challenge. Both biofuels can be derived from the same biomass materials, but butanol is more difficult to produce.

An important component of CAREER awards is the integration of teaching the next generation of scientists. Tu’s project includes plans to hire 20 undergraduate researchers from Auburn University and Tuskegee University, with special effort to recruit a diverse cohort of students.

“Dr. Tu’s research will help solve technological barriers to producing cellulose-based liquid fuels that we can use to offset fossil fuels,” said James Shepard, dean of the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences.

— Jessica Nelson

### NSF presents Early Career Development Award to Forestry, Wildlife Sciences prof

Auburn University recently hosted Saudi Arabian diplomat Nayef Alrasheed, his country’s deputy consul general for the Royal Saudi Consulate in Houston. The Saudi diplomat was in Auburn to visit with students and faculty as part of a university program to increase international exposure for Auburn students. Alrasheed, center, is shown with University President Jay Gogue, right, and Senior Counsel Bob McGinnis, who arranged the visit.

### Visiting Saudi official

Auburn University; committee meetings start at 9 a.m. followed at approximately 10:45 a.m. by regular meeting of the board

**FRIDAY, APRIL 12**

**MEETING** Board of Trustees, Ballroom B, The Hotel at Auburn University; committee meetings start at 9 a.m. followed at approximately 10:45 a.m. by regular meeting of the board

**SATURDAY, APRIL 13**

**FILM & DISCUSSION** Screenwriter Chris Millis showing and discussing “Small Apartments,” 3 p.m., Langdon Hall; admission charged; sponsored by the Auburn New Media Club

**FILM FESTIVAL** Showcasing the best student films judged by a panel of judges, 7:30-10:30 p.m.; admission charged; sponsored by the Auburn New Media Club

**MONDAY, APRIL 15**

**CONCERT** Auburn University Low Brass Ensemble, 7:30 p.m., Goodwin Recital Hall; admission charged

**TUESDAY, APRIL 16**

**UNIVERSITY THEATRE** “Elephant’s Graveyard,” 7:30 p.m., Telfair Peet Theatre; also Thursday, Friday and Saturday, April 17-20, at 7:30 p.m., and 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, April 21; admission charge for faculty, staff and public, admission free for students with ID

**CONCERT** Auburn University Symphonic Band, 7:30 p.m., Opelika Performing Arts Center; admission charged

**THURSDAY, APRIL 18**

**PUBLIC LECTURE** Howell Raines, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and former executive editor of The New York Times, 6 p.m., auditorium, The Hotel at Auburn University; part of the Neil O. and Henrietta Davis Distinguished Lecture Series

**GUEST CONCERT** Jazz guitarist and composer Bob Sneider, 7:30 p.m., Goodwin Recital Hall; admission charged

**FRIDAY, APRIL 19**

**CONCERT** Auburn University Jazz Band, 7:30 p.m., Room 134, Goodwin Music Building; admission charged

**SATURDAY, APRIL 20**

**OPEN HOUSE** College of Veterinary Medicine, 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

**A-DAY BLOCK PARTY** “Celebrate the Tradition,” final tribute to the Auburn Oaks, 5-9 p.m., Toomer’s Corner

**SUNDAY, APRIL 21**

**CONCERT** Auburn University Community Orchestra, 4 p.m., Jule Collins Smith Museum

**MONDAY, APRIL 22**

**EARTH DAY EVENT** Free screening of sustainability film “Thin Ice: The Inside Story of Climate Science,” 7 p.m., Langdon Hall

**FRIDAY, APRIL 26**

**NEXT Auburn Report** Final edition of spring semester

**LAST DAY** of classes for spring semester

**MONDAY, APRIL 29**

**FINAL EXAMS** April 29-May 3; commencement May 4-5
Honors College student
Auburn double-major named 2013 Goldwater Scholar

Patrick Donnan, an Auburn University Honors College student double-majoring in physics and music, has been chosen as a 2013 Barry M. Goldwater Scholar, an honor bestowed only to approximately 300 students nationwide each year. The scholarship is often cited as the most prestigious award in the United States for undergraduates in science, technology, engineering and mathematics disciplines.

While a student in the Honors College, Donnan is pursuing the physics major in the College of Sciences and Mathematics and the music major in the College of Liberal Arts.

Donnan, an Auburn native, conducts research with Professor Francis Robicheaux as part of the theoretical and computational atomic physics group in the College of Sciences and Mathematics’ Department of Physics.

Donnan’s research involves studying processes in atoms by using advanced computational methods. Specifically, his work examines Rydberg atoms, which appear in virtually every subfield of atomic physics and have widespread interest in the atomic physics research community. He has co-authored four peer-reviewed publications, including articles in the Auburn University Journal of Undergraduate Research and in Nature: The International Weekly Journal of Science, among others.

In May he will travel to Leipzig, Germany, to study at the Max Planck Institute for Quantum Optics. Upon graduation from Auburn, he aims to complete a doctorate in theoretical atomic physics and ultimately become a physics professor.

“Patrick is very enthusiastic about physics,” Robicheaux said. “He is very easy to work with and he has a good temperament for research. Setbacks don’t trouble him and if something gives problems, he works at it until the problems are fixed. His motivation and drive are incredibly high, and he has the training of a top scientist.”

Donnan, who has a 3.98 grade-point average, is president of the Auburn chapter of the Society for Physics Students and a member of the Undergraduate Research Board. In addition, he is principal chair with the bassoon in the Auburn University Symphonic Band and a member of the Auburn Community Orchestra.

Auburn Honors College student Tyler Sutherland received honorable mention during the 2013 Goldwater Scholarship selection process, one of only 50 students nationwide to enjoy this distinction. He is majoring in physics and minoring in mathematics and works under the guidance of Stuart Loch, associate professor of physics. Sutherland is also a tutor in the Loachapoka Afterschool Program, a member of the Undergraduate Research Board and a teaching assistant in the Department of Physics.

Originally from Huntsville, he will spend the summer in Cambridge, Mass., as an intern in the Harvard Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory Summer Program.

“It was a pleasure assisting Patrick and Tyler with their Goldwater applications,” said Paul Harris, associate director of the Honors College. “I first met Patrick when he was enrolled in my Honors Human Odyssey Course during his freshman year and shortly thereafter I met Tyler. They represent the very best of what my office looks for in prestigious scholarship applicants: an intellectually curious nature, a sincere desire to learn for learning’s sake and a ‘can-do, will-do’ attitude.”

— Charles Martin

Academic Achievement Award

Continued from Page 1

Lall specializes in electronic packaging and his research interests include thermo-mechanics of electronics in harsh environments, constitutive behavior of electronic materials and multi-scale modeling of nanostructures. He is a recipient of the College of Engineering’s Senior Faculty Research Award and is the founding faculty adviser for Auburn’s student chapter of the Surface Mount Technology Association.

Lall holds three U.S. patents and serves as associate editor for the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers’ “Transactions on Components and Packaging Technologies” as well as the ASME “Journal of Electronic Packaging.” He has written two books, 13 book chapters and more than 325 journal and conference papers on electronic packaging, as well as design, modeling and predictive techniques.

— Charles Martin

Spirit of Excellence

Auburn University Human Resources has announced winners of Spirit of Excellence Awards for December and January. The awards recognize up to four Auburn employees each month for exceptional performance and service to the university. Recipients for December, left photo, are Katie Lackey, left, of the College of Human Sciences, Jackie Edwards, right, of Auburn University Libraries and, not shown, Martha Allison of the Department of Theatre. Winners for January, right photo, left to right, are Charles Vail of the Office of Information Technology, Rosie Grady of Auburn University Libraries, Mike Patterson of Facilities and, not shown, Terri Jackson of Agriculture Land and Resources Management.
Auburn creating keepsakes from famous oaks to benefit student scholarships

Auburn fans will soon have a way to remember the oaks at Toomer’s Corner long after the trees are gone. To commemorate the tradition of rolling the oaks, the university will be working with several licensed manufacturers to create mementos from the trees’ wood following their removal later this month. All royalties collected from their sale will benefit Auburn students through a special scholarship fund.

“This is a very special way for the Auburn Family to remember one of our best-known traditions,” said Debbie Shaw, vice president for alumni affairs. “Generations of our fans have gathered beneath the oaks over the years, and it is fitting that future generations of students will benefit from the scholarships they will provide.”

The trees will be removed from the corner on April 23. While mementos made from the trees will not be available until the following week, there is already commemorative apparel and merchandise available at retailers in time for A-Day. See www.auburn.edu/oaks for more information.

Fans should look for the specially designed Auburn Oaks officially licensed hangtag to ensure proceeds go toward the university’s scholarship fund.

Elmore named director of Budget Services in University Business Office

Bryan Elmore has been named director of the Office of Budget Services in Auburn University’s Business Office.

Appointed after a national search, Elmore had served as assistant director of the department since 2007. Before joining Auburn University as an accountant in 2005, he was a staff accountant at Jackson Thornton & Co. P.C. He holds a bachelor’s degree in accounting and a master’s degree in higher education administration, both from Auburn.

State Department of Education awards grant for Auburn STEM program

Researchers from the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative, the College of Education, the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering and the College of Sciences and Mathematics will facilitate teacher professional development and engage students in project-based Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, or STEM, education with the help of a $230,500 grant from the Alabama State Department of Education.

The funding will help the RE2-FoCUS Initiative offer professional development for 176 Alabama middle school science and math teachers and help them use hands-on, project-based engineering design content to help deepen student understanding of science and math concepts.

The principal investigators for the project are Christine Schnittka, an assistant professor of science and engineering education with a joint appointment in the Colleges of Education and Engineering, Allen Landers, an associate professor and Howard Carr Professor of Outreach and Experimental Atomic and Molecular Physics in the College of Sciences and Mathematics, and Mary Lou Ewald, director of outreach for the College of Sciences and Mathematics. The researchers will also collaborate with BEST Robotics, Inc., through BEST Executive Director George Blanks, director of K-12 outreach for continuing education in the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering.

Sikora named president of regional association fighting soybean disease

Edward Sikora, a professor in the College of Agriculture’s Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology at Auburn University and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, was installed as president of the Southern Soybean Disease Workers at their annual meeting in Pensacola in March.

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