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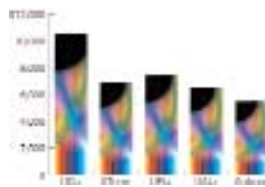
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Source: Planning & Analysis from SREB data  
for 2001-02, the latest available.

Updates between issues

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[www.auburn.edu/  
au\\_report/aureport.html](http://www.auburn.edu/au_report/aureport.html)

# AU report

For the faculty and staff of Auburn University

Vol. 36 No. 12

## Walker says tax reform vote could decide future of education, state

AU President William Walker has urged the entire university community to support Gov. Bob Riley's statewide campaign for tax reform and accountability.

In remarks to the University Senate, alumni organizations and civic groups across Alabama, Walker is saying passage of the reform package in a Sept. 9 statewide referendum would lead to rapid

improvements in the quality of life in Alabama by improving education and state services.

Failure of the reform package, Walker warns, would lead to rapid deterioration of public schools and basic state services. With passage, the state would gain \$700 million in new revenue next year and \$1.2 billion per year by 2009; if the package fails, (See *Referendum*, page 2)



## AU, UA join forces to target Black Belt

Chief academic officers from the Auburn University and University of Alabama systems have joined forces on behalf of their institutions against seemingly intractable problems in Alabama's poorest counties.

The senior academic administrators began meeting in late May at the request of AU President William Walker and UA System Chancellor Malcolm Portera.

Through their combined efforts, the five universities in the two systems can have a greater impact on the educational, social, health and economic problems in the Black Belt than they can achieve individually, said interim AU Provost John Pritchett.

A combined effort against the problems of the state's poorest region will also provide a model for the academic administrators to use as the universities expand their collective efforts to other issues that are too large for institutions to address individually, he added.

Pritchett and Charles Nash of the University of Alabama System were among six senior academic administrators who met in Birmingham to form closer links between the AU and UA systems. Other participants were Roger Ritvo of AU-Montgomery, (See *Academic officers*, page 2)

### Personal delivery

Gov. Bob Riley personally delivered a check to AU for a scholarship in wildlife sciences on June 13. The \$63,000 gift came from proceeds of the Second Annual Governor's Turkey Hunt, a celebrity event for industrial prospects, in March.

# Referendum

(continued from page 1)

the state must slice up to \$675 million from budgets for schools and basic services in the 2003-04 fiscal year, which starts Oct. 1.

"We must do all we can to campaign for support of these measures," said Walker. "Passage of the governor's reform package would have profound impact on the future of our state, and so would its defeat."

Walker noted that the benefits to AU will be indirect through improvements in the quality of K-12 public schools and state services and through relief from ongoing state revenue declines that threaten the future for students in K-12 and higher education. In addition, Auburn students would gain directly through a scholarship program linked to the funding package.

If the package fails at the polls in September, the effect will be immediate and disastrous for all of education, Walker said. He noted that the governor has warned of massive layoffs of public school teachers, widespread cancellation of band and football programs, mass releases of convicts from state prisons and loss of services at every level of state government.

By improving efficiency, setting aside a proration

reserve and raising tuition, Auburn is prepared to weather a projected reduction of 6.34 percent in state funding in the 2003-04 budget year, but Walker said state funding problems will take a toll on Auburn if they continue beyond next year, as predicted.

The governor has been campaigning across the state on behalf of the reform package since the Legislature passed the package on June 7. Walker said all supporters of education in Alabama should unite in support of the campaign to win voter approval in the Sept. 9 referendum.

The package would raise state revenues by 14 percent through changes in income, property, utility, cigarette and other taxes. The constitutional amendment would also impose accountability measures on state government and school systems and would ban pass-through "pork" legislation, which legislators use to finance favored projects.

The amendment would also place all the new revenues in a separate Alabama Excellence Initiative Fund for targeted investments such as the Alabama Reading Initiative and college scholarships.

The Governor's Office has details of the package on the Web at <http://www.governor.state.al.us/>.

Universities in the UA System, particularly UAB, also have strong programs in those counties, he noted.

"We want to build on what we have there already and work with the other institutions to reinforce each other and avoid duplication," Pritchett said.

"We also want to identify areas that are not now being reached and develop programs in concert with each other and the citizens of the Black Belt to address those challenges."

Each institution will still remain free to develop and enhance its programs, but the coordination will help ensure that those programs meet their goals, he said.

Pritchett noted that the focus on the Black Belt fits with Gov. Bob Riley's goal of reviving the economy and social structure of that region. Riley has said progress in the entire state is being held back by the economic and education problems of those counties.

The focus on the Black Belt will not come at the expense of other goals of the institutions, Pritchett said. He noted that the academic administrators have agreed to look at other areas of cooperation in future meetings.

"I see this as the start of greater cooperation that will make both systems and all our institutions stronger and enhance their service to the people of our state," he said.

# Academic officers

(continued from page 1)

Judy L. Bonner of the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa, Eli Capilouto of UA Birmingham, and Lewis Radonovich of UA Huntsville.

In their first initiative, the chief academic officers are conducting an inventory of AU and UA programs that address problems of the Black Belt, which badly trails the rest of the state in education opportunities, government infrastructure and economic development. Although some counties in Southeast Alabama, such as Macon and Barbour, are included in the Black Belt, most of the region is in West Alabama in a triangle bordered by Montgomery, Mobile and Tuscaloosa.

The academic administrators agreed to examine their own programs in June and reconvene in July. "We will get back together to work out better coordination and plan additional initiatives once we identify what each of us is now doing," Pritchett said.

Pritchett noted that Auburn already has some strong programs in the economically distressed region. Two of the most prominent are the School of Architecture's Rural Studio and the West Alabama Learning Coalition, which is coordinated by the College of Education's Truman Pierce Institute.

Pritchett noted that several other colleges and schools also have worked with AU Outreach and the Cooperative Extension System to provide services to the region.

# Upcoming Events

**Tuesday, June 24**

- Classes begin for Summer Session II.

**Wednesday, June 25**

- Faculty Development Session: "WebCT: Tricks and Tips," noon, O.D. Smith 328. Hosted by AU Distance Learning.

**Thursday, June 26**

- Museum Tour: Tour of new Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art, 4 p.m., South College Street. For tour reservation, call 844-1507.

**Friday, July 4**

- Independence Day holiday: No classes; offices closed.

**Monday, July 7**

- Next AU Report

**Tuesday, July 8**

- Meeting: University Senate, 3 p.m., Broun Hall auditorium.

**Tuesday, July 29**

- Classes end for summer term.

**Wednesday, July 30**

- Summer term finals through Aug. 1.

**Monday, August 4**

- Graduation: Ceremony at 2 p.m., Coliseum.

**Wednesday, August 20**

- First day of classes for fall semester, 2003-04 academic year.

## Early deadline for July 7 edition of AU Report

The July 7 issue of the AU Report will face an early press deadline because of the Independence Day holiday. As a result, the deadline for submission of materials for that issue will be 4 p.m. Monday, June 30, two days earlier than normal.



AU Report Editor: Roy Summerford. Contributing editors: Bob Lowry and David Granger. Other contributions by college and school staff writers. Photography by Jeff Etheridge and Trice Megginson of AU Photo Services.

Assistant Vice President for Communications & Marketing: John Hachtel.

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## Salary goals

Interim Provost John Pritchett outlines AU's goals for faculty salary improvement during this month's University Senate meeting. Pritchett noted that AU is within striking distance of its goal of bringing faculty salaries up to the regional average for Auburn's peer institutions.



# AU will follow procedures set last year to determine salary increases

Senior administrators say AU this summer will follow procedures established in 2002 for faculty salary increases last fall in determining increases for the 2003-04 fiscal year that starts Oct. 1.

In remarks to the University Senate on June 10, Executive Vice President Don Large said increases this year should place faculty salaries at or near the regional average for peer institutions. He cautioned that Auburn's success in reaching that goal will depend in part on other institutions, which last year increased their faculty salaries an average of 10.5 percent. Those actions reduced the impact of a nearly 12 percent average increase at Auburn last fall.

Interim Provost John Pritchett said his office, working with the deans, is updating the plan developed last year to recognize individual merit and market conditions by academic field.

The senior administrators did not state how much money will be allocated for raises. Large is chair and Pritchett is a member of the 20-person University Budget Advisory Committee, which will develop a university budget for 2003-04 following guidelines approved by the Board of Trustees on June 2.

The administration must take next year's budget to the board for final action before funding decisions take effect.

With the state allocation facing a projected cut of 6.34 percent for 2003-04, the primary sources of new funds will be additional reallocations of internal

resources and a 16 percent increase in tuition. Budget planners expect the tuition increase to generate about half the total additional funds in next year's budget, with most of the remainder coming from the internal redistribution and reallocation.

Large said the largest share of the new or reallocated money would go to salaries, but he noted that the university must also meet other commitments under the five-year plan approved by the Board of Trustees in 1999 and must fulfill new obligations incurred since then.

Pritchett said Auburn faculty at all ranks narrowed the gap between AU and its peers across the region this year. On average, the pay of AU professors rose from 88 percent to 95 percent of the regional average, associate professors rose from 91 percent to 98 percent of the regional average and assistant professors rose from 88 percent to 94 percent of the regional average.

"We are the closest to the regional average that we have been in the past several years," Pritchett said. If AU achieves its goal in the coming year, pay levels will still be below those of some peer institutions in the South, but meeting the goal of the SREB average will make Auburn more competitive, he said.

The College of Liberal Arts and the College of Sciences and Mathematics are farthest from the regional average, but Pritchett said their salary averages should move closer to their peers this fall.

## AU College of Education registering children for summer program

The AU College of Education is enrolling children, ages 4-8, for its Early Childhood Summer Program.

The new session starts Monday, June 23, but parents may enroll their children after the start of the session, said program coordinator Candra D. Thorn-

ton. The program, which features aquatic themes and is taught by upper-level College of Education practicum students, is four days per week over three weeks, ending in mid-July.

For information on fees and registration, contact Thornton at 844-6791 or Liesa Viruleg at 844-6877.

Associate dean

# Engineering names astronaut to post

Astronaut Jim Voss has been named associate dean for external affairs in AU's Samuel Ginn College of Engineering.

Voss will begin his duties on campus in August, at the beginning of fall semester. He will lead the college's fund-raising efforts and teach a course in spacecraft design.



Voss

"Jim Voss has been a frequent and welcome visitor to the Auburn campus during his tenure at NASA, and has spoken with many of our students, alumni and faculty members," Engineering Dean Larry Benefield said in making the announcement.

"He will bring a unique perspective to the engineering classroom," Benefield added. "As a veteran astronaut, he offers an exciting viewpoint that will

elevate our instructional program in a way that would not otherwise be possible."

Voss, a retired U.S. Army colonel, earned a bachelor's degree in aerospace engineering from Auburn in 1972, when he received a commission as a second lieutenant in the Army. He earned a master's degree in aerospace engineering from the University of Colorado in 1974 under the Army Graduate Fellowship Program.

NASA selected him for the astronaut program in 1987. A veteran of five space flights, Voss has logged 201 days in space, including four space walks totaling more than 22 hours.

Most recently he was a management astronaut working in the Space Station Program Mission Integration and Operations Office as a deputy for flight operations.



### Renovation

**It's curtains for the theatre this summer as workers cover the west side of Telfair Peet Theatre to keep loose building materials on-site during renovation. The work includes improved exterior waterproofing and interior changes to remove asbestos, meet current fire codes and upgrade of the stage and seating areas in the 30-year-old building. Two plays next fall semester will be off campus due to the renovation.**

## AU Theatre to present two plays off campus

In plays for its 2003-04 season, AU Theatre will feature a Carson McCullers drama, a rock opera, a musical based on a book about working and a documentary exploring the murder of a social outcast in a small town.

Due to renovation of Telfair Peet Theatre, the first two plays in the new season will be off-campus at the Jan Dempsey Arts Center at 222 E. Drake Ave., approximately one mile northeast of campus.

The first play of the season will be "The Member of the Wedding," in October. The play by McCullers, a Columbus, Ga., native, explores the loneliness of adolescence and the bond between blacks and whites in the mid-20th century South through the eyes of the groom's younger sister.

"Freakspiel! A Demented Rock Opera," sched-

uled for November and featuring puppetry, will also be at the Dempsey Arts Center.

The following two plays, "Working" and "The Laramie Project," will be in Telfair Peet Theatre.

"Working," scheduled for February, is an adaptation of Studs Turkel's Pulitzer Prize-winning book, using music by James Taylor and Steven Schwartz.

"The Laramie Project" is a theatrical documentary exploring the lives of the citizens of Laramie, Wyo., and events surrounding the murder of a homosexual man by two of the town's residents.

AU Theatre has begun taking ticket orders for the upcoming season. Tickets for all four plays are \$45 for students, \$65 for faculty, staff and senior citizens and \$70 general admission. For ticket information, call 844-4145.

## Campus Roundup

### Tax rates change on statements

Under tax reduction legislation signed May 28 by President Bush, the 2003 income tax rates are changed for most taxpayers.

The new tax rates are reflected in university employees' salary and wage payments effective June 20.

### Art Museum will offer public tour

Auburn's new, nearly complete Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art on South College Street will offer a public tour at 4 p.m. Thursday, June 26.

To participate in this tour or to request a tour for a civic or educational group, call Catherine Walsh at 844-1507. AU faculty, staff and students with valid I.D. are admitted free. General admission is \$3.

### Wang wins grant from Art Council

The Alabama State Council on the Arts has awarded a \$5,000 fellowship grant to Assistant Professor Wei Wang of the Department of Art in AU's College of Liberal Arts.

The one-year grant, effective this fall, will support Wang's research in digital imaging, 2-D and 3-D animation, interactive multimedia and web design.

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