Welcome sought for international students at AU

Auburn faculty and staff have an opportunity to welcome students who are new not only to the AU campus but also to this country through Auburn Family Friend, a program of the Office of International Student Life.

An expansion of a grassroots community effort, Auburn Family Friend helps link new international students with volunteers from the AU community in informal relationships as a way of extending hospitality to these students.

The program does not place a substantial burden on volunteers, yet it provides a lifeline of caring to new international students during their first year at Auburn, when they are thousands of miles away from home and family, often for the first time in their lives, said Nejla Orgen, AU’s director of International Student Life.

“Just be a friend,” said Orgen. “That is all we are asking.” Simple gestures of hospitality such as a welcoming phone call or an invitation to a meal in the home or out in the community are all that is required, she said.

With up to 150 new international students expected on campus this fall, she said the first semester, especially Thanksgiving Week, can be an especially lonely, socially isolated period in these students’ lives.

“Having a friendly voice welcoming them is a big help,” Orgen said. “When people in the Auburn community reach out to our international students, it not only makes a real difference in the students’ acclimation to the United States, but it is also a wonderful cultural exchange.”

For more information about the program or to become an Auburn Family Friend volunteer and be matched with an interested student, call the Office of International Student Life at 844-2353 or e-mail Nejla Orgen at orgenny@auburn.edu. Volunteers will receive an information packet about the student and the student’s country, general guidelines about how to get to know the student and some basic conversation tips.
A academics are sometimes accused by the general public of living in an “ivory tower.” To some extent such a charge may be true inasmuch as our scholarship is, at times, far removed from the concerns and daily life of the general public. For example, is not much scholarship today largely unreadable except for a few specialists in the field? Or course publication in highly specialized journals certainly enhances one’s reputation and one’s career, but do faculty know the academic really care or even understand what academics are saying? Please don’t get me wrong. There will always be a place for refereed journal articles in academia, but shouldn’t editor. The establishment of independent policy centers and institutes provided another venue for faculty who wanted to have a direct influence on public policy. Also, we had the expansion of the work of Ralph Waldo Emerson. In response to the technological advances that launched electronic communication and cable news coverage. Moreover, with the number of specialized scholarship the demand for experts who could translate academic publications into clear and readable prose.

Why are faculty today unwilling to be public intellectuals? Writing for the general public may be the ultimate test of the advancement of one’s career. One may be accused of oversimplifying complex issues. Publication in less distinguished journals will not normally build a tenure file. I would argue, though, that public intellectuals have the ability to change conventional wisdom and entrenched power. They can speak truth to power, that is, public intellectuals can pursue uncomfortable truths wherever they may lead. They can forcefully advocate on a wide range of issues, such as universal health care coverage, discrimination against women and minorities, the elimination of a tax on food in the State of Alabama.

In my view Henry Kissinger was on target when he wrote, “The real power of the Peninsula is to increase enrollment for under-privileged students, and that second- and third-generation college students to campus life. Passed are Agriculture, Business, Education, Forestry and most of fall semester courses in the fall. Jenda said the primary objective of the program is designed for students majoring in one of the seven colleges and schools that sponsor the program. The sponsoring colleges and schools are Agriculture, Business, Education, Forestry, Wildlife Sciences, Human Sciences, Nursing and the program. The ceremony may be viewed live on the Internet at www.auburn.edu/graduationlive. The broadcast begins at 1:45 p.m. on Monday, August 25.

For Diversity and Multicultural Affairs. “We look forward to the success of these students and this program,” said Overtoun Jenda, associate provost of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs. “We look forward to the success of these students and this program. Summer enrichment programs are definitely best practices for the retention of minorities and first-generation college students.”

The program prepares students for freshmen courses in the fall. Jenda said the primary objective of the program is to increase enrollment for under-represented populations, increase students’ skills in mathematics and English and expose the students earlier to career fields available at the sponsoring colleges and schools.

The program provides promising students from these backgrounds career and academic guidance that may not be available in their homes or communities — preparation and expectations for second- and third-generation college students often take for granted.

The College of Liberal Arts has selected five faculty members as recipients of the college’s New Engaged Scholar professorships. The first CLA Engaged Scholar will be Barb Randy of Art, Brigitta Brunner of Communication and Journalism, Jeff Jakeman of History, Jim Johnston of Psychology and Canoe Zogby of Economics.

The professorships are for three years and carry an annual supplement of $5,000. The program recognizes faculty for high-quality work to strengthen student and faculty engagement in the community, nationally or internationally.
Achievements

Evelyn F. Crayton, assistant director of family programs for the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, has been elected to serve on the board of directors of the American Dietetic Association. One of 18 national leaders selected in nutrition, medicine, industry and public health, she will serve a two-year term.

Jin Wang of Chemical Engineering has been named Auburn’s winner of the 2008 Ralph E. Powe Award for research excellence from the Oak Ridge Associated Universities. The Powe Award, with a $5,000 stipend, is presented annually to one or two faculty members with noteworthy and promising research at each ORAU university.

Kendra Peters, a graduate student in Civil Engineering, won the best student presentation award in Paris at the recent International Conference on Heavy Vehicles. Her presentation, “Effects of Increasing Truck Weight Limit on Highway Infrastructure Damage,” was among 101 presentations made by students and practicing engineers and researchers from 26 countries. Peters’ adviser is Gottlieb Associate Professor David Timm.

Gold standard

Two of the AU System’s newest buildings — the Miller Gorrie Center, home of the McWhorter School of Building Science on Samford Avenue, left at top, and the Alabama 4-H Environmental Science Education Center near Columbiana, bottom left — qualify for the United States Green Building Council’s coveted LEED certification with a Gold rating.

An acronym for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, a LEED rating, especially Gold, signifies that a building meets exceptional design and construction standards. Gold LEED, a rare rating nationally, is the second highest, just below the Platinum rating.

The Gorrie Center was designed by CMH Architects of Birmingham, and the firm of Brasfield and Gorrie provided construction management.

Davis Architects of Birmingham designed the 4-H Center building, and B.L. Harbert International served as construction managers.

AU receives award for marketing to, recruiting students

AU was one of three North American institutions honored July 16 for successful marketing and recruitment efforts in 2008 at the National Conference on Student Recruitment, Marketing and Retention.

The Noel-Levitz higher education consulting firm presented the award to representatives of AU Enrollment Services at the conference in Chicago.

The awards recognize exemplary programs, services and strategies that have had a positive impact on student recruitment.

Noting AU’s success in significantly raising the average ACT scores of its freshmen class, a Noel-Levitz awards publication cited Auburn for improved scholarship programs, a move to proactive recruitment and a staff reorganization to transform the culture of student recruiting.

Auburn’s student recruitment efforts are led by Wayne Alderman, dean of enrollment services, and Cindy Singley, director of university recruitment.

The other institutions receiving awards were Colby-Sawyer College in New Hampshire and Quest University in British Columbia, Canada.

Demolished

A chimney and part of the old central steam plant were all that remained last week of the vacant Facilities building north of Broun Hall. Those are also coming down as work crews clear the land in advance of construction of the second phase of the Shelby Engineering Center for Engineering Technology. The last occupant of the building, the AU Mail Service, moved a few months ago to the west side of campus.