Interim AU President Ed Richardson sees similarities between the challenges facing Auburn today and those faced by Wilford Bailey, who became interim president two decades ago.

“Dr. Bailey came in during a troubled time and brought some peace and stability to the university,” recalled Richardson, who was superintendent of Auburn City Schools during the Bailey presidency in 1983-84.

“He very quickly helped restore the university’s focus and established a sense of trust that made it possible for people to put aside their differences on behalf of shared values and goals.” When Bailey left office, the Board of Trustees retroactively named him president in appreciation of his leadership.

Richardson, who holds three degrees from Auburn, said AU was a much stronger and unified institution when Bailey left office. That, he said, will be his goal as interim president. “Somewhere along the way, we lost our focus and we need to regain it. I think we have an excellent chance of doing so, and I will do everything possible to help Auburn achieve that goal.”

By refocusing on shared values and goals and acting accordingly, Auburn should meet the SACS criteria this year and establish a solid foundation for the next president, he said. "Somewhere along the way, we lost our focus and we need to regain it." (See Challenge, page 2)
Jocelyn Wilcher has joined AU’s Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs as the department’s student advisor, says Keenan Grenell, interim associate provost for multicultural affairs.

Wilcher, formerly academic advisor in the College of Architecture, Design and Construction, will coordinate the Minority Peer Mentoring Program, which helps minority students develop leadership and academic skills while becoming more involved in campus activities.

The Minority Peer Mentoring Program is one of the most important programs on campus to ensure the academic success and leader- ship development of minority students, said Grenell.

“Since the students in this program are expected to develop into leaders within their professions, communities and state, we wanted a proven and respected leader to guide the program. In Jocelyn Wilcher, we have found an ideal person to meet this challenge,” he added.

Wilcher holds three degrees from Auburn — a bachelor’s in human development and family studies and master’s and specialist degrees in adult edu- cation. Grenell said Wilcher, as an academic adviso- ry in CADC over the past five years, had estab- lished a reputation for enthusiastic job performance and developed a broad network of contacts that would benefit students in the Minority Peer Men- tuning Program.

In her new post, Wilcher said she will expand opportunities and develop new programs to help minority students succeed at Auburn. “I would like to build this program to the point where students will have more many scholarship and internship opportunities granted to them,” she said. “And, hopefully in the future, we will have opportunities for not only students at Auburn but also minority high school students to develop their leadership and academic skills on our campus.”

Library dean elected to offices in state, national organizations

Sheri Downer, interim dean of AU Library, was recently elected to state and national offices of library organi- zations.

At the state level, Downer has been elect- ed chair of the Network of Alabama Academic Libraries. NAAL was established in 1984 by the presidents of Alaba- ma’s academic institu- tions and the Alabama Commission on Higher Education. NAAL coor- dinates a statewide pro- gram to strengthen and share library resources among the state’s university libraries.

At the national level, Downer has been elect- ed to serve a three-year term on the Diversity Committee of the Associa- tion of Research Libraries. The ARL Di- versity Program sup- ports efforts within li- braries to promote and develop library staff and leaders who are representative of a diverse pop- ulation.

The Association of Research Libraries is comprised of 123 lead- ing research libraries in North America. The ARL’s mission is to shape and influence the future of research li- braries in scholarly communication.

Agriculture journal gives high rankings to two AU departments

Meat & Poultry, the business journal of the North American meat and poultry industry, recently gave high national rankings to programs in two de- partments at the AU College of Agriculture. The rankings ap- peared in a recent issue of Meat & Poultry and were based on an infor- mal survey of journal members from more than 40 universities. The business journal ranked AU’s Animal Sciences and Poultry Science departments 10th nationally for service to the industry and 12th in the field of Poultry Science fourth in the nation for its pro- grams specializing in poultry processing.

Meat & Poultry said the rankings are based on input from meat and poultry industry leaders and editors and were derived from the point of view of industry leaders and editors.

Survey shows rapid growth in use of electronic mail as news vehicle

A survey by the Office of Communications and Marketing in November revealed a major shift in the way AU faculty and staff receive their news about campus.

Between 1996 and 2003, use of electronic mail as a primary source of campus news rose from less than 5 percent to 47 percent. Reliance on print media as the primary source of news during that period declined from 64 percent to 24 percent.

However, according to the survey, e-mail is not displacing print media but is increasingly used in tandem with it. The survey revealed that 89 percent read most issues of the AU Report and 78 percent read AU Daily e-mail news reports at least once a week. Both the AU Report and AU Daily are pro- duced by the Communications-arms of AU Commu- nications and Marketing.

Respondents listed their top priorities in campus news coverage, in descending order, as information about pay and benefits, AU finances, legislative issues affecting AU, working conditions and the cal- endar. Lowest rated items were conferences, Camp- us Forum, alumni gifts and color pictures.

The survey was the third conducted by the office since 1996, providing a comparison of changes in news preferences and use of internal communica- tions by faculty and staff.

The survey was conducted by campus mail between Nov. 1-21. Survey forms were mailed to 755 faculty and staff, and 254 completed and returned the forms by the deadline for a 34 percent return rate. Roy Summerford, editor of the AU Report, con- ducted the survey, with assistance from Mike Clarby, editor of AUDaily, and Camille Barkley, director of marketing services in the Office of Com- munications and Marketing.


University Faculty meeting rescheduled to Feb. 10

AU faculty officers have rescheduled the special, called meeting of the University Faculty to Feb. 10. The meeting was originally scheduled for Jan. 27 to discuss the decision of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to place Auburn on probation over governance issues.

That session was rescheduled for Feb. 3 following the resignation of former President William Walker. Interim President Ed Richardson, appointed by the Board of Trustees on Jan. 20, asked the faculty lead- ers to schedule a session that he could attend after the Board of Trustees meeting on Friday.

The AU Senate, representative body of the faculty, will meet at 3 p.m. in Brown Hall auditorium and be adjourned for the general faculty to meet there at 3:35 p.m. An agenda is online at www.auburn- edu/administration/governance/ senate/2004f010fac.htm.
AU’s Office of Communications and Marketing has won three Awards of Excellence and a Special Merit award from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, District III.

The district council represents approximately 5,000 development, communications, marketing, public relations and alumni relations staff members in 177 institutions in the Southeastern states. CASE officials will present the awards on Feb. 25 during the regional council’s annual conference in Atlanta.

AU Communications and Marketing won Awards of Excellence for internal communications, television and print. CASE officials will present the Special Merit Award to the Auburn University School of Art for a series of five brochures, “This is the Auburn Experience,” that feature or discuss various aspects of living in Auburn.

AU won an Award of Excellence in the television category for public service announcements in which Anson Carter, associate professor and faculty recite the Auburn Creed. Auburn also won the design improvement award for the "Tiger Transit Rider’s Guide," which was designed by Al Elzey.

The PSA and transit guide projects were coordinated by the office’s assistant director, Don Ford. For that work, AU won a Special Merit Award for internal communications. The Internal Communications Award recognizes the combined efforts of Communications staff to produce the AU Daily e-mail packages, AU Report internal newsletter, “AU in the News” daily clips and the AU calendar on the university Web site and “Briefing Notes” providing periodic background information on major events.

Mike Clardy, David Granger and Roy Summerford coordinated those efforts, which included coordination with other staff in Communications and Marketing, Photographic Services and communications professionals in AU colleges and schools.

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Panel seeks nominations for two positions on Board of Trustees

The AU Trustee Selection Committee has issued a call for nominations, with a Feb. 18 deadline, for two positions on the Board of Trustees.

The committee will meet Feb. 26-27 to review nominations for the seats formerly held by the late Charles Hall and Steve Reynolds. The nominations process began Dec. 29 with seven years remaining in his terms. The positions formerly held by Richardson will be filled by the next trustee board meeting, which is set for Feb. 26-27.

Two positions have been set aside for the Separable Trustee Program to fill the seats formerly held by the late Samford and Richardson. Those nominations are due Feb. 18 with interviews to be held Feb. 26-27.

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February 2, 2004

ACES, partners launch campaign for agri-tourism

Tourism and farming, which each generate about $6 billion in income annually in Alabama, are a natural match, said Tom Chesnutt, an ACES Tourism specialist and assistant professor of nutrition and food science at Auburn. He notes that thousands of Alabamians, many of whom are several generations removed from the farm, have a natural curiosity about how commodities raised on the farm eventually find their way to supermarket shelves.

Partners with ACES in the agri-tourism endeavor are the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries, the Alabama Farmers Federation and the Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel. The partnership’s goal is to develop a statewide Alabama Agri-Tourism Trail — an inventory of agri-tourism sites on the partnership’s new Web site, www.alabamaturistourism.com. Extension personnel will then work with representatives from the other organizations to inform the public about these opportunities.

Although initial efforts focus on marketing existing agri-tourism operations, the partners also are developing long-term plans for more ambitious outreach efforts.

“Down the road, we hope to be providing a series of workshops, publications and other outreach efforts so that those who are not yet involved in agri-tourism will have the tools to start their own operations. We also want to develop a certification process for these sites,” Chesnutt said.

Winter skies

Recent frigid temperatures have had a redeeming quality, as seen in this sunset captured on film looking west along Dormitory Drive.

AU Human Resources offers class on parenting adolescents

The Office of Human Resources will sponsor the program “Parenting Adolescents: Your Teenager Really Does Care What You Think” at 9 a.m. Feb. 10 in Foy 321.

Jennifer Kepelman, an associate professor in human development and family studies, will present the two-hour program, which examines ways to improve communication with teenage children. To register, contact Human Resources on-line at www.auburn.edu/administration/human_resources/hrd/index.html or call Melissa Askew at 844-4145.

Sollie named special adviser to provost

Donna Sollie has been named to a one-year appointment as special adviser to the provost for women’s leadership. The appointment became effective Jan. 1.

Sollie is an Alumni Professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies.

She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Tennessee and has been a faculty member at AU since 1986.

Women’s Leadership Institute seeks nominations for class

The Women’s Leadership Institute is seeking nominations from faculty for admission of outstanding female undergraduate and graduate students for membership in the institute.

The recently created AU Institute will induct approximately 30 students during a five-day session in May of each year. Each faculty member may submit up to three names for consideration.

The session on May 17-22 will help the women develop skills to aid in their career success. The institute covers the cost of instruction, food, housing and travel expenses, and it seeks applicants from diverse backgrounds, regardless of the student’s major or field of study.

Faculty nominating students for the institute may submit up to three names.

To register, contact the Women’s Leadership Institute office in the Foy Building, Suite 297, by Friday, Feb. 6, by e-mail to provokeditor@auburn.edu. Contact Tamia Spencer at 844-6842 for additional information.

Seminars to explore future of race relations, diversity in America

A Feb. 13 public seminar at AU will explore the future of African Americans, race relations and diversity in Alabama and the nation.

Nationally prominent scholars at the 7 p.m. forum in Foy Student Union Ballroom include Princeton University President John Sibley Butler, who has spent most of his career with the Atlanta Journal-Constitution; a reporter, editor and editorial page editor.


The visiting speakers will reflect on the divergent views of early 20th century African American philosophers W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington and discuss how those leaders would view issues of race and diversity in the new century.

West, one of the nation’s most prominent writers on race and diversity, recently joined the Princeton faculty as a professor of religion after a highly public dispute with the president of Harvard over the direction of that university’s African American studies program.

Two staff members receive research awards

Niki L. Johnson and Brian Schweiker are recipients of the second annual Meritorious Service Award from the Office of the Vice President for Research.

Johnson, research compliance administrator with the Office of Human Subjects Research, and Schweiker, an electronic technician with the Research Electronics Support unit, each received a $1,000 cash award and a plaque.

“Niki, an attorney with an M.B.A., has brought a new level of professional skill to our operations so that we serve AU researchers and students more effectively,” said Chip Burton, director of the Office of Human Subjects Research. “Niki works tirelessly and puts in long hours to ensure that protocols are reviewed in a timely manner for submittal to the Institutional Review Board, and she has played an important role in delivering educational programs to investigators all across campus.”

Schweiker’s supervisor, Henry Cobb, cited his contact with Auburn’s knowledge of the field of electronics and computers is outstanding. “Cobb wrote in his nomination of Schweiker. “His job requires him to work on all types of machines. He does all it with a can-do attitude and great service. Brian has always displayed a certain thirst for knowledge for new technology.”

The Meritorious Service Award began last year by the OVPPI, recognizes exemplary job performance. All employees within any of the units reporting to the OVPPI are eligible for nomination. Previous recipients include Deb Enbach of the Office of Technology Transfer, and Tony Ventimiglia of the Office of Sponsored Programs.

Journals named Auburn faculty member to editorial board

Industrial and Engineering Chemistry Research Journal has named Ram B. Gupta, AU Alumni Associate Professor of chemical engineering, to its editorial advisory board, effective Jan. 1.

The American Chemical Society publication is one of the most prestigious and widely circulated international journals for research in the fields of industrial and engineering, chemistry and materials engineering.

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Bequest will fund scholarships

A bequest from the estate of former Auburn High School teacher Mary Simpson Stephens will provide $2.1 million to endow scholarships for students who demonstrate financial need.

The bequest will endow the Miles and Mary Stephens Endowment for Scholarships. Mary Stephens died in 2002, and her husband, Miles Stephens, a retired AU faculty member, died in 1998.

“Mrs. Stephens’ gift to Auburn University is an inspiration to the Auburn family and to the students who will benefit from her spirit of philanthropy,” said Robert McGinnis, Auburn’s vice president for development. “This endowment contribution will memorialize her benevolence, and we at Auburn are most grateful.”

Wes Williams, vice president for student affairs, added, “This is a wonderful gift from the Stephens family as it will carry on the philosophy of helping students receive an education. There are too many students that are not able to attend college because of financial need and the Stephens scholarship will provide that opportunity for students to attend Auburn University.” Williams said.

Born in Piedmont, S.C., Mary Simpson graduated from Chicoza College in that state. She taught and was a high school principal in North Carolina before marrying Miles Stephens in 1937.

In 1945, the couple moved to Auburn, where Mary worked in the university registrar’s office and Miles, a 1927 graduate of Auburn, was a soil scientist. She earned a master’s of education degree at Auburn in 1948 and began teaching in 1952, first in Opelika and then at Auburn High School, where she taught business, until her retirement in 1970.

“Mary was a lovely person. She was a genuine southern lady from South Carolina,” Larkin Radney, her nephew-in-law, recalled. “She really loved Auburn – both the town and the university.”

Radney, who also is attorney for the estate, described Stephens as very outgoing and always interested in helping others. “Up until a few months before her death, she read books to the elderly at Wesley Terrace who couldn’t see to read,” he said.

Her colleagues at Auburn High School remember Mary Stephens as a generally happy person. “She was a very gracious lady and always had a smile on her face. She was never unhappy,” said Virginia Taylor, who taught at Auburn High School with Stephens from 1962-70.

ATN gets grant to teach workplace-violence prevention

The U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration has awarded the Auburn-based Alabama Technology Network Center a $153,000 grant to develop a workplace violence prevention program.

The program is aimed at small- to mid-size businesses, says Jackie Robinson workforce development specialist. The ATN project team, which also includes AU management scientist Rick Horne and graduate assistant Quita Rosser, will develop a comprehensive training program for workers, supervisors and managers.

The free training will help employers identify situations and behaviors that could lead to workplace violence. It will also cover measures to prevent violence and procedures to follow if violence occurs.

Stage “freaks”
The original AU Theatre production “Freakspiel” concludes its premiere run this week. The play is AU Theatre’s view of reality television shows as an updated version of early 20th century “freak” shows. For show times and box office information, see calendar on pages 4-5.

Airline, FAA executives to discuss future of industry

An executive from the successful low-cost carrier JetBlue Airways and officials from the Federal Aviation Administration will discuss the future of the aviation industry Thursday at a 7 p.m. public forum at Lowder Business Building, Room 125.

Panelists include Al Spain, senior vice president of operations of New York-based JetBlue Airways; Nick Sabatini, the FAA’s associate administrator for regulations and certification; and Quentin Smith, the FAA’s senior technical adviser to Sabatini.

The forum on aviation is sponsored by the Department of Aviation Management and Logistics in the College of Business. Co-sponsors are the Aviation Management Advisory Board and aviation and logistics student organizations at Auburn.

“This is a very distinguished and knowledgeable panel and their visit to Auburn is a tribute to the outstanding reputation of our university and the aviation program,” said forum coordinator Ted Mallory, an Aviation Management Advisory Board representative.

The AU Report is an official publication of Auburn University. Each unit mailing copies of this document to off-campus addresses. Each unit must include its return address. Communications Marketing will not accept billing for copies mailed by other units.