Senate candidates state their views for faculty voters

With Conner Bailey and Patricia Duffy moving into the two top elected positions of the University Faculty and the University Senate on March 15, who will succeed them in 2006?

This issue of the AU Report provides statements from and biographical information about the four nominees for chair-elect and secretary-elect offices in the University Faculty, which includes everyone classified as faculty at Auburn, and the University Senate, the faculty’s representative body. A committee of the University Faculty nominated two professors for each position.

Nominees for chair-elect are Richard Penaskovic of Philosophy and Christa Slaton of Political Science. Nominees for secretary-elect are Kathryn Flynn of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences and Virginia O’Leary of Psychology.

Faculty will vote electronically on March 10-14 for a chair-elect and secretary-elect to succeed Bailey and Duffy, respectively, in those positions and move into the top positions. The results will be announced at the University Faculty meeting on March 15, when Bailey succeeds Willie D. Larkin as University Faculty and University Senate chair and Duffy succeeds Debra Cobia as secretary of the faculty and its representative body.

The chair presides over meetings of both the University Faculty and the University Senate and is the primary faculty representative to the university president and administration. Besides maintaining records for the University Faculty and the senate, the secretary assists the chair in representing the faculty and serves on the senate’s Rules and Steering committees.

As immediate past-chair, Larkin will represent the faculty for a year as adviser to the Board of Trustees, succeeding John Mouton in that role.

The senate will release information about voting procedures closer to the start of voting. The faculty used electronic voting for the first time last year.

Late afternoon shadows add to the serenity around a student design project near Hargis and Biggin halls.

How Auburn Stacks Up

Average faculty salaries, 2004-05

Source: Institutional Research and Assessment

www.ocm.auburn.edu/au_report/aureport.html
Richard Penaskovic in his own words

As a child I drove my parents crazy with questions: Where did I come from? What will become of us? Asking questions is how I learn. I attended a workshop on the use of the computer at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York when I was 12 years old. Here programming started to be the rage. The workshop was for faculty from every discipline who wished to teach computer science. I wound up asking practically all the questions because many of the other faculty allowed me to be a spokesperson for their views. I question things not to be annoying but because I am naturally insatiable. I see several key issues facing this university. First, why not begin a search for a permanent president immediately? In my opinion Dr. Richardson came as interim president for only one primary purpose: to get us off SACS probation. To his great credit Dr. Richardson has accomplished this. However, if interim deans can only serve for a year, for an even stronger reason an interim president should not serve for more than a year. We have not had a president chosen by the people who work here every day since Dr. Travee left in 2000. Six years without a permanent president is not healthy for the institution, nor consistent with a commitment to shared governance. In addition, without a permanent president or provost, searches for deans will be on hold indefinitely because candidates do not want to call the persons to whom they will have to report. Second, Dr. Richardson now says that he has six priorities to accomplish, one of which is to conduct a program review. Dr. Richardson tells me that he came up with these priorities himself. Would it not be better if these priorities emerged from the dialogue, as courses belong in the core curriculum? After all, they have the expertise in these areas. As Aristotle said: “The expert in a particular area is the person trained in that area.” Should not the interim president search immediately for a full-time director of Affirmative Action/EEO? Do not the recent firings in the Athletic Department show the present system to be unsatisfactory? We also need to recruit a more diverse student body and faculty, including minority groups in addition to people of color. Why do hundreds of Jewish students attend the University of Alabama and Emory University, while there are none that attend AU? Why can’t we use, any necessary changes being made, the same recruiting techniques that the Athletic Department does? Why do minority recruiting minorities so that we can hire minorities from underrepresented groups? Why not beef up our sabbatical program for faculty and institute one for administrators? I know faculty/administrators that have been here 15 years and have never had a day’s leave. They all know the persons to whom they will have to report. Third, program review, two things should be kept in mind. First, we need to ask ourselves what kind of student do we want to turn out at AU? What kind of skills should our graduates possess? The answers to these questions should determine what set of courses best fit our students for life in a forever-changing world. Second, program review should not be rushed into but should occur under the aegis of a permanent president and provost chosen by the entire university rather than by an interim president and provost. “Asking questions is how I learn. I will continue to ask the tough questions as I work cooperatively with the administration to nudge this university forward.” Richard Penaskovic

University Faculty Chair-Elect Candidate

Robert Penaskovic

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University Faculty Chair-Elect Candidate

Christa Slaton in her own words

As a member of Auburn University’s faculty, I am committed to the university’s mission to serve the citizens of Alabama through instructional, research and community service. We need an academic leader who will work with the entire campus to support and prepare Alabamians to respond successfully to the challenges of the 21st century. This exciting opportunity is best accomplished by recognizing the trust placed in our faculty by the citizens of the state, by striving for excellence in all our endeavors, and by collaborating with all stakeholders to promote the highest ideals of an institution of higher learning.

Great reservoir of faculty expertise on this campus that promotes academic freedom, encourages study and discourse to advance knowledge and prepares students for an ever-changing global society. The hallmarks of great universities are faculty are devoted to keeping Auburn among the best academic institutions in the country.

The best means to achieve Auburn’s mission is through shared governance. After more than two decades of research in my field, I have discovered that policies made openly with candid discussion among diverse perspectives are usually wiser and more easily implemented than those developed by a small group of like-minded thinkers behind closed doors. Developing policies democratically is not always the most efficient method of decision-making, but it is the most effective. When one factors in the difficulties of imposing policies on those we need to give voice to (such as students, staff, and faculty) one recognizes that efficiency in decision-making is lost in policy implementation. One avenue for shared governance is the University Senate, a deliberative body composed of elected representatives and administrators. The chair should use this forum to bring together faculty and administrative officials to share ideas and policies that affect the academic life of Auburn University into an open debate. This body is the appropriate venue for faculty discussion of policies that are often evaluated and/or proposed by university and senate committees.

I believe we are most successful at fulfilling our goals when our faculty spend time working with the administration in implementing policies derived from shared governance rather than reacting to decisions that have been made in executive offices without the careful consideration of diverse perspectives.

Christa Slaton

Christa Slaton is a professor in the Department of Political Science in the College of Liberal Arts. She was a visiting assistant professor in AU in 1992-93 and returned as a member of the faculty in 1994. She was promoted to associate professor in 1999 and became a full professor in 2001. She served as director of the Master’s of Public Administration program from 1997-99. Christa Slaton holds a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Hawaii and is currently teaching at Auburn. She is associate editor of the “Journal of Public Policy” and is author and co-author of three books and over 40 refereed articles in publications in her field.

Biography notes about Richard Penaskovic

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Pharmacy collaborative encourages community-involvement incentives

Auburn’s Harrison School of Pharmacy has joined forces with nine other health-profession schools across the United States in a nationwide effort to get colleges and universities more involved in their communities.

"Our goal is to make changes in the way community-engaged scholarship is defined and considered as it relates to awarding promotions and tenure," said Janelle Krueger, an assistant clinical professor and co-ordinator of Auburn’s Pharmacy Practice Experience program.

Krueger said the prevailing tenure system in the United States emphasizes scientific research with much less attention devoted to community-based teaching, research and service. The collaborative is an attempt to recognize community-engaged scholarship, she said, in an attempt to make changes in the way tenure is awarded.

The group will increase support for community engagement by developing new models for faculty review and promotion and tenure policies and practices as incentives for faculty participating in community-engaged scholarship. "It is our hope that these models will then be adopted by schools across the country," Krueger said.

The task force will be composed of the Harrison School of Pharmacy’s emphasis on community engagement and the school’s Pharmacy Practice Experience program closely with the goals of the national health collaborative.

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"Our program is unique because it extends from the first year of pharmacy school to the third year. It involves students in the patient care process early in their education," Krueger said.

The Pharmacy Practice Experience is a community-based program that matches pharmacy students with people in the Auburn area who need a moderate level of health care assistance. In an effort to help those people make informed health decisions, the students visit them each week to discuss medications, perform routine tests such as blood pressure checks and serve as a general health resource.

"Our program is unique because it extends from the first year of pharmacy school to the third year. It involves students in the patient care process early in their education," Krueger said. "We provide support to make changes in the way community-engaged scholarship is defined and considered, so that what we’re ahead of the game," she added. "Since Auburn recently revised the definitions of outreach and outreach scholarship for promotion and tenure, we can share our journey thus far in recognizing this type of scholarship."
I write this statement from Nepal, where I am currently teaching and doing research as a Fulbright senior scholar. Therefore, I am very much interested in the recent developments in the University of Vermont's political situation. The current political tensions and the role of the University Senate, both on paper and in actuality, and I am committed to ensuring that all voices are respectfully heard. I am encouraged to be part of the governance process. An atmosphere of democratic participation is not only desirable as a principle but necessary to function as a democracy. All voices are afforded genuine respect and where business is conducted with professionalism and civility. The position of senate secretary is an important one, as accurate record keeping is critical to any organizations, especially a large one dependent on good minutes for its all-too-often-ignored or overlooked institution—memory.

Having served in a variety of administrative capacities from department chair at two different universities to president of two large professional organizations with memberships in the thousands, I am deeply committed to the importance of critical evaluation, clear and unbiased record-keeping, and to committing to doing business with professionalism and civility.
English Department launches public lecture series about world literature

The Department of English in AU’s College of Liberal Arts is starting a World Literature distinguished lecturer series to highlight the expanded scope of the literature program in Auburn’s core curriculum.

Each semester an internationally prominent scholar will come to Auburn to discuss topics that will be of special interest to the general public as well as students and faculty, said Alexander Dunlop, coordinator of the World Literature Program.

The first speaker in the World Literature Lecture Series will be Sabry Hafez, a professor of modern Arabic at the University of London. Hafez, who is also a visiting professor at Harvard, will speak at 7:30 p.m. Monday, March 7, in the auditorium of Draughon Library.

Hafez, an internationally prominent literary scholar and critic, will discuss the perceptions and misperceptions that the Arab World and the West have of each other. He will also meet with Auburn faculty to discuss successful approaches to teaching literature from other cultures.

The visiting lecturer is co-editor of three volumes of “The Longman Anthology of World Literature,” a survey of significant literature from major cultures of the Ancient World, the Medieval Era and the Early Modern Period. Hafez, who earned a Ph.D. in modern Arabic literature from the University of London in 1979, is a member of a nine-member panel that is responsible for financing research in modern languages in all British universities.

The public lecture series is sponsored by the English Department, the AU Office of Diversity and Race Relations and the Longman Company. The public lectures will help focus attention on a major part of Auburn’s core curriculum, said Dunlop, an associate professor in the Department of English. He noted that the World Literature Program is an expanded version of the sequence that was called Great Books until last fall semester. “In the study of literature, as well as in other academic studies, we need to promote awareness of and respect for other cultures because graduates will be in contact with other cultures in their careers and daily lives,” he said. “The study of literature helps people learn more about themselves as well as other cultures.”

He added, “We have not abandoned the traditional canon, but we are rethinking the courses to show how Western literature fits in with literature from other cultures.”

‘Hunger’ film series moves from Human Sciences to Business

The “Pay It Forward” film series, which originated in the College of Human Sciences as part of AU’s involvement in the worldwide “War on Hunger,” has a new sponsor. The “War on Hunger” Subcommittee of 19 in the College of Business began sponsoring the film series in February. Films are shown on Sundays at 5 p.m. in Room 129 of the Loewder Business Building. Upcoming films and dates are: “Life and Death,” March 6; “Lost Boys of Sudan,” March 13; and “Hidden in America,” March 20.

IMG opens registration for Summer Academy

AU’s Instructional Multimedia Group, which provides training in academic technologies for faculty and others, is accepting applications for its 2005 Summer Academy.

The Summer Academy is a five-week in-depth training course that includes instruction in the use of WebCT, PowerPoint, web-design software, photo editing software and other educational technologies. The academy will offer basic and advanced levels of instruction to faculty, staff and graduate students.

For more information on instructional programs at either level or to access the online application, go to www.auburn.edu/img and click on “IMG Academy.”

The priority application deadline is March 15. Applications received after that date will be considered on a space available basis.