Week of activities set in memory of Martin Luther King

Auburn University will host a week-long tribute to Martin Luther King Jr. from Monday, Jan. 17, through Friday, Jan. 21, with the theme “Paying it Forward to Change the World: One Auburn, One Community.”

In observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, no classes are scheduled for Monday and university offices will be closed that day.

Highlights of the week will include an oratory contest, a scholarship breakfast, guest speakers, lectures, student performances and community service projects. All events are open to the public.

The week’s events begin with a scholarship breakfast at 7:30 a.m. Monday at The Hotel at Auburn University with Trooper Taylor, Auburn University assistant head football coach, as the keynote speaker. To purchase tickets for the event, call 501-3084 or 844-5042. Monday’s events will also include the community service project, “A Day On and Not a Day Off.” To register for this project, call 844-5042.

On Tuesday, Dana Chandler, university archivist at Tuskegee University, will present “George Washington Carver: The First Green Scientist.” The public lecture will be in the Student Center, rooms 2222-23, at 11:45 a.m., and is part of the ongoing Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs Lunch and Learn lecture series. Jennifer Saffron, adjunct lecturer of film studies and English at the University of Pittsburgh will speak on “It Takes a Village: Youth Media Literacy and Service-Learning,” at 3 p.m. Wednesday also in the Student Center, rooms 2222-23. The event is sponsored by the Caroline Marshall Draughon Center for the Arts and Humanities and Access and Community Initiatives.

In a Discover Auburn presentation on Thursday, Overtoun Jenda, associate provost for Diversity and Multicultural Affairs will discuss the status of diversity and inclusive excellence at Auburn University. The 3 p.m. presentation will be in Special Collections and Archives in Draughon Library.

Student finalists in the “Word from the Mountain Top” oratory contest will be announced at 11:45 a.m. Friday at the Multicultural Center. This year’s King Week activities are coordinated by Access and Community Initiatives and the Multicultural Center units of the Auburn University Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs.

Carnegie report awards Auburn high classification for Outreach

Auburn University has been selected for the 2010 “Community Engagement Classification” by the prestigious Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, recognizing Auburn’s commitment to community partnership and public service through its mission of outreach. The classification is the most significant recognition in higher education for a university’s total outreach body of work in the community.

“We’re honored to receive this national recognition for our faculty and student engagement,” said Auburn University President Jay Gogue. “Outreach is a defining aspect of our land-grant heritage, and this classification reflects Auburn’s significant commitment to serving the public in Alabama and beyond.”

Wide use in the study of higher education, the Carnegie Classification system is the leading framework for describing institutional diversity in the United States. Previously, Auburn had been recognized by Carnegie as a comprehensive, doctoral-granting research institution. The community engagement classification was established by Carnegie in 2006 as an elective category for which institutions could voluntarily apply.

The application process for the classification was designed to assess institutional engagement in the curriculum, faculty scholarship, community partnerships and student life. In order to be selected for the classification, institutions had to provide detailed descriptions of institutionalized practices supporting community engagement and demonstrating alignment among mission, culture, leadership, policies, administration and resources.

Hot party on a cold night

Not even freezing cold could keep students and fans away from Toomer’s Corner Monday night after the Auburn Tigers won the 2010 BCS national football championship with a 22-19 victory over Oregon in Glendale, Ariz. The win wrapped up a historic 14-0 title run and was the Tigers’ biggest moment on the national stage since 1957. The BCS title was especially cherished by older fans, who had been bitterly disappointed when the 1983, 1993 and 2004 teams had been denied the title despite conquering tougher opponents while compiling records equal to or better than teams awarded the crown in those years. With students back for spring semester, a victory celebration is scheduled for 1 p.m. Jan. 22 in Jordan-Hare Stadium.
Reed serving as Auburn’s Presidential Administrative Fellow for spring 2011

Cynthia Reed, professor and director of the Truman Pierce Institute in the College of Education, has been named Auburn’s 2011 Presidential Administrative Fellow for spring semester.

The Presidential Administrative Fellowship Program provides senior administrative experience to faculty, providing them the opportunity to appreciate and understand higher education administration. The fellow proposes and develops a plan and will dedicate the semester to a special project.

In her project, “Developing University-Community Collaborations for a Better Alabama,” Reed seeks to develop and enhance networks that increase Auburn University’s visibility, reputation and capacity to identify and collaboratively address educational, economic and community problems. She will host a series of community forums to address the concerns and needs of Alabama citizens and community educational and business leaders.

“My project was designed to draw upon previous work creating partnerships and engaging community members,” Reed said. “These forums will be focused on learning more about current issues and challenges facing communities so that we can identify ways that Auburn University’s academic, research and outreach scholarship efforts can better address these needs.”

Reed said she hopes her project will lead to partnerships with other higher education institutions in the state, developing the groundwork for future collaborations to address the needs of Alabama citizens.

Education professor to spend semester in Egypt

James Witte, an associate professor and coordinator of the Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership and Technology’s adult and higher education program, will teach courses this semester at Suez Canal University in Suez City, Egypt.

Beginning in February, Witte will teach an undergraduate course focusing on the nature of adult education and two graduate courses, one on research methods and one on dissertation development, at Suez Canal University. While in Egypt, he will remain connected to Auburn students while teaching a distance course in adult education.
NIH designates new center in College of Veterinary Medicine using nanotechnology in cancer research

The National Institutes of Health has designated Auburn University’s College of Veterinary Medicine a Center for Translational Cancer Nanomedicine. The five-year, $1.7 million award is part of a larger, $13.5 million grant from the NIH National Cancer Institute which established a Center for Cancer Nanotechnology Excellence.

Auburn researchers will work with a multidisciplinary team of scientists, industry and government partners to develop new nanotechnology-based strategies for treatment of lung, pancreatic and breast cancers. Studies will involve both the design and testing of new nanotherapeutic strategies and related delivery systems.

“The human body is naturally programmed to protect itself against cancer using its powerful immune system,” said Valery Petrenko, a professor in Auburn’s Department of Pathobiology, who will direct the center. “Unfortunately, different environmental and genetic factors can affect this ability. As a result, millions of people all over the world suffer and die from various cancer diseases.”

In the United States, more than 1.5 million new cancer patients will be diagnosed and more than 500,000 will die this year.

“To respond to this challenge, our goal is to develop a nanotherapeutic defense system that will be more powerful than the immune system in its ability to recognize and destroy appearing cancer cells in the human body,” said Petrenko.

He continued, “Our concept is based on the use of our proprietary phage display system – a collection of genetically engineered nanoparticles, or ‘magic bullets’ – that exceed the repertoire of natural antibodies and immune cells a thousand times. From this collection, we select particles that specifically recognize cancer receptors and convert these particles into nanomedicines that destroy tumors.”

Auburn researchers will work with recognized scientists from prominent institutions including Northeastern’s Vladimir Torchilin, Mansoor Amiji, Sri Sridhar and Craig Ferri; Harvard Medical School’s S. Nahum Goldberg; Tufts University’s Alexey Degterev; and Nemuroe Medical Innovations’ Tim Coleman.

At Auburn, Petrenko established a research program focusing on the concept of phage-driven drug delivery. “I am very happy our team could receive the support to translate our novel concept for production and clinical practice,” he said.

– Tara Lanier

Social work professor named among most influential in his field

Chris Locke, an assistant professor in the College of Liberal Arts’ Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work, has been named among the top 20 most influential social work professors in the country by Masters of Social Work Blog.

Locke was cited as one of the most influential social work professors because of his experience in the social work and mental health fields, as well as his current areas of research.

Before joining Auburn’s faculty at the start of fall semester, Locke worked in various capacities in Ohio including home-based MultiSystemic Therapy, outpatient therapy for sex offenders and domestic violence offenders for five years and in a psychiatric inpatient hospital setting for 10 years. He has also received extensive training in cognitive-behavioral therapy/rational-emotive behavioral therapy at the Albert Ellis Institute in New York and the Cleveland Center for Cognitive Therapy in Ohio. He holds master’s and doctoral degrees in social work from Ohio State University.

“I am very honored and humbled by this, considering that I have only been on the faculty here since August. I believe my involvement on campus regarding my research and social work practice interest in domestic violence/interpersonal violence was a big part of this recognition,” Locke said, adding, “My colleagues have been very supportive of this recognition, as well as my friends and family.”

Locke’s research interests include studies of domestic violence offender treatment as well as the stigma of mental illness, with a focus on the impact of the media on stigma, recovery and mental illness.

– Vicky Santos
Campus News Briefs

Biggio Center head to present keynote address at conference in Estonia

James Groccia, director of Auburn University’s Biggio Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, is presenting an invited keynote address at a conference, “University Teaching as a Scholarship?,” in Estonia this month.

Groccia, who is also an associate professor in Auburn’s College of Education, will speak on “Professional Development of the University Teacher: The U.S. Experience.”

The aim of the conference is to develop willingness in university teachers to elaborate and explore their teaching skills. The conference is organized by the European Union’s Primus/Archimedes Programs and the Estonian Ministry of Education.

Education researchers win national center’s 2010 Bright Ideas Awards

Researchers in the College of Education’s Center for Disability Research and Service recently earned one of the 2010 Bright Ideas Awards from the National Center for Technology Innovation.

Scott Renner, Margaret Flores and Kate Racoff received their award at the 2010 Tech Expo during the NCTI Innovators Conference in November in Washington, D.C.

Their presentation, “Increasing Communication and Social Skills Using the iPad,” demonstrated how the devices can be used to address the communication and behavioral needs of students with developmental disabilities.

Renner is assistive technology coordinator for the Center for Disability Research and Service, while Flores, an assistant professor in the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation and Counseling/School Psychology, is its coordinator of educational support. Racoff is pursuing a doctorate in rehabilitation counseling.

Scholarships available for dependents of faculty, staff at Auburn University

The Office of University Scholarships is accepting applications for the 2011-12 Auburn University Employee Dependent Children Scholarship.

A parent or guardian eligible for consideration must: (1) be a fulltime, regular, continuing employee in any employee group in any division of Auburn University; and (2) be employed for a minimum of 12 months immediately preceding the application deadline.

A dependent child eligible for consideration must: (1) be an admitted, undergraduate student enrolled at the Auburn University main campus; (2) be a dependent child as documented by an IRS tax return for the most recent filing period; (3) demonstrate financial need as determined by the Office of Financial Aid through completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (available online at www.fafsa.ed.gov) by the scholarship application deadline; and (4) have a minimum 3.0 cumulative high school, transfer, or unadjusted Auburn GPA, depending on current enrollment status.

Application materials and information are available online at www.auburn.edu/scholarship/forms-and-documents for an application. Completed applications should be submitted to the Office of University Scholarships located in 115 Quad Center or faxed to 844-7571. A separate application should be completed for each dependent child. Priority consideration will be given to applications received on or before March 1.

The Employee Dependent Children Scholarship application is separate from the Employee Dependent Waiver application. Direct any questions regarding the FAFSA or the Employee Dependent Waiver to the Office of Financial Aid at 844-4634 or finaid7@auburn.edu. Direct questions regarding the Employee Dependent Children Scholarship to the Office of University Scholarships at 844-7570 or scholar@auburn.edu.