Campaign seeks support from AU faculty and staff

Faculty and staff volunteers have launched a campuswide fundraising effort among their colleagues as part of AU’s $500 million “It Begins at Auburn” campaign.

The faculty and staff campaign began March 2 with 45 team leaders drawn from all colleges, schools and major divisions at Auburn. Co-chairs are Christopher Roberts, Uthlaut Professor and chair of the Department of Chemical Engineering, and Victoria Tate, classroom building manager in Facilities.

Over the next few weeks, campaign volunteers will distribute information packets that show faculty or staff members how individual gifts can help improve targeted areas while providing a larger boost for the university. Gifts can be targeted broadly, such as scholarships, or directed to specific departments, schools or colleges or targeted for areas of special interest such as the library, band, arboretum, museum or other areas within the university.

Campus campaign organizers say faculty and staff contributions are a way for individuals closest to the action to boost programs that are important for students, faculty, staff and other members of the university community. And, they say, faculty and

See Campus campaign, page 2

Provost seeking professor for office's chief of staff

Provost John Heilman is seeking a tenured full professor with experience as a department head or associate dean at Auburn to serve as chief of staff for the Office of Provost.

The successful candidate will serve as a liaison to the deans and will be responsible for issues including budgetary matters, programmatic review, space planning issues, working with the Academic Honesty Committee, oversight of the

Jule Collins Smith Museum and special projects as assigned by the provost.

Faculty members with interest in the position should submit a CV and a letter of application indicating experience relevant to the position. Only current AU faculty will be considered. The office encourages women and minorities to apply.

The deadline for receipt of applications in the Office of the Provost is Friday.

On stage

In a scene from last week’s presentation of William Shakespeare’s “The Tempest,” characters played by Sarah Dunivant and Jason Ferguson celebrate the discovery of a treasure that led to unexpected consequences. The play was the latest in the 2005-06 season at Telfair Peet Theatre.
The National Science Foundation has awarded a nearly $400,000 grant to AU’s Samuel Gin College of Engineering to support targeted diversity efforts in the college.

Three Computer Science and Engineering faculty members developed the program to increase the number of African-Americans in tenure-track faculty positions and graduate level programs in computer science and computer engineering. Associate Professor Joan Gilbert spearheaded the grant-writing effort, and he was joined by Associate Professor Gerry Dozier and Assistant Professor Cheryl Seals.

Auburn’s grant was one of the first of its kind supporting minority students interested in a career in computer science. North America universities had 173 computer science doctoral students in fall 2004. Of 5,179 computer science and computer engineering faculty in North America, 53 are African-Americans.

Gilbert said he thinks Auburn’s African-American presence played a role in the success of the grant. Among the most productive institutions in those academic disciplines, AU has about 10 percent of all Ph.D. students in those fields and two of the eight African-American associate professors in North America.

Tate noted that the campus campaign’s theme, “Participation Begins with Me,” reflects the importance of faculty and student participation to the overall campaign.

“Among members of the university community, we know first-hand how expensive it has become to obtain a post-secondary education,” she said. “I keep thinking I’m going to wake up and everything is going to be OK,” she said. “I am going to stay positive and know that God is going to take care of everything. I am really looking forward to the future.”

“The faculty and staff here at Auburn have a vested interest in seeing this university campaign succeed,” he said. “Out of that commitment and pride, we can provide an example for alumni and supporters of the university by demonstrating that we believe in what we are doing here.”

He added, “Widespread support for the campaign by those of us on campus should inspire others to respond with additional support for Auburn. The emphasis with this faculty and staff campaign is placed on the number of participants, not on the size of the contributions. By participating in this process at any level we can reveal a vote of confidence in what we are doing at Auburn.”

For more information about the faculty-staff campaign, see the Web site www.develop.auburn.edu/campaign or contact Sharon Awtry at 844-1445.
AU institute helps disabled teens overcome obstacles in transition

Making the transition from high school to college can be tough. However, the challenges can be even greater for someone with a disability. Auburn’s Transition Leadership Institute is helping teenagers with disabilities throughout Alabama overcome these challenges and successfully move from their teen years to adulthood.

The work of the Auburn institute is highlighted across Alabama this week as AU hosts the 16th annual Alabama Transition Conference at The Lodge and Conference Center at Grand National in Opelika from Monday-Wednesday. The annual conference brings together teachers, counselors, agency representatives, parents and others to examine the latest research and outreach developments in the transition process.

The Auburn institute, headquartered in the AU College of Education, works with state agencies such as vocational rehabilitation, mental health, workforce investment and social security to develop programs and provide services for special education students.

“The idea is to not have a gap between when a student leaves high school and when that student moves to the next phase.”

Karen Rabren, the institute’s co-director, says Auburn’s Transition Institute is unique among the handful of transition institutes and centers in the United States because it both conducts research on the transition process and offers outreach services.

“The institute is important because we systematically provide the collaboration, planning and policy development with all our state partners,” Rabren said. “If we didn’t have this structure, this might not happen. We provide a foundation from which those agencies can build and provide assistance.”

The institute began in the early 1990s and was recently recognized by AU when Philip Browning, institute co-director, was awarded the 2005 Annual Outreach Award for Faculty Excellence.

Rabren, who is also head of the Department of Rehabilitation and Special Education at AU, said the institute works to help prepare students for the changes that occur once they finish high school. For some, this means entering college. For others, the change is from education to a job or vocation. The students receive transition services that range from mild for those who continue on to college, career and independent living to severe for those who may need assistance for the rest of their lives.

One component of the institute is the Alabama student tracking system, a comprehensive research effort that provides school systems and agencies throughout the state with accountability and program improvement measures.

Besides assisting professionals, parents and advocates for the disabled, information gathered through the institute’s research helps inform lawmakers in the crafting of legislation and allocation of funding for programs that benefit special education students.

For more information on AU’s Transition Leadership Institute, visit www.auburn.edu/rse/institute.

Faculty exhibition
Works by faculty in the Art Department in AU’s College of Liberal Arts are on display at the Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art through May 14. The exhibition by 17 faculty members includes ceramics, sculpture, paintings and drawings, such as "Bird in Cage," above, by Ray Dugas, a member of the department since 1974.

Leah Atkins to discuss history of AU women
Auburn’s Sesquicentennial Lecture Series continues Tuesday with a presentation by historian Leah Rawls Atkins. Atkins will present “Women at Auburn” at 4 p.m. in the Special Collections Room of Draughon Library.

Director emerita of the AU Center for the Arts and Humanities, Atkins was the first student to earn a Ph.D. in history at Auburn. She has written several books including Blossoms Amid the Deep Verdure: A Century of Women at Auburn.

In 1892, Auburn, then known as the Alabama Polytechnic Institute, became the first institution of higher learning in the state to admit female students. Three women, including Kate Conway Broun, daughter of A.P. I. President LeRoy Broun, enrolled that year.

How Auburn Stacks Up
Top 10 feeder high schools for new AU freshmen, fall 2005

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Freshman 2005</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>95</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hoover</td>
<td>86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oak Mountain</td>
<td>82</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vestavia Hills</td>
<td>69</td>
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<td>Yrigal Grissom</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spain Park</td>
<td>58</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bob Jones</td>
<td>55</td>
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<td>Mountain Brook</td>
<td>48</td>
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<tr>
<td>McGill Toddle</td>
<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hewett Trussville</td>
<td>43</td>
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Source: Institutional Research and Assessment

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