Gifts to Auburn top $131 million in past year, setting new record

Sparked by two $5 million pledges and a $10 million gift, private giving to Auburn University rose to an all-time high of $131.3 million in the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30. This tops the previous year’s total of $105.3 million. It is the third year in a row the university has broken the prior year’s fundraising record and raised more than $100 million.

The total for 2006-07 is 25 percent higher than the previous fiscal year’s earnings. AU received contributions from 37,875 donors, with the total representing pledges, deferred and outright gifts. Gifts of more than $1 million came from 23 donors. These gifts totaled more than $54 million, or 41 percent of the total giving for the year. An additional 30 percent of the fiscal year’s gifts came from donations of $100,000 to $999,999.

The Annual Fund also had a record year, bringing in more than $2.8 million from 31,956 donors. This is a 16 percent increase over the previous year’s numbers. The fund focuses on unrestricted gifts, which can be allocated by schools and colleges for immediate needs.

Of the $131 million contributed to the university last year, $28 million went to student support, $21 million to faculty support, $11 million to facilities and $71 million to programmatic support.

The “It Begins at Auburn” Campaign also had a groundbreaking year. The campaign reached its $500 million goal nine months early and ended the year with a state record for private giving during a campaign of more than $540 million. The campaign will conclude on March 31.

“The 2006-07 fiscal year will stand out in Auburn’s record books for setting a new standard in fundraising for the university and the state of Alabama,” said Bob McGinnis, vice president for development. “We still have individual goals across the campus that have not been achieved and many areas in need of increased support.”

“This outstanding financial accomplishment is due to our dedicated team of volunteers, deans and development staff. The Auburn spirit is evident in all they do to support the university and for this I give them thanks,” said McGinnis.

AU President Jay Gogue added, “Auburn supporters help bridge the gap between a good education and a great education. Their generosity this past year will be felt long into the future.”

Decorating for holidays
Facilities workers Alan Renoewick, on the ground, and Kim Crawford, on the lift, string lights and prepare to put up bows on a newly planted tree last week as part of holiday decorations in Samford Park. A fast-growing conifer, the Green Giant arborvitae is the first tree of its type on campus.

How Auburn Stacks Up
Increase in the size and number of AU labs and classrooms, 2001-07

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Classrooms</th>
<th>Labs</th>
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<td>13.9%</td>
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Source: Institutional Research and Assessment

Note: Due to an error during page design, a number in the Nov. 12 AU Report was incorrect. The College of Business enrolled 17 percent of new freshmen at AU this fall.

www.ocm.auburn.edu/au_report/aureport.html
With goal in sight, campus United Way continues ’07 campaign into December

C ampus volunteers are asking AU faculty, staff and students to dig a little deeper for contributions to United Way of Lee County during December.

The AU campaign was approaching 80 percent of its $140,000 goal last week for the 2007 United Way Campaign. AU had collected approximately $119,000 in pledges and contributions by Thanksgiving and a $5,000 commitment by the Student Government Association.

Although Thanksgiving usually marks the end of large-scale fundraising efforts for the Lee County campaign, the campus campaign regularly continues until the end of the semester in mid-December.

Campus Campaign Chair Bill Sauer said he was pleased to see contributions at AU surpassing $100,000 before Thanksgiving and especially impressed with the commitment from the Student Government Association.

In the campaign’s final push for 2007, volunteers are asking faculty and staff to contribute if they have not already done so and to consider increasing their contribution if they have already contributed.

B rian Thurow of the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering recently received a $300,000 grant through the U.S. Air Force’s Young Investigator Research Program.

The grant will assist Thurow, assistant professor in the U.S. Air Force for $9.5 million in grants. Recipients must show exceptional ability and promise for conducting research. The Young Investigator Research Program supports scientists and engineers who have received a doctorate or equivalent degrees in the last five years.

Thurow was one of 29 researchers chosen by the Air Force for $9.5 million in grants. Recipients must show exceptional ability and promise for conducting basic research.

The program seeks to foster creative basic research in science and engineering, enhance early career development of outstanding young investigators and increase opportunities for the young investigators to recognize the Air Force mission and the related challenges in science and engineering.

The “It Begins at Auburn” Campaign encompasses all AU business offices return to normal hours Tuesday, January 8

AU Report Editor: Roy Summerford. Contributing editors and writers: Mike Clardy, Katie Wider and Charles Martin, AU Communications; and Sara Borchuk, Engineering. Photography: Jeff Etheridge and Melissa Humble, AU Photographic Services; and peet Theatre; tickets, $10, available at 117 Goodwin Hall or call 844-4194.

AU Report, 23 Samford Hall, Auburn University, AL 36849. Telephone: 334/844-9999. Wednesday before publication date. Direct inquiries, suggestions and news items to AU Report Editor: Roy Summerford. Contributing editors and writers: Mike Clardy, Katie Wider and Charles Martin, AU Communications; and Sara Borchuk, Engineering. Photography: Jeff Etheridge and Melissa Humble, AU Photographic Services; and peet Theatre; tickets, $10, available at 117 Goodwin Hall or call 844-4194.

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 two weeks in summer term, except on the Mondays of the first Monday after some major U.S. holidays. Copies are distributed free by campus mail to full-time faculty and staff at campus offices. All others may request a delivery of the publication 4 p.m. on Wednesday before publication date: Direct inquiries, suggestions and news items to AU Report, 23 Samford Hall, Auburn University, AL 36849. Telephone: 334/844-9999. Email: summerford@auburn.edu.

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comfortable pair of pajamas and a good bedtime story might seem to be all a child needs for a good night's sleep. But according to an Auburn researcher, there are many other factors that affect how well a child sleeps at night.

Mona El-Sheikh, Alumni Professor of Human Development and Family Studies with AU’s College of Human Sciences, directs a study of the effects of poor sleep in children and the factors that can contribute to restless nights.

“We live in an achievement-oriented society where sleep is equated with laziness, and given this culture, people undermine the importance of sleep,” said El-Sheikh, who recently received one of AU's two Creative Research and Scholarship Awards for 2007.

She said data show that most elementary-aged children do not get the sleep they need. And while there is a vast amount of research available regarding how important sleep is for adults, El-Sheikh noticed that sleep in children was comparatively understudied. She began to think about how quality sleep in children related to her research interests: children’s well-being in the context of family adversity.

“In the past, sleep research was mostly limited to pediatric medicine and not really the human development realm. Our assessment of sleep in the context of family functioning was really new because it bridged different disciplines together,” she said. “I saw it as a potential avenue that could really clarify pathways of risk.”

With funding from AU and the National Science Foundation, El-Sheikh and Joseph Buckhalt of AU’s College of Education began studying the effects of sleep disruptions and how they relate to family risk and also to children’s physical health, adjustment, cognitive functioning and emotional well-being.

“We now know that sleep disruptions are related to worse grades in school, lower achievement on standardized tests, detriments in general cognitive functioning measures, increased aggression, and increased depression and anxiety,” she said.

Using more than 1,000 volunteers from five different school districts in Alabama, El-Sheikh and her research team invite parents and children to a lab in Haley Center where the children’s physiological activity – including heart rate, breathing, sweating and hormone secretion – are assessed. They are then exposed to stressors like trying to solve a Rubik’s cube or listening to a tape of a mild argument while their activity continues to be monitored.

Once the lab work is complete, the children return home where they continue their normal sleep routines for a week wearing an Actigraph, a wrist-watch-like device that records the amount and quality of sleep, including tossing and turning. During the week, El-Sheikh also conducts interviews with parents and children about their sleep.

Through this ongoing process, El-Sheikh and her collaborators continue to improve understanding of the effects of sleep disruptions in children.

In recent studies published in Child Development and Journal of Family Psychology, they found that marital tension, despite the parents’ best efforts to hide it, can set off a chain reaction in children, creating worry about the stability of the family which prevents them from relaxing and obtaining adequate sleep. Further, a 2007 study published in the Journal of Sleep Research found that the link between marital problems and children’s poor sleep is especially strong for those children prone to poor physiological activity. As a result, children suffer a range of negative consequences.

“Even mild loss of sleep can disrupt attention, alter information processing, weaken motivation, increase irritability and diminish emotional control,” El-Sheikh said. “For children, stress in the family can threaten their whole world.”

In other studies, El-Sheikh is investigating links between childhood obesity and lack of sleep as well as frequency of illness in children who do not get enough sleep.

“I’ve realized that for people to be well functioning adults, a lot of the issues and problems we face in adulthood have roots in childhood so examining what goes on in childhood is important because it gives us a window where you can actually modify some behaviors and hopefully feel you’ve made a contribution,” she said.

As her research continues and new findings are uncovered, El-Sheikh said she wants to send a message to parents that good sleep is imperative and that consistent bedtimes and wake times are crucial.

“The most important message in all of this is that sleep disruptions have a negative impact on all children. It doesn’t affect only certain minority groups or certain socioeconomic groups. It affects all children,” she said.