New engineering center to bear name of Sen. Richard Shelby

An engineering center designed to place AU among the nation’s leaders in 21st century transportation technology will bear the name of U.S. Sen. Richard Shelby when Phase I of the Shelby Center for Engineering Technology opens in November 2007.

The AU Board of Trustees recently voted to name the nearly 200,000-square-foot engineering center for Alabama’s senior senator in recognition of his efforts to secure $65 million in federal funding for the $108 million, two-stage project.

Shelby is especially deserving of the honor, said interim AU President Ed Richardson, because the senator’s successful efforts gave AU at least a decade’s head start on development of a technology center that will be among the most advanced in the nation.

“We are extremely indebted to Sen. Shelby for his leadership in securing funding for both phases of one of the most ambitious building projects in Auburn history,” said Richardson. “Sen. Shelby has displayed a clear sense of the importance of engineering technology to the people of Alabama, and he has encouraged us every step of the way to fully develop our capabilities in that regard. His vision and hard work in Congress helped make all this possible.”

Richardson added, “This is going to change the face of Auburn University, both physically, because the buildings will be truly magnificent, and also functionally, because the Shelby Center will greatly impact the research aspect of Auburn’s mission.”

With a mission of advancing technology in a variety of disciplines, including those vital to the automotive and other transportation industries in Alabama, the Shelby Center will be the largest building complex in the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering.

The center, with a wide array of new instructional and research technologies, will play an important role in the state’s economic development and is central to the college’s goal of engineering leadership for Alabama and the nation throughout the 21st century, said Engineering Dean Larry Benefield.

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“The technology center is the cornerstone of our strategic plan for the college to bring our programs to the next level,” said Benefield. “The buildings will provide the facilities necessary to expand our research efforts while ensuring that our undergraduate programs remain among the best in the nation.”

He continued, “Auburn University is committed to providing the facilities that will advance the technologies which fuel Alabama’s economic engine.”
AU center aiding in New Orleans recovery efforts

The Center for Governmental Services in AU Outreach is leading an initiative to provide professional services for evaluating and rebuilding New Orleans.

Dr. Jerry Veal, the center’s director, assembled a team from AU to provide reeducation and support to the Algiers Economic Development Foundation in Louisiana. Over the past year, Algiers became a central point to serve the rest of New Orleans and has been highlighted for its efforts in thinking differently about rebuilding and redeveloping the city.

“We wanted to do something that was manageable and practical,” Veal said. “We are applying our area of expertise in an area that needs it most.”

Other members include Bill Seuser, associate dean for Business and Engineering Outreach, John Gaber, associate professor in the School of Architecture and Linda Ruth, professor in Building Science.

“Through this outreach initiative, Auburn University faculty are applying their academic expertise to a devastated area and assisting with improving quality of life,” said Roycekk Cook, assistant vice president for University Outreach.

A variety of initiatives are being developed with education being the driving force in the redevelop-
ment of New Orleans. The projects will promote the area’s recovery from Hurricane Katrina as well as economic development in the regions.

The group will hold focus group meetings and conduct strategic planning and assessment, comprehensive evaluations of physical structures such as select public schools. The AU team will also conduct analyses of educational programs and capital assets and assist with other activities.

“Projects such as this, where education is a driver to lead Institute for Natural Resources” for a year, until a new president takes office at AU and decides how to fill the position permanently. The can serve to carry the name “by way of Donahue and Rehwoldt Drives.

Donahue Drives will be closed to an underdemanded time due to construction in the area. During that period, access to the deck will be only by way of Donahue and Rehwoldt Drives.

Direct questions by electronic mail to parking@auburn.edu.

AU to award honorary degree to leader of fund-raising effort

Weaver has played a pivotal role. While serving in the early 1990s as president of the AU Foundation, which oversees fundraising for Auburn, he was president of the "Next Generation" campaign.

The "Next Generation" effort raised $201 million in private support for AU from 1990-96. In 1994, prior to the first fundraising phase, he agreed to also serve as Auburn’s interim vice president for alumni and development. When the campaign reached 77 percent of its goal. Although he rose to statewide prominence in for- estry-related industries, Weaver earned bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees from the AU College of Education and had a successful career in Alabama economic development.

Weaver and his wife Sandra endowed the Forestry Lecture Series in AU’s School of Forestry and Wild-
life Sciences. The series brings natural resources experts from around the world to campus to discuss environmental issues. Family members have also endowed scholarships in the College of Education.
New AU center to bolster studies of alternative fuels

With the escalating worldwide demand for new sources of energy, AU is launching a new research center to bolster research already under way or planned for the near future in several schools and colleges.

Interim President Ed Richardson told more than 60 scientists and administrators from across campus that the university will provide a one-year grant to launch the new Auburn Alternative Fuels Initiative at the start of the 2006-07 fiscal year on Oct. 1.

Continued operation of the initiative or center will depend on its ability to secure external funding, but Richardson and organizers say they are optimistic that the center will be able to secure funding for continued research and development of alternatives to petroleum-based fuels.

Ralph Zee of the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering and Graeme Lockaby of the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences are co-chairs of a nine-member campuswide committee that is developing plans for the center.

Zee and Lockaby said Auburn researchers are working in several areas of alternative fuels studies that, collectively, could provide a niche for Auburn as state and national leaders recognize the need for new sources of energy for application beyond motor vehicles. The initiative co-chairs said the center will focus on developing technologies that can help Alabama use its renewable natural resources to augment the nation’s energy supplies.

Outreach and Extension will also play a major role in bridging the gap between university research and development of technologies in the private sector, they said.

A statewide conference at Auburn on Oct. 23-24, “Energy Solutions from Alabama Natural Resources,” will bring in visiting speakers from industry, government and other universities to discuss the current state and possibilities of alternative energy development. By then, Zee and Lockaby say, work at the Auburn center will be under way, with researchers in targeted areas gaining access to equipment, supplies, research areas, funding and other aid to coordinate and help move their research forward.

The committee is seeking input this week from faculty whose present or planned research areas may have been missed in earlier communications with faculty who have expertise in alternative fuels studies. Contact Zee by electronic mail at zeealp@auburn.edu or Lockaby at lockaby@auburn.edu.

Information on the initiative is available online at www.eng.auburn.edu/~rzee/temp/alternativefuel.ppt and as streaming video at mms://notus.eng.auburn.edu/COE_Media_SS/public/altfuel.wmv.

AU developing policy on directed studies

Interim AU President Ed Richardson said Friday that the university is developing a set of policies to regulate directed studies courses at Auburn.

His announcement came as a committee investigates allegations involving an unusually large number of directed studies courses taught in an AU academic department.

Richardson asked Provost John Heilman to work with faculty and members of the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees to develop a set of policies by the Aug. 4 meeting of the AU Board.

The primary objectives of the policies, he said, will be to limit the number of directed studies courses that any faculty member can offer, ensure that every course offered at AU is taught with appropriate academic rigor and ensure that proper administrative oversight is in place throughout the university.

Richardson said he asked for a set of policies after discussing the issue with the provost, leaders of the University Senate and members of the Board of Trustees. All support immediate action, he said.

He said he expects the policies to comply with and exceed standards established by the Southeastern Association of Colleges and Schools. “We have inherited a strong academic reputation due to the hard work of alumni, faculty and students, and it is my job to ensure that we continue to earn that reputation,” he added.

“My actions today should not be seen as a conclusion but as a first step,” Richardson said. “The investigation being conducted by the Provost’s Office is ongoing, and, as promised, will be made public upon completion.”