Open-enrollment period in November

Month offers chance to update insurance, tax-saving plans

November is the annual period for Auburn University faculty and staff to add or make changes to their health insurance, optional insurance plans and tax-saving flexible spending plans for health care costs.

University employees may update, renew or submit changes to these plans from Nov. 1-30, with the changes taking effect on Jan. 1 for the 2012 calendar year.

Chief among the benefits for most employees is Auburn’s group insurance program, which is administered by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama but is financed entirely by the university and employee-participants.

There will be no across-the-board increase in the cost of health insurance for 2012, and many employees will pay less due to the addition of two new categories: employee and spouse, and employee and children. Until now, these categories have been a part of family coverage, whether there were two or 12 people in the family.

Employees will not have to take action to change insurance brackets. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama will place employees in the appropriate tiers, based on the dependents covered by each employee’s contract. Those tiers are labeled: self, employee and spouse, employee and children, and family. Rates will also vary by salary bracket, with the cheapest rates available for those earning below $26,700 per year. At the top level will be employees earning $40,000 per year or above.

Additional health insurance savings of $25 per month are available for those who take advantage of basic health screenings for each participating individual and his or her spouse through the Healthy Tigers Program.

The Pharmaceutical Care Center on campus will accept appointments for Healthy Tigers screenings in November only; there will be no screenings in December.

However, if a university employee or his or her spouse is unable to be screened at the center in November, they can have their doctor complete the Healthcare Provider Screening Form. The AUPCC will accept completed forms through Dec. 16, when the university closes for the holidays.

Healthy Tiger Forms can be turned in or mailed to Tammy Hollis, the Healthy Tigers coordinator, in the AUPCC, 2155 Walker Building. Once a form has been received, the patient will receive an email confirmation from Hollis. If the confirmation is not received, send an email to hollite@auburn.edu to check the status of your eligibility.

The Healthy Tigers screenings include a finger stick blood test and blood pressure check. A short wellness questionnaire and height, weight, body mass index (BMI) and percent body fat analysis are all optional. Additional information, including the form and screening appointments, are available at www.auburn.edu/administration/business_office/payroll/healthytigers/index.html.

Among other benefits impacted by the November open-enrollment period are flexible spending accounts, which enable employees to set aside a portion of pre-tax income up to $5,000 per year to cover projected co-pays and other medical expenses not covered by insurance during the coming year. By reducing the gross amount of payroll subject to federal and state income taxes, these accounts enable participants to reduce their taxes and receive more net income in their paychecks.

Because of the use-it-or-lose-it federal requirement, the University Business Office advises employees to plan conservatively to avoid placing more money into flex-spending accounts than they expect to spend during the coming year. The plans do provide a grace period from Jan. 1-March 15 of the following year for participants to spend any remaining money in their accounts, but all money in an account must be used by then or lost.

An additional requirement of flex-spending accounts is that participant must renew his or her account each November in order to participate in the next calendar year.

Other financial benefits that faculty, staff and other eligible employees may add, drop or change in November include dental, vision and cancer insurance options. These plans will continue automatically for currently enrolled members, unless the member chooses to make changes.

Details are in information packets recently mailed to all employees by Payroll and Benefits and online at www.auburn.edu/administration/business_office/payroll/. In addition, details on all the plans and other aspects of the open-enrollment period are available online at www.auburn.edu/payroll.

— Roy Summerford and Amy Weaver

Students take creative approach to Halloween with Pumpkin Carve

More than 400 jack-o-lanterns will light up the courtyard of Auburn University’s Dudley Hall on Friday, Oct. 28, as students from the College of Architecture, Design and Construction hold their 23rd annual Pumpkin Carve.

The Pumpkin Carve has grown from a small student competition to a community event that attracts hundreds of people. A full day of activity will culminate with the lighting of the jack-o-lanterns at 6 p.m. in Dudley Courtyard.

The series of events, sponsored by the Auburn University chapter of the American Institute of Architecture Students, will begin at 9 a.m., as uncarved pumpkins go on sale for festival visitors and architecture students begin to create their jack-o-lanterns for the evening’s competition.

Visitors are asked to bring donations of canned food for the Beat Bama Food Drive, as this year’s Pumpkin Carve will again feature Auburn Canstruction in which students design and build a structure from donated cans of food.

See Pumpkin Carve, Page 2
Campus Calendar

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28
PUMPKIN CARVE Exhibition of dozens of creatively carved jack-o-lanterns, results of student competition, 6 p.m.-until, Dudley Commons

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29
EXHIBITION OPENS Art by German-born, Birmingham-based artist Jurgen Tarrasch, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Jule Collins Smith Museum; exhibition continues through Jan. 7

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 2
PUBLIC LECTURE “Making History in this Moment: The Impact of Political Discussion on Students,” William Jelani Cobb, author and professor of Africana Studies at Rutgers, noon, 2222 Student Center; sponsored by the Multicultural Center

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3
PUBLIC LECTURE “Meeting Global Food Demands: Research and Education Needs,” Gebisa Ejeta, 7 p.m., The Hotel at Auburn University; part of the College of Agriculture’s E.T. York Lecture Series

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10
FILM AND DISCUSSION “Some Assembly Required,” discussion about the right to protest versus the right to security, 11:30 a.m., Student Center 2222; sponsored by the Multicultural Center
PUBLIC LECTURE “Engaged Faculty and Their Projects for the Public Good,” Karen Garrison and Russell Haight of the Department of Music and Whitney Reed of Auburn City Schools, 5:30 p.m., The Gnu’s Room, South Gay Street; part of the College of Liberal Arts’ Engaged Scholar Speaker Series

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11
NEXT Auburn Report
NATIVE AMERICAN FESTIVAL Annual festival celebrating the heritage of Native Americans, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., grounds of the Jule Collins Smith Museum; also Saturday, Nov. 12

Pumpkin Carve

Continued from Page 1

Family activities begin with Halloween carnival booths, a visit from Aubie from 10–10:45 a.m., a children’s costume competition at 11 a.m. and the sale of Pumpkin Carve T-shirts. The public is invited to carve pumpkins beginning at 11 a.m. A college student costume competition will take place at 11:30 a.m. Hallowieners, hamburgers and chili will be on sale for lunch and again at 7 p.m.

At 6 p.m. pumpkin carving by students from the College of Architecture, Design and Construction will end and the pumpkins will be lit. The pumpkins, many with intricate designs and current-event themes, will be judged based on creativity, appearance and craftsmanship. Judges will be university, civic and business leaders from the Auburn-Opelika area.

At 7:30 p.m., winning pumpkins will be announced and prizes awarded. At 8 p.m., the winning pumpkins will be auctioned to benefit the American Institute of Architecture Students. Other carved pumpkins will be available for purchase for a minimum donation of $5 beginning at 7:30 p.m., with those proceeds also benefitting the AIAS.

The Dudley Courtyard is located between Dudley Hall and Dudley Commons, which is adjacent to the Graves Amphitheatre on the university campus. After 5 p.m., visitors may park in the new South Quad Parking Deck on Lem Morrison Drive and Duncan Drive.

— Neali Vann
New center in College of Business provides students edge over competition in job search

As employers face cutbacks during tough economic times, Auburn’s College of Business has established a facility to give students an edge in landing that first job.

The college opened a 5,400-square-foot Office of Professional and Career Development last fall to allow students to interview onsite or through video conferencing with companies around the country.

“We are very excited about our facility and the assistance we offer business students,” said Jimmy Lawrence, the office’s executive director. “We help students with career development, as well as with their professional development as it relates to choosing majors, choosing careers, interviewing for internships and searching for jobs.”

The facility is located in a remodeled, first-floor section of the College of Business Building and has eight interview rooms sponsored by local and national businesses, a conference room for group interviews and an employer conference room where visiting employers can debrief at the end of the day.

A video conferencing system offers recruiters the option of interviewing Auburn students without having to spend travel dollars.

“Video interviews are a great way for our students to talk with employers, who otherwise might not travel to Auburn,” Lawrence said. “Students can broaden their geographic area to reach more employers, while companies can save money and time on initial rounds of interviews. Afterward, the company might arrange for the student to visit its headquarters.”

Two resource areas are available for undergraduate and graduate students to research potential employers. A lounge and open space allows for employers and students to interact and have presentations alike.

“Former Dean Paul Bobrowski had the idea in 2007 to expand career services offerings in the College of Business,” Lawrence said, “and Dean Bill Hardgrave has been a champion of the office since joining Auburn in 2010.”

“Our vision is to continue to propel the college upward among the most elite business schools regionally and establish ourselves as a business school targeted nationally by employers seeking our talented students.”

Auburn officials visited and studied business career centers at Indiana University, Purdue University and the University of Kentucky while formulating plans for construction.

“We used ideas from each school and incorporated them into our large, first-floor area,” Lawrence said. “The result was a very functional, high-tech facility in a convenient location for students and recruiters.”

Funding for the college’s business career office is generated from a student professional fee and support from organizations and individuals.

The donors include Aflac; AT&T; Deloitte; Ernst and Young; KPMG; David A. Luck of ABC Supply; the Richard P. Nicholas family; State Farm Insurance; Alabama Power Company; Carr, Riggs and Ingram CPAs and Advisors; Andrew and Kayla Gannon of EDSCO Fasteners Inc.; Gifford Hillegass and Ingwersen LLP, certified public accountants and advisors; Momma Goldberg’s Deli; Price-waterhouseCoopers; and Thomas W. and Patricia M. Tripp.

Lawrence said the office continues to work closely with the university’s Career Center in Mary Martin Hall.

“The Auburn University Career Center has been a great partner with our Office of Professional and Career Development in the College of Business,” Lawrence said. “We have worked together in some unique ways to share resources and ideas during these tough economic times.”

— Charles Martin

Spirit of Excellence
Auburn University Human Resources has announced Spirit of Excellence winners for July and August. The awards honor staff members represented by the University Staff Council and the Administrative and Professional Assembly who displayed exceptional performance on the job and as representatives of the university. The winners for July, above at left, are, from left, Barbara Hawkins of the College of Business, Gerald Frazier of Agricultural Land and Resource Management, Kimberly Parker of Human Sciences and, not shown, Mary Townsend of Building Services. Three winners were selected for August; above at right, they were, from left, Megan Ross of the College of Agriculture, David Miller of University Scholarships and Connie Tisdale of the Office of Information Technology.
Campus News Briefs

Faculty lounge to open in room adjacent to Foy Food Court

A faculty lounge will open in Foy 105 next to Foy Food Court on Tuesday, Nov. 1. Sponsored by Tiger Dining, the lounge is described as a place for faculty to relax and enjoy light refreshments from 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Monday-Friday each week. Free refreshments for faculty will include iced tea, water and a variety of mini-desserts and cookies.

Forestry professor co-authors textbook on forest management

Daowei Zhang, Alumni Professor and W. George Peake Jr. Professor of Forest Economics and Policy in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, and Professor Emeritus Peter H. Pearse of the University of British Columbia, recently co-authored a forest economics textbook.

Published by the University of British Columbia Press, the book covers basic economic principles and concepts and their application to modern forest management and policy issues. The book is for students of forestry and resource economics and practitioners of forest management, natural resource conservation and environmental studies.

Business professor speaks at conferences in U.S. and Mexico

James R. Barth, Lowder Eminent Scholar in Finance, recently spoke on “What’s Next?” at a session of the Global Los Angeles Venture Association in Los Angeles. Barth also spoke at two other recent events: as keynote speaker at the First Congress of Financial Research in Mexico City; and on the topic “The Guardians of Finance: Making Regulators Work for Us” at the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City.

Dedicating Cary Center

Frances Pick Dillard, left, passes the ceremonial keys for the Halliday-Cary-Pick House to June Henton, dean of the College of Human Sciences, during a ceremony Oct. 14 to dedicate the historic home as the Cary Center for the Advancement of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies. Looking on are Betsy Pick Dillard, Charles Cary Pick, Sidney James Nakhjavan and Auburn President Jay Gogue. Named for three of the city’s earliest and most prominent families, whose members lived there in the past, the Halliday-Cary-Pick House is the second oldest surviving home in Auburn.