Family Fun Day
The ever-popular pneumatic slide was again a huge hit with children at Family Fun Day on June 16. The annual event for Auburn employees and their families attracted hundreds to the President’s Home for an afternoon of family-themed activities, games, foods and fun in a relaxed, community atmosphere. This was the 14th year the university has organized Family Fun Day and the seventh consecutive year the festival has been held at the President’s Home.

Little new revenue as budget team seeks funds for salary relief

After two straight years of sharp drops in state appropriations and continuing uncertainty for next year due to the national economic recession, Auburn University faces virtually level funding with little likelihood of significant new funds for the 2010-11 fiscal year, which starts Oct. 1.

However, budget planners and members of the Board of Trustees say they are hopeful that funds can be found for one-time salary supplements for faculty and staff in order to prevent a third straight year without a pay increase.

Under guidelines drafted by the university’s Budget Advisory Committee and approved June 18 by the Board of Trustees, the administration will prepare for $242.7 million in state appropriations for the Auburn University System in the coming fiscal year. That amount is up less than 1 percent from the current fiscal year’s state appropriation but is in sharp contrast with the recent, proration-led trend, which saw a 22.3 percent decline in 2008-09 and an additional 7.7 percent decline for 2009-10.

Executive Vice President Don Large, the university’s chief financial officer, reported to the board that Auburn has taken a large financial hit from the recession and a quick recovery in state appropriations does not appear likely. The university system’s

Work to start soon on new buildings for students, Athletics; Haley, others marked for replacement over next decade

Auburn students will soon get a new wellness and sustainability center, Auburn Athletics will soon get an indoor practice facility and the Hill Residence Halls and Carolyn Draughon Village will be renovated under resolutions passed by the Board of Trustees on June 18.

In addition, several major campus buildings, including Haley Center, were identified for replacement during the new decade.

The board authorized campus objectives that include constructing a new central classroom facility and replacing Haley Center and several other major academic buildings by 2020. The latter would include Funchess, Parker, Allison and Spidle, all of which were constructed in the early 1960s, and Upchurch Hall, which dates from 1929.

The board approved a $72 million budget for a new 240,000-square-foot wellness and sustainability center, clearing the way for the university to seek bids from contractors and for construction to start next summer. Students voted in 2009 to pay $50 to $200 per semester to finance the building, which planners say will take 18 months to two years to construct.

The wellness center will be built in front of the coliseum, which will be demolished when a new home is found for the Department of Kinesiology, which occupies 56,000 square feet in the coliseum. Dan King, assistant vice president for facilities, said planners are considering three possibilities: renovating part of the existing student activities building, constructing a new building or adding a basement level under the wellness center for Kinesiology.

The board gave expedited status to the indoor practice facility for Athletics to enable planning to proceed immediately and work to begin as soon as the 2010 football season ends and have it available for use at the start of the 2011 season. The 92,000-square-foot facility will contain a full-length football field and be constructed parallel to Samford Avenue in the practice area, where the outdoor fields will be reduced from three to two. The 40-yard practice area in Watson arena will then be available for other use by the Athletics Department.

Athletics Director Jay Jacobs said the indoor practice field, carpeted with synthetic grass, would enable the entire football team to practice in inclement weather and by other athletic teams as needed for their practices. The $16.5 million facility would be financed with Athletics Department funds, initially through a bond issue, but Jacobs said he expects the debt to be retired early through private gifts.
Budget planning

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state appropriation declined from $336.6 million in 2007-08 to $241.2 million this year and is projected to recover only slightly, to $242.8 million, in the coming year. Two years ago, state appropriations accounted for 45 percent of the main campus operating budget; this year, that number is down to 32 percent, with tuition increases and internal budget cuts having to make up most of the difference.

The Auburn University System includes the main campus, Auburn Montgomery, the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

Auburn is not raising tuition at the main campus for 2010-11, but tuition restructuring is expected to increase overall tuition revenues by 8 percent next year. To encourage undergraduates to graduate in four years, the restructuring provides financial incentives for students who take large class loads and disincentives for those taking smaller ones.

Large said the university is taking a cautious approach to budgeting but sticking with its strategic plan during budget planning for the coming year. “Our strategy is to stay on task and act like we are going to be here another 100 years,” he said. Longterm, he said, the university should be able to identify and implement permanent reductions in its budget through strategic planning to cope with changes in the economy.

For the main campus in 2010-11, Auburn will have to make up a $27.6 million funding shortfall resulting from 2009-10 cuts in state appropriations and a further reduction for the coming year. Scholarship commitments and rising health insurance costs account for more than $8 million in estimated additional expenses. Nearly $2 million in new funds will be budgeted for merit promotions, enrollment management, student affairs and professorships, bringing the total estimate for new expenses to $37.9 million.

Those expenses are projected to be offset by $18 million in additional tuition revenue and a combination of budget reductions totaling nearly $20 million.

AAES and ACES will also rely on budget reductions to offset much of their additional expenses, and Auburn Montgomery, like the Auburn campus, will rely on a mix of increased tuition revenue and budget reductions for the coming year.

President Jay Gogue said conservative budget practices in the past have enabled Auburn to avoid the severe constraints facing many other universities around the nation during this recession. Although the university has been unable to grant pay increases during the recession, he noted that the university had avoided the temptation to overexpand in good economic times and is faring much better than some of its peers, who now have been forced to furlough faculty and staff.

Gogue, Large and trustees agreed that planners will examine the budget closely for ways to finance modest salary relief of up to 3 percent to 5 percent for faculty and staff. Rather than risk adding permanent costs to the budget that might be sustainable in a double-dip or prolonged recession, some trustees suggested that, if funds can be found, the university follow the precedent it set in 2004. That year, when longterm revenues were also uncertain, most faculty and staff received a one-time salary supplement as a reward for meritorious service.

— Roy Summerford

Future OIT Building

A new home for the Office of Information Technology is taking shape next to Lem Morrison Drive on the south side of campus. The $24 million facility will pull together OIT staff who are now housed in several campus buildings and, for the first time, will provide a new, modern home for sophisticated technology that has long been housed in old, flood-prone buildings.

Buildings coming, going

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The renovations to the Hill Residence Halls are the next step in longterm campus plans to upgrade the overall quality of student housing, including the recent addition of the Village residential complex on the west side of campus. Carolyn Draughon Village, which is slated for eventual demolition, will be renovated enough to remain in service for at least another decade to house occupants of the Hill residence halls, which will be renovated two or three buildings at a time. Those buildings and Terrell Dining Hall, which will also undergo renovation, were built in the 1960s and given an exterior post-modern architectural makeover in the 1980s.

The student housing renovations and building projects are part of the campus objectives King outlined for the board as part of requested plans for campus facilities through 2020. King said the plan will have built-in flexibility to accommodate changing needs, will adhere to the university’s image and character guidelines for campus buildings and will be a major part of updates to the university’s master plan.

Major objectives of the plan are to build a new central classroom building, replace deteriorated academic buildings in the core of campus, proceed with the new student wellness and sustain-

ability center, redevelop the old coliseum site, create a health science center/campus, replace the Small Animal Teaching Hospital and renovate student housing facilities. Other objectives include constructing and/or renovating new athletic facilities, including the indoor practice facility, and renovating up to five academic and administrative buildings: Comer Hall, Textile Building, Mary Martin Hall, Greene Hall and Dudley Hall.

All the buildings marked for replacement have a history of high maintenance costs and (except for Upchurch, the oldest) are in the International style that is in conflict with current environmental sustainability standards and the university’s character and image guidelines for a more traditional appearance for campus buildings.

Parker, Allison and the coliseum were previously listed as candidates for demolition in the current master plan, which was adopted in 2002 and updated in 2007.

To complete all the objectives, not counting the renovations, would cost an estimated $380 million. Renovation of two or more buildings on that part of the list would be financed through the university’s fund for deferred maintenance.

— Roy Summerford
Food science program moving to College of Agriculture

Auburn’s program in food science is moving from the College of Human Sciences back into the College of Agriculture, its original academic home. The Board of Trustees approved the move at its June 18 meeting.

In the College of Agriculture, the food science program will become a formal part of the Department of Poultry Science, effective in August. Three food science faculty members — Leonard Bell, Tung-Shi Huang, and Jean Weese — will become part of the department, and the food science teaching program will become an option within the poultry science curriculum.

“Given that the Alabama poultry industry represents a modern global food industry, moving the food science program back to the College of Agriculture will allow our department and college to better serve the poultry industry’s needs,” said Don Conner, head of the Poultry Science Department. “Strengthening our efforts in food science will enhance Auburn’s existing programs in live poultry production and will uniquely position the Poultry Science Department to more effectively address critical issues from the farm to the fork.”

Auburn is developing a comprehensive food safety initiative to address critical food safety issues facing the state and nation, and the Department of Poultry Science will play a key role in the universitywide initiative. Participating faculty said a strong food science program will provide needed support for research and extension programs in food safety.

— Katie Jackson

University Theatre presenting Summer Stage event

As part of its Summer Stage 2010 series, Auburn University Theatre is presenting “A Way with Words — Short Plays for a Summer Evening” this weekend at Telfair Peet’s Theatre Upstairs. Performances, which started Thursday evening, will be at 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

Eight student actors will perform seven short plays in a mix of theatrical periods and styles by various playwrights under the direction of Theatre Professor Daydrie Hague. Performances will feature classic and contemporary works including Shakespeare, Bertolt Brecht and David Ives.

Tracy Oleinick has designed costumes for the production, with scenery designed by Robin Jaffe. Paul Anton provides production technical direction and lighting design, and the student company is comprised of Ellery Badcock, Tyler Baxter, Brooke Biddle, Melissa Bowman, Eli Jolley, Madeleine Koon, Mallory Porter, Seth Slick, Paralee Williams and Sarah Wood.

For ticket information, call the Theatre Box Office at 844-4154. For additional information online, see www.auburnuniversitytheatre.org.
from June 15 to Aug. 30 in the museum’s Porter Gallery. The exhibition, “1:1 Architects Build Small Spaces,” runs through July 23. Each week will provide a different group or artist who will perform at the exhibit. Freear and Jeremy Till recently spoke to a Victoria and Albert Museum audience about bridging the gap between theory and demands of the real world. The central aim of the “1:1 Architects Build Small Spaces” exhibition is to move away from explaining architecture through drawings and models and instead allow the visitor to experience the architecture itself.

For more information about the “Woodshed” exhibit, go to www.vam.ac.uk/things-to-do/blogs/11-architects-build-small-spaces. — Coleena Burt and Sarah Phillips

Southern Growth Policies Board presents Alabama Innovator Award to Auburn’s DesignSeed program

The Southern Growth Policies Board this month presented its 2010 Innovator Award for Alabama to Auburn’s DesignSeed program. The program is a collaborative effort of the Office of University Outreach, Auburn Technical Assistance Center and the Department of Industrial Design. DesignSeed creates businesses in rural and distressed areas of Alabama that are based on innovative product designs created by the university’s Industrial Design students. The DesignSeed process reaches out into the community, beginning with input from community leaders, stakeholders, citizens and workers to identify natural resources and community assets around which to build business ideas. The university then provides assistance to identify and support entrepreneurs who can launch the resulting products. Innovator Awards are presented annually to one organization in each of Southern Growth’s 13 member states in recognition of initiatives that are improving economic opportunities and quality of life in the region.

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