Groundbreaking
University, state and national dignitaries provided a symbolic start last week to construction of Phase I of AU’s new Transportation Technology Center in the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering. U.S. Sen. Richard Shelby and his wife were special guests for the ceremony on Monday. Shelby, Alabama’s senior senator, was influential in obtaining $65 million in federal funding for the $108 million center.

State Department selects faculty from AU
The U.S. State Department has awarded Fulbright Scholar grants to three Auburn faculty members to lecture and perform research at institutions abroad during the 2005-06 academic year. Christopher Shook, an AU assistant professor of strategic management, Narendra Singh, a professor of molecular biology, and David South, a professor of forest regeneration, are among 800 U.S. faculty and professionals who will travel abroad to 140 countries through the Fulbright Scholar Program during the next year.

Shook will teach strategic management and conduct research on the development of entrepreneurial intent in transitional economies at the Academy of Economic Sciences in Bucharest, Romania.

Singh said he plans to spend six months in Poland, primarily at Lodz University near Warsaw. He will help his Polish colleagues establish graduate and undergraduate plant biotechnology programs and conduct research on a protein that has therapeutic value for cardiac diseases.

South will lecture on forest nursery and tree-planting practices and review segments of the forestry graduate program at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. While there, he will also be the keynote speaker at a pine-regeneration workshop sponsored by the Institute for Commercial Forestry Research.

AU Provost John Heilman said the Fulbright grants are an honor for the faculty recipients and the university. “The exchange of ideas that the Fulbright program affords has historically proven beneficial to both the home institution of the scholar and the host institution.”

He added, “We encourage our faculty to pursue these and other opportunities that benefit them individually and Auburn University as a whole.”
University, city take steps toward new research park for emerging industries

Recent actions by a development foundation and by Auburn University represent bring plans for a university research park closer to reality, says AU Vice President for Research and Michael Moriarty. The Auburn Research and Technology Foundation, which is spearheading development of the research park for AU, has secured a non-profit status to assist universities in development projects such as a research park through low-cost financing. “Our tax-exempt status enables us to obtain bond money and other sources of financing that are not available to for-profit developers,” said University Financing Foundation representative Tom Hall.

Moriarty said site work for the research park is expected to begin by late summer. The first is projected to be ready for occupancy by late 2006, with a second building expected for completion in early 2007. “These are ambitious schedules, but the developer and the city’s engineering firm believe these dates are achievable,” he said.

The Auburn Research and Technology Foundation at AU selected the University Financing Foundation of Atlanta as the park developer. Formed in 1982, the financing foundation’s mission is to assist universities in development projects such as a research park through low-cost financing. “Our tax-exempt status enables us to obtain bond money and other sources of financing that are not available to for-profit developers,” said University Financing Foundation representative Tom Hall.

The Atlanta-based foundation has conducted extensive development for Georgia Tech. The foundation’s development portfolio of more than $520 million also includes projects at Clemson University, University of Alabama at Birmingham and University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Meanwhile, the City of Auburn has contracted with the Barge, Waggoner, Sumner and Cannon engineering firm, also known as BWSC, to design the research park. The city and its engineering firm believe these dates are achievable, he said.

The Auburn Research and Technology Foundation will oversee the work. The research and technology foundation will hold a long-term lease from AU on the 156-acre site southwest of the intersection of Shug Jordan Parkway and South College Street.
AU research: Time together is best way to strengthen ties with children

How much time do you spend with your child? The amount of time a mother and child spend together affects the quality of the parent-child relationship regardless of race, according to recent research by an Auburn faculty member.

Paris Strom, an assistant professor in AU's College of Education, found that mothers and children from these different ethnic groups all ranked quality time spent together as the most important variable of a successful parent-child relationship.

Strom and his colleagues used the Parent Success Indicator to survey 779 black, Hispanic and white American mothers and 806 adolescents in six different categories to determine the strengths and learning needs of parenting across the races from the perspective of both generations. The results were reported in the Winter 2004 issue of the Journal Adolescence.

“We’re looking at two different sides of the same coin. One side says what you think you’re good at as a parent and what you think you are good at,” Strom said. “The other side identifies your weaknesses as seen by you and your child.”

Children in the study ranged in age from 10 to 14 years old. “We chose this age group because early adolescence is a transition time. Most children this age are dealing with puberty and many are beginning to think at a higher level,” Strom said. The goal of the research was to establish an American Mother Standard or norm — something that hasn’t been done before. The norm will serve as a benchmark or basis for comparison that other groups can be evaluated against to help identify inadequacies. “If a group strays from the norm in a negative way, it deserves some attention.”

Ethnic groups were weighted to approximate their proportion of the national population. “We combined these three groups which represent 95 percent of the mothers in the United States. Common strengths and common problems were identified,” he said.

Of the 60 items, the items that mothers ranked lowest as their greatest weaknesses included a need for information about helping their child explore career choices and difficulty arranging leisure time for themselves.

“Regardless of race, these are things that everyone has to deal with.”

The adolescents agree to some extent about the areas of weakness, ranking frustration over chores and their mothers’ inability to arrange leisure time in the bottom tier.

“There was more of a consensus between the generations regarding areas viewed as successful,” said Strom.

The adolescents’ interaction with friends fifth. “Time spent together was the factor with the greatest influence on perceptions of success by both generations,” said Strom.

Strom said the goal of the research was to improve the quality of the parent-child relationship regardless of race, according to recent research by an Auburn faculty member.

Friends and colleagues of forestry researcher William Allen Carey have established a memorial fund in his honor in the AU School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences.

Carey, 56, died April 22 in an automobile accident in Columbus, Ga. He held a Ph.D. from Duke University and had been a research plant pathologist at Auburn since 2000. His wife, Debra Carey, is a lab technician in Columbus, Ga. Their daughter, Kaffie Sledge, is a columnist for the Columbus (Ga.) Ledger-Enquirer, will serve as workshop director.

“The high school students will work closely with professionals and professors on campus and participate in field trips to newspapers and other sites,” said Strom.

Workshop to introduce high school students to journalism

High school students from Alabama and Georgia will get a crash course in journalism and other communication fields June 12-17 during a workshop by the Department of Communication and Journalism in AU’s College of Liberal Arts.

“Regardless of race, these are things that everyone has to deal with,” Strom said. “We know that there are things in common that we all have to do.”

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“We learn from what we spend time doing and many are beginning to think at a higher level,” Strom said. The goal of the research was to establish an American Mother Standard or norm — something that hasn’t been done before. The norm will serve as a benchmark or basis for comparison that other groups can be evaluated against to help identify inadequacies. “If a group strays from the norm in a negative way, it deserves some attention.”

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