

September 22  
2003

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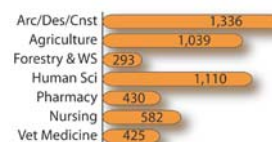
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### How AU Stacks Up

2003 Enrollment,  
Colleges, Schools  
Under 2,000



Source: AU Planning & Analysis

Updates between issues  
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[www.ocm.auburn.edu/  
au\\_report/aureport.html](http://www.ocm.auburn.edu/au_report/aureport.html)

# AU report

For the faculty and staff of Auburn University

Vol. 36 No. 20

## Youth center surprises professor at ceremony

Psychology Professor Barry Burkhart was in the audience recently for dedication of the Lee County Youth Development Center's new psychological services center in Opelika when he heard his own name called.

The center's governing board had voted to name the building for the AU professor but kept their decision secret until the center's 30th anniversary ceremony. On that occasion, the center dedicated a building to house services that Burkhart helped establish over the past quarter-century.



Burkhart

"I never even suspected it," said Burkhart. "I was just there to help them celebrate. I was caught totally off guard."

The new 4,500-square-foot building houses staff and facilities for psychological therapy and counseling of children and teens at the center's Opelika campus.

"Dr. Burkhart is a great asset for Lee County, and he has been a wonderful resource for our center almost as long as we've been here," said Laura Cooper, executive director of the center.

Cooper noted that the comprehensive facility is an outgrowth of services that began in 1976, when Burkhart began providing individual counseling to the center's residents at the kitchen table of the original building. He also trained the staff, got graduate students involved in the center's work, helped secure additional profes-

sional assistance and built links between the center and AU's outreach programs in psychology.

"He has provided more than 25 years of unselfish and inspiring support to our program," she said. "Most of what we have today in psychological services, we owe to his efforts."

The psychological services building was one of two new buildings dedicated. The center also dedicated a fountain and rededicated the organization's original house.

Burkhart said Lee County is fortunate to have a refuge for children who have experienced trauma in their lives. He noted that the county has one of the state's most complete and best-managed centers for at-risk youths.

"I am very proud of the people of Lee County for voting to increase their taxes a while back so these kids would have a chance in life," Burkhart said. "That kind of generosity is very rare, and it is a tribute to the unselfishness of the people of this county."

The Auburn professor said he is inspired by the dedication of the youth development center's leaders and the work of its staff in helping young people overcome personal and family tragedies that could have wrecked their lives.

"When I started helping, we were literally meeting around the kitchen table, and today we have the facilities and staff out there that can make a difference in a lot of lives," he said. "These kids need the help, and I am glad we have a place to provide it."



**Raising the flag**  
ROTC units have long kept the U.S. and Alabama flags flying over the Auburn campus. On special occasions, such as 9-11, all units participate in the flag-raising ceremony.



**International flags**  
AU President William Walker, left, discusses with Johnny Green of the provost's office the university's new exhibit of more than 100 flags from around the world. The flags are on display in Foy Student Union.

## Foy Student Union goes international, flying flags of more than 100 countries

International students at Auburn now have a visual reminder of their homeland on campus. More than 100 flags decorate the skylights of Foy Student Union, representing the nations of international students enrolled at Auburn.

The Division of Student Affairs dedicated the flag display in a ceremony at the start of fall semester.

"The purpose of the flag display is to make international students feel at home and to represent the vast diversity of students, faculty and scholars at Auburn," said Nejla Orgen, associate director for international student life and admissions.

Orgen said she expects the flag display to be a permanent fixture, which will move to the new student

union when that building is completed later in this decade.

Johnny Green, special assistant to the provost, said Auburn is a forward-looking university and the flags are appropriate symbols of its diversity.

"We live in global village. It is hard to be global if we are only thinking locally," said Green. "We have many countries represented among our student population, and this says to people, 'you are welcome, and there is a place for you at Auburn.'"

Sponsors include the Division of Student Affairs, the Center for Diversity and Race Relations, the Graduate School, the Office of International Education and the International Students Organization.

## Education gets \$1.2 million grant to prepare special ed teachers for children with ASD

The U.S. Department of Education has awarded a \$1.2 million grant to the AU College of Education to train special education teachers.

The program will result in a significant improvement in the type and quality of educational services for children with autism spectrum disorder, a neurological disorder commonly known as ASD, said Philip Browning, head of the Department of Rehabilitation and Special Education.

The five-year project will produce 50 teachers to meet specialized needs of children with ASD.

"The purpose of this grant is to prepare teachers to meet the critical shortage of personnel to teach children and youth with autism spectrum disorder in Alabama and Georgia," said project leader Robert Simpson of the RSE faculty.

Many children with ASD have severely impaired language abilities, and some are unable to express themselves verbally without special training. Simp-

son, a professor of special education, said these children frequently isolate themselves from others and focus on repetitive behaviors such as spinning objects or hand flapping. They may also appear to be preoccupied with "sameness," not easily accepting change in their environment.

Despite these difficulties, children with ASD are capable of learning, he said. "There is a sense of urgency relative to preparing highly qualified teachers to meet the needs of students with ASD." Simpson noted that prevalence rates for autism have skyrocketed in the past 10 years and have been estimated as high as one in every 500 children.

"Alabama has seen the number of students identified with autism increase by 105 percent throughout the past five years," he added. "However, the number of highly qualified teachers has not kept pace with the increase. This grant opportunity will effectively address this critical shortage."

## Upcoming Events

### Tuesday, September 23

- Concert: Auburn Community Orchestra, 6 p.m., Kiesel Park.
- Art Exhibit: Works of Emanuel Martinez, Center for the Arts and Humanities, Pebble Hill. Through Friday, Sept. 26.

### Wednesday, September 24

- Public Lecture: Vernadette Ramirez Broyles, director of public policy for "We Care America," a national network of faith leaders, denominations and care providers serving the underprivileged, 4 p.m., Broun 238.

### Thursday, September 25

- Committee Meetings: Board of Trustees Investment and Academic Affairs committees, sessions start at 8 a.m., Dixon Conference Center.
- Art Exhibit: Works of emeritus Art Department faculty, Biggin Hall gallery. Opening reception, 4:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. Works on display through Oct. 10.

### Friday, September 26

- Meeting: Board of Trustees, 1 p.m., Dixon Conference Center. Committee sessions start at 8:30 a.m., Dixon Conference Center.
- Goodwin Lecture: Immunologist Judith Whittum-Hudson, Wayne State University, 1 p.m., 203 Greene Hall, Veterinary Medicine.

### Monday, September 29

- Next AU Report.
- Speech and Hearing Screening: Free screening, AU Speech and Hearing Clinic, 1:30 p.m.-4 p.m., Haley 1199.

### Tuesday, September 30

- Littleton-Franklin Lecture: David Billington, authority on aesthetics in engineering, 4 p.m., Dixon Conference Center.

### Wednesday, October 1

- AU Theatre: "The Member of the Wedding," 7:30 p.m., through Friday, Oct. 3, and Wednesday-Saturday, Oct. 8-11. Matinee 2 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 5. All performances at Jan Dempsey Arts Center, behind Frank Brown Recreation Center on Opelika Road. Box Office, 844-4154.

### Friday, October 3

- Grand Opening: Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art, 10 a.m., South College Street and Woodfield Drive.



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## Board to meet Friday to discuss new budget, health insurance

The AU Board of Trustees on Friday is scheduled to discuss an operating budget for the 2003-04 fiscal year and the rising cost of health insurance for AU employees. The AU Board will meet at 1 p.m. at Dixon Conference Center.

With the budget year starting Oct. 1 and the Alabama Legislature in special session to consider state general fund and education budgets, AU President William Walker has said the university may need more time to develop its own budget. One option, he said, may be to continue operations at the current level until the university knows the amount of its state appropriation.

Accounting for about 40 percent of the university's revenue in a typical year, the state appropriation will be a major factor in Auburn's spending plans for the coming fiscal year. With state fiscal planners warning of a sharp decline in state revenues in the 2004-05 budget cycle, AU budget planners must also keep an eye on the state's financial projections for next fall and beyond, Walker said.

The AU Board is also scheduled to address the university's employee health plan. Reflecting a national trend, costs rose 10.3 percent in the 12-month period that ended May 31, with prescription

costs rising 19.7 percent and outpacing all other medical expenses. (See charts, below.) Prescriptions account for one-quarter of all expenses for the health insurance plan.

Although AU's insurance plan is administered by Blue Cross/Blue Shield, the university and its employees maintain a self-insurance fund to cover all claims. Any changes in either health insurance provisions or cost will go into effect on Jan. 1.

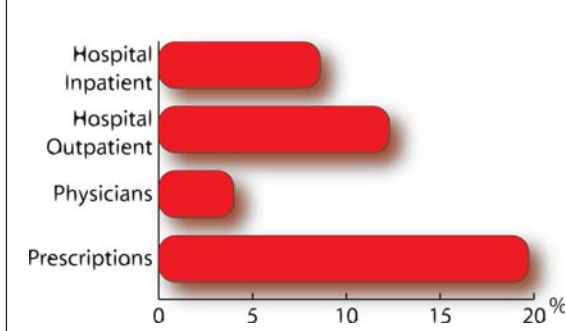
The university pays from 60 percent to 80 percent of the cost of each participating employee's total health insurance premium, depending on the faculty or staff member's salary.

Both the budget and health insurance are scheduled for discussion at the board's Budget Committee meeting at 8:30 a.m. Friday, and the full board at the 1 p.m. session. The Property and Facilities Committee is scheduled to meet at 9:15 a.m. Friday. Two committees are scheduled to meet on Thursday: Investments at 8 a.m. and Academic Affairs at 10:30 a.m. All sessions are at Dixon Conference Center.

Any changes in meeting times before the day of the meeting will be announced through the AU Daily e-mail transmissions from the Office of Communications and Marketing to faculty and staff.

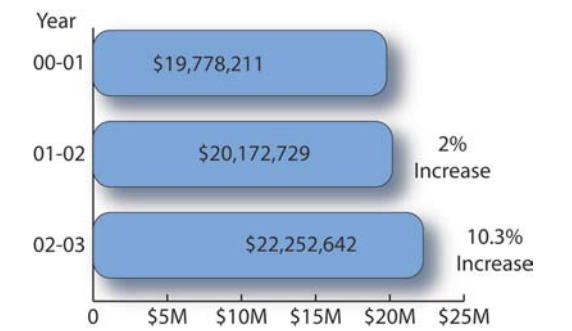
## Rising cost of health insurance claims at AU

Percentage increases in amount of claims filed in 2002-03



Source: Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Alabama

Increases in payments for claims over past three years



## UPC tickets to Gorbachev presentation go on sale

Tickets for an Oct. 6 speech by Mikhael Gorbachev, the last president of the Soviet Union, are scheduled to go on sale Tuesday at Foy Student Union and at Ticketmaster.

Attendance at the presentation in Beard-Eaves-Memorial Coliseum will be limited to ticket-holders. Tickets to the University Programs Council event

will cost \$8 for students, \$12 for faculty and staff and \$15 for others.

Gorbachev, who led the Soviet Union through its peaceful dissolution into individual states in 1991, was one of the principal figures in world affairs during the 1980s and early '90s and won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1990.

## Adams: Social, economic changes blur lines between public, private colleges

A sluggish national economy that is taking a toll on universities in practically every state is also blurring the line between public and private institutions, says an AU authority on higher education finance.

The nation's economic woes since 2000 accelerated trends that were present but far less visible during the '90s, says Olin Adams, an assistant professor of educational leadership in the College of Education.



Adams

If state revenues remain stagnant or fall during the remainder of this decade, universities that paid lip service to economic planning during the boom years will have to implement realistic strategic plans or accept a decline in quality and reputation.

Adams, who joined the AU faculty in 2000 after 10 years at Ohio University, is measuring certain aspects of the financial changes through a national survey of managerial accounting practices in higher education. The current survey will update a survey he conducted in 1998, at the height of that decade's economic expansion.

In the 1990s, most public institutions were significantly different from private colleges and universities in their missions, finances and operations. Adams says he expects the differences to narrow in the current survey as public institutions become more like private universities in response to the decline in state and federal financial support.

"The competition for public funds is greater than ever, and higher education is just not as high a priority for state budgets as in the past," said Adams, who holds an M.B.A in accounting and a doctorate in higher education.

"In the '60s and '70s, state legislatures went along with increases in spending for colleges and universities because the money was available and there was a large surge in the college-age population," he said.

"Those circumstances changed in the '80s and '90s, but the economy was pretty good for much of that time and recessions were relatively short," he added. "Now, most states are collecting less revenue, and people are saying they want more of the resources to go to K-12 and roads, corrections and other priorities."

Alabama did not share fully in the growth of the past decade, but it is sharing in the economic problems of the current decade, he noted. In the mid-1990s, while other states were increasing funding for higher education, Gov. Fob James persuaded the Alabama Legislature to divert funds from higher education to K-12 schools. In that regard, Adams said, Alabama was ahead of the pack.

Having missed much of the boom in the last half of the '90s, Auburn in 1999 restructured its administrative and academic programs and entered this decade with a five-year plan to regain its competi-

tive edge. Entering the final year of that five-year plan, President William Walker has organized a task force to draft another plan for the last half of the decade.

Adams said many public universities were unable or unwilling to develop or implement meaningful strategic plans in good economic times but may have to act now.

"Higher education is an easy target for cuts by legislatures," Adams said, noting that colleges and universities have access to tuition and endowments. "These sources of income are not available to the K-

***"The competition for public funds is greater than ever, and higher education is just not as high a priority for state budgets as in the past."***

12 sector or other areas of government, so politicians can rationalize that they can withstand the cuts more easily. However, even those resources are limited," he noted.

With the lingering instability of state funding, public universities across the nation must act like private institutions by raising tuition, closely monitoring cash flow and placing new emphasis on marketing, said the College of Education faculty member.

Public universities in most states have been raising tuition rapidly to offset the decline or slow growth of state support. Auburn's tuition increases of 12 percent in 2002 and 16 percent this year reflect the national trend, Adams said. He noted that Clemson University raised tuition approximately 40 percent in one stroke a few years ago when South Carolina faced a fiscal crisis.

Miami University of Ohio this year responded to the financial crisis in that state by raising in-state tuition to the level of out-of-state students. The Ohio school then announced that it would reduce the in-state tuition in proportion to the amount of funding from the legislature each year.

Tuition hikes are just one way in which Adams says administrators and governing boards at public universities have begun thinking like their counterparts at private institutions.

He noted that economic circumstances are forcing public institutions to prioritize, manage operations more efficiently and market themselves more effectively to prospective students. Like private colleges, public universities are now paying more attention to landscaping, student services, information technology, housing, food courts and other subjects that were once low on their priority lists.

The trend is neither inherently bad nor good, he said, noting that the result will depend on how well the institutions plan and implement change.

## Authority on aesthetics in engineering to speak at AU

David Billington, a leading authority on aesthetics in engineering, will speak at AU on Sept. 30 as part of the Littleton-Franklin Lecture Series.

Billington, the Gordon Y.S. Wu Professor of Engineering at Princeton University, will speak at 4 p.m. at Dixon Conference Center.

In a class he developed at Princeton in the 1970s, Billington teaches structural design as an engineering art independent of architecture.

The Littleton-Franklin lecturer is author of several books, including "Robert Maillart's Bridges: The Art of Engineering," "The Tower and the Bridge: The New Art of Structural Engineering" and "The Art of Structural Design: A Swiss Legacy."

Billington will be the first of five speakers in the Littleton-Franklin series this academic year. Next in the series will be Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Gary Wills on Oct. 28. Wills is author of "Lincoln at Gettysburg" and the forthcoming book "'Negro President': Jefferson and the Slave Power."

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