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Source: Institutional Research
and Assessment

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[www.ocm.auburn.edu/
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IAU report

FOR THE FACULTY AND STAFF OF AUBURN UNIVERSITY

AU leaders say SACS decision offers new start

AU administrative and faculty leaders say the lifting of probation by Auburn's accrediting agency last week offers a chance for the university to take a fresh look at the future.

"With this episode behind us, it is now time for all of us within the Auburn family to work together and to renew our efforts toward making Auburn everything it needs to be," said interim President Ed Richardson on Tuesday. He issued the statement after the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools ended the probation it imposed on AU one year earlier.

"I am appreciative of the efforts of all those who have worked extremely hard to allow us to achieve full compliance with the SACS standards," Richardson said.

In ending probation and reaffirming Auburn's accreditation, SACS agreed that AU had taken steps to address the association's concerns about university governance.

SACS will require the university to issue a report next September describing its progress in implementing changes adopted by the AU Board of Trustees. Those changes came in response to the accrediting agency's recommendations regarding the board's code of ethics for trustees and regular evaluation of the president.

"We fully intend to provide SACS with every report they request," said Richardson.

Gov. Bob Riley joined Richardson in presenting Auburn's case to SACS during the past year and again at the association's annual meeting. Riley was instrumental in the selection of new members to the AU Board and the appointment of Richardson as interim president in January, and Richardson helped the board develop a code of ethics, new bylaws and changes in operating procedures to comply with

(See *Beyond SACS*, page 2)



Honoring champions

Banners along College Street honor AU's 2004 football team for its 12-0 season and for winning the Southeastern Conference Championship (and AU Report National Championship). The banners were a cooperative project of the City of Auburn and AU through the Athletics Department and the Office of Communications and Marketing.

AU to graduate 1,430 on Friday

Auburn will award an estimated 1,430 academic degrees at fall commencement at 2 p.m. Friday in Beard-Eaves-Memorial Coliseum.

AU will award 1,156 bachelor's degrees, 210 master's degrees, three specialist's degrees and 61 doctoral degrees.

The College of Business will award the most degrees with 320, followed by Liberal Arts with 307 and Engineering with 180.

The College of Education will award 110 degrees, Sciences and Mathematics 69, Agriculture 59, Human Sciences 53, Architecture, Design and Construction 37, Forestry and Wildlife Sciences 11, and Nursing 10. Veterinary Medicine and Pharmacy have no graduates for fall semester.

Auburn has awarded more than 200,000 degrees at the main campus since its founding in 1856.

Beyond SACS

(continued from page 1)

SACS recommendations. "The lifting of probation is an acknowledgement that there has been real change at Auburn University," Riley said following the SACS announcement.

"Clearing this university's name with regard to its accreditation status has been my top priority since assuming the interim presidency at Auburn," said Richardson. "I have been confident all along that we would hear the news we've heard today (Tuesday), and I hope we can now move Auburn toward better days."

Richardson added, "I am convinced that if all Auburn people put aside whatever differences may have existed in the past and concentrate on working together for the common good, this university's future is filled with promise."

Alluding to the pending search for a permanent president, Richardson said, "I am further convinced that, by working together, we can make Auburn more attractive to the top-quality president this university deserves."

Willie D. Larkin, chair of the University Faculty, described the SACS probation as a "wake-up call" for the university. "We certainly don't want to repeat this or place our university at risk — ever again. Auburn has a bright future, but leadership must be the key."

Larkin said he hopes administrative and faculty leaders will seize the opportunity to establish stronger working relationships with each other. "The faculty have always known that the year-long probation was never about the academic side of the

house," he said. "However, regardless of who was at fault, we now have a great opportunity to mend fences and move the university in a positive direction."

A key to success, Larkin said, will be the ability of everyone involved to put aside hurt feelings from the past and commit to working together for the future of Auburn.

He added, "It should be noted that when the faculty question decisions made by the administration and the Board of Trustees, we are not being disloyal to Auburn. On the contrary, it only means we are practicing due diligence in the process of shared governance."

John Mouton, faculty adviser to the Board of Trustees, said Auburn has made significant advances in governance since the Joint Assessment Committee filed a letter of complaint with SACS in 2001. "Those advances can have a profound impact on our collective future," he said, "provided that the administration, the board and the faculty collaborate, with discourse as needed, for the overall and long-term benefit of the university."

Mouton said university activities and discussions over the coming year will have a major impact on Auburn for many years beyond. "The messages emerging from our community in the near-term will impact the consideration of potential candidates for our presidency, the recruiting and selection of which is as important to our future as the lifting of the probation," he added.

External reviews find no conflict of interest in business activities of Auburn trustees

External reviews over the past three weeks supported earlier findings by the Board of Trustees Audit Committee that all trustees are complying with the board's code of ethics, state laws and the standards of the university's accrediting agency.

Prominent civil rights attorney Fred Gray of Tuskegee and Birmingham business executive and attorney John J. Mahon, president pro tempore of the University of Alabama Board of Trustees, reviewed ethics reports and data on the business relationships of AU trustees at the request of interim AU President Ed Richardson, who referred to their findings during an oral presentation to the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools on Dec. 3.

The presentation was part of the university's efforts to end the year-long probation, which SACS lifted on Dec. 7, when the association reaffirmed AU's accreditation.

Richardson also cited an analysis by William

Weary, president of Fieldstone Consulting. Weary, a former official of the Association of Governing Boards, reviewed the study by Gray and Mahon and agreed with their findings.

The independent reviews came in response to a recommendation in November from a SACS committee that reviewed AU's efforts to comply with the association's recommendations on university governance. In its final report, the SACS committee had questioned whether some business relationships of trustees were in compliance with the board's code of ethics. While Richardson arranged for the additional reviews from outside sources, the board's audit committee re-examined trustees' ethics filings and confirmed its earlier finding that all relationships complied with the code of ethics.

The results of the latest reviews, along with other SACS-related materials, are online at www.auburn.edu/administration/specialreports/sacsdocuments.html.

Upcoming Events



2005

Tuesday, January 11

- Classes start for spring semester.

Monday, January 17

- First AU Report of spring semester. Please Note: This is a change from the printed version of the AU Report.
- Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday: No classes; offices closed.

Tuesday, January 18

- Meeting: University Senate, 3 p.m., Broun Hall auditorium.



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Wednesday, December 15

- Gallery Talk: Catherine Walsh, curator of exhibitions, discusses the Joan Cousins Hartman Collection of Tibetan Buddhist Bronzes, 2 p.m., Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art.

Thursday, December 16

- Curator's Choice Film Series: "Louis Kahn, Silence and Light," film about a leading architect of the 20th century, 7 p.m., JCS Museum of Fine Art.

Friday, December 17

- Graduation: Ceremony at 2 p.m., Coliseum.

Wednesday, December 22

- Holiday Break: AU offices closed until Wednesday, Jan. 5. Please Note: This is a change from the printed version of the AU Report.



Medical Clinic

Workers are landscaping and putting the finishing touches on AU's new Medical Clinic building. The clinic's doctors and staff are scheduled to start moving into the new facility this week from Drake Hall at Magnolia Avenue and the north end of Duncan Drive to the new building at the south end of Duncan. The new facility is scheduled to open in January.

Technology Network Center wins two awards from development association

The Alabama Technology Network Center at Auburn has received two awards this fall for outstanding project of the year from the University Economic Development Association.

In the first project, Amit Mitra, associate dean with the College of Business, and Mark Clark, visiting professor and management scientist for ATN-Auburn, worked with Boise Paper Solutions in Jackson. After teaching the four-week Six Sigma Black Belt course to a select group of Boise employees, Mitra and Clark worked closely with Boise and helped save the company \$582,000 by reducing grade-change times and reducing steam temperature used in the manufacturing process.

The term "Six Sigma" refers to a statistically derived performance target of operating with less than four defects per million activities. More than a target, "Six Sigma" is a process that enables a com-

pany to design and monitor activities that minimize waste and resources while increasing customer satisfaction.

The second award is for the work ATN-Auburn Management Scientist Rick Horne did with the Jackson Downtown Revitalization Committee to recruit an antique mall to the downtown area. Horne also assisted with negotiations that local officials said helped keep the downtown area vital and prosperous. Projections for filling the mall with vendors are six months ahead of schedule, and revenue generated is expected to reach \$150,000 this year.

The University Economic Development Association supports university-based organizations and their affiliates providing economic development, business and technical assistance to businesses and communities.

Spirit of Excellence

Each month AU presents Spirit of Excellence awards to four employees to recognize exceptional performance. Recipients for November were, from left, Bobbi Gistarb of Pharmacy Care Systems, Chris Sharpe of AU Housing Property Management, Sharon Hughley of Mathematics and Statistics and, not shown, Cindy Tily of Veterinary Medicine.





Twilight calendars
This early evening scene of Nichols Center is among images of Auburn in "Twilight on the Plains," the 2005 AU calendar produced by Photographic Services. The calendars are available at Photo Services in the L Building, the AU Bookstore in Haley Center, Anders and J&M bookstores and Tiger Rags. For information on ordering calendars by mail, call 844-4560.

United Way surpasses campus, Lee County goals for 2004

AU and Lee County have exceeded their goals for the 2004 United Way campaign.

The campus campaign raised \$138,515 as of Dec. 7, surpassing its \$135,000 goal.

"This is the most contributed by AU in recent history, maybe even the most ever," said Susie Hall, coordinator of the campus campaign. "We are so blessed to work with employees who care about others in the community."

The AU effort is part of the Lee County United Way's 2004 campaign, which raised \$977,000, exceeding the county goal by \$12,000.

United Way contributions are important for many people in East Alabama, Hall said, because the money supports local charities and social services.

Of the money contributed at AU and elsewhere in Lee County, more than 90 percent remains in the local area for services to needy families, the disabled, youth groups, sick or injured persons and others with special needs that are not met through federal or state agencies.

IMG expanding technology training

Auburn's Instructional Media Group is accepting applications for a new Educational Technology Academy that will be available spring semester.

The program is an expansion of IMG's popular summer program for faculty and others using technology for teaching and academic support.

The academy offers instruction and assistance in new instruction-related technologies, such as web-based courses, course supplements, PowerPoint presentations and other technologies.

As in the summer program, projects may range

from narrowly focused topics to complete changes in course delivery methods.

Faculty, graduate teaching assistants and staff from all academic and support units are eligible for the IMG's 2005 Spring Academy. Sessions will be from 1 p.m.-4 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays, Jan. 18-April 14, except for March 29 and 31.

For more information or to apply, see the web site www.auburn.edu/img/summer_academy/index.htm or contact the IMG at img@auburn.edu or 844-5181.

Engineering dean honored by his alma mater

Larry Benefield, dean of Auburn's Samuel Ginn College of Engineering, was recently inducted into the Via Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering's Academy of Distinguished Alumni at Virginia Tech.

A faculty member at AU since 1979, Benefield has been dean of the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering since 2000.

Benefield is a 1975 doctoral graduate of Virginia Tech and is a member of the department's alumni advisory board.

At Auburn, Benefield was major professor to Mark Widdowson, a member of the faculty of Vir-

ginia Tech's Via Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering.

As an engineering administrator, he has led the college's efforts to implement an interdisciplinary automotive certificate program in response to the state's growing automotive industry and coordinated a joint program with the College of Business that integrates business and management practices for undergraduate engineering students.

Under Benefield, the Ginn College of Engineering also established the first undergraduate wireless engineering degree program in the nation.

Forsythe elected president of retailing association

Sandra Forsythe of AU's College of Human Sciences, has been elected president of the American Collegiate Retailing Association.

Forsythe, Wrangler Professor in the Department of Consumer Affairs, previously served as vice president, secretary, development chair and newsletter editor of the association, which represents educators with special expertise in collegiate retailing.

A member of the Auburn faculty since 1991, Forsythe has conducted extensive teaching and research in consumer behavior and her work has been published in Journal of Retailing, Journal of Business Research, Journal of Applied Psychology and other professional and academic publications. She is also a former editor of the Clothing and Textiles Research Journal.

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