In Agriculture, Liberal Arts

Two faculty members named Fulbright Scholars for this fall

A branch of the U.S. Department of State has named two Auburn faculty members as Fulbright Scholars for international study, teaching and research in the 2009-10 academic year.

Horticulture Professor Luther Waters in the College of Agriculture will spend four months at an agricultural institution in Hungary, and George Mitrevski, an associate professor in the College of Liberal Arts’ Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, will spend nine months at a college in Macedonia.

Waters will teach horticultural and agricultural technology to students at a satellite campus of Hungary’s largest agricultural university. He will be hosted by the faculty of Agriculture, Water and Environmental Management of Samuel Tessedik College in Szarvis. The college in southeastern Hungary recently merged with and became a branch of Szent Istvan University in Godollo, near Budapest.

Although Waters’ primary role as a visiting Fulbright Scholar will be to teach graduate and undergraduate classes in fruit and vegetable production systems, seed science and post-harvest-handling technology, he also will assist efforts to strengthen the connection between a new association of commercial seed companies and Hungary’s academic community.

Mitrevski, who leaves in August for Macedonia, will conduct research on an electronic collection of Macedonian texts at the Academy of Sciences and the Arts and at the Macedonian Language Institute. He will also teach English essay-writing and American literature at the Pedagogical Faculty in the city of Bitola.

At Auburn since 1983, Mitrevski teaches courses on Russian language and culture and an introductory World Literature course through the English department. He recently developed a set of distance learning courses for Russian. He holds doctoral and master’s degrees in Russian and Slavic studies from Ohio State University.

A native of Macedonia, Mitrevski was born in the village of Podmochani in the Prespa region. “My family emigrated from there in 1966 when I was 15 and I’ve traveled there quite often,” he said.

In 1997, Mitrevski was awarded a Fulbright grant to study at an institution in Macedonia, and he received a Fulbright-Hayes grant to conduct research in the country in 2002-03.

For this trip, Mitrevski said he was also contacted by the rector, or president, of a new university that is being built in the city of Ohrid to help design some of their academic programs.

“What is so unique about this new school is that the language of instruction will be English and at least half of the faculty will be from other countries,” he said.

The Fulbright Scholar program is governed by a 12-member board appointed by the president of the United States that is responsible for establishing worldwide policies for the program and for the selection of Fulbright recipients.

The award is given by the Council for International Exchange of Scholars in cooperation with the United States Department of State and is provided through funds that are appropriated annually by the U.S. Congress, and in many cases, by contributions from partner countries and the private sector.

The mission of Fulbright recipients is to increase the mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of the more than 150 countries. In its 63-year history, the Fulbright program has provided more than 285,000 participants the opportunity to study, teach and conduct research in each others’ countries.

— Vicky Santos, Katie Wilder and Jamie Creamer

New housing

Work on The Village student housing complex is approaching its final stage as crews prepare six of the eight buildings for occupancy in time for the start of fall semester in August. The remaining two buildings are scheduled for completion this fall. Residents of those buildings will begin the semester in the nearby CDV Extension apartments.

Forest named to succeed Bickers as university registrar

Laura Ann Forest has been named university registrar, effective July 8. She will assume the duties of university registrar from Doyle Bickers, who is retiring Oct. 1.

Forest comes to Auburn from Walden University in Maryland, where she served as university registrar. She has held similar positions at Montgomery College and Central Texas College.

As university registrar, she will administer registration and scheduling, graduation, transcripts, student information and NCAA athletic certification.

Bickers, who came to Auburn in 1999, will continue to support registrar functions during the leadership transition, working from Samford Hall until his retirement date.
Reviving musical history

Professor’s CD updates African-American spirituals

After more than 15 years of researching African-American spirituals, Auburn music professor and professional singer Rosephanye Powell has released a CD titled “Motherless Child.”

Powell, a professor in Auburn’s College of Liberal Arts, said African-American spirituals, songs that enabled slaves to develop a sense of community, are considered by many anthropologists to be the first true American folk song. However, Powell’s collection has been updated with a more contemporary sound. She has taken traditional spirituals and given them a mix of R&B, urban, gospel and jazz feel.

The project grew out of her concern that, because of its association with slavery, many African-Americans “do not embrace the spiritual or do not consider it relevant to the times in which they live; others are ashamed of it; and still others just see it as ‘old music.’”

By updating the sound, Powell says she hopes to spark a renewed interest in the African-American spiritual in mainstream America so that this part of black history is not lost. She notes the success of Wynton Marsalis in reviving jazz music as part of her inspiration.

Powell says she hopes to reach out to young people, especially young African-Americans, with the contemporary sound of her spirituals.

“While they’re enjoying the musical flavors, I want to be speaking to their minds,” she said. “I want to encourage young people to look back to history for the strength to succeed and achieve in today’s society. I believe that the African-American community can move forward as we appreciate our heritage and pass on to our children all of the inspiration. “Motherless Child” takes the listener on a musical journey into American slavery – from Africa to America. The 10 tracks are a tapestry of music, narratives and drama that provide insight into the heartaches, pains, joys and hopes of the slave community.

The title track, “Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child,” depicts the feelings slaves had when their loved ones were sold away, something to which every slave could relate. “This song was a shared expression of heartache that provided a sense of community for slaves,” she said. “So, I felt that it was the perfect theme for the project.”

Other well-known spirituals that Powell has transformed on her CD include “Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho,” “Balm in Gilead,” “Deep River” and “Soon-a-Will Be Done,” among others.

The songs, which feature Powell’s classically trained, yet soulful, soprano voice combined with passionate narratives and engaging harmonies, are meant to provide both entertainment and enlightenment.

“My goal was to produce a multifaceted project that would serve as a tool for music educators, a means for outreach to diverse cultures, and, of course, artistic entertainment,” she said.

“Motherless Child” CDs and mp3 downloads are available online at cdbaby.com, iTunes, Rhapsody and Amazon.com. For more information or to view music videos, visit the Web site www.inkhornmusic.com or www.rosephanyepowell.com.

Powell is an internationally acclaimed composer and arranger of choral music. She has more than 100 published works, including some for the Hal Leonard Corporation, the nation’s leading music publisher. As one of the country’s premier women composers of choral music, her works are in great demand at schools, churches and choral festivals around the world.

— Lisa Marshall

New Auburn grad earns Navy’s top ROTC award

Ensign Lauren Nevels, a recent Auburn graduate, has been recognized as the top Naval Reserve Officers Training Corp Midshipman in the nation.

Nevels received the Admiral James L. Holloway Jr. Award in a ceremony June 30. Rear Adm. Robert Crates, president of the Southern Region of the Navy League of the United States, was on hand to present the annual award.

“This award is such an unexpected honor,” Nevels said. “I am so appreciative of all the people who have poured so much into me — the Auburn NROTC staff that trained me to be a naval officer, the nursing and medical staff that have helped me along the way, and especially my dad, who gave me encouragement every step of the way and is always so proud of me.”

Each of the more than 50 NROTC units from around the country had the opportunity to nominate someone. Nevels was nominated by her unit at Auburn. The winner was selected by the head of the Naval Service Training Command, Rear Adm. Clifford Sharpe.

“I was impressed with Lauren from the moment we met,” said Capt. Dell Epperson, commanding officer and professor of naval science at Auburn. “She is confident, poised, articulate and has a natural leadership quality that epitomizes the best of what we look for in a naval officer. She will represent the best of the Navy and Auburn University in any future endeavor.”

In May, Nevels graduated summa cum laude from Auburn’s School of Nursing. Within NROTC, she was a member of the Trident Society, the sail team, Officer’s Christian Fellowship and served with the medical personnel during Navy and Marine Corps training evolutions. She also was a founding member and president of Auburn’s Nurses Christian Fellowship, an active member of her church and a nurse-volunteer at Women’s Hope Medical Clinic.

“She is focused but not constrained with tunnel vision,” said Cmdr. J.R. Jones, former executive officer of Auburn’s NROTC unit. “She is able to master both her academic curriculum and the professional duties of a naval student.”

This month, Nevels heads to Guam, where she will work as a nurse at the naval hospital on the island.

— Lisa Marshall

Campus Calendar

TUESDAY, JULY 14
MEETING University Senate, 3 p.m., auditorium, Broun Hall

THURSDAY, JULY 16
FARMERS MARKET The Market at Ag Heritage Park, 3 p.m.-6 p.m., Donahue Drive entrance
JCSM FREE NIGHT “Man,” improvisational dance by The Layman Group, 5 p.m.-8 p.m., Jule Collins Smith Museum

THURSDAY, JULY 23
FARMERS MARKET The Market at Ag Heritage Park, 3 p.m.-6 p.m., Donahue Drive entrance

FRIDAY, JULY 24
NEXT Auburn Report

FRIDAY, AUGUST 7
FINAL Auburn Report of summer

MONDAY, AUGUST 10
GRADUATION 2 p.m., Beard-Eaves-Memorial Coliseum
New technologies expand Education program’s reach

In developing the College of Education’s Rehabilitation Counseling master’s program 10 years ago, Randall McDaniel envisioned possibilities presented by emerging technology.

“When I started this program, my goal was to get it to where it was a portable program and people could carry it in their pockets,” said McDaniel, who is Distance Education Program director and Wayne T. Smith distinguished professor in the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, Counseling/School Psychology. “We didn’t have the technology at the time, but we knew it was coming.”

The proliferation of such devices as Apple’s iPhone and iPod has changed the nature of distance learning altogether, tearing down distance-related barriers and allowing for the creation of more intimate educational environments, he explained.

Those instantaneous electronic delivery systems are part of what keep the Rehabilitation Counseling master’s program going and enable it to reach practitioners as far away as Alaska. A five-year, $1 million Comprehensive System of Personnel Development grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration will enable the program to provide scholarships for 14 working rehabilitation counselors interested in obtaining their master’s degrees without relocating or interrupting their everyday work. It will also enable the program to develop new ways to leverage new technological devices as teaching tools and as a means of accommodating students with disabilities.

“We’re going to buy all the students an iPhone or an iTouch and put part of our program on that device for them,” McDaniel said. “They’ll be able to access their classes and syllabi and Blackboard and different things. It’s incredible.”

McDaniel said he and the team that worked on the grant proposal — program assistant Dawn Browning and doctoral students Richard Helling, Linda Fisher and Bedarius Bell — have discussed creating downloadable flash cards to help students prepare for national certification exams. Other possibilities include the development of an iPhone application that would provide a screen reader for students with visual impairments.

The Rehabilitation Counseling program is ranked 17th nationally and 14th among public institutions in U.S. News and World Report’s list of top graduate programs.

Students in the Rehabilitation Counseling master’s program receive all their classes through video streaming and can receive direct instruction on the computer or through Auburn’s distance education studio. McDaniel said the two-year program expects to serve between 20 and 30 students from the Southeast to the Pacific Northwest. He added that the program recruits professionals from as far away as Oregon and Alaska with the help of agencies in those states.

While most of the instruction in the master’s program spans the globe with the help of digital devices, McDaniel said the distance education program offers opportunities for face-to-face interaction between students and professors. The students in the program are brought to Auburn’s campus once a semester in order to foster a sense of connectedness.

“The most important thing in a distance ed program is to have a learning community so people don’t feel like they’re isolated out there by themselves,” McDaniel said. “We do so much to foster that and have these students feel like they’re cared about. What we have found is that the best recruitment tool we have are our former students.”

— Troy Johnson

New design for Auburn license plates set to debut in August

The State of Alabama has introduced a new design for Auburn’s collegiate license plate that is scheduled for distribution through local county license offices, starting in August.

Proceeds from the sale of Auburn license plates in Alabama go to the Auburn University “License to Learn” Scholarship Endowment Fund, a statewide program that raises funds for freshmen scholarships. Approximately $1.2 million in scholarships was awarded in 2008-09.

The state requires the collegiate license plate designs to be changed every five years. Auburn’s new design features the interlocking AU logo on the left side of the tag, an orange gradient at the bottom and a blue gradient at the top, with “Auburn” in orange at the top of the tag. The new design will also allow for six characters; past designs have had space for only five. This will allow for additional personalization options.

Several new designs were considered, and Auburn in-state alumni voiced their opinions in a survey, with the alumni agreeing overwhelming on the winning design. “I appreciate the university asking Auburn in-state alumni to participate in choosing the new tag design,” said Debbie Shaw, vice president of alumni affairs. “Our alumni love to show their support of Auburn and what better place than on the highways every day.”

Numbered tags and personalized tags are available; the cost of either one is $50 above the normal tag cost of $24.25. Collegiate license plates may be purchased at any time of the year, regardless of the individual’s tag renewal month.

Auburn tags are also available in Georgia, Tennessee, Virginia, Mississippi and South Carolina, and new Auburn tags will be available this fall in North Carolina. Tag sales from North Carolina and South Carolina also benefit scholarships.

For more information on Auburn’s car tag program, go to the Web site www.auburn.edu/cartags or call the Auburn Alumni Affairs office at 844-2586.

— Lisa Marshall

Engineering society confers fellow status on Raju

P.K. Raju, Thomas Walter Professor in the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering’s Department of Mechanical Engineering, was recently selected as a fellow of the American Society for Engineering Education.

Raju, the director of the Laboratory for Innovative Technology and Engineering Education and the Auburn Engineering Technical Assistance Program, received the designation of fellow in recognition of exceptional contributions to engineering education.

In addition to his research and teaching, Raju is editor-in-chief of the Journal of STEM Education: Innovations and Research and a member of the editorial board for the Annals of Research on Engineering Education published by the National Academy of Engineering.
NIH awards grant for mosquito study
The National Institutes of Health’s National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases has awarded Professor Nannan Liu of the College of Agriculture’s Entomology Department a $400,000 grant to study the molecular mechanisms that cause mosquitoes to develop insecticide resistance.

Mosquito-borne diseases, such as malaria, are the number-one killers of humans worldwide. Liu’s work to identify the genes involved in the pests’ response to insecticides addresses the basic science of molecular pathways of resistance development and seeks to aid the development of novel approaches to mosquito control. Grants from the Auburn University Biogrant Program and the AAES Hatch/Multistate Program also support Liu’s project.

Professors conclude residency in Rome
Magdalena Garmaz, an associate professor of architecture in the College of Architecture, Design and Construction, and Zdenko Krtic, an associate professor of art in the College of Liberal Arts, recently returned from Italy after a three-week residence as professor of art in the College of Liberal Arts, recently returned from Italy after a three-week residence as professor of art in the College of Liberal Arts, recently returned from Italy after a three-week residence as visiting artists at the American Academy in Rome.

This is the second time the two have participated in the program.

Garmaz continued her research into the relationship of architecture and textiles, using the academy’s vast resources to further her teaching and research interests, while Krtic used the city of Rome as inspiration for his photography and painting.

The American Academy in Rome is one of the leading American overseas centers for independent studies and advanced research in the fine arts and the humanities.

The Visiting Artist and Scholar program offers artists and scholars of any nationality an opportunity to apply for living and working space at the academy for a period from two weeks to four months. Subject areas include architecture design, historic preservation and conservation, landscape architecture, literature, music composition, visual arts and history.

College hosting Korean faculty group
The College of Education is hosting a contingent of Korea University faculty and students July 9-21.

The visit is part of ongoing efforts between the College of Education and its counterpart at Korea University to build an exchange partnership. The efforts seek to broaden the perspectives of students and encourage research collaborations among faculty at both institutions.

Korea University, founded in 1905 and based in Seoul, is home to 35,000 students. Some of the topics to be covered in this visit are service learning projects, semester-long teaching practicum and internship opportunities for students, visiting professorships and research collaborations.

The visit is coordinated by Suhyun Suh and John Dagley, associate professors in the Auburn college’s Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, Counseling and School Psychology.

Professor appointed to journal board
John Quindry, an assistant professor in the College of Education’s Department of Kinesiology, has been appointed to the editorial board of the journal Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise for a one-year term.

Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise features clinical study, investigative pieces and comprehensive reviews on current topics in sports medicine and exercise science. The multidisciplinary journal features reports on new educational developments, the role of physical activity in human health and function and new treatments for sport injuries.