International diplomats step up Auburn visits, meetings with students

Auburn University is fast becoming one of Alabama’s most popular destinations for visiting dignitaries from foreign governments.

Since February 2009, Auburn has been the destination for the heads of 17 international consulates in the United States, with some returning for additional visits. In addition, Wenzhong Zhou, China’s ambassador to the U.S., visited the campus and addressed hundreds of students in October 2009.

In addition to China, visiting dignitaries have come from Albania, Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Germany, India, Liechtenstein, Japan, Mexico, Peru, South Korea, Taiwan and Turkey. The list will grow longer this week of May 17, when dignitaries from Hungary, Kuwait, Nigeria and Malaysia, as well as additional guests from China, are scheduled to visit.

Auburn launched the visiting dignitaries initiative at the suggestion of President Jay Gogue as one part of a commitment in the strategic plan that Auburn adopted in 2008. In that plan, the university committed to ensuring that students gain an understanding of other cultures and the global forces for success in an interdependent world.

“International experiences are becoming a necessity for college graduates to succeed in an expanding global cultural and economic environment that is already far beyond what previous generations encountered,” said Gogue, who also cited Alabama’s increasing presence in the world economy.

When Bob McGinnis retired as Auburn’s vice president for development in 2008, Gogue asked him to remain as senior counsel to the president; among other duties in his new position, McGinnis assumed responsibility for inviting international dignitaries to visit campus. Auburn has a long history of hosting visiting international scholars but previous visits by dignitaries had been infrequent and usually confined to meetings with administrators and researchers.

This time, Gogue said, the university would extend more invitations, and a primary focus would be on establishing communications between the visiting dignitaries and Auburn’s students and professors.

The first of the visits came shortly afterward, in early 2009, when consular officials from 10 countries came to Auburn for discussions with administrative, research and academic leaders, students from their home countries and representatives from the Alabama Legislature and Gov. Bob Riley. This was soon followed by a sequence of individual visits by consular officials of those 10 and seven additional countries; several have traveled on to Montgomery to meet with the governor and other state leaders.

Most visiting officials have addressed student audiences or spoken to classes in areas of special interest, such as the International Political Economy classes in the Honors College, Foreign Languages and Literatures classes in the College of Liberal Arts, Graphic Design students in the College of Architecture, Design and Construction and International Business and Business Engineering Technology classes in the College of Business. For instance, Lutz Goergens, Germany’s consul general for the southeastern United States, who has made several visits to Auburn, participated in International visitors, page 2
Farmers’ market to start season on May 27

The Market at Ag Heritage Park will kick off its annual season from 3 p.m.-6 p.m., Thursday, May 27.

The 2010 season of the market will then continue each Thursday through Aug. 26 at the same location, west of South Donahue Drive near Lem Morrison Drive. Enter on Donahue, beside the Ham Wilson Livestock Arena.

Area growers will offer a variety of fruits and vegetables that will change as the summer progresses. Throughout the season, shoppers will find honey, goat cheese, stone-ground grains, Alabama-roasted coffee, homemade jellies and home-baked goods, including oven-ready casseroles.

The open-air, growers-only farmers market is entering its sixth season.

The Market is sponsored by Auburn’s College of Agriculture and the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station. The Market will be open rain or shine, unless severe weather threatens the safety of vendors and customers.

Book challenges South’s ‘Reluctant Rebels’ myth

An Auburn professor has written a book about “later enlists” during the Civil War, who have often been cast as less committed to the Confederacy.

In “Reluctant Rebels: The Confederates Who Joined the Army After 1861,” Kenneth Noe, Draughon Professor of Southern History in the College of Liberal Arts, examines the claim that Southerners who enlisted later in the war were inferior, less-committed soldiers than those who immediately joined the Confederate ranks.

Noe refutes the notion that later enlists were more likely to desert or perform poorly in battle, and he reassesses the argument that they were less ideologically committed than their counterparts who enlisted early in the conflict.

“Kinship and neighborhood, not conscription, compelled these men to fight,” Noe said. “They were determined to protect their families and property and were fueled by resentment over emancipation and pillaging and destruction by Union forces.”

He says, however, their age along with their duties often caused them to wear down more quickly than younger men, making them less effective soldiers for a Confederate nation that desperately needed every able-bodied man it could muster.

Noe, a native of Virginia, received his doctorate from the University of Illinois and taught at West Georgia College for 10 years before coming to Auburn in 2000. His major teaching and research areas are the American Civil War and Appalachian history.

He is the author or editor of six books, one of which was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. Also, he was winner of the 2003 Kentucky Governor’s Award, the 2002 Peter Seaborg Book Award for Civil War Non-fiction, and the 1997 Tennessee History Book Award, as well as several teaching awards.

“Reluctant Rebels: The Confederates Who Joined the Army After 1861” is published by the University of North Carolina Press.

— Melissa Hand

International visitors

continued from page 1

classes on contemporary German literature and international political economy and an organized discussion with faculty and students on climate and energy.

In addition, officials from Peru brought a photographic exhibition of that country’s historic and scenic Inca Trail to Draughon Library, and Germany provided a photo exhibition of United Nations World Heritage Sites in that country.

Noting that approximately 900 Auburn students participate in Auburn Abroad programs each year and about 900 students from other countries attend Auburn, McGinnis said, “Up to 25 percent of our native students have direct experience in other lands during their undergraduate years here, and we look for that number to increase significantly in the future as we increase opportunities for students to study abroad.”

He added, “That still leaves a lot of students who, for one reason or another, are unable to participate in study abroad programs. By bringing in very important international visitors, in addition to other ongoing international activities on campus, we are creating opportunities for students to gain a better understanding of other countries and cultures and become more adept at thinking and acting globally.”

— Roy Summerford

Campus Calendar

FRIDAY, MAY 14
COMENCEMENT 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., Beard-Eaves-Memorial Coliseum

THURSDAY, MAY 20
CLASSES BEGIN for summer semester

MONDAY, MAY 24
FREE SCREENING for speech and hearing problems, no appointment necessary, 1 p.m.-4 p.m., Speech and Hearing Clinic, Haley 1199

THURSDAY, MAY 27
FARMERS’ MARKET The Market at Ag Heritage Park, 3 p.m.-6 p.m., South Donahue Drive, enter beside Ham Wilson Livestock Arena; each Thursday thereafter through Aug. 26

FRIDAY, MAY 28
NEXT Auburn Report

MONDAY, MAY 31
HOLIDAY Memorial Day observed; no classes; offices closed

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— Roy Summerford
Associate dean of Auburn’s College of Sciences and Mathematics named as college’s new dean

Marie Wooten, Scharnagel Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences and associate dean for research in Auburn University’s College of Sciences and Mathematics, has been named dean of the college, effective Aug. 1.

“Dr. Wooten has been an integral part of the College of Sciences and Mathematics for a number of years,” said Auburn Provost Mary Ellen Mazey. “She is an experienced classroom instructor, an internationally recognized scientist and a leader in interdisciplinary research and outreach.”

Wooten, an Auburn faculty member since 1987, has served as associate dean for research in the college since 2000. In this role, she has guided the creation of several programs, enhanced interdisciplinary research, developed strategic partnerships and sought to diversify the college’s research portfolio. Meanwhile, external funding secured by the college has doubled over a 10-year period.

“I am honored to have the opportunity to serve as the next dean of COSAM,” Wooten said. “The faculty and students possess a passion for discovery and innovation that has enabled the growth of strong academic, research and outreach programs. I look forward to moving the college to the next level and collaborating with other units in key strategic areas.”

Widely recognized for her contributions as a mentor, scientist, scholar and academic administrator, Wooten is described by colleagues as committed to student training and outreach.

She is cofounder of the Institute for Women in Sciences and Engineering and has provided leadership in developing numerous education initiatives in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM, disciplines. Wooten is also a member of the National Science Foundation ADVANCE program, which focuses on enhancing diversity in STEM fields.

Wooten’s research interests include cellular and molecular developmental neurobiology and neurodegeneration. She was recently awarded a four-year, $1.3 million grant by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, and her research program has received funding on a continuous basis from the National Institutes of Health since 1985. She also has received research grants from the National Science Foundation, the American Heart Association, NASA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. She holds two patents and has commercialized one technology.

Wooten earned a bachelor’s degree in microbiology from the University of Memphis and doctorate in cell and molecular biosciences from Texas Women’s University. She received postdoctoral training at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory and has been a visiting scientist at institutions in South Africa and Spain.

— Carol Nelson

Agriculture professor named Fulbright Scholar to teach turfgrass management at University of Mauritius in fall

Beth Guertal, an agronomy and soils professor at Auburn University, has been named a Fulbright Scholar to teach in Mauritius this fall.

Guertal will spend fall semester teaching turfgrass management and sustainable agriculture at the University of Mauritius. She says she also hopes to develop opportunities for her students there and back home at Auburn to get involved with projects on the island’s golf courses.

Mauritius, an island in the Indian Ocean off the southeast coast of Africa, is a popular tourist destination for Europeans because of its tropical climate, beautiful beaches and world-class golf courses.

Guertal has a head start on establishing a relationship with one particular Mauritius golf course — the one where Storm Lupier is superintendent. Guertal assisted Lupier when he was assistant superintendent at Still Waters Golf Club in Dadeville.

“It’s a small world,” Guertal said, adding that she has contacted Lupier and hopes to set up several projects for her Mauritius students on the golf course where he now works and to arrange for future internship opportunities for Auburn students.

In addition to the professional opportunities the Fulbright scholarship offers, Guertal said she is looking forward to the chance for personal growth.

“I am very excited to travel to a region of the world where I have never been and to have the opportunity to teach students at the University of Mauritius,” Guertal said. “I’m also taking my family, and the chance for all of us to become part of another culture, at least for six months, is an event they’ll treasure the rest of their lives.”

The Fulbright program is designed to increase mutual understanding between the people of the U.S. and people of other countries by providing opportunities for American scholars and professionals to conduct research, lecture and consult with other scholars and institutions abroad. Participants are chosen based on their academic merit and leadership potential.

— Leigh Hinton

WPB, Early Learning Center team up to offer children’s summer camp on managing money

A new camp, Camp iCare, will be launched in July to help children, ages 6-12, learn the basic skills of being money-smart and philanthropically engaged. Camp sessions will be Monday-Thursday, July 12-15, from 8 a.m.-noon at the Early Learning Center on campus.

The Women’s Philanthropy Board in Auburn University’s College of Sciences and Engineering is teaming up with the Early Learning Center in the college’s Department of Human Development and Family Studies to offer Camp iCare.

The sessions will include visits from legendary golfer Nancy Lopez and others, daily planned activities and a service project. Through Camp iCare, campers explore themes of financial and philanthropic stewardship and leadership using modern communication techniques. For more information, go to www.humsci.auburn.edu/wpb/10events/CampiCarePacket.pdf.

Tuition for Camp iCare is $150 and covers supplies, a daily snack, a T-shirt and special learning tools. Reservations are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis and will be confirmed upon receipt of forms and payment.

To register, contact Sidney James Nakhjavan, director of the Women’s Philanthropy Board, at 844-3524 or wpbchs1@auburn.edu; or Sharon Wilbanks, director of the Early Learning Center, at 844-4696 or shw0005@auburn.edu. Make checks payable to the Women’s Philanthropy Board. Mail checks and registration forms to the WPB Office at 210 Spidle Hall, campus. For information about registration, call 844-9199.
Achievements

Fisheries alumnus named to Time’s list of persons with most impact on world

Valentin Abe, an alumnus of the Department of Fisheries and Allied Aquacultures in Auburn’s College of Agriculture, has been named by Time magazine as one of the 100 people who have the most impact on the world. Citing Abe’s Haiti Fish Development Project tilapia farm that has put Haitians to work and given them a source of income, former U.S. President Bill Clinton nominated Abe for the 2010 Time 100 list. A native of the Ivory Coast, Abe earned his master’s degree in 1991 and his Ph.D. in 1995. Abe was included in the “Heroes” category, as was Clinton. View the article in the magazine’s May 10 issue online at www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1984685_1984949_1985272,00.html.

Maxwell-Evans assumes post as director of Human Resources employee relations

Linda Maxwell-Evans joined Auburn University Human Resources as director of employee relations on May 3. She comes to Auburn from the Estee Lauder Companies in Melville, N.Y., where she was a human resources manager. She also has experience with a worldwide distributor of medical, dental and veterinary supplies; a large public library; and a public service agency for the Manhattan Borough in New York. She earned her bachelor’s degree from Alabama State University and a Master of Public Administration degree from Iowa State University.

Bailey named president-elect of national association of rural sociology experts

Conner Bailey of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology in the College of Agriculture has been named president-elect of the Rural Sociological Society. Bailey will begin his service this August and will become president of the society in August 2011. The Rural Sociological Society is a professional social science association that promotes the generation, application and dissemination of sociological knowledge in order to enhance the quality of rural life, communities and the environment.

Barth in Egypt this week at request of State Department to discuss economy

James Barth, Lowder Eminent Scholar in Finance in Auburn’s College of Business, is in Cairo and Alexandria, Egypt from May 8-15 to discuss the global financial crisis with various small groups and larger audiences. His trip was at the invitation of the Bureau of International Information Programs of the United States Department of State.

Isabelle Thompson receives international association’s best-article-of-year award

Isabelle Thompson of the English Department in the College of Liberal Arts was recently honored by the International Writing Centers Association. Her Written Communication article “Scaffolding in the Writing Center: A Microanalysis of an Experienced Tutor’s Verbal and Nonverbal Tutoring Strategies” received the association’s Best Article Award for 2009.

Johns Hopkins University Press honors Backscheider for book on women poets

“British Women Poets of the Long Eighteenth Century: An Anthology,” co-edited by Paula Backscheider and Catherine Ingrassia, has been selected as a Director’s Choice Book by Johns Hopkins University Press. Backscheider, a professor of English in Auburn’s College of Liberal Arts, is senior editor and a long-standing author at Johns Hopkins University Press. She was honored at a program at Johns Hopkins on April 29.