AU creates agriculture institute, starts search for vice president

Auburn is preparing to launch an internal search for a vice president to lead a new institute that will coordinate AU’s agricultural and natural resource programs.

The Board of Trustees approved creation of the new institute on June 30, capping more than two years of study that included input from major agricultural, forestry and related constituent organizations as well as faculty and staff of the campus units that will be part of the new institute.

Interim President Ed Richardson said he hopes to have a new vice president on board by early fall to lead the organizational efforts of the institute. The institute will unite agriculture, forestry and natural resource programs from three AU divisions — AU main campus, Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station and Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

The new vice president will report directly to the president on administrative matters, but Richardson said academic matters in the College of Agriculture and the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences will still go through the Office of the Provost. Richardson said programs with connections to AAES or ACES through other colleges and schools will remain in the same colleges and schools as in the past.

While the initial focus is on improving the ability of Auburn’s relevant research and extension programs to meet the changing needs of Alabama agriculture, forestry and natural resources, Richardson said AU will organize and operate the institute’s administrative structure in accordance with agreements in effect with Alabama A&M.

AU is the third major land-grant institution in the Southeast to consolidate its agriculture-related programs into an institute. The others are the University of Florida and the University of Tennessee.

In separate, upcoming activities, the Board of Trustees will meet on Aug. 4 to review AU’s scholarship and financial aid programs. Board members said they want to establish a policy that will make the university more competitive in its financial aid packages for top high school scholars. The financial incentives, they said, could be part of a larger effort to increase the ACT/SAT averages of AU freshmen.
Green to take office as dean of students

Johnny Green, assistant vice president for access to education and affirmative action, was named dean of students on Friday, August 10, 2006.

Green, who holds a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Virginia, comes to Alabama after serving as interim assistant provost and dean of students at Texas A&M University. He fills the position vacated by Joe Ansell, head of the Department of Art, who died last week.

Ansell was named dean in 2004, when Ansell was named interim dean. As dean, he oversaw the renovation of Biggin Hall, opened in 1909 or 1910. Historical sources are unclear whether this photo was made in Old Main or Samford Hall.

In addition to the position Green is vacating to take office as dean of students, he will continue to serve as interim director of the Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art. Ansell was named director of the museum in 2004, when Ansell was named interim dean.

Green was named dean following an internal search to fill the position.

Dr. Green has been a student of the arts for many years..." he said.

"Beginning this year, the federal government is asking all institutions of higher learning to begin collecting post-high school data on students with disabilities," said Rabren.

The software was copyrighted in March, and several states have already expressed interest in purchasing PODS to collect data on their own students with disabilities.

College of Education Dean Fran Kochan said the software will have a significant impact on transition efforts.

"The development of PODS exemplifies the collaborative nature of the transition of students with disabilities. Educators across the nation are seeking solutions to address the unique challenges that students with disabilities present. The transition of students with disabilities, collect information to improve transition programs and meet new federal reporting mandates."

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Spirit of Excellence

Each month AU presents Spirit of Excellence awards for outstanding performance to four staff members. Recipients for April, above left, from left, were Vera Payne of Distance and Outreach Learning, William Clark of Polymer and Fiber Engineering, Ken Adams of the Aquatics Center and Linda Renegar of Engineering Administration. Recipients for May, above right, from left, were Wilma Thompson of Campus Planning and Space Management, Gene Stewart of Information Technology, Lisa Martin of Financial Services and, not show, Carlos Flakes of Asbestos Removal.

Auburn students design, help build home for family in wake of Katrina

A collaboration among Auburn architecture students, Habitat for Humanity and Palm Harbor Manufactured Homes came to fruition in late June, when hurricane victims Dorinda Crews and her three children moved into a new home.

The Crews family lived in a mobile home until last fall, when Hurricane Katrina knocked down trees that punched holes in the roof, windows and doors. The subsequent leaks created mold that worsened the chronic respiratory problems of Dorinda’s two sons, Shawn and Damarius.

“I am thankful for the students’ talent and their time,” Dorinda Crews said. “I thank God for blessing me with this new home.”

The 1,100-square-foot home, called the Breeze Way, was designed by students in Associate Professor David Hinson’s fourth-year studio class in the School of Architecture. The house incorporates the speed and efficiency of manufactured housing along with the volunteer-based approach of Habitat for Humanity.

Palm Harbor Homes, located in Boaz, built two modular sections that included bedrooms, bathrooms and the kitchen. Those two sections were then delivered to Greensboro, where the Crews family lives.

The students, the Crews family and Habitat volunteers from Hale County then spent nearly 2,000 hours working on-site to build a great room that connected the two sections. As part of its design, the home was energy efficient, the home channels a breeze from the front porch into the great room in favorable weather conditions.

Hinson said the students took great care in the placement of the home to minimize the amount of heat generated from direct sunlight while still taking advantage of natural light from the sun. The students also used alternative siding and roofing material that are more durable but still provide energy-efficient benefits.

The fourth-year architecture students presented their designs to representatives from Palm Harbor Homes, the Alabama Manufactured Housing Institute and the Alabama Association of Habitat Affiliates in February.

One design was selected from the group and the students then worked with Palm Harbor to increase energy efficiency.

The students who worked on the plan were: Joey Aplin, Samuel Bassett, Cayce Bean, David Davis, Danielle Dratch, Joey Fante, Russ Gibson, Jennifer Givens, Simon Hurst, Walter Mason, Bill Moore, Matt Murphy, Ryan Simon and Mackenzie Stagg.

Museum exhibiting ceramics by leading industrial designer

A retrospective exhibition of one of the most influential industrial designers of the past 100 years is at AU’s Jule Collins Smith Museum through Sept. 2.

“Eva Zeisel: The Playful Search for Beauty” examines Zeisel’s influence on ceramic ware, with more than 100 pieces on display demonstrating the fluid lines, sensuous forms and organic simplicity of the modern aesthetic in decorative arts.

Zeisel is one of the most prominent designers in her field. The “Playful Search for Beauty” exhibit is the first to include her contribution to industrial design in the former Soviet Union, which would later determine her contribution to modern design in the United States.

Professor donates rare books to AU Libraries

Kelly D. Jolley, chair of the Department of Philosophy in the College of Liberal Arts, recently donated nine rare books to AU Libraries.

Jolley, who is also an Alumni Professor at Auburn, presented the books in memory of the late James Haden, an influential philosophy professor and author at the College of Wooster in Ohio during Jolley’s undergraduate days.

The gifts include a 1718 edition of Sir Isaac Newton’s Opticks, a 1633 edition of Galileo’s Siderus nuncius (Starry Messenger) and a 1758 edition of Historia insectorum (History of Insects) by the Dutch scientist Jan Swammerdam.

The collection also includes important works by Descartes, Rousseau, Scottish philosopher Thomas Reid, Francois Fenelon, Thomas Sprat and Robert Burton.

How Auburn Stacks Up

Percent of fall ’04 freshmen at Alabama institutions who transferred in-state after their first year

Source: Institutional Research and Assessment

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