Health insurance premiums going up for AU faculty, staff in January

Health insurance premiums for most Auburn faculty and staff will increase on Jan. 1 in a range of $1.75 to $15.25 per pay period.

The amount of the increase will vary on the basis of each employee’s annual salary, pay schedule and choice of individual or family coverage.

At the low end of the payment scale for 2008, employees with AU’s BlueCross BlueShield Traditional health insurance coverage will pay $36.75 ($1.75 more) per pay period if they earn less than $25,900 per year, are paid every two weeks and have individual coverage. For family coverage, those persons will pay $73.50, an increase of $3.50.

At the high end of that scale, employees with annual salary of $38,800 or more on a 12-month payroll schedule will pay $153.25 per month ($7.25 more than in 2007) for single coverage or $322.25 ($15.25 more) per month for family coverage.

The employee costs, depending on each individual’s pay grade, represent only 20 percent to 40 percent of the full cost for health insurance. AU, which pays 60 percent to 80 percent of the total for each employee, will pay an additional $1.1 million into the health insurance fund in 2008.

BlueCross BlueShield of Alabama administers the insurance program for AU, but the university and its employee participants maintain the fund from which all claims are paid.

The increases, which the Business Office detailed in a mailing last week to all AU employees, are described as an attempt to offset the rising cost of health care for employees. The insurance fund saw an 8 percent increase in payments from 2006 to 2007, and costs continue to rise. The increase in premiums, however, will average 5 percent for most employees.

Faculty and staff with the BC/BS Traditional health insurance plan — the plan most widely used at AU — can offset the increase, actually paying below their current rate in many cases, by switching to the BC/BS Personal Choice plan during November, the annual open enrollment period. The option carries similar benefits at savings of $3 to $22 per pay period, depending, again, on the employee’s
AU Board adopts new dismissal policy, approves fees for College of Business

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, November 6

MEETING
University Senate, 3 p.m., auditorium, Broun Hall

MULTICULTURAL FILM “My Two Cents,” examining the assimilation of early 20th century immigrants to the United States from southern and eastern Europe, 3:30 p.m., Foy 208

Wednesday, November 7

FACULTY SEMINAR “The Power of Feedback to Students,” Jim Grecia, 11:15 a.m., Foy 203, contact Biggio Center, 844-8330

DISCOVER AUBURN LECTURE “Imprinting the South: Southern Printmakers and Their Images of the Region,” author and AU Librarian Emerita Lynn Baistes Williams, 3 p.m., Archives and Special Collections, Draughon Library

Thursday, November 8

THEATRE Shakespeare’s “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” 7:30 p.m., Telfair Peet Theatre; also Friday and Saturday; box office 844-4154

Sunday, November 11

THEATRE Shakespeare’s “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” 2 p.m., Telfair Peet Theatre; box office 844-4154

Monday, November 12

NEXT AU Report

Tuesday, November 13

THEATRE Shakespeare’s “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” 7:30 p.m., Telfair Peet Theatre; also Wednesday-Friday; box office 844-4154

FREE CONCERT AU Community Orchestra and guest artist Dong-Do Lee of Korea’s Ulsan University, Hayden’s “C Major Cello Concerto,” 7:30 p.m., Opelika Performing Arts Center

Wednesday, November 14

PUBLIC LECTURE Frye Gaillard, author of “Prophet from Plains: Jimmy Carter and His Legacy,” 3 p.m., Archives and Special Collections, Draughon Library

Monday, November 19

NO CLASSES during week of Thanksgiving

Cary Hall

AU dedicated a historic marker to Armenia and the Armenian people in a ceremony at Cary Hall on Oct. 26. Representatives of the AU College of Veterinary Medicine, Auburn Heritage Association and Historic Chattahoochee Commission placed the marker in front of the building, which housed Auburn’s veterinary school from 1940 to 1970. Cary Hall is named for Charles Allen Cary, who served as dean of veterinary medicine from 1907-35.

Health insurance continued from page 1

salary, pay schedule and choice of individual or family coverage.

Personal Choice, however, carries more restrictions than BC/BS Traditional, primarily requiring each participant to consult his or her family physician or other approved doctor before going to a specialist for treatment.

Auburn is adding some benefits to its health insurance package for 2008. Two benefits affecting all employees are free flu immunizations, which became available on Oct. 1, and an annual routine physical, starting Jan. 1, with the employee responsible for only a $25 copay.

Two new benefits with age restrictions are a colonoscopy exam every 10 years for members starting at age 50 and a Human Papillomavirus (HPV) screening every five years starting at age 30.

AU employees may make changes to or add insurance plans during November. Insurance options include the two health plans, dental, vision, cancer and supplemental disability insurance.

Employees may also renew or increase flexible spending plans during this period. The flex spend option enables facility and staff to set aside funds for medical expenses not covered by insurance, providing tax savings for participants.

For more information, contact Payroll and Employee Benefits at 844-4154 or see it online under Benefits at www.auburn.edu/administration/business_office/payroll.

au report

November 5, 2007

AU Report, 23 Samford Hall, Auburn University, AL 36849. Telephone: 334/844-9999.

AU Report is edited by Roy Summervill. Contributing editors and writers: Kate Wilder and Charles Martin, AU Communications. Photography: Jeff Elftmeyer and Melissa Humble, AU photographic services. Executive Director of Communications & Marketing: Donna Doxeda.

The AU Report is published by the Office of Communications and Marketing at Auburn University. Issues appear each Monday during fall and spring semesters and every other week during summer term, except on the Monday of or before Monday after some major U.S. holidays. Copies are distributed free by campus mail to full-time faculty and staff and campus offices. Deadline for delivery of items for publication is 4 p.m. on Wednesday before publication date. Direct inquiries, suggestions and news items to AU Report, 25 Samford Hall, Auburn University, AL 36849. Telephone: 334/844-9999. Email: au-report@auburn.edu

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Researcher finds evidence for global warming in bird migration patterns

Quiet side of Haley

A long-term effort to make the campus more conducive to pedestrians has created quiet yet colorful areas in unlikely places, such as the stretch of sidewalk on the north side of Haley Center. The area bounds the Thach pedestrian way, which is one of the most heavily trafficked parts of campus for students, faculty and visitors. The area was converted for pedestrian use earlier in this decade, it was the scene of bumper-to-bumper traffic during class hours.

DeTure named to lead AU Distance Learning

Email ryttycrrauk, assistant vice president for University Outreach, has announced the appointment of Monica DeTure as director of the Office of Distance Learning and Outreach Technology, effective Nov. 1.

DeTure comes to AU from Cape Fear Community College in North Carolina, where she was assistant vice president of instruction with responsibilities for distance learning.

DeTure earned her undergraduate degree from the College of Charleston and her master’s and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Florida.

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researcher finds evidence for global warming in bird migration patterns

A study by researchers from Auburn and the University of Louisiana at Lafayette shows that the breeding ranges of North American birds have shifted northward, coinciding with a period of increasing global temperatures.

Senior research biologist Scott Hitch, a doctoral student in AU’s School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, and co-author Paul Leberg of UL-Lafayette, published their findings earlier this year in the journal Conservation Biology, following a lengthy examination of migration patterns of 56 bird species.

“Examples of such range advances include birds from the northeast that have advanced into the upper midwest, and from the upper midwest into the southern Great Lakes region.”

Hitch said their analysis factored in climate and circumstances and conditions such as population expansions and land-use changes that might explain a range shift.

“To demonstrate a causal link between climate change and shifting ranges is difficult,” Hitch said.

Confronting the linkage challenge, the researchers studied a variety of species on a large geographic scale to determine if there was a causal link between climate change and breeding ranges.

“If the breeding ranges were moving because of climate change, then the ranges would be expected to shift in a direction opposite to the normal geographic shift pattern.”

Hitch said the birds’ breeding ranges over 26 years. If the ranges were expanding to the north and south, he said, the data would suggest that the birds were simply expanding their ranges.

However, he found that the birds’ ranges were extending only to the north, leading to the conclusion that the range shift might be responsible for the shift in range.

The Auburn doctoral student said identifying the forces that drive such shifts in the first step to understanding whether these shifts will lead to the extinction of local populations.
Technology Center
Work continues on phase one of the Shelby Transportation Technology Center as construction crews try to get the building ready for occupancy by mid-December. Work on the Magnolia Avenue side of the building is substantially complete and workers are scheduled to reach that stage on this side, which faces the interior of campus, in about two weeks. The $50.7 million complex will house several units of the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering. A second phase is planned for the near future.

For those who sign up

New alert system lets people know rapidly when emergencies happen

In the wake of recent emergency situations around the nation ranging from severe weather to campus violence, Auburn has launched AU Alert, a personalized voice and text messaging system. The system is designed to provide critical information on a timely basis if an emergency occurs.

The head of AU’s safety office is urging students and employees to sign up for emergency notifications by logging on to www.auburn.edu/ualert. In a major emergency affecting the university community, persons who have registered will receive information and instructions through cell phones, home phones, e-mail or other text-receiving devices.

“Nothing all students, faculty and staff immediately is crucial in emergency situations, such as a severe storm or campus closure,” said Christine Eick, executive director of AU’s Office of Risk Management and Safety.

She added, “It is essential for students, faculty and staff to enter all of their contact information into the AU Alert database. The more means we have to contact individuals, the better our odds are of spreading timely information and updates and keeping everyone safe.”

University officials will only use the system in emergency situations, Eick said. All persons with an AU e-mail address will receive emergency alerts to their campus e-mail address, but only those who register will receive the text and voice messaging notification.

AU Alert enables AU officials to schedule, send and track personalized voice messages to as many as four phone numbers and two e-mail addresses per person.

“For today we are forced to prepare for situations that we never could have anticipated happening and recognize the important role that immediate communication plays in keeping students safe,” Eick said. “AU Alert will allow us to keep students, faculty and staff informed, whether they are in their dorms, sitting in front of their computers or on their way to class.”

In addition to AU Alert, Auburn employs a variety of notification systems in emergency situations, including a new service that allows Auburn Public Safety to send emergency alerts directly to severe-weather radios on campus.

Robinson assumes presidency of professional association

Kevin Robinson, executive director of Internal Auditing at AU, has assumed the office of president of the Association of College and University Auditors, which represents auditors at approximately 600 colleges and universities in the United States and abroad.

Robinson, who is a Certified Internal Auditor and a Certified Fraud Examiner, was inducted into office in October in Atlanta during the 51st ACUA Annual Conference.

Robinson holds a bachelor of science degree in accounting and a master of accountancy. He was a member of the ACUA Board of Directors from 2003-07, has served as membership committee chair and served for the past year as president-elect.

Play gives new-age touch to Elizabethan fantasy


The updated production runs Thursday-Sunday and Nov. 13-16 at Telfair Peet Theatre. Performances are at 7:30 p.m., with a Sunday matinee at 2 p.m.

In the play two pairs of Athenian lovers try to solve a romantic dilemma by fleeing into the woods only to become the playthings of a group of fairies who are having their own romantic challenges.

Meanwhile members of an inept troupe of would-be actors preparing an entertainment for a royal wedding also fall prey to some supernatural antics while rehearsing in the woods.

Director Chris Qualls, has reinterpreted the play to make it accessible to both mature and young adult audiences.

The text has been cut to accommodate songs in the fashion of a “jukebox musical.” Songs range in style from Frank Sinatra to Air Supply to Captain and Tennille to Aretha Franklin to Johnny Cash.

For tickets or information, call 844-4154.

The AU Report is an official publication of Auburn University. Each unit mailing addresses must include its return address. The Office of Communications & Marketing will not accept billing for copies mailed by other units.