Online master’s program gets top national ranking

The Auburn University online Master of Education degree program is ranked No. 1 in the United States by TheBestSchools.org, a prominent higher education and career website.

TheBestSchools.org rated the top 20 online master of education programs based on academic excellence, quality of course offerings, faculty, awards and school reputation.

“This recognition is further evidence of the high quality of our programs and the commitment of our faculty to provide access for students unable to come to Auburn,” said College of Education Dean Betty Lou Whitford.

Auburn’s Master of Education degree program offers eight areas of study including agriscience education, business and marketing education, foreign language education, collaborative teacher special education, elementary education, music education, rehabilitation and counseling and early childhood special education.

“Graduate distance learning meets the needs of practicing professionals to improve their knowledge and skills in teaching young people,” said Kim Walls, professor and interim head of the Department of Curriculum and Teaching. “Through distance learning, geographically distant teachers network and build a sense of professional community.”

Auburn’s online Master of Education courses are developed and taught by tenured or tenure-track professors who also teach on campus. Classes are relatively small, usually restricted to 15 graduate-level students per class, which allows for a more personal and individualized experience for students.

Most of the classes require online live interaction; both professors and students log in together and teach and attend during a regularly scheduled class time.

“Most professors prefer to teach live, rather than through video or self-completion modules,” said Jane Kuehne, an associate professor in the Department of Curriculum and Teaching. “There is a place for this kind of learning, and we utilize it from time to time, but when teaching subjects like music education philosophy and history, music education or music technology, it is difficult to truly gauge student understanding solely through textual interaction such as papers.”

See Online master’s program, Page 3

Kansas State educator

Aistrup named Liberal Arts dean

Joseph Aistrup has been named the dean of Auburn University’s College of Liberal Arts.

Aistrup, currently the associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Kansas State University, will begin his appointment Sept. 1. He was selected for the Auburn post following a national search.

“Dr. Aistrup brings a wealth of experience as both an administrator and an educator,” said Timothy Boosinger, Auburn University provost and vice president for academic affairs. “We look forward to his leadership of the College of Liberal Arts and its diverse programs and course offerings.”

Aistrup began his tenure at Kansas State in 2002 as associate professor and head of the Department of Political Science. He also served as interim dean of the KSU College of Arts and Sciences before becoming associate dean in October 2012.

“The degree programs of Auburn’s College of Liberal Arts offer students an exceptional education to prepare them for life,” Aistrup said. “The college plays a central role in the general education of every student at Auburn, and I look forward to becoming its dean.”

Aistrup succeeds Anne-Katrin Gramberg, who is returning to a fulltime faculty role after serving eight years as dean.

Before joining Kansas State, Aistrup was director of the Docking Institute of Public Affairs and professor of political science and justice studies at Fort Hays State University in Kansas. He earned a bachelor’s degree from Fort Hays State in 1982, a master’s from Virginia Tech in 1984 and Ph.D. from Indiana University in 1989.

“I know that I will ‘find my place’ among the outstanding faculty members, students and professional staff of the college and university,” said Aistrup.

Aistrup’s primary teaching and scholarly interests are state and local politics, Southern politics, water policy and research methodology. He also has extensive experience in strategic planning for economic development.

— Mike Clardy
Program offers fitness training for students, faculty with disabilities

When Franklin Butts first began exercising with Auburn University’s Adaptive Fitness program, he could not push his wheelchair very far at a time.

For the past seven years, Butts has continued to get stronger while participating in the Adaptive Fitness program and recently rolled his first 5k. He credits the training he received from the program for his success.

“The goal of the program is to cater to individuals with disabilities, specifically students, faculty, staff and anyone in the Auburn community,” said Ford Dyke, a kinesiology graduate student and program assistant. “The focus is on accessible weight and cardiovascular training and assisted exercise in a relaxed and supportive atmosphere.”

The Adaptive Fitness program was started when professors Yong Tai Wang and Wendi Weimar discovered that individuals who use wheelchairs had severely weakened shoulder muscles.

To combat the problem, they partnered with the School of Kinesiology and the Office of Accessibility to create an exercise program to aid wheelchair users. Now in its 14th year, the program continues to grow.

“It’s a great program for anyone with a disability,” Butts said. “It has made a big difference in my life.”

Butts and fellow participants use a weight room equipped with specialized, wheelchair-accessible machines including the NuStep sit-down chair and hand bikes not found in a regular gym.

“Their workout is really up to them,” Dyke said. “I tell them to pace themselves and just focus on using the facilities to get healthy.”

The Adaptive Fitness program is a partnership of the Auburn University School of Kinesiology and Auburn University’s Adaptive Recreation and Athletics.

Throughout the year, the program is held on Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights from 5-6 p.m. in Beard-Eaves-Memorial Coliseum, room 1129. The program is free, and those interested in joining can email Ford Dyke at fbd0001@auburn.edu or visit room 1129 in Beard-Eaves-Memorial Coliseum.

Lindsay Miles

Auburn-ISS pact offers enhanced data analysis

Auburn University and Intelligent Software Solutions have announced a formal partnership in which the two entities will work together to provide data analysis services to students in addition to government and military customers.

As part of the ISS Partner Program, Auburn students and faculty will work closely with ISS’ WebTAS data analysis and visualization software toolkit. Officials say expertise developed through the program will enable Auburn to deliver a curriculum designed to address complex homeland and national security challenges.

ISS recently installed the system into Auburn’s Open Source Intelligence Lab. The organizations will work together to pursue potential business opportunities in the government, public safety and intelligence sectors. The partnership will be managed by Auburn University’s Office of the Vice President for Research and ISS’ Strategic Initiatives Division.

“This is a very exciting opportunity to bring together Auburn’s world-class cyber lab with the battle-tested ISS software and personnel,” said retired Lt. Gen. Ron Burgess, senior counsel for national security programs, cyber programs and military affairs at Auburn University. “We can all work together to address our nation’s insatiable thirst for intelligence and data analysis solutions.”

Campus Calendar

**FRIDAY, JULY 12**

**ART EXHIBITIONS** “Tamarind Touchstones: Fabulous at 50 – Celebrating Excellence in Fine Art Lithography,” through Aug. 17; “Full Circle: The Sculptures of Jean Woodham,” through Oct. 12; both at Jule Collins Smith Museum

**THURSDAY, JULY 18**

**FARMERS MARKET** Selection of Alabama-grown fresh fruits, vegetables and other farm products, 3-6 p.m., The Market at Ag Heritage Park, corner of Lem Morrison and South Donahue

**MUSEUM FILM SERIES** “Tokyo Waka,” film about the interplay of man and nature in one of the world’s largest cities, 5 p.m., Jule Collins Smith Museum

**THURSDAY, JULY 25**

**FARMERS MARKET** Selection of Alabama-grown fresh fruits, vegetables and other farm products, 3-6 p.m., The Market at Ag Heritage Park, corner of Lem Morrison and South Donahue

**FRIDAY, JULY 26**

**NEXT Auburn Report; final edition of summer semester**

**LAST DAY of classes for summer semester**

**MONDAY, JULY 29**

**FINAL EXAMS** through Wednesday, July 31

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 3**

**GRADUATION Ceremonies** at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., Auburn Arena
Williams coordinating initiative on advanced power electronics

The Pennsylvania-based II-VI Foundation will sponsor a three-year Cooperative Research Initiative by Auburn University, Rutgers University and Purdue University. With up to $1 million in funding, the initiative to study advanced power electronics is coordinated by John Williams, Auburn University professor emeritus of physics.

The II-VI Foundation’s mission is to encourage and enable students to pursue a career in engineering, science and mathematics while maintaining a standard of excellence in that pursuit.

Williams retired in 2011, after a 37-year career at Auburn. During his tenure he directed the development and growth of the Wide Band Gap Semiconductor Physics Program. He has maintained longtime collaborations with Sarit Dhar, who is the primary Auburn investigator on the project, Leonard Feldman at Rutgers University and James Cooper at Purdue University. Those relationships, along with Williams’ experience and knowledge, made the collaboration possible.

The project is “SiO2/4H-SiC Interface -Optimization for Next Generation Power MOSFETs.” The initiative will support efforts in the realm of advanced power electronics development and, specifically, oxide semiconductor interface passivation studies for silicon carbide devices.

Known for funding individual institutional efforts, this is the first time the II-VI Foundation has designated a gift for a Cooperative Research Initiative.

“The Block Gift Cooperative Research Initiative is different than anything we have ever done before,” said Carl Johnson, II-VI Incorporated chairman and co-founder of the II-VI Foundation with his wife, Margot. “We recognized that the work being done at Auburn, Rutgers and Purdue provides three different viewpoints on the same tough problem, and we have a coordinator in John Williams who really understands the strengths and dynamics of each contributing program. In the past we would have had to fund and administer these programs separately, but with John as the coordinator, we were able to combine efforts for the first time.”

Psychology grad program given high national ranking

The Department of Psychology’s graduate program in the College of Liberal Arts at Auburn University has been ranked No. 15 in the nation by Graduateprograms.com. Graduateprograms.com is an online guide to graduate schools for prospective graduate students. Current and recent students from graduate programs at more than 1,200 schools across the country rate and review their experiences, including posting pertinent comments. Using the cumulative responses, graduateprograms.com ranks the various programs.

The Psychology Department’s graduate programs offer advanced training in clinical, cognitive and behavioral sciences, and industrial/organizational psychology, as well as a master’s program in applied behavior analysis.

“All the psychology faculty are very active in graduate education at Auburn University,” said Daniel Svyantek, professor and chair of the Psychology Department.

Graduate students in doctoral training for clinical psychology provide services under the supervision of licensed clinical psychologists, who are faculty members in the Department of Psychology, through theauburn University Psychological Services Center. Under the supervision of licensed psychologists, graduate clinicians provide confidential individual therapy for children, adolescents and adults.

Svyantek said graduate students in the cognitive and behavioral sciences are on the cutting-edge of new developments in research utilizing the new MRI center on campus. He noted that students in the industrial/organizational psychology program provide support to the economic development of Alabama and the region in various internships in local organizations. Students in the applied behavior analysis, under the supervision of the faculty, are instrumental in providing support to schools and families dealing with children with developmental disabilities, he said.

“We pride ourselves on the mentoring of graduate students in the department,” Svyantek said. “This mentoring is used to create a collegial environment for faculty-graduate student relations. We also emphasize career development for our students. We strive to provide the necessary opportunities for our students to grow as professionals and to develop their own career interests and paths. The faculty are tremendously proud that our students recognize and appreciate the opportunities they have here at Auburn.”

Graduateprograms.com reaches current and recent graduate students through scholarship entries as well as social media platforms. All psychology rankings cover a period from Sept. 1, 2012, until June 19, 2013. Graduateprograms.com assigns 15 ranking categories to each graduate program at each graduate school. Rankings cover a variety of student topics, such as academic competitiveness, career support, financial aid and quality of network.

The rankings are determined by calculating the average score for each program based on the 15 ranking categories. These scores are then compared across all ranked schools for that program and are translated into a final ranking for that graduate program.

By online guide

Online master’s program

Continued from Page 1

The ranking system of TheBestSchools.org is based on three broad master criteria: academic excellence, defined by intellectual reputation and influence within the wider academic community; return on investment, measured by the financial benefits graduates of the program can expect to receive as a direct consequence of the degree; and incidental benefit, which consists of overall student satisfaction, opportunities and program facility.

In January, U.S. News & World Report ranked Auburn’s online graduate degree program in education No. 2 in the nation.
Campus News Briefs

Auburn Magazine receives CASE award in Best Articles of the Year category

Auburn Magazine has been awarded a Silver Medal in the national Circle of Excellence Awards from CASE, the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education.

The quarterly magazine, published by the Auburn Alumni Association, won in the category of Best Articles of the Year for the feature article “The Death of Journalism,” which discussed the future of the daily newspaper in light of recent cutbacks in the publishing cycles of Alabama’s three largest dailies. The article was written by Auburn Magazine editor Suzanne Johnson and ran in the fall 2012 issue.

Animal Sciences professor receives award from meat science association

Christy Bratcher, an associate professor in the Department of Animal Sciences, has received one of three 2013 Distinguished Achievement Awards from the American Meat Science Association for her scientific skills in muscle foods research and technology that contribute to the animal products industry.

Bratcher, who joined the faculty in 2008, was honored in June at AMSA’s 66th Reciprocal Meat Conference in Auburn.

Professor at Auburn receives history association award for journal article

Adam Jortner, an assistant professor in the Department of History in the College of Liberal Arts, recently received the J. Talmadge Jones Award from the Mormon History Association.

The award recognizes the year’s best articles in Mormon history. Jortner, an authority on the creation of new religious movements in the post-revolutionary United States, received the award for his article, “Solomon Spaulding’s Indians; or, What the ‘Manuscript Found’ Really Tells Us,” which appeared in the fall 2012 issue of the Journal of Mormon History. He received the award in June during the 2013 Mormon History Association Conference in Layton, Utah.

International organization for agricultural technology names Fulton top educator

John Fulton, a biosystems engineering associate professor and Extension specialist, has been named the 2013 Educator of the Year by the PrecisionAg Institute.

The PrecisionAg Institute, a global agricultural technology organization that includes the global precision technology names Fulton top educator.

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