Two Auburn colleges earn top honors from leading magazine for their design programs

For its annual survey, “America’s Best Architecture & Design Schools 2012,” DesignIntelligence magazine has ranked Auburn University’s undergraduate Interior Design program in the College of Human Sciences best in the nation and the Industrial Design and Architecture programs in the College of Architecture, Design and Construction among the top 20 degree programs in their fields.

Based on interior design programs accredited by the Council for Interior Design Accreditation, Auburn tied for number one in the nation with Savannah College of Art and Design. “Being ranked number one is a testament to the efforts that both faculty and students have made to ensure that our graduates are indeed prepared for the professional world,” said Carol Warfield, head of the Department of Consumer Affairs.

Auburn’s Interior Design program is offered through Consumer Affairs in the College of Human Sciences. The program’s previous best ranking was in 2008 when it was ranked fourth. It was ranked third nationally for cross-disciplinary teamwork in this year’s survey, which cited the growing importance of collaboration and communication in design education. “We are pleased to be recognized as one of many excellent design programs offered here at Auburn,” said June Henton, dean of the College of Human Sciences.

The College of Architecture, Design and Construction’s Industrial Design program was ranked ninth and Architecture 14th. Vini Nathan, the college’s dean, said, “I am delighted that the recent rankings from DesignIntelligence confirm the academic rigor and professional relevance of the design programs in the CADC. The extremely strong reputation of our architecture, interior architecture and industrial design programs is testimony to the convergence of bright students, dedicated faculty and staff and supportive alumni, advisory board and industry partners.” Also recognized for excellence in the survey was Rod Barnett, associate professor and chair of the Graduate Program in Landscape Architecture in CADC’s School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Architecture, who was named one of the 25 Most Admired Educators of the Year.

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The Industrial Design undergraduate program, in the Department of Industrial and Graphic Design, has been ranked in the top 10 industrial design programs for six consecutive years. The undergraduate Architecture program was up four spots in the rankings from last year, and marked its seventh consecutive year in the nation’s top 20 architecture programs.

Future research facility
State government and business leaders joined university officials on Nov. 18 to commemorate the start of construction on the new Auburn University Center for Advanced Science, Innovation and Commerce in the Auburn Technology Park.

Work starts on building to house collaborative research projects

Construction has begun on a $28.8 million science center in the Auburn Technology Park designed to foster multidisciplinary research collaborations.

A Nov. 18 ceremony marked the groundbreaking at the technology park for the 84,000-square-foot Auburn University Center for Advanced Science, Innovation and Commerce, also known as CASIC.

The building is funded by a $14.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce’s National Institute of Standards and Technology, with matching funds from state government and with support from Auburn University and the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station.

The new center will feature 20 laboratories as well as shared support spaces and specialized equipment areas for scientific research in bioenergy, water quality, food safety, genomics, information science and ecosystem health. The building will house researchers from the School of Forestry and Wildlife and the colleges of Agriculture, Engineering, Sciences and Mathematics and Architecture, Design and Construction.

John Mason, vice president for research, said the new center will be a valuable addition to Auburn’s research portfolio and is crucial to the university’s strategic research initiatives to provide solutions to critical problems and issues that face the nation, region and state.

“These issues include our focus on cyber systems and security, energy and environment, health sciences and food systems and transportation,” Mason said. “To address these critical areas, state-of-the-art research and development laboratories and facilities are essential for encouraging and supporting the high level of interdisciplinary, collaborative projects that will deliver results.”

Bill Batchelor, dean of the College of Agriculture and director of the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station, said, “This facility will put Auburn at the forefront of research on food, renewable energy and environmental sustainability.”
On Christmas tour
The home of Auburn’s School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences will join several houses and a downtown church on this year’s Loveliest Village Christmas Tour of Homes and Buildings.

This year’s tour of homes to include campus building, downtown church

The School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences Building will be among sites featured on the fifth annual Loveliest Village Christmas Tour of Homes and Buildings, sponsored by the Auburn Preservation League.

The tour will feature eight homes and buildings in the Auburn area, including the residences of Jane and Don Barringer, Kay and Richard Guthrie, Gayle and George Hammitt, Phillip and Debbie Hajek, Becky and Ed Lewis, and Meredith Luck. Other featured buildings include the Forestry and Wildlife Sciences Building and St. Dunstan’s Episcopal Church on Magnolia Avenue.

Tour dates are Saturday, Dec. 10, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 11, from 1 p.m.-4 p.m. Tour tickets are $20 and are on sale at the Auburn Chamber of Commerce and at The Villager.

Musicians from St. Dunstan’s will provide Advent music on Saturday, and Cross Road Community Church’s choir will sing Christmas music on Sunday afternoon.

More information is online at www.auburn-preservationleague.org.

Samford Hall Collection launched, featuring select Auburn-themed art items by alumni

Auburn University has announced The Samford Hall Collection, a selection of one-of-a-kind Auburn merchandise and memorabilia “created for the Auburn Family by the Auburn Family.”

The Samford Hall Collection includes products that are created by artists with ties to the university. The initial merchandise in this collection includes an exclusive line of handblown glass from Orbix Hot Glass of Fort Payne, owned and operated by Auburn alumni Cal and Christy Breed.

“It is an honor to have the opportunity to collaborate with Auburn University on its Samford Hall Collection. Having been shaped so much as a person and as an artist while I was a student at Auburn, it is a pleasure to design a line of glassware to represent the spirit of the university,” said Cal Breed.

The Orbix Hot Glass product line features pieces crafted exclusively for the Auburn University Family as items that can be collected, cherished and passed down for future generations. Among the first items featured by Orbix is a limited edition 2011 Auburn University Holiday Ornament.

Future items in the Samford Hall Collection will soon include exclusive posters, invitations and notecards designed by the Creative Services team in Auburn’s Office of Communications and Marketing.

Products from the Samford Hall Collection will be sold through an online store via the Auburn University Marketplace. For more information, or to see the first products in the Samford Hall Collection, go to www.auburn.edu/samfordcollection.

University to acquire former Bruno’s building off campus, expand dining on campus

The Auburn University Board of Trustees on Nov. 18 authorized the purchase of the vacant Bruno’s supermarket and six acres of land two miles from campus at the corner of East University Drive and Glenn Avenue.

Dan King, assistant vice president for facilities, said the property is available through a bankruptcy purchase at significantly less than normal market value. At 55,000 square feet and with 220 parking spaces, the building will provide space for functions that can be moved from the core of campus while several older, deteriorated buildings are torn down and replaced. Smaller businesses in the shopping center will not be affected by the sale.

The board also took steps for an addition to Telfair Peet Theatre and construction of a wellness dining facility on the south side of campus.

Trustees established a project budget of $3.3 million and authorized bids for an addition of 7,600 square feet to Telfair Peet. The addition will house a 125-seat black box theatre, a production facility offering more flexibility for staging plays and events than traditional theatres with fixed seating and stage. If bids are favorable, the building may also include a 2,200-square-foot dance studio.

The dining hall will be adjacent to a planned parking deck between the Athletics Center and the old coliseum, which is slated to be torn down in the near future. It will replace a dining facility that for decades was housed in the recently demolished Sewell Hall and will be near the new residence hall planned for the former Sewell site. The dining hall will be open to all and will specialize in meals for health-conscious individuals, including athletes and others with special dietary needs.

Campus Calendar

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2
CLASSES END for fall semester

MONDAY, DECEMBER 5
FINAL EXAMS BEGIN and continue through Friday, Dec. 9

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9
NEXT Auburn Report, last edition of 2011

MONDAY, DECEMBER 12
GRADUATION Ceremonies at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., Auburn Arena

MONDAY, DECEMBER 19
SEMESTER BREAK Offices closed until Tuesday, Jan. 3

2012

TUESDAY, JANUARY 3
OFFICES REOPEN Normal business schedule resumes

MONDAY, JANUARY 9
FIRST day of classes for spring semester

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13
FIRST Auburn Report of 2012 calendar year
Auburn faculty member Nan Fairley regularly challenges her journalism students to get off campus, “off the interstate” and deep into communities to apply what they have learned if they want more than just a grade in a course.

Since joining the Auburn faculty in 1992, Fairley, an associate professor in the Department of Communication and Journalism, has emerged as a leader in the university’s community engagement efforts. Journalism, she reminds her students, not only keeps citizens informed, it sustains communities and can be a powerful tool for learning and engagement.

In recognition of her success in combining teaching and community service, Fairley, an Engaged Scholar in the College of Liberal Arts, received the 2011 Auburn University Award for Excellence in Faculty Outreach, the university’s top outreach award, during Auburn’s annual faculty awards ceremony this fall.

“Professor Fairley’s extensive body of work in civic engagement, scholastic journalism, and community partnership is recognized by her peers here at Auburn and across the academy,” said Royrickers Cook, assistant vice president for University Outreach. “Nan’s devotion to student engagement and her exemplary outreach scholarship is clearly having an impact in the community.”

Cook cited Fairley’s Valley Vision project, a class-based student community journalism exercise, as an example of faculty leadership and student involvement that combines learning and service. During Valley Vision, journalism students developed a special newspaper about Valley, a small city in neighboring Chambers County. Incorporated in 1980 from several former mill towns near the Chattahoochee River, Valley had been struggling throughout its existence due to the decline of the textile industry in the region.

Over the past few years, the city had sought to redefine itself for economic development purposes, while civic leaders looked for ways to create a new image for the community and redevelop Valley’s historic riverfront mill properties.

In that endeavor, Fairley’s students produced a special newspaper that captured the history, culture and aspirations of the town and became the centerpiece of Valley’s development initiative. The project received national recognition at the 2010 Imagining America Conference in Seattle, Wash., and later that year at the National Outreach Scholarship Conference in North Carolina.

On a broader scale, Fairley’s engagement with students and communities has resulted in a glossy, feature magazine called “Front Porch.” The title alludes to simpler days when communities and citizens were bound together by conversations with neighbors from the front porches of their homes. “Front Porch” highlights 10 Alabama towns and is a part of a multi-year Living Democracy project with Mark Wilson in the College of Liberal Arts and the national Kettering Foundation.

Fairley said the heart of the project is learning through the journey of discovery. “Without the journey, there’s not as much authentic discovery,” she explained. “Classroom lectures on topics ranging from the meaning of community to stereotypes can only go so far.” She noted that in developing their stories, her students discovered hometown heroes fighting to better their towns, friendly mayors, tough issues, and hugs from welcoming community members.

“Of course, none of the above would be possible in the confines of a classroom,” Fairley said. “They also discovered something about themselves as journalists: the value of taking time to sit on a front porch and have real conversations; the challenge of finding just the right sources; the beauty of spending an afternoon with folks from Selma to Bayou La Batre to Collinsville.”

Fairley’s philosophy of pushing students “off the interstate” has been a cornerstone of her journalism classes. For Fairley, getting “off the interstate” means making connections: connecting students to community, connecting university resources to communities, connecting community partners’ needs to student talent and other resources, and connecting students to real people dealing with real issues.

“I believe that the educational experience is much richer when students see the impact they can have in communities,” she said. “I’ve been inspired to continue to grow in this area by the outstanding learning outcomes I see in my students and the positive outcomes of such connections in different communities.”

— Ralph Foster and Roy Summerford

Contacts found to be effective delivery system for time-release medications

A team of chemical and biomedical engineers at Auburn led by Mark Byrne, the Daniel F. and Joseephine Breeden Associate Professor in the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering, has developed a new method to deliver eye medication by wearing contact lenses.

Byrne’s lenses are the first to release drug doses over time for as long as the contact should be worn. The lenses deliver a constant flow of medication without altering a patient’s natural vision, or can be used to correct vision while also delivering eye medication, such as anti-inflammatories, antibiotics and anti-allergy drugs.

“Eye drops may soon be a thing of the past,” Byrne said. “Results indicate that our lenses release a constant drug concentration for the entire time the lens is worn. This is about 100 times better than the conventional therapy, which consists of drug delivery via eye drops. With numbers that impressive, this technology is a real game-changer.”

The contacts developed by Byrne’s team can be worn for up to 24 hours with daily wear lenses or up to 30 days with extended wear lenses. In contrast, eye drops often wash away within 30 minutes, requiring drops multiple times throughout the day for successful treatment.

“Unlike other contact lens technologies, we make our lenses,” said Byrne. “These aren’t contacts soaked in a medication that only release for a very short time. We are administering a drug through controlled release by creating drug memory in the lens structure while maintaining all of the other lens properties.”

The researchers’ paper, “Sustained In Vivo Release from Imprinted Therapeutic Contact Lenses,” demonstrates how Byrne’s group achieved extended release of a small therapeutic through drug delivery from molecularly imprinted contact lenses worn by a rabbit. This is the first time that a steady, effective concentration of a drug has been maintained in tear fluid for the duration of lens wear, or for 24 hours in their study.

“Eye drops and ointments make up more than 90 percent market share but are an inefficient, inconvenient method,” Byrne said. “Our lenses offer the increased efficacy and efficiency of drug delivery, which translates to better eye health.”

Byrne recently presented his study at the annual American Institute of Chemical Engineers’ meeting in Minneapolis. The research team’s findings have also been published in the Journal of Controlled Release. His team includes chemical engineering doctoral students Arianna Tieppo and Charles White, chemical engineering undergraduates Amanda Paine and Matthew McBride and ophthalmologist Meredith Voyles, assistant professor in Auburn’s College of Veterinary Medicine.

— Sally Credille
Campus News Briefs

Alpha Psi fraternity pledges $1 million to Auburn’s College of Veterinary Medicine

The Theta chapter of Alpha Psi fraternity has pledged $1 million over the next 10 years to benefit the Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine.

The gift will be used to enhance the facilities at the college, including three new classrooms in the educational wing addition that are under construction. The 150-seat lecture rooms will be accessible in 2012. The new Wilford and Kate Bailey Small Animal Teaching Hospital is scheduled to open in 2014.

College of Business professors’ article on ethics is among most cited in journal

Peter Stanwick, an associate professor of Management, and Sarah Stanwick, Taylor Associate Professor of Accounting, have been 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, and a special edition of the Journal of Business Ethics will be published in 2012 to acknowledge this accomplishment.

Head of Learning Communities Program at Auburn presents at National Conference

Ruthanna Payne, coordinator of the Learning Communities Program at Auburn, was an invited presenter in St. Louis at the National Conference of the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.

Payne co-presented a six-hour preconference session, “How to Build the Most Effective Interdisciplinary Program on Campus: Learning Communities.” She is the program administrator in educational support services for first-year, transfer, veteran and upper division students in Auburn’s 46 learning communities.

National institute awards Fellow status to Mechanical Engineering professor

Pradeep Lall, the T. Walter Professor of Mechanical Engineering in Auburn’s Samuel Ginn College of Engineering, has been named a Fellow by the board of directors of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.

Lall was recognized for his contributions to reliability prediction for electronic packaging. He is director of the NSF-CAVE3 Electronic Research Center at Auburn and the principal investigator on the center’s Phase-III NSF-grant.

Auburn Then and Now

Need an Auburn-themed Christmas gift for friends or family? The new coffeetable book “Echoes Strong and Clear: Auburn University Then and Now,” is available for $39.95 at the Auburn University Bookstore in Haley Center and Photographic Services in Foy Hall. Faculty and staff with ID receive a 10 percent discount. Full of historic and recent photographs, the book was produced by the Office of Communications and Marketing.

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