Future veterinary hospital
Phase I of the Small Animal Teaching Hospital on the Veterinary Medicine campus is taking shape as workers place brickwork around the exterior of the building. The first phase connects to and expands the Overton-Rudd Center. Phase I is on schedule for completion early in 2012, and Phase II is at the bid stage.

Student’s class notes set stage for new textbook with professor

With the exception of a new book co-authored by an Auburn University professor, virtually all college textbooks are written by senior professors who are among the leading names in their academic fields.

The usual textbook authors are people like Larry Wit, a prominent professor of biological sciences in Auburn’s College of Sciences and Mathematics, where he is also associate dean for academic affairs and has been a member of the Biological Sciences faculty since 1976. Wit’s “Mammalian Physiology” class has become legendary at Auburn and in medical and related fields, where many of his former students now work.

The Auburn professor is co-author of “Biomedical Physiology,” a textbook for graduate students and advanced undergraduates that was published this fall by Kendall Hunt Publishing Co. of Dubuque, Iowa. Based on courses Wit has taught and built upon for more than three decades, the book covers the core principles of physiology that many pre-med students are required to master for admission to medical school and others need in several related professions.

Yet Wit is the secondary author of the text. Instead of another senior professor, the primary author is Matthew Goodwin, a former student of Wit’s who received his Ph.D. from Auburn in 2008 and is now a third-year student at Cornell University’s Weill Cornell Medical College in New York City.

However, Wit and another senior professor, Bruce Gladden in Auburn’s College of Education, are quick to point out that Goodwin was not a typical graduate student, most of whom take years beyond graduation to get established in a career before even considering — and then, usually, dropping — the idea of tackling a book about a complex subject.

The material in the book is gleaned from and builds upon Wit’s extensive knowledge of the field of biomedical physiology — mammalian physiology is an older term for the same subject area, and Wit says the name of the course at Auburn may be updated in the future. The writing of the book, meanwhile, is an

Professor organizes, leads conference session in Europe through Skype links

Ted Becker, a political science professor at Auburn University, hosted a panel of experts at an international conference in Prague, Czech Republic, on a recent Saturday. He managed to do so without fighting airport crowds, security body scans or jet lag. The only thing he had to fight that day was the crowd on campus for the Auburn-Ole Miss game.

Becker, the Alma Holliday Professor of Civic Engagement in Auburn’s College of Liberal Arts, was able to lead the session from Auburn across two continents through use of the Internet and Skype technology.

The Auburn professor and three other presenters at the session on applied direct deliberative democracy participated from two continents covering nine time zones. One of the other presenters was a Stockholm University professor who joined the conversation from Venice, Italy; another presenter was a research associate who connected from the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada; and the third was a social reform advocate from Minneapolis, who participated from the state of Washington.

Becker had been invited nearly a year ago to lead a panel discussion at the International Conference on Participatory Democracy in Prague, which was hosted by the Masarysk Democracy Academy, but he declined because his teaching schedule precluded his attendance there this November. Six weeks before the conference, organizers contacted him again and asked him to lead the session electronically from Auburn. He agreed and quickly assembled the panelists, who were eager to try the emerging technology.

A faculty member in the Department of Political Science since 1988, Becker has been an early leader in the use of social networking software for educational use and as a tool to promote greater citizen involvement in democratic institutions. Because the panel discussion dealt with the latter issue, Becker said the Skype networking site provided a demonstration of what the presenters were talking about. “The medium is the message,” he said, recalling the words of famed 20th century futurist Marshall McLuhan.

Skype is one of a family of networking sites that
Financial Times rates Auburn EMBA among world’s top 100

The Financial Times has ranked the Executive MBA in Auburn’s College of Business among the top 100 programs in the world for the third consecutive year.

The Times ranks Auburn’s program 82nd worldwide and 29th among exclusively U.S.-based programs. It is the only program in the state, and one of only four schools from the Southeastern Conference, to be included in this year’s ranking.

“The Auburn University College of Business is committed to providing our students with a world-class education,” Dean Bill Hardgrave said. “We welcome and embrace the continued recognition of our innovative and very effective blended-delivery EMBA program. To be ranked among the world’s top EMBA programs confirms that we are on the right path and delivering a quality product.”

To determine its rankings, The Financial Times evaluates 16 criteria in three areas: alumni career progression; school diversity and international reach; and idea generation and research productivity of the faculty. The ranking is compiled from surveys of EMBA alumni three years post-graduation and from information provided by the business school.

“We are pleased the Auburn EMBA program has again been recognized as one of the best in the world and that our students are doing well in their careers several years after graduation,” said Dan Gropper, associate dean for graduate programs and the David and Meredith Luck Professor of Finance.

The Auburn EMBA is a 21-month program that combines on-campus residency weeks with distance education and an international study experience. Participants must have a minimum of eight years of progressively responsible work experience.

Business profs honored

Peter Stanwick, an associate professor of Management, and Sarah Stanwick, Taylor Associate Professor of Accounting, were recently recognized by the Journal of Business Ethics.

Their article, “The Relationship Between Corporate Social Performance, and Organizational Size, Financial Performance and Environmental Performance: An Empirical Examination” was one of the top 33 most cited articles in the 30-year history of the journal.

Their article is rated as a citation classic; a special edition of the Journal of Business Ethics will be published in 2012.

Skyping across the Atlantic

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originated several years ago in the business sector for conferences and planning groups and has been continually refined since. Becker noted that academia is slowly adopting the technology, while its use in the public sphere is skyrocketing for everything from personal, long-distance conversations to group participation in community and social organizing.

Becker said the Prague session may provide a template for university faculty and members of professional organizations to participate in conferences and information sharing on a broader scale than in the past, when tight schedules and limited travel budgets limited participation to only those who had the time and money to attend.

But the greatest potential of the emerging technology, he said, is its ability to break down barriers to citizen participation in democracy. He cited the Occupy Wall Street movement as an example of unaffiliated individuals using social networking technology to organize and promote issues outside the traditional confines of government and business. “Skype makes the future of real democracy even brighter,” he said.

— Roy Summerford
Auburn graduate student Dan Mazzaferrro has been named a finalist for Rhodes Scholar honors.

The Rhodes Scholarships, founded in 1904, are the oldest international fellowships. Winners of the scholarship have the opportunity to do graduate work at Oxford University in England.

The next step for Mazzaferrro is a two-day interview process. He will appear before the District II Selection Committee Nov. 19-20 in Boston, joining 12 other finalists from the district. Two finalists will be selected as 2012 Rhodes Scholars.

The Rhodes Trust awards the scholarships on the basis of literary and scholastic attainments; energy to use one’s talents to the fullest extent, as demonstrated by fondness for and success in sports; character traits such as truth, courage, devotion to duty, sympathy for and protection of the weak, kindness, unselfishness and fellowship; and leadership ability.

A native of Cheshire, Conn., Mazzaferrro had a cumulative grade point average of 3.92 in earning a bachelor’s degree in chemistry from Auburn in May 2010 and has a cumulative 4.00 GPA in graduate school while earning his M.B.A. degree this fall. He has received a Phi Kappa Phi National Graduate Fellowship and won the President’s Medal for the College of Sciences and Mathematics.

An Honors Scholar, he is also a member of the Chi Alpha Sigma Honor Society, Golden Key International Honor Society, Delta Epsilon Iota and National Society of Collegiate Scholars.

A member of the Auburn intercollegiate swimming and diving program, Mazzaferrro was an Olympic Trials finalist, a seven-time All-American, a three-time SEC Champion, co-SEC Male Diver of the Year, a CoSIDA Academic All-American, a team captain and the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee President.

He helped lead Auburn to the 2007 and 2009 NCAA Championships and represented the United States in the World University Games.

“An engaging scholar, a world class athlete and a true servant, Dan’s motivation for doing world class research in Dr. Mike Squillacote’s organic chemistry lab all the while competing at the top levels of his sport is so extraordinarily strong, his promise so unparallelled, that I am confident in predicting that Dan will accomplish something awesome and huge in his life’s work,” said Paul Harris, associate director for National Prestigious Scholarships at Auburn.

Mazzaferrro joins two other swimming and diving student athletes — Erica Meissner and Jordan Anderson — along with former gymnast Krissy Voss as the fourth Auburn student-athlete to be named a Rhodes finalist in the last three years. Anderson was a Rhodes Scholar recipient in 2009.

Auburn student named Rhodes Scholar finalist

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Feedback was positive all around, and eventually the two decided that they had the foundation for a textbook. Wit would provide additional input while Goodwin would start from his own notes and handle much of the writing. Once begun, the project took about a year to complete.

The book fulfills many of the goals Wit sets for his classes. “In the book as well as in the classroom, the course must involve more than memorization,” he said. “The questions in the book are developed that way; they require the student to think.”

Often in textbook publishing, the senior faculty member is listed first among the authors. However, when their book was in the final stage of production, Goodwin received a call from the publishing company informing him that he would be listed as the primary author, with the professor listed second. Goodwin insisted that his former student be listed first or he would not sign off on the book.

“I just thought he deserved first credit,” Wit said. “I had told him he would have to do most of the interaction with the publisher, and he took on that responsibility in addition to much of the actual writing.”

Goodwin had received his Ph.D. and was fully occupied in medical school in New York while he worked on the book with Wit back in Auburn. Gladden, who is pictured on the cover working in his laboratory, said he was not surprised that his former student could co-author a textbook for graduate students in a complex subject while in medical school. “Matt has an incredible capacity to do a lot of work and study; he seems to work 20 hours a day,” Gladden said. “I thought from the beginning that he was an exceptionally bright and interested person, but despite that lofty evaluation, I guess I still underestimated him.”

— Ray Summerford

Professor, recent graduate write physiology textbook

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outgrowth of copious notes Goodwin took in Wit’s class.

“I usually ask students to produce a paper on a topic of the person’s interest in the course,” Wit recalled. “Matt wondered about writing ‘a perfect set notes’ for the class, instead. I told him to go ahead and he succeeded admirably.”

“That was five or six years ago, and it was so complete, we put it on the website for the course,” Wit continued, noting that the response was so favorable that they soon began collaborating on plans for using the notes as an outline for a textbook for biomedical physiology courses at Auburn and other universities.

At the time, Goodwin was in his mid-20s, and had arrived at Auburn with bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Furman University in his hometown of Greenville, S.C.

He had heard about Wit’s class while on a visit to Auburn before entering the doctoral program in exercise physiology under Gladden, a Humana-Germany-Sherman Distinguished Professor in the College of Education’s Department of Kinesiology. Gladden guided the young doctoral student to Wit’s physiology class in 2006 as part of his academic program. “In the course of pursuing his interest in exercise physiology, he became interested in medicine,” Gladden said. “Physiology is one of the courses that prepare students for medical fields, and Dr. Wit is widely known beyond Auburn as a master teacher and has won several awards for teaching. It was about that time that Matt decided to go to medical school after getting his Ph.D., and his taking that course was certainly a factor.”

Goodwin says he went beyond typical note-taking in Wit’s course because existing notes posted by previous students had been too sketchy and were often inaccurate. As a graduate teaching assistant in the Department of Kinesiology, Goodwin would provide students with a packet of notes in courses he taught, and he suggested to Wit that he organize his own notes for Wit’s physiology class and combine them with material the professor was providing to help students in that class. Wit encourages students to participate more in the class, but many students were too busy taking notes to do so; Goodwin offered a way to help students get past the details for an overview of the class. “He thought it was a great idea, so that’s what we did,” Goodwin said.

From the first class session, Goodwin had been taking copious notes. The time was now right to do more. “During his course, I began meticulously taking notes, recording every word he said and then listening to them at night, reading numerous outside sources and e-mailing him often to question a particular view or how I thought it could be better worded,” he said. “I worked in a physiology lab all day with Dr. Gladden, then stayed up late reading and thinking about physiology from Dr. Wit’s class. For a physiology geek like me, it was a great semester!”

Feedback was positive all around, and eventually the two decided that they had the foundation for a textbook. Wit would provide additional input while Goodwin would start from his own notes and handle much of the writing. Once begun, the project took about a year to complete.

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— Ray Summerford
Hotel employees win honors from hotel and lodging group

Five employees of The Hotel at Auburn University were recognized at The Alabama Hotel and Lodging Association’s Stars of the Industry Awards gala in Birmingham on Oct. 24, with two taking home top honors.

Catering and special events chef Leonardo Maurelli was named Chef of the Year and engineer Charles Smith was named the Hospitality Employee of the Year.

Finalists in their fields were Laura Stirling, director of housekeeping; Ted Dempsey, member of the audio/visual department; and Caleb Reeves, bartender. Reeves also took home the silver medal for the Alabama Bartender Competition.

“We are so honored and proud to have two individuals from The Hotel at Auburn University win these very prestigious awards and three others named as finalists,” said Hans van der Reijden, managing director of The Hotel at Auburn University.

He added, “Chef Maurelli’s continued dedication to his craft and all of the effort he put into organizing Chefs to the Rescue, the June fundraiser to benefit Alabama’s April tornado victims featuring 24 chefs from around the country, were some of the characteristics that helped him win his award.”

Maurelli has served as the catering and special event chef of the hotel since August 2009. He often works closely with local craft brewers to develop unique menus for weekly craft beer dinners and for the hotel’s signature events, such as AprilFest and Oktoberfest.

Charles Smith has been an engineer at The Hotel at Auburn University since August 2009.

“Mr. Smith’s outstanding and unusual service to the property, to our guests and to the community made him a top candidate to win the Hospitality Employee of the Year award,” van der Reijden said. “We are lucky to have him as a member of our team.”

Seeking campus support

The United Way Campus Campaign is approximately two-thirds of the way toward its $140,000 goal for 2011-12 to assist local charities and nonprofit agencies.

Volunteers are asking all faculty and staff to contribute by the end of November. President Jay Gogue is shown at a recent meeting with campaign leaders, from left, Lynne Hammonds of Human Resources, chair of the Campus Campaign; Becky Benton, executive director of United Way of Lee County; and Liberal Arts Dean Anne-Katrin Gramberg, honorary chair of the Campus Campaign.