Lieutenant governor to be guest speaker at Aug. 4 graduation

Alabama Lt. Gov. Kay Ivey will be the guest speaker during Auburn University’s two summer graduation ceremonies Saturday, Aug. 4, in Auburn Arena.

A 10 a.m. ceremony will include the colleges, schools and programs of Architecture, Design and Construction; Engineering; Forestry and Wildlife Sciences; Interdisciplinary Studies; Liberal Arts; Nursing; and Sciences and Mathematics. A 2 p.m. ceremony will be held for the colleges and schools of Agriculture; Business; Education; and Human Sciences. Both ceremonies may be viewed live through the university’s website at www.auburn.edu/graduationlive.

Ivey, a Camden native and a 1967 graduate of Auburn, was elected lieutenant governor in 2010. Previously, she was elected state treasurer in 2002 and 2006. She also has worked in the private sector as a banker and assistant hospital administrator, as well as in public service as a high school teacher and as reading clerk of the Alabama House of Representatives.

Her public service includes being appointed by three governors to positions in state government, including assistant director of the Department of Commerce, formerly the Alabama Development Office.

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National organization cites Auburn writing initiative as model

Auburn University is one of 14 institutions across the United States and Canada highlighted in a higher education research organization’s new report on ways colleges and universities are using data to improve the educational outcomes of students.

The Auburn University Writing Initiative, a comprehensive effort to help students improve their written communication skills, was featured in “Moving from Data to Action: Lessons from the Field — Volume 2,” published by the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research in Bloomington, Ind.

For the presentation of successful practices, the report selected the 14 accounts of effective data-driven programs to promote student engagement from the experiences of more than 1,500 North American universities and colleges that have participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement. NSSE surveys enable participating institutions to identify the academic strengths and needs of their freshman and senior classes and assess the progress of students in relation to national norms over a span of time.

One of four key aims of the survey is to measure students’ exposure to and participation in effective educational practices, such as programs to enhance writing skills.

Under the heading “Improving Writing across Disciplines,” the report’s section on Auburn’s writing initiative described how the university analyzed data from NSSE and the Collegiate Learning Assessment to identify student writing as a targeted area for improvement. Launching the Auburn University Writing Initiative in 2010, Auburn established the University Writing Committee and created the Office of University Writing, which includes the Miller Writing Center.

“...the writing initiative is a comprehensive effort to enhance writing and writing instruction at Auburn, so it makes sense that the NSSE folks would notice what we’re doing here,” said English Professor Margaret Marshall, director of the Office of University Writing.

Established in 2009, the Miller Writing Center works with all Auburn students to raise the overall quality of their writing through peer consultations about specific writing projects, both those assigned in courses and those students undertake on their own. The center is named for the late John C.H. “Jack” Miller, a Board of Trustees member who was a major supporter of improving writing at Auburn.

Marshall joined the Auburn faculty and became head of the Office of University Writing in January 2010. Later that semester, a University Senate resolution sanctioned the University Writing Committee, which has worked with academic departments in every college and school at Auburn to develop comprehensive plans that embed significant writing experiences relevant to the needs of graduates in their academic programs.

See Writing initiative, Page 2

Groundbreaking for Alumni Walk
Debbie Shaw, Auburn’s vice president for alumni affairs, and Jennifer Stephens, director of alumni accounting, recently joined Alumni Association President Bobby Poundstone and other officers of the Auburn Alumni Association in breaking ground for the new Alumni Walk in front of the Auburn Alumni Center. The project enables alumni and friends of Auburn University to buy personalized pavers honoring an individual or group or commemorating a special occasion in the donor’s life. Specially etched pavers are available for $200, $500 and $1,000, depending on size, with proceeds going toward student scholarships. Shown from left are Poundstone, Dusty Pritchett, Bill Stone, Stephens, Shaw, Jack Fite and Howard Nelson.
National center honors Auburn official for work to advance STEM disciplines

Robert Holm, assistant director of education in Auburn’s Office of Sponsored Programs, was recently appointed a SENCER Leadership Fellow by the National Center for Science and Civic Engagement.

Chosen from a group of more than 2,500 nominees, Holm is one of nine educators elected to this year’s class of fellows. SENCER, an acronym for Science Education for New Civic Engagements and Responsibilities, is a National Science Foundation-supported faculty development and science education reform initiative that engages students in sciences and mathematics by focusing coursework on real world problems. Holm is serving an 18-month appointment, during which he will work to advance science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM, education and teaching.

Holm joined Auburn’s Office of Sponsored Programs in April. Previously, he was director of the Institute for Research and Scholarship at Butler University in Indianapolis from 2000 to 2012. He received his bachelor’s degree in biology from the University of Miami and his master’s and doctoral degrees in biological sciences from Northwestern University.

He has more than 25 years of experience in the environmental management field and has held governmental positions including administrator of the Environmental Resources Management Division for the City of Indianapolis, Ind., manager of Environmental Programs for the City of St. Petersburg, Fla., and manager of the Coastal and Wetlands Section for Metro Dade County, Fla. He has taught courses in environmental biology, water quality in the urban environment, environmental pollution and environmental technology.

With his recent move to Auburn, Holm will continue to lead SENCER initiatives by introducing the approach to his new colleagues, many of whom are interested in experiential learning.

The Science Education for New Civic Engagements and Responsibilities was initiated in 2001 and has established projects to develop and implement relevant courses with teams that have included more than 2,000 educators, administrators and students from more than 430 two- and four-year colleges and universities, non-governmental organizations, government agencies, educational associations and community-based organizations.

“Embedding writing throughout the curriculum rather than designating some courses as writing intensive is a fairly new approach to improving writing instruction,” said Marshall. “Other institutions that are using this approach are implementing it in one department at a time, but Auburn developed writing plans for all undergraduate programs in just over a year, and will begin this fall to monitor progress through regular review by the University Writing Committee.”

She added, “The faculty who worked on the original task force and those who have served on the University Writing Committee have consistently emphasized the need to make the writing initiative related to what faculty in the disciplines do. Faculty know how to write because they publish their research, prepare reports, and present information to the public. What the initiative does is encourage them to work with others in their department to think about how to teach writing to their students and use writing to help students learn the content of their courses.”

The Office of University Writing has also presented or participated in several faculty workshops covering strategies for integrating writing more effectively into course content. The Office of University Writing also provides resources on its website for faculty and students and has been involved in projects that promote writing across the university.

Through its Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, Auburn has participated in eight surveys by the NSSE Institute for Effective Educational Practice since the 2002-03 academic year.

“Auburn has made an abiding commitment to improving student learning and the environment that supports it,” said Drew Clark, director of institutional research and assessment. “We are also committed to examining our learning environment in the context of what other institutions are achieving. Instruments like the National Survey of Student Engagement provide critical support for those efforts.”

The only other Southeastern Conference institution profiled in the NSSE report was the University of Tennessee, which was an example of activities to enhance student advising.

— Ray Summerford

Writing initiative

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Campus Calendar

FRIDAY, JULY 27
Classes End for summer semester

MONDAY, JULY 30
Final Exams start, continue through Wednesday, Aug. 1

THURSDAY, AUGUST 2
Farmers Market Selection of locally grown fresh fruits, vegetables and other farm products, The Market at Ag Heritage Park, 3-6 p.m.; also Aug. 9, 17, 23 and 30

SATURDAY, AUGUST 4
Graduation Ceremonies at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., Auburn Arena

THURSDAY, AUGUST 16
First Day of classes for fall semester, 2012-13 academic year

FRIDAY, AUGUST 17
Next Auburn Report, first edition of fall semester
New smoking policy takes effect Aug. 16

Auburn University will implement a new campus smoking policy with the start of fall semester on Aug. 16, requiring tobacco users to move at least 25 feet away from buildings to smoke.

The new policy will continue the current prohibition against smoking inside campus buildings while creating a smoke-free area around the perimeter of buildings.

President Jay Gogue authorized the policy change after the Division of Student Affairs reviewed proposals from the Student Government Association, the University Senate, Staff Council and Administrative and Professional Assembly for a more restrictive policy.

For more information about the policy, go to https://fp.auburn.edu/studentaffairs/healthandwellness/headlines.aspx?i=94.

Move-In Mania coming up for Auburn residence halls

Auburn University’s Housing and Residence Life in the Division of Student Affairs will hold Move-In Mania 2012 on Aug. 5 and Aug. 11 from 6:30-11 a.m. at campus residence halls.

Emily Crane, Move-In Mania intern, said they are looking for students, faculty, staff and members of the community to volunteer to assist as movers, greeters and refreshment providers.

“This fall, we want to make our Move-In Mania the best possible welcome to Auburn that it can be,” Crane said. “Everyone loves the notion of the Auburn Family, and we want to give incoming students a true family welcome to the Plains. They are experiencing Auburn as their own home for the first time; we want to make the experience as exciting and enjoyable as possible.”

Movers will carry or push items from the unloading areas to the residence halls; greeters will welcome residents and families, monitor unloaded items and answer questions about parking, shopping, campus opportunities and dining; and refreshment providers will accompany Chartwells dining employees in distributing water to volunteers and families.

To volunteer or for more information, contact Emily Crane by e-mail at eac0007@auburn.edu.

Summer graduation

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Auburn will award 1,338 academic degrees during the graduation ceremonies, including 871 bachelor’s degrees, 352 master’s degrees, 105 doctorates, five specialist degrees and five professional degrees.

The College of Liberal Arts will award the most bachelor’s degrees with 233, followed by the College of Business with 141 and the College of Human Sciences with 106. The Samuel Ginn College of Engineering will award 79 degrees, seven.

The College of Sciences and Mathematics, 77; College of Architecture, Design and Construction, 67; College of Education, 60; School of Nursing, 51; College of Agriculture, 38; Office of the Provost, 12 degrees in Interdisciplinary Studies; and School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, seven.

— Charles Martin
Campus News Briefs

Bryan Chin’s research featured on Science Coalition’s new online ‘Innovators’ series

The Science Coalition, an organization of research universities that highlights university research, has selected Auburn faculty member Bryan Chin’s research on food safety sensors as one of the featured research stories for its new “Innovators” video series/brochure and webpage. Chin, a professor of materials engineering in the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering, is a food safety engineer and director of the Auburn University Detection and Food Safety Center.

Two Auburn students receive Gilman Scholarships for Study Abroad this fall

Auburn University students Jamesa Stokes and Joel Geer have been awarded Gilman Scholarships through the Institute for International Education for study abroad this fall.

Stokes, a sophomore double-major in physics and German, will attend Reutlingen University in Germany. Geer, a junior majoring in civil engineering, will attend Nihon University in Japan.

Established in 2000, the Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship Program is a nationally competitive program sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the United States Department of State.

College of Business faculty awarded NSF grant to research STEM education

In Auburn’s College of Business, Chetan Sankar, the college’s Advisory Council Professor of Information Systems, and Allison Jones-Farmer, the C & E Smith Associate Professor of Statistics and Business Analytics, have been awarded a two-year, $400,000 National Science Foundation grant.

The grant is for their study, “Predictors of Dissemination Success of STEM Learning Innovations: An Empirical Investigation.” Sankar’s and Jones-Farmer’s research seeks to identify factors that lead to the most successful adoption of STEM educational innovations. STEM disciplines include science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Engineering researchers getting $1.5 million in NIH grants to support graduate programs

Jerry Davis, Rich Sesek and Sean Gallagher, faculty members in the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering’s Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering, have been awarded two grants totaling $1.5 million from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health to support occupational safety and ergonomics and occupational injury prevention graduate programs.

Davis is the principal investigator for Auburn’s occupational safety and ergonomics training program, which received $1 million from NIOSH.

A second grant from the organization will provide $500,000 for an additional five years for the occupational injury prevention training program, which is led by Gallagher. The funding will allow a cadre of doctoral students to study scientific principles of injury control and will help support student engineers learning the public health model of injury control.

David Pugh receives group’s award as Food Animal Continuing Educator of the Year

Attendees of the recent 84th Annual Western Veterinary Conference chose David Pugh of Auburn as the organization’s Food Animal Continuing Educator of the Year. The award recognizes the recipient’s expertise, communication skills and outstanding commitment to the veterinary profession.

A veterinarian with the Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine’s Equine Source Plasma Program, Pugh is a diplomate in the American College of Veterinary Microbiologists, the American College of Theriogenologists and the American College of Veterinary Nutritionists.

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