Faculty Awards Celebrating Excellence

Awards program recognizes top teaching, research, outreach faculty for 2009

In its fourth annual Faculty Awards Celebrating Excellence ceremony, Auburn University honored 16 faculty members on Tuesday for outstanding achievement both during the past year and over the course of their careers.

The awards included Auburn’s two top awards for teaching, the Gerald and Emily Leischuck Endowed Presidential Award for Excellence in Teaching; the top award for research, the Creative Research and Scholarship Award; and the top award for outreach combining a faculty member’s academic field and community service, the Award for Excellence in Faculty Outreach.

The ceremony in the auditorium of The Hotel at Auburn University also included honors for recipients of the university’s top graduate faculty award, the Distinguished Graduate Faculty Lectureship, three major awards for undergraduate teaching, the Alumni Undergraduate Teaching Excellence Awards, and six new Alumni Professorships awarded by the Auburn Alumni Association.

Also, new to the awards program for 2009, three faculty members received Distinguished Diversity Researcher Awards for research contributing to awareness and understanding of cultural diversity.

Photos of the award recipients are included in these pages.

Leischuck Awards
Gerald and Emily Leischuck, emeriti administrators whose gift enabled Auburn to establish the Leischuck Endowed Presidential Awards for Excellence in Teaching, flank 2009 recipients Sushil Bhavnani of Mechanical Engineering and Mary Mendonca of Biological Sciences.

Faculty Outreach
Royrickers Cook, left, assistant vice president for university outreach, presented the Award for Excellence in Faculty Outreach for 2009 to Barry Burkhart of the Department of Psychology.

Inside: Creative Research and Scholarship Award, Distinguished Graduate Faculty Lecturer, Alumni Undergraduate Teaching Excellence Awards, Distinguished Diversity Research Awards, Alumni Professorships for 2009
Undergraduate Teaching and Diversity Research
Alumni Undergraduate Teaching Excellence Award recipients, above, from left, were Carolyn Robinson of Horticulture, Ted Becker of Political Science and Shari Park-Gates of Consumer Affairs. Below, recipients of Distinguished Diversity Researcher Awards were, from left, Constance Hendricks of Nursing, Francesca Adler-Baeder of Human Development and Family Studies and Mitchell Brown of Political Science.

Research Award
Morris Bian, right, of the Department of History received the Creative Research and Scholarship Award, the university’s top award for research, from Vice President for Research John Mason at Tuesday’s Faculty Awards Celebrating Excellence ceremony.
Chinese ambassador
University President Jay Gogue, right, is shown welcoming Ambassador Wenzhong Zhou of China to campus. In remarks to a large audience at the Student Center on Oct. 21, the ambassador discussed increasing trade and cultural and educational ties between China and the United States. In addition to visiting with Alabama Gov. Bob Riley, the ambassador also toured engineering and fisheries facilities and visited with faculty who have established partnerships or programs in China.

Auburn Board to meet at Shelby Center on Nov. 6
The Auburn University Board of Trustees will meet on Friday, Nov. 6, in the McCartney Suite of Shelby Center.

The meeting at one of the university’s newest academic buildings will be a break from recent tradition for the Board of Trustees, which usually meets at The Hotel at Auburn University and Dixon Conference Center, except for an annual February meeting at the Montgomery campus.

Committee meetings are scheduled to begin at 8:30 a.m., starting with a combined meeting of the Agriculture, AUM and Property and Facilities panels, followed, in order, by a combined meeting of the Academic Affairs, AUM and Finance committees, the Student Affairs Committee and the Executive Committee.

The regular meeting of the board is scheduled to start at 10:45 a.m., break immediately for approximately a half hour and resume at 11:15 a.m. All times are approximate and subject to change, depending on the duration of committee meetings.

Four committees appointed to seek deans for colleges
Provost Mary Ellen Mazey has announced the appointment of committees to conduct searches for four deans during the remainder of the 2009-10 academic year.

The new deans will succeed College of Agriculture Dean Richard Guthrie, who is retiring, and three who will return to the faculty: Sciences and Mathematics Dean Stewart Schneller, Education Dean Frances Kochan and College of Business Dean Paul Bobrowski.

Schneller and Jim Bannon of the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station are co-chairs of a 12-member search committee for the dean of Agriculture; College of Liberal Arts Dean Anna Gramberg chairs a 12-member committee for the College of Sciences and Mathematics; Dan Bennett, dean of the College of Architecture, Design and Construction, is chair of the 11-member search committee for the College of Business; and Human Sciences Dean June Henton chairs a 13-member committee for the College of Education.

Although timetables could change as the searches proceed, each committee is scheduled to advertise nationally for candidates between November and mid-January, conduct airport interviews with semi-finalists in February and invite finalists for campus interviews in March, with a final decision anticipated in April or May.

The new deans will join fellow newcomer Gregg Newschwander, who was named in August as dean of the School of Nursing, effective Dec. 1.

Alumni Professors and Master of Ceremonies
New Alumni Professors for 2009, above, are, from left, Curtis Jolly of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, Mark Steltenpohl of Geology and Geography, Wei Wang of Industrial Design, Subhash Sinha of Mechanical Engineering, Mary Mendonca of Biological Sciences and Frank Bartol of Veterinary Medicine. Below, Larry Wit of Sciences and Mathematics served as master of ceremonies at the faculty awards ceremony on Tuesday.
Native American culture
Native Americans from across the United States helped Auburn celebrate the culture, crafts and traditions of America’s original settlers on Oct. 23 at the 2009 War Eagle Native American Festival. The annual festival includes exhibits and demonstrations of the foods, campsites and daily life by traditional singers, musicians, dancers and artisans.

CADC students celebrating Halloween with specially designed jack-o-lanterns

Students from Auburn University’s College of Architecture, Design and Construction will light up the courtyard of Dudley Hall with the glow of more than 400 jack-o-lanterns at the 21st annual Pumpkin Carve on Friday, Oct. 30.

The event, sponsored by the Auburn chapter of the American Institute of Architecture Students, will begin at 9 a.m. as pumpkins go on sale for $4 for festival visitors and as students begin to create their jack-o-lanterns for the evening’s competition.

Other activities will include a visit by Aubie from 9:30 a.m. until about 11 a.m., the student costume contest at noon and the children’s costume contest at 6 p.m. Food and drinks, including hot dogs, burgers and chili, will be available for purchase. The public is invited to carve pumpkins from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Also during that time there will be face painting, cookie decorating, games and other community activities.

At 6 p.m., pumpkin carving by students from the College of Architecture, Design and Construction will end and the pumpkins will be lit. At 6:30 p.m., these pumpkins, many with intricate designs and current event themes, will be judged based on creativity, appearance and craftsmanship. Awards will be presented at 7 p.m., and the carved pumpkins will be available for purchase for a minimum donation of $5 to the American Institute of Architecture Students beginning at 7:30 p.m.

A live video stream of all the day’s activities will be available online at www.cadc.auburn.edu/pumpkincarve/.

Campus Calendar

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30
PUMPKIN CARVE Exhibition of elaborately student-carved jack-o-lanterns, 6 p.m.-until, Dudley Hall Courtyard

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1
FALL CHORAL CONCERT Performances by Auburn University Chamber Choir, Women’s Chorus, Men’s Chorus, and Concert Choir; selected works by Orazio Vecchi, Johannes Brahms, Eric Whitacre, Peter Wilhousky, Rosephanye Powell; 2:30 p.m., Auburn United Methodist Church, 220 E. Magnolia Ave.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3
PUBLIC RECEPTION AAUP fall reception for all faculty, 3:30 p.m., Goodwin Rooms, Alumni Center
ELVIS’ AMERICA FILM “Mystery Train,” 6 p.m., Jule Collins Smith Museum

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6
MEETINGS Board of Trustees, committees 8:30 a.m.-10:45 a.m., full Board 10:45 a.m., times subject to change, McCartney Suite, Shelby Center
DESIGN SYMPOSIUM/EXHIBIT 31st Annual Design Interaction public symposium and exhibit, hosted by CADC Department of Industrial and Graphic Design, 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Wallace Center
HOMECOMING PARADE 4:45 p.m., from Parker Hall to Toomer’s Corner

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10
ART EXHIBITION “Elvis at 21, New York to Memphis: Photographs by Alfred Wertheimer,” Jule Collins Smith Museum, until Nov. 10
MEETING University Senate, 3 p.m., auditorium, Broun Hall
PUBLIC LECTURE “Sleetown: An African American Community on a Civil War Battlefield,” Draughon Professor of Southern History Kenneth Noe, 3:30 p.m., Room 2218, Student Center
PUBLIC LECTURE “Elvis, Musical Precedents and First-Wave American Youth Culture,” James M. Salem, author of “The Late Great Johnny Ace and the Transition from R&B to Rock ‘n’ Roll,” 4 p.m., Jule Collins Smith Museum
ELVIS’ AMERICA FILM “Milking the Rhino,” 6 p.m., Jule Collins Smith Museum

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13
NEXT Auburn Report
OPEN HOUSE College of Architecture, Design and Construction, 8 a.m.-noon, Dudley Hall, Gorrie Center and Wallace Center
THEATRE “Brighton Beach Memoirs,” 7:30 p.m., also Friday, Nov. 14, and Tuesday-Friday, Nov. 17-20, and 2:30 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 15, Telfair Peet Theatre; Box Office: 844-4154
Enhanced visuals and sound quality have been coming into play for recent events, such as this meeting of Campus Communicators in the auditorium of The Hotel at Auburn University and Dixon Conference Center. The upgraded audio-visual capabilities are also being used for conferences, public lectures, special ceremonies and awards programs. With financing from hotel operating profits, the university-owned facility replaced decades-old sound and visual equipment with technology developed for today's audiences. Also, in an effort to ensure consistent sound and visual quality for event planners and audiences, the hotel replaced its part-time, outsourced technical support with fulltime, on-site audio-visual operating and technical support through a partnership with the Office of Communications and Marketing.

Financial Times places Auburn’s EMBA program among world’s best in latest global ranking of EMBA programs

The Auburn Executive MBA is ranked 84th among the world’s leading programs in the newly released Financial Times global ranking of the world’s best EMBA programs for 2009.

This is the first time Auburn has been eligible to be included in the Financial Times ranking, which is in its ninth year. Among United States programs, Auburn was ranked 40th, making it one of only two Southeastern Conference schools that made it into this year's ranking. The University of Tennessee's program was ranked 93rd overall and 46th among U.S. programs.

The Financial Times ranking is compiled from surveys completed by EMBA alumni and information provided by the business school. The surveys evaluated 16 criteria in three areas: Alumni career progression; diversity and international reach; and research productivity of the faculty.

"This ranking is a tribute to the faculty and staff who have worked to build this program, as well as the accomplishments of our alumni," said College of Business Dean Paul Bobrowski. "It is a pleasure to see our program receive international recognition at this level."

Associate Dean Dan Gropper, executive director of the college’s MBA programs, added, “We have worked hard to build a program that is self-sustaining, which does a great job educating our students, and enhances the reputation of Auburn University.”

The College of Business at Auburn University is accredited at the undergraduate and graduate levels by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, the highest standard of achievement for business schools. Less than one-third of U.S. business schools and only 15 percent of business schools worldwide meet the rigorous standards of AACSB International accreditation.

Art museum exhibiting historic mid-20th century works

The Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art will exhibit a selection of some of the museum’s most treasured pieces from its “Advancing American Art” collection through Jan. 23 in the Chi Omega-Hargis Gallery.

For both their artistic and historical value, the 36 paintings and works on paper in this collection constitute one of the most significant components of the museum’s permanent collection. Featured in the exhibition are paintings by some of the artists of the mid-20th century, including Arthur Dove, Jacob Lawrence, John Marin, Georgia O’Keeffe and Ben Shahn.

Auburn acquired the collection in 1948, following the early end of an international exhibition. In 1946, the Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. State Department organized an exhibition of 117 oil paintings and watercolors that was designed to demonstrate the ascendancy of American art at the mid-century.

Described as a cultural Marshall Plan, the paintings were exhibited at various venues in the United States and abroad. Soon after its initial exhibition, the show was criticized for its “modernity” by conservative politicians, disenfranchised artists and critics. The collection became the focus of intense criticism in Congress which condemned the State Department for its purchase of the collection and for presenting the work of “left-wing” artists whose abstract works, they felt, inadequately illustrated America’s ideals to the rest of the world.

Within a year the program was suspended. The paintings were recalled, stored in a warehouse, declared war surplus and sold at auction. Alabama Congressmen assisted faculty from Auburn’s Department of Art in becoming eligible for a discount during the bidding process which resulted in the acquisition of 36 of the 117 paintings.
Profiles in Excellence

Skills developed on the band field carry over to current role for music educator Kim Walls

Education Professor Kimberly Walls possesses vivid memories of bright autumn Saturdays when she eagerly awaited the moment to start the show and strike up the band.

As the drum major for the Auburn University Marching Band during her undergraduate days, she was always out in front when the first notes of “War Eagle” began whipping a crowded stadium into full frenzy. By the time Walls reached midfield, the rhythm, the melody and the pageantry had created a harmonious cosmic swirl that transformed a patch of grass and painted white lines into something far different.

“I felt as if the stadium was my oyster,” said Walls, who earned her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in music education at Auburn. Following graduation and after teaching band in Alabama schools, she completed her doctorate in music education at Florida State University.

The enthusiasm of her student days remains strong in her career.

After leading musicians on the field as a student, Walls is devoting the same care and enthusiasm to a career of leading music educators and students. In her 13 years at Auburn as a faculty member in the College of Education’s Department of Curriculum and Teaching, Walls continues to shape music education program. Her care in designing and leading an innovative graduate distance learning program for practicing music education professionals has grown beyond her home department to the larger university community.

Auburn’s Graduate School named Walls as the Distinguished Graduate Faculty Lecturer for 2009. She delivered her lecture Monday, Oct. 26, in the Shelby Center auditorium. She was selected for the honor by a panel drawn from the 34 previous winners of the award, sponsored jointly by the Auburn Alumni Association and the Graduate School. Recipients, nominated by deans and department heads and chosen by the Graduate Faculty Council on the basis of excellence in research, receive a $2,000 award from the Alumni Association.

Walls earned the honor based on her service as graduate program officer for the Department of Curriculum and Teaching – one of the university’s largest graduate programs — from 2004-08 and the quality of her research. Her areas of research emphasis include the application of technology in music classrooms, music perception, general music education and instrumental music education.

Not that there was ever much doubt about what field Walls would enter. Her Double Springs, Ala., home was filled with all manner of songs. Walls’ mother sang in her high school choir, while her father performed in his high school and college bands. She also heard plenty of stories about her great-grandfather, who was a band leader in England.

“It was in my blood,” Walls said.

It continues to course through her veins as she shares the joy of teaching music with her undergraduate and graduate students. Thus far, she has chaired the committees of 96 Auburn graduate students who have completed their degrees. Over the course of a career that has taken her from Florida State University to the University of Texas at San Antonio to Auburn, Walls has taught approximately 1,000 preservice elementary teachers how to develop skills in integrating music into children’s learning.

Observing her courses conjures up images of a former drum major while instructing.

With her distance education students participating in classes equipped with two-way video streaming, Walls engages and informs them. Walls said her marching band roots help facilitate classroom interaction on camera with students who are logging in from as far away as Idaho and New Jersey.

“As a conductor, you’re always used to being in front of groups,” said Walls, the 2008 winner of the Emily and Gerald Leischuck Outstanding Graduate Teaching Award. “You’re used to being on stage.”

Graduate faculty honors

Kim Walls of the College of Education, shown presenting the Graduate School’s 2009 Distinguished Graduate Faculty Lecture on Monday, was among faculty honored in a ceremony on Tuesday for academic excellence.

She added, “In our courses, students have to respond and they have to participate. With the nature of instruction (in distance education), they’re required to interact.”

Walls contributes to the body of knowledge in her field through research and service. She is in the midst of a two-year term as vice president of the Association for Technology in Music Instruction, an independent professional organization with more than 200 members worldwide. In addition to receiving an appointment to the National Advisory Board of the Technology Institute for Music Educators, Walls has served as chair of the Music Educators National Conference Music Teacher Education Special Interest Group and president of the Alabama Music Educators Association’s Higher Education Division.

As a professor, Walls says she strives to keep her students in step while helping them learn how to engage an audience as musicians/teachers who also conduct research. “I really enjoy seeing them become familiar with the field of research and wanting to contribute to it,” Walls said. “That keeps me inspired. A lot of the professional activity that I do, I do because of my students. I want to be a role model for them.” — Troy Johnson

Editor’s Note: Profiles in Excellence is a periodic series of feature articles about Auburn faculty and staff who have been honored by the university or nationally for the top level of achievement in teaching, research, outreach or within a professional field.
Achievements

Schooley to deliver invited paper in Hong Kong

Political Scientist Shawn Schooley has been invited to Hong Kong to deliver a paper in November on “The Art of Democracy: An Interdisciplinary Approach for Scholars to Engage Communities.”

Schooley’s research is part of the College of Liberal Arts Civic Engagement Initiative. The Art of Democracy project was created by the Montgomery Director of Elections, and it brings together local artists to create paintings of their choosing at the polls on Election Day. The paintings are used to create community, inform the public and educate primary and secondary school children about the democratic process.

Freear speaks on Rural Studio at New York meeting

Andrew Freear, the Wiatt Professor at Auburn’s Rural Studio, spoke at the Architectural League of New York on Oct. 19.

In New York, he discussed the studio’s work and educational ethos. Freear has been director of the Rural Studio in Newbern since 2002. His main role, aside from directing the Rural Studio, is thesis project advisor to fifth-year undergraduate students and their building projects.

The Rural Studio is a hands-on architectural pedagogy that not only teaches students to design and build charity homes and community projects, but also improves the living conditions in rural west Alabama. The focus of the student’s thesis year is a community-based project and sustainable materials research.

Bondy named Breeden Scholar in Arts and Humanities

The Caroline Marshall Draughon Center for the Arts and Humanities in the College of Liberal Arts has announced the appointment of Barb Bondy, assistant professor in the Department of Art, as the 2009-10 Daniel F. Breeden Eminent Scholar Chair of the Arts and Humanities.

Bondy received her master’s degree in fine art from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale after earning a bachelor’s degree in visual art at University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada, and a diploma in photography at Sheridan College in Oakville, Ontario. Her creative research is directed primarily toward exploring the nature of and correlation between the mind and brain through the mediums of drawing and photography.

As the Breeden Scholar for this year, Bondy is working on both outreach and research. Among her projects will be a campus-based lecture series for the university community and the general public on creativity, innovation and the role of the arts and humanities in encouraging critical thinking and problem-solving. In addition, she will develop a new interdisciplinary class and a nationally promoted exhibition devoted to creativity.

Chris Kerth named nation’s top meat-science teacher

Chris Kerth, an associate professor of meat science in the Department of Animal Sciences, has received the American Meat Science Association’s 2009 Distinguished Teaching Award in recognition of both his exceptional performance as an instructor and adviser and his influence on students and curricula.

He received the award at the AMSA’s recent 2009 Reciprocal Meat Conference in Rogers, Ark.

Kerth, an Auburn faculty member since 1999, developed the muscle foods degree option that is now available to animal sciences undergraduates, and he established the Auburn University Meat Science Association, an active student group that in recent years has raised more than $200,000 through catering events to support study-abroad experiences for undergraduate and graduate students. In addition to teaching, he conducts extensive research on all aspects of pasture- and grain-fed beef, from production to marketing.

Theatre troupe to present ‘Brighton Beach Memoirs’

The Auburn University Department of Theatre will present “Brighton Beach Memoirs” at Telfair Peet Theatre during November.

Winner of three Tonys and a New York Drama Critics Circle Award, “Brighton Beach” has been described by theatre critics as a tribute to the power of family bonds in the midst of crisis.

Neil Simon’s 1983 play is about a Brooklyn family and its comic struggle to hold itself together during the worst year of the Great Depression. It’s 1937, and the world of young Eugene Morris Jerome — a budding writer and would-be baseball player — seems to be coming apart at the seams.

His father’s employer goes bankrupt, brother Stan loses his job after sticking up for a co-worker, and his Aunt Blanche wants to date the drunken neighbor who has been known to spend the night in a doorway across the street.

Part one of what has become known as Simon’s Eugene Trilogy, “Brighton Beach” — along with “Biloxi Blues” (1985) and “Broadway Bound” (1986) — is a semi-autobiographical work reflecting Simon’s childhood in the ethnic enclave of Brighton Beach, Brooklyn, and later his experience as a young draftee and fledgling comedy writer.

Scott Phillips, an associate professor of theatre and director of the Auburn production, said the situation facing the Jerome family may resonate with an audience in the midst of an economic crisis of its own. “We may not be in the Great Depression,” said Phillips, “more like the Great Recession — but the Jerome family’s problems are not unlike what many families are facing today.”

The campus production of “Brighton Beach Memoirs” premieres on Nov. 13 at 7:30 p.m., with additional performances set for the same time on Nov. 14 and Nov. 17-20 and a 2:30 p.m. matinee on Nov. 15. For ticket information, see the Web site http://media.cla.auburn.edu/theatre/boxoffice/index.cfm or call 844-4254.
Auburn alumna, retired Air Force general to launch lecture series on Tuesday

The Women’s Leadership Institute at Auburn will inaugurate its Extraordinary Women Lecture Series on Tuesday, Nov. 3, with a presentation by retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Leslie F. Kenne.

Kenne, an Auburn graduate who held several senior offices in the Pentagon during her 32-year military career, will speak on “Making the Most of Your Leadership Potential” at 11 a.m. in Telfair Peet Theatre.

Now the president of the Kenne Group, she serves on three corporate boards as well as the Air Force Studies Board, an organization under the National Academy of Sciences which performs studies on topics selected by Air Force leadership.

Early candidates for governor to speak at campus forum on Tuesday

Auburn University will host the Alabama Gubernatorial Forum 2010 on Tuesday, Nov. 3, at 7 p.m. in the Student Center Ballroom.

All gubernatorial candidates who declared candidacy prior to Sept. 25 were invited to participate in the forum. Participating candidates are Robert Bentley, Bradley Byrne, Artur Davis, Kay Ivey, Tim James, Bill Johnson and Ron Sparks. The moderator for the event is Jeremy Campbell of ABC 33/40 in Birmingham.

Complimentary tickets are available through the sponsoring organizations: League of Women Voters of East Alabama, Auburn Chamber of Commerce and Opelika Chamber of Commerce. The event is hosted by the Center for Governmental Services, a division of University Outreach.

New assistant vice president for student affairs coming from Temple University

The Division of Student Affairs has named Amy Hecht as assistant vice president for student affairs, effective Nov. 2.

Hecht is coming to Auburn from Temple University in Philadelphia where she served as the senior associate dean of students. She is a graduate of Florida State University, earned her master’s degree at the University of Pennsylvania and is completing her Ph.D. in higher education administration from the University of Pennsylvania.

In addition to expertise in strategic planning, assessment, program review and budget management, she has experience working with and supervising orientation programs, leadership programs, student media, Greek life, student activities, judicial affairs and career services.

Forestry and Wildlife Sciences offering Toomer’s Oaks progeny for purchase

The School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences will offer Auburn Toomer’s Corner Oak Trees for sale Saturday, Nov. 7, at the school on Duncan Drive as part of Homecoming weekend activities.

The seedling trees sell for $60 each and are direct descendents of the two oaks at Toomer’s Corner. The trees come with a certificate of authenticity, which tells the history of the Toomer’s Corner oak trees, planting instructions, a tree ID tag, and a roll of Auburn toilet paper. All proceeds from the trees are divided among the Forestry Club, The Wildlife Society and the Toomer’s Oak Leadership Endowment for scholarships.

You may also purchase an Auburn Toomer’s Corner Oak Tree online at any time at www.TigerRags.com or http://www.sfws.auburn.edu/oaks/MainPage.htm.