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AU to proceed with evaluation next semester

The university will launch its new post-tenure review process in spring semester, President Ed Richardson told the AU Board of Trustees on Friday.

Richardson said a faculty evaluation program developed by the Provost’s Office would be field-tested next semester. The program, which evaluates the performance of faculty beyond the tenure stage, will itself be evaluated and refined by the next president, following Richardson’s retirement in 2007.

Although they have cited concerns about the necessity of post-tenure review and other objections, faculty leaders worked with Provost John Heilman to develop the emerging plan. Heilman told the University Senate last week that he will seek additional input to correct any flaws that appear during this spring’s test.

Noting that several peer institutions have adopted post-tenure review policies, Richardson told the AU Board on Friday that the emphasis will be on identifying faculty whose performance is superior in teaching, research and outreach. Deans, department heads will be expected to work with faculty who do not fare well in one or more of the university’s mission areas to bring those faculty up to standard, he added.

Conner Bailey, faculty adviser to the board, said many faculty members see post-tenure review as unnecessary duplication of annual reviews, which are the primary factor in determining merit salary increases.

Board members, however, said they would like to see the university develop a more refined process to measure faculty quality.

In other activity, the board adopted a resolution reaffirming AU’s commitment to diversity.

Also, presidential search adviser John Kuhnle said the field has been narrowed from 60 highly qualified candidates to 15-20 who merit special attention by the search committee.
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Haley roof gets touch of green

A class project led to placement of plants on this section of Haley Center’s roof as an environmental demonstration.

Thursday, November 16

LAST DAY for donations to Beat Bama Food Drive; canned and other non-perishable foods for needy families; Spidle Hall, other locations on campus, area grocery stores and Food Bank of East Alabama.

CHAMBER MUSIC Amadeus Piano Trio, 7:30 p.m., Goodwin Music Hall; call 826-2979 or 887-9379 for ticket information

FACULTY WORKSHOP “Study Abroad: Health and Safety,” 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Foy 208; m-f, Foy 202; for seats availability, contact littla@auburn.edu

RECEPTION 2006 Study Abroad participants, students and faculty, photo exhibit, 4 p.m.-6:30 p.m., Foy 203

NEXT AU Report Thanksgiving Holiday; no classes this week; offices open Monday-Friday, closed Wednesday-Friday; no AU Report on Nov. 27

Upcoming Events

Art Exhibit Graphic Design Senior Project Exhibition, Biggin Gallery, through Friday

Deskside recycling program extends across campus

Extra “trash” cans are being delivered to offices across campus, but they are not for trash. Offices across campus are getting individual bins for collection of recyclable materials as AU kicks off deskside recycling programs to 31 buildings this academic year.

Each deskside bin is essentially a smaller trash can labeled for recycling. Under the deskside recycling program, individuals place soft drink cans, plastic bottles, used office paper, magazines, newspapers and other recyclable paper in the deskside containers instead of throwing those materials in a trash can with food wrappers, disposable coffee cups and other office waste.

Donnie Addison, recycling coordinator in the Facilities Division, said the program is being expanded to include most large buildings this semester after a successful trial in 2005-06, during which it expanded from three buildings to 12.

The program will expand to most remaining buildings as soon as the logistics are worked out, he said. Each building added to the program so far has space to one or two deskside containers on campus that are marked for recyclable materials.

Addison said numerous administrators and all the deans have endorsed the deskside recycling program for their buildings.

“Response to the pilot program has been excellent,” said Addison. “People seem to like it, especially since they don’t have to sort paper, bottles and cans. We just ask them to put all their recyclable items in the collection bin instead of the trash, and they have been really great about doing so.”

Custodial staff in the buildings collect the recyclable materials each Tuesday and Thursday and take those materials to a nearby collection site for recyclable materials. Trucks from SP Recycling Inc. of Auburn will take the materials to a collection point for sorting.

Over the past year, AU has collected more than 200 tons through its deskside recycling program. Addison said that amount is a small fraction of what the universe is capable of recycling. “A lot of materials that now go into the trash on campus is recyclable, but only about 10 percent is now being recycled. It is possible for us to double that amount in houses,” he said.

Although deskside recycling involves small steps, it is an important step in the overall impact it could have, Addison said. “The collected material adds up fast, and every bit of it we collect will help protect the environment and save landfill space and costs.

Listening sessions

Auburn experienced little of the student unrest and campus protests during the late 1960s and early ‘70s. Protestes were few and far between at Auburn during that era. One factor was the approach adopted by President Harry M. Philpott, who regularly left his office for impromptu, wide-ranging discussions with students. Philpott, who retired in 1980 after 15 years as president, still lives in the area.

Sally Jones Hill has succeeded the late Buddy Weaver as campaign co-chair for “The Begins at Auburn” Campaign.

“Sally is a cherished member of the Auburn family,” said AU President Ed Richardson. “Her involvement with the university shows her commitment to its future success.”

Hill, who joins Sam cargo in leading the national campaign, served as the AU Foundation president from 2004 until earlier this year and has been a member of the AU Foundation Board since 1986.

“Sally was president of the Foundation during a significant time in Auburn’s history, the public launch of Auburn’s largest fundraising campaign, said Bob McGinnis, vice president for development. “Her dedication and hard work are evident in the success of our campaign and the continued vision of the Auburn University Foundation.”

A 1963 Auburn graduate in liberal arts, Hill was a member of the Auburn Ali Association Board of Directors from 1978-80 and has served on the College of Business Advisory Council. She is a past president of the Women’s Philanthropy Board and a member of AU’s Presidential Search Advisory Committee.

Gifting to Auburn

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These gifts represent 28 percent of the total giving for the year. An additional $33.3 million, 31 percent of the fiscal year’s gifts, was from donations of $100,000 to $1 million.

Money generated through Auburn’s Annual Fund accounted for a portion of the remaining donations to the university. The Annual Fund raised more than $2.4 million from more than 6,000 donors in the 2005-06 fiscal year. The focus was upon unrestricted gifts, which can be allocated by schools and colleges for their most immediate and pressing needs. In November, AU’s largest deskside fundraising campaign, the AU President’s Challenge, publicly launched the first of 31 regional campaigns. The regional campaigns raised a total $16.8 million in cash and pledges in fiscal 2005-06 as part of the “It Begins at Auburn” Campaign.

The success of this campaign can be credited to both those who have given money to Auburn, as well as our team of volunteer leaders, deans, and development staff,” said Bob McGinnis, vice president for development.

“They have all given their best to this endeavor, and I thank them for their hard work and dedication,” said Bob McGinnis, vice president for development.

Of the $15.3 million contributed to the university within the last year, $8.6 million went to student support, $5.2 million to faculty, $6.8 million to facilities and $66.5 million to programmatic support.

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Graphic Design Senior Project Exhibition, Biggin Gallery, through Friday

Art Exhibit Graphic Design Senior Project Exhibition, Biggin Gallery, through Friday

Tuesday, November 14

PUBLIC LECTURE “The November Elections: Did Gender Count?” Christa Slaton, electoral reform expert, AU Department of Political Science, 12:15 p.m.-1:15 p.m., Lowder 152; Women’s Studies “Brown Bag” series, bring your lunch

FACULTY SEMINAR “Tips for Effective Grant Proposal Writing,” 12:15 p.m.-1:15 p.m., Foy 208; open to all faculty, and staff and graduate students; bring your lunch

MEETING Administrative & Professional Assembly, 2:30 p.m., Foy 213

MOZART FEST “In Search of Mozart,” 4 p.m., Julie Collins Smith Museum; also Thursday at noon and 3 p.m.

AU THEATRE “The Flea in Her Ear,” 7:30 p.m., Tillman Peet Theatre, also Wednesday-Friday; box office: 844-4174

11-screen IMAX Theatre "In Search of the Giants," 1 p.m., 3 p.m., 5 p.m., 7 p.m., 9 p.m., and 11 p.m.

Greening of Haley

A section of the Haley roof is covered with rows of specially potted native plants that a group of students placed there as an environmental project. Sponsored by the College of Liberal Arts, student participants in the Auburn Sustainability Project devised the “Green Roof” display to demonstrate ways in which nature can be used to improve a man-made environment.

Students involved in the project say the “Green Roof” concept has several advantages. “The plants will absorb significant amounts of water and prevent polluted runoff from going into the drains and sewage systems,” said Valerie Grupp, a political science major and intern with the Auburn Sustainability Initiative project.

Ultimately the “Green Roof” will decrease the amount of polluted water flowing out to our rivers and streams,” Grupp added.

The Auburn Sustainability Initiative organized the project following a challenge from College of Liberal Arts Dean Anna Gramberg to ASI Director Lindy Biggs, who is also a history professor in the college.

Last year, when Biggs approached the students about funds to bring in a well-known speaker about environ- mental activism, Gramberg responded that there had been enough talk and it was time for some action.

The dean said she would be happy to fund something the students were involved in, and she wanted something that everyone could benefit from and enjoy.

Within an hour, Biggs came up with the idea for a sustainability class. Her proposal outlined a small class. Students would have to apply for the class and those who accepted would receive internship credit. Gramberg approved the proposal and Biggs received more than 40 applications in one week. Only 14 students were accepted into the class.

“I met the selected students and knew they were up to the task of a project like this. And I was right!” said Gramberg. “I truly impressed by the students involved with this initiative. They are outstanding, interesting, creative, forward-thinking and bright. I thank Dr. Biggs for her leadership and for her incredible dedication to sustainability. Dr. Biggs and her students designed and implemented something the college can be proud of. What they have accomplished will benefit our environment and everyone who comes to Haley Center.”

Gramberg added, “Instead of a slab of concrete, students and visitors to Haley Center now have a beautiful green arrangement to look at and admire.”

Besides being environmentally friendly and attractive, Biggs said the “Green Roof” concept makes fiscal sense as well. “The average roof reaches temperatures of more than 120 degrees, while plants never become warmer than 80 degrees. So by insulating the roof with plants, you are effectively cutting down on energy costs.”

Biggs said the plants may also keep the roof from deteriorating by blocking out harmful ultraviolet rays. Information about the Auburn Sustainability Initiative is online at www.auburn.edu/projects/sustainability.
Do you listen or tune out? Authors see difference in ways people listen

Everyone listens. Even the hearing impaired “listen” through their other senses. After all, listening is a basic component of human communication, right?

Listening is basic to communication, but according to a large segment of scholars — including Margaret Fitch-Hauser and Debra Worthington of the Department of Communication and Journalism in Auburn’s College of Liberal Arts — listening is an art in which people may not be as proficient as they think.

Fortunately, effective listening can be taught, and under a publishing agreement with Prentice Hall educational publishers, the two are authoring a new textbook on listening.

Together, Fitch-Hauser and Worthington have more than 40 years of college-level teaching and research expertise to share on the subject.

“We have actually been preparing for this (textbook) for a long time,” Worthington said. Supported by evidence gathered through their collective and separate research on listening, Fitch-Hauser and Worthington note that listening is a complex process that can easily result in misinterpretation and the illusion that a common understanding has been achieved.

“People have different levels of listening effectiveness,” Worthington said. “Those levels are affected by our individual and cultural differences and those factors combine to form a person’s listening style.”

Listening is a cognitive process through which people form the meaning of what they hear, Fitch-Hauser says. She added that people can learn to be more effective listeners — a quality that enhances one’s success academically, professionally, socially and which enriches virtually every other aspect of a person’s life.

“Effective listening involves such things as memory, recall, concentration, association and even visualization,” Fitch-Hauser said. The academic study of listening has been pursued for only about 50 years, according to Fitch-Hauser and Worthington.

The International Listening Association considers the area of listening to be a distinct communication discipline. The importance of listening as a critical communication competency is further supported by the National Communication Association, the largest professional association for communication educators and researchers.

“Auburn is among the leading institutions in the academic study and conduct of research in the area of listening,” said Fitch-Hauser, who is a past president and journal editor with the International Listening Association.

Fitch-Hauser specializes in the areas of public relations and business communication training and development, and Worthington’s background includes extensive experience in the field of legal and health care communication. The two say their new textbook will be the first on the subject of listening to be introduced in several years, and it will be the first that extensively examines the application of listening research to specific professional and occupational areas.

“Our book devotes entire chapters to teaching the individual critical competencies associated with listening and the teaching of effective listening,” Worthington said.

Fitch-Hauser added, “It will show how listening fits into different areas, such as law, in resolving litigation cases, health care as in the prevention of medication error, in organizational communication as in employee relations, customer service and management, and in other fields.”

The writers say the book is slated for publication in late 2007 and will be available for use in undergraduate curricula.