Wohl to take office as first ombudsperson at Auburn

Jim Wohl, a professor of veterinary medicine at Auburn, has been appointed as the university’s first ombudsperson. In that position, he will serve as a neutral party in helping employees and the university solve grievances and workplace concerns.

Wohl, who has been on the Auburn faculty since 1996, has served on a national roster of mediators since 2006 and was interim ombudsperson for Louisiana State University in 2007.

“We are pleased to have someone with Jim’s background available to our employees,” Auburn President Jay Gogue said. “The collaboration of the university senate and senior administration in establishing this office shows a commitment to promoting a fair and positive workplace at Auburn.”

Appointed by Provost John Heilman, the new position is for a two-year trial period starting Sept. 2 and will supplement existing grievance procedures and other administrative processes on campus. Wohl will not perform formal investigations, make policy or overturn decisions, but can offer advice on possible resolutions and serve as an impartial third-party liaison. He will spend 75 percent of his time as ombudsperson and will continue to teach in his specialty area of veterinary emergency and critical care medicine.

“It is a great privilege to serve as university ombudsperson and I’m eager to earn the trust placed in this office,” Wohl said. “I look forward to getting acquainted with the entire university community and in providing a safe, confidential and informal resource for employees to address concerns.”

Wohl’s training includes certification in workplace conflict management and alternative dispute resolution from the Institute of Conflict Resolution at Cornell. He has completed advanced training courses with the International Ombudsman Association and the Consortium on Negotiation and Conflict Resolution of the University System of Georgia.

“I want to help find cooperative solutions that meet the interests of the involved parties when addressing workplace concerns. Rather than advocating for an individual or the university, I will be exploring ways in which people can solve problems informally,” Wohl said. “Seeking the assistance of the ombudsperson is entirely voluntary and the services available range from simply having a conversation to exploring options to helping visitors navigate university offices and policies, as well as negotiations and mediation.”

Wohl received his bachelor’s degree in public affairs from State University of New York at Albany, a master’s degree in public administration from Auburn and a doctor of veterinary medicine degree from Purdue. He is a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine and the American College of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care.

The office location will be announced later. The Ombuds Office will not keep records for the university and will only furnish aggregate statistical data in its annual reports in a manner that protects identities of persons contacting the office.

— Charles Martin

Duffy named assistant provost for undergraduate studies

Patricia Duffy has been named assistant provost for undergraduate studies in the Office of the Provost, effective Aug. 6.

Among her duties, she will head the Special Lectures Committee and will lead development of interdisciplinary program initiatives.

Duffy will work part time in the Office of Undergraduate Studies while continuing to work in the College of Agriculture for the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology.

A faculty member since 1985, she has served as secretary of the University Senate, chair of the Student Academic Grievance Committee and undergraduate program coordinator in her department.

Bike to school

Bicycles are becoming an increasingly popular means of transportation at Auburn, as witnessed by the dozens of bikes parked in front of campus buildings on Monday, when classes began for the 2008-09 academic year. Along with new riding paths on campus and in town, bike riders will soon have access to a bicycle repair shop in the new student center.

Coming up

The Board of Trustees meets Friday at the Hotel at Auburn University. Committee meetings start at 8:30 a.m., and the board convenes at 10:45 a.m.

Groundbreaking for the new Auburn Arena will be at 3 p.m. Friday across Roosevelt Drive from the coliseum.

Labor Day is next Monday, Sept. 1. The campus will be closed for the holiday. Offices will reopen and classes will resume on Tuesday.
Liberal Arts

Four departments start academic year with new leaders

The College of Liberal Arts is starting the new academic year with four new department chairs: Barry Fleming in Art, Michelle Sidler in English, Charles Israel in History and Daniel Svyantek in Psychology.

Fleming has been a member of the Department of Art faculty since 1988. He holds a master of fine arts degree from the University of Tennessee and teaches all levels of painting and drawing. He also was director of the department’s exhibition and lecture program for 13 years. Fleming’s paintings and ceramics have been exhibited in solo, invitational and competitive exhibitions across the country.

Fleming replaces Allyson Comstock who served as interim chair for two-and-a-half years.

In the Department of English, Sidler has been coordinator of composition and teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in composition, technology, science and literacy. Her primary areas of research interest are science and technology, computer-mediated composition instruction and rhetorical theory. She received her Ph.D. in English from Purdue with a specialization in rhetoric and composition.

Sidler succeeds George Crandell, who served as chair for seven years.

Israel is a historian of the religion and culture of the American South. He has written on religion and evolution in the South and is currently researching a book on the efforts of white and black Christians to improve Southern society in the early 20th century, provisionally titled “A Southern Social Gospel: Religion, Reform, and the Riddles of Race and Gender.” He holds a Ph.D. from Rice University.

Israel succeeds Anthony Gene Carey as chair.

Svyantek, who succeeds Barry Burkhart as chair of the Department of Psychology, has been program director of the industrial and organizational psychology Ph.D. program since coming to Auburn in 2003. He previously headed a similar program at the University of Akron. His research deals with the practical value of organizational research areas such as leadership and culture in real-world, applied contexts.

He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Houston.

— Victoria Santos

College receives $1 million for scholarship endowment

A $1 million gift from Auburn alumni to the College of Liberal Arts will benefit honor students from Mountain Brook High School, which consistently ranks near the top in national rankings of America’s high schools.

Carolyn Brinson Reed, Class of 1965, and her sons Randy and Scott, who graduated in 1989 and 1990, respectively, established the scholarship endowment in memory of her husband and their father, Robert E. Reed.

The Reed family has supported the arts in their community and at Auburn for many years. “A liberal arts education provides a strong foundation in preparing students for a successful career,” said Carolyn Reed. “It is central to many other disciplines.”

She added, “I hope this endowed scholarship will bring the best and brightest students to Auburn’s College of Liberal Arts and provide the college with the resources required in today’s competitive environment.”

“This generous endowment ensures the college will be a contender for the top students in the (Birmingham) area,” said College of Liberal Arts Dean Anna Gramberg.
New Web cams provide multiple views of campus

Want a bird’s-eye view of Samford lawn? Ever wonder what Jordan-Hare Stadium looks like on a weeknight? Thanks to Auburn’s new Web cameras, visitors to the university’s Web site can log on and view in real time what is happening on campus from several different locations.

Ten new cameras provide feeds of high-traffic, popular sites around campus including Cater Lawn, Toomer’s Corner, Jordan-Hare Stadium, Samford Lawn and the Harrison School of Pharmacy. Seven of the cameras are operated by Auburn’s Office of Communications and Marketing. All 10 cameras may be viewed at www.ocm.auburn.edu/webcams.

“These cameras are the window back to a place many alumni and friends remember fondly,” said Mike Clardy, manager of News and Web Services with Auburn’s Office of Communications and Marketing. “Through our lenses people can get an idea of how much the campus has changed and how beautiful it is today.”

The cameras will also serve as a recruiting tool for future students. “We’re in competition with many other universities to gain the attention of prospective students,” Clardy said. “The Web cameras give them another way to view our campus and hopefully entice them into making a visit.”

The university previously featured three Web cameras on its Web site. However, heat and age put them out of commission. The new cameras feature the latest technology and were installed with weather conditions in mind. Most are located inside, where temperatures are controlled. Those that are outside reside in special weather housings for long-term protection from the elements.

Auburn’s Web camera offerings will expand still more during the upcoming academic year. Clardy said the university’s new Student Center will provide many interesting possibilities and attractive locations for additional cameras.

— Katie Wilder

Green for emergencies

At the first sign of an emergency in Haley Center, trained volunteers throughout the building will don green helmets and vests to help others in the building while first-responders are on the way.

Haley Center volunteers train for fast action in emergencies

While the color green is commonly associated with the environment, in Auburn University’s Haley Center, green is also becoming associated with public safety through a pilot program in emergency preparedness.

The largest and busiest academic building on campus, Haley Center is the site of a pilot program in which approximately 45 faculty and staff volunteers have received special training to help the building’s occupants reach safety and to assist first responders if an alarm sounds or an emergency occurs. Identifiable in green vests and hardhats, these volunteers will be the first emergency personnel that most of the building’s occupants will see in such an event.

The volunteers are members of Auburn’s first Campus-Community Emergency Response Team, also known as C-CERT. The team members have each received 16 hours of training in emergency response in sessions led by the AU Department of Public Safety and Security, with assistance from AU Risk Management and Safety, City of Auburn Public Safety and American Red Cross of Lee County.

Susan McCallister of the Department of Public Safety and Security said the volunteers have had training on disaster preparedness, fire safety, minor first aid and medical triaging, light search and rescue, disaster psychology, incident command and terrorism situations. She added, “If a weather-related, fire or other type of emergency should occur, they will have direct contact with the Department of Public Safety and will be in a position to help people evacuate the building or take shelter inside, depending on the situation.”

Among other responsibilities, team members will report emergencies and, if necessary, apply minor first-aid and medical triage while medical responders are en route. They will also report to Department of Public Safety and Security personnel on problem areas and persons needing assistance.

Having trained volunteers in place will help public safety personnel as well as the occupants of buildings such as Haley Center, said Chance Corbett of the Department of Public Safety and Security. “Emergency preparation is important for everyone,” he explained. “We hope these steps will improve responsiveness for the safety and security of all the building’s occupants.”

The emergency response team in Haley will serve as a model for others that will be added in other campus buildings over the next few years, Corbett said.

— Roy Summerford
Key witness in ‘intelligent design’ case to discuss evolution, religion ties

A key witness in a federal court case over teaching of “intelligent design” alongside evolution in public schools will be the first speaker next week in Auburn’s 2008-09 Littleton-Franklin Lectures, Auburn’s oldest and most prominent public lecture series.

Kenneth Miller, a professor of biology at Brown University, will speak on “Darwin, God, and Design: Evolution and the Battle for America’s Soul” at 4 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 2, in the Science Center Auditorium.

Miller is the author of “Finding Darwin’s God: A Scientist’s Search for Common Ground Between God and Evolution” and a textbook that is said to be the most widely used high school biology text in America.

He also was the lead witness in 2005 in a Pennsylvania “intelligent design” case involving the first direct challenge brought in the U.S. federal courts against a public school district that required creationism as an alternative to evolution to explain the origin of life. The advocates of “intelligent design” lost that battle in court and in the next school board election.

Miller’s public lecture will kick off several campus events during the 2008-09 academic year in observance of Charles Darwin’s 200th birthday and the 150th anniversary of publication of his classic “The Origin of Species.”

In its 42nd year, the Littleton-Franklin Lectures in Science and Humanities is named for the John and Mary Franklin Foundation of Atlanta and Mosley Professor Emeritus Taylor Littleton, who administered the program for many years. Future speakers in the 2008-09 series will include internationally prominent anthropologist Richard Leakey on Oct. 6 and award-winning science writer Natalie Angier on Jan. 27.

Analyst with international expertise named to new post in Institutional Research and Assessment at AU

Iryna Johnson, a research analyst with a range of international experience, has been named to the new post of associate director for assessment in the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis at Auburn, effective Aug. 1.

In her new role, Johnson coordinates and leads the university’s program- and unit-based assessment and improvement activities. Information and Assessment Director Drew Clark said Johnson will be the office’s most frequent point of contact with Auburn faculty on matters relating to the assessment of student learning and will represent the university in the broader assessment community of higher education.

Johnson comes to Auburn from Indiana University, Bloomington, where she was institutional research analyst. Previously, she served from 2004-07 as coordinator of student success research at Indiana State University in Terre Haute.

Earlier in her career, Johnson served as a research associate at Kiev International Institute in Ukraine and as a consultant for various international organizations, including the World Bank and the International Development Research Center in Ottawa, Canada. She has also served as an assistant and associate professor at institutions in Ukraine.

Johnson holds the candidate of science degree, equivalent to an American Ph.D., in sociology from the National Taras Shevchenko University of Kyiv, Ukraine.

On display at museum
A collection of paintings of early-19th century American Indian leaders in the Southeast by the noted artist Henry Inman is on display at the Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art. The portraits of Creek and Cherokee leaders from the area that included Alabama and Georgia will be on display through Nov. 8. The exhibition and a related publication were made possible through the support of Tom and Ann Cousins.
Research in Liberal Arts

Why do bad habits, addictions keep coming back? Psychology study seeks clues in animal behavior

You can overcome an addiction, but can you kill it? Even on a more benign level, why do we find ourselves resuming bad habits months or even years after breaking the pattern?

At Auburn University, a team of psychology researchers with support from the National Institutes of Health is looking for clues on how to make such changes permanent.

While many psychologists and counselors devote their careers to helping people overcome addictions and patterns of undesirable behavior, decades of research have not led to a permanent cure other than abstinence for the most harmful addictions, such as alcoholism, drug abuse and smoking. Decades after quitting, the smell of a cigarette or alcohol still triggers old cravings in many former smokers or heavy drinkers.

In the effort to discover a way to help people permanently correct undesirable or addictive behavior, medical authorities are looking to basic science for clues. Some of those clues may come from research at Auburn, where behavioral psychologist Martha Escobar is leading a team of student researchers in a study of the concept of extinction, with extinction referring to behaviors, not species.

In layman’s terms, Escobar’s research team is using lab rats in a study to determine if it is possible for animals to permanently change patterns of behavior so that conditions that once led to a certain response no longer do so. With humans, this could involve a reformed alcoholic being able to take a drink or a former smoker to be around cigarettes without craving another; with white mice in the laboratory, the behavior could involve not fearing a light that previously triggered fear because in the past it signaled a mild electrical shock.

The Auburn study is funded by an NIH grant as part of a federally supported program to bridge the gap between basic research and applied research concerning mental health. The project in Auburn’s Department of Psychology is intended to help provide the clues that other scientists for studies involving humans and eventually to more effective counseling and medical treatments for addictions.

In announcing the recent NIH grant, Sen. Richard Shelby of Alabama said, “This fascinating research will help doctors understand certain physiological and behavioral conditions that my help us better understand theories behind extinction. Research resulting from groundbreaking studies such as this will benefit the lives of people across our nation.”

“Everything we learn is the beginning of something new,” said Escobar who has been conducting laboratory studies into behavior modification for more than a decade. An Auburn faculty member since 2002, the associate professor notes that such studies are part of a scientific tradition established by Nobel Prize Winner Ivan Pavlov more than a century ago.

Escobar said many people mistakenly believe that animals are harmed in the tests, but the ethical standards that characterize behavioral research ensure the animals’ safety and comfort even when they are trained to fear a stimulus. She noted that the voltage is set so low that the animals feel only a tingling sensation that is just enough to produce a response but not to produce pain.

Not all the research assistants will be graduate students, and they may not all be psychology students. Escobar will enlist three graduate students and six to eight advanced undergraduates in this, the first stage of a multi-year research project. The students are in academic fields as diverse as English, pre-medicine and chemical engineering. Part of a movement in higher education to involve undergraduate students in major research, Escobar said this grant, housed in the College of Liberal Arts, will give undergraduates their first taste of potential scientific career fields and an introduction to work they may want to pursue in graduate school.

Citing both the direct benefits of adding to the knowledge base in psychology and neuroscience and the training of future scientists, Escobar said, “This is an excellent way to help good students develop into good researchers, who, I expect, will go on to the top graduate schools in their fields.”

— Roy Summerford

Art Department faculty member sleeps on inspiration in pillow factory

A former pillow factory seemed like the ideal place to sleep comfortably, but the 30 days and nights Barb Bondy of Auburn’s Department of Art spent inside the cavernous space were anything but restful.

Her nightly tossing and turning on a small mattress hidden behind a wall inside the factory-turned-Columbus State University art gallery figured prominently in her exhibit “Night Tracks, Day Tracks,” a series of drawings and photographs exploring dualities of night and day as metaphors for conscious and non-conscious states.

Her exhibit at CSU certainly redefined summer studio residencies. Bondy moved into the Norman Shannon and Emmy Lou P. Illeges Gallery, located in downtown Columbus, and stayed there for all of June and the first week of July. The gallery served as her studio and as a stage of sorts for performance art.

When Bondy completed her work each day, she would retreat to her small sleeping area hidden behind a wall inside the gallery. Given the fact that two security lights remained on at all times, piercing the darkness, she sometimes found sleep to be a precious commodity.

“It was not comfortable,” Bondy said on the last day of her exhibit. “It was definitely hard. I brought in a chair, but I was on the floor a lot or working on the wall. I was quiet. It wasn’t until the end that I started to play a little music. I was sketching, reading, drawing or making. It was so unnatural, but it was such fertile ground. I kept saying to people — this is Utopia.”

In many ways, the monastic setting proved to be ideal for her concepts. What better way to unlock the mysteries of the human than in most silent and solitary confinement?

One work, in particular, that captured the theme of the exhibit was “This and That,” which featured interlocking tracings of the words in black and white on a narrow, 30-foot long piece of Stonehenge paper. In order to work with such long and large mediums, Bondy often had to finish her work from near ceiling level, high atop a scissor lift.

— Victoria Santos
ATAC outreach effort helps Sikorsky adopt ‘lean’ growth strategy

It has been a challenge growing from 180 employees to 670 in an 18-month period, but for Sikorsky Aircraft Corp. in Troy, implementing a manufacturing management strategy known as “lean” during this growth surge has helped the company to manage the expansion more effectively while significantly shortening the efficiency curve to meet increased customer demands.

“We are seeing production lead and cycle times being reduced on our assembly lines in almost daily increments,” said Sikorsky Production Control Manager Eric Scott. “Along with lead and cycle time improvements, we are reducing waste and creating more efficient product flow through the manufacturing processes.”

Facing an increase in both U.S. and international product orders, Sikorsky enlisted lean implementation assistance from the Auburn Technical Assistance Center in early 2007.

“We knew that we were going to have to make some rapid and drastic changes in our production operation over the coming months,” Scott said. “And we knew that we needed outside assistance to do that most successfully.”

That same year, ATAC delivered a sequence of in-depth lean training events and began helping the company implement process improvement programs known as “kaizen events” in various production areas. Over the past year and one-half, Sikorsky has noted significant improvements and cost savings that continue to multiply.

“In 2007, we produced eight completed helicopter airframes,” Scott noted. “However, through our kaizen events and lean implementation activities, we anticipate that we will deliver 36 by the end of 2008.”

ATAC has helped implement kaizen events in the five production areas of the Lower Nose Assembly Unit; Tail Cone Assembly Unit; Upper Aft Assembly Unit; the Join Area; and conducted a Value Stream Mapping event of the Warehouse for future improvement.

“We have decreased production lead time by days and have reduced production hours by hundreds — and in some areas — more than a thousand hours,” Scott said. “We are seeing our trend lines drop where they need to be dropping. All of this can be attributed to the improvements that we are making to our processes through the implementation of lean and training our people.”

Scott said Sikorsky’s partnership with ATAC is a big factor in enabling the firm to successfully manage this period of fast growth and high production demand. “Every unit that ATAC has worked with us on has shown dramatic improvement,” he said. “This is a momentum that we want to continue.”

— Mitch Emmons

College outreach program receives NEA grant to teach art in Alabama prisons

An outreach program in Auburn University’s College of Liberal Arts has received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to teach art, photography and creative writing in Alabama’s prisons.

Kyes Stevens, director of the Alabama Prison Arts + Education Project, said the $14,000 NEA grant will support additional educational programs and materials in correctional facilities and will fund a pilot project with Space One Eleven to offer studio instruction for participants and those participating in community corrections in Birmingham.

In the last six years, the Alabama Prison Arts + Education Project, now housed in the college’s Psychology Department, has enabled more than 900 prisoners to learn poetry, creative writing, drawing, multi-media art and photography.

Achievements

Levent Yilmaz, an associate professor in the Department of Computer Science and Software Engineering, has been appointed editor-in-chief of Simulation: Transactions of the Society for Modeling and Simulation International. Yilmaz will direct the editorial activities of the flagship journal of the leading society devoted to advancing the discipline and profession of modeling and simulation. Simulation is an archival journal that helps professionals and researchers, particularly those involved in multidisciplinary projects, apply advances in modeling and simulation theory, methodology and technology to their focused areas.

Thomas Walter Professor Pradeep Lall of Mechanical Engineering has been selected as a fellow of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, a designation that recognizes significant achievements in and contributions to the engineering profession. Lall has authored or co-authored two books, more than 200 technical papers and 11 book-chapters. He is the associate editor for the IEEE Transactions on Components and Packaging Technologies, IEEE Transactions on Manufacturing and ASME Journal! of Electronic Packaging.

Henry Burdg, director of the Auburn Technical Assistance Center, has achieved examiner recertification and recently was appointed senior examiner for the 2008 Alabama Quality Award. Modeled after the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, the Alabama Quality Award recognizes and honors organizations for innovations in areas of production.

Jennifer Wood Adams, an assistant professor in the Department of Communication and Journalism, and graduate research assistant Melissa Voykich, who graduated Aug. 9, have won the Top Three Faculty Paper Award in the newspaper division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. The award recognizes their article, “The Use of Design Technology in the Classroom: A Switch from QuarkXPress to InDesign?” in Journalism and Mass Communication Educator.
Researchers in Auburn’s Samuel Ginn College of Engineering have produced new antimicrobial coatings with the potential to help prevent diseases from spreading on treated surfaces.

Combining a widely available disinfectant and nanotechnology, the discovery has implications for hospitals, schools, offices, airplanes and other places where contaminated surfaces lead to the rapid spread of diseases.

Led by Virginia Davis of Chemical Engineering and Aleksandr Simonian of Mechanical Engineering, the Auburn researchers mixed solutions of lysozyme, a natural product with antimicrobial properties found in egg whites and human tears, with single-walled carbon nanotubes.

The nanotubes, known as SWNTs, are strong pieces of carbon one nanometer in diameter that keep the chemical intact in the coating. Among the smallest units of measurement in scientific use, a nanometer is equivalent to one billionth of a meter, or, roughly, one billionth of 3.2 feet.

Davis noted that Lysozyme is used in some commercial products such as certain brands of mouthwash. “However,” she added, “lysozyme itself is not as tough. Single-walled carbon nanotubes, on the other hand, are among the strongest materials known to man. While they are 100 times as strong as steel, they have only one-sixth the weight.”

By using layer-by-layer deposition, the team demonstrated the inability of intact Staphylococcus aureus cells to grow on these antimicrobial surfaces.

“Disinfection generally requires rigorous cleaning with solvent that must remain wet for a given period of time to ensure that surface germs are killed,” said Davis. “In contrast, we have created a surface that is inherently antimicrobial, so how long it is wet is not an issue.”

Davis’ research paper, “Strong Antimicrobial Coatings: Single-Walled Carbon Nanotubes Armored with Biopolymers,” was recently featured in the journal NanoLetters, which is frequently cited by top researchers in the field of nanotechnology.

“The material presented in NanoLetters is only the beginning,” said Davis. “We plan to adapt processing to enable the assembly of coatings on a much larger scale. As a foundation for future applications, the combination of single-walled carbon nanotubes with DNA, proteins and enzymes enables a range of possibilities for sensing and smart-functionality capabilities.”

Graduate student Shankal Balasubramanian and postdoctoral fellow Dhrity Nepal worked with Davis and Simonian on the research project. — Sally Credille


campus news briefs

Free membership in Parents’ Association
The Auburn University Parents’ Association is offering free membership for AU employees who have a child enrolled as a student at Auburn. The AUPA is a membership-based organization that provides services and programs to support the families of Auburn University students. Membership information is available online at www.auburn.edu/parents. In completing the online application, list your auburn.edu e-mail address and, under payment, check “free membership, and then submit. For more information contact Nancy Bernard in Career Development Services by e-mail at bernamn@auburn.edu.

Tippur receives Department of Defense grant
The Army Research Office in the U.S. Department of Defense has awarded a three-year grant to Mechanical Engineering Professor Hareesh Tippur in the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering for basic research on novel multiphase structural foams with unique interpenetrating architecture. The grant is based on preliminary work by his group on a relatively new class of materials inspired by biological systems such as skeletal tissue and other natural fibrous microstructures which offer excellent strength-to-weight ratio.

NSF grant supports minority scholars
The National Science Foundation has awarded the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering’s AT&T Minority Engineering Program almost $600,000 for scholarships over the next five years. The first scholarships through the NSF’s Scholarships in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics program awarded will be awarded at Auburn in fall 2009. The Auburn project seeks to develop an interdisciplinary group of engineering majors and involve them in the college’s minority program activities, which include peer tutoring, collaborative learning, an interactive learning lab and a student life skills component.

Auburn named a national research center
Auburn is part of the first group of institutions to be named National Centers of Academic Excellence in Information Assurance Research by the Homeland Security Department and National Security Agency. The designation, which applies to 23 institutions across the nation, provides opportunities for Auburn to receive federal funding for information assurance research. Universities with the designation have the opportunity to apply for scholarships and grants through federal information assurance scholarship programs. The designation recognizes information assurance programs in computer science and software engineering, electrical and computer engineering, management, mathematics and poultry science. Drew Hamilton, director of the Auburn Information Assurance Center, is the principal investigator for the program at Auburn.
Cost savings, more content, updated name

What’s an Auburn Report? Where’s this week’s AU Report?

With this, the first issue of fall semester, the AU Report has both a new look and a new name. After more than 40 years, Auburn University’s faculty-staff newsletter has dropped the initials from its name in favor of the name by which this university has been known since its earliest days.

Both names — AU Report and Auburn Report — are short for Auburn University Report. When the university began producing this publication in the mid-1960s, the institution was trying to establish its identity nationally as Auburn University rather than Alabama Polytechnic Institute or API, as Auburn was officially known until 1960.

Today, Auburn is well established in the ranks of America’s major universities, and we no longer need to use the university reference so frequently. Among American universities, there is only one Auburn, just as there is only one Syracuse, Purdue, Clemson, Duke, Harvard or Yale. Yet, AU can refer to any of several institutions, including Atlanta University in Georgia, American University in Washington, D.C. and others.

In recent years, the interlocking-AU logo helped avoid confusion, at least in Alabama, but it presented a potential conflict with the university’s own visual identity standards for publications, which discourage combining logos. The interlocking AU logo is one of two official logos used on university publications. The other official logo is the Samford Tower image. Both are used in this publication.

The change in name accompanies changes in the format and publication schedule for the Auburn Report. Both changes are in response to the monetary constraints facing Auburn University as a result of reduced state funding. The cost savings are significant, but we are trying to achieve the savings without sacrificing quality or the communication function of the Auburn Report.

The small tabloid on glossy paper has been replaced by a larger publication printed on a web press. And, instead of weekly publication during fall and spring semesters, the Auburn Report will appear every two weeks during the academic year, as well as summer. Most editions will be eight pages, as in this edition. With nearly 25 percent more space per page, the new size allows more design flexibility and will enable us to present more and larger news, features and photos.

The Auburn Report attempts to provide useful, informative news about the campus community and is delivered to each faculty and staff member in a format that the reader can read immediately or put aside for later. The Office of Communications and Marketing presents breaking news and time-sensitive announcements quickly in e-mail and AU Daily and on the university’s home page on the Web at www.auburn.edu. However, electronic media are unable to reach all university employees on campus. In addition, material posted on the Web has a short shelf life and may not be available later for the historical record.

With this new format, we are able to reimplement standing features such as Achievements and Campus News Briefs once or twice per month. These were once regular features in the AU Report until we adopted the small tabloid format a few years ago. That size publication did not have room for these features. Another standing feature, How Auburn Stacks Up, will run on a regular basis but not in every issue, as in the past. Meanwhile, the “Stacks Up” statistical charts which appeared in each issue over the past decade will now appear every two or three issues, when they contain information relevant to news appearing in that edition.

What do you think of these changes? Send your thoughts by e-mail to summero@auburn.edu.

— Roy Summerford, editor

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www.ocm.auburn.edu/au_report/aureport.html