AU regains lost funds as state passes budget

Under the state education budget passed by the Alabama Legislature last week, the AU main campus will receive a 13 percent increase in appropriations for the fiscal year starting Oct. 1. The main campus appropriation is $158.9 million, up $18.6 million from this year. A major part of the increase was due to the state providing funding for retiree-related expenses it had shifted to higher education over the past two years. Full funding for the retiree insurance program and the Teachers Retirement System were key objectives of AU’s legislative agenda this year.

In a related matter, the budget also includes an extra $2.9 million in funding for AU, part of $13 million in additional funding for higher education to partially reimburse the universities for money lost due to the previous shift in retiree obligations. Passage of the state budget with the additional funding has immediate implications for Auburn as the university prepares for the start of both a new academic year and a new fiscal year.

• Much of the guesswork is removed for university budget planners as they rush to meet an early, self-imposed deadline for the university’s operating budget for 2005-06. In most years, the administration asks the Board of Trustees to approve a budget shortly before the start of a fiscal year. In some years, the Legislature has waited until August or September to pass a budget, causing AU to delay action on its own budget until after Oct. 1. But the AU Business Office is trying to complete the process for the next fiscal year during the summer as it prepares for the launch of new financial records software in the fall.

• With state appropriations amounting to approximately one-third of AU’s annual operating

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Vitaly Vodyanoy wins Creative Research Award for technological innovation

Vitaly Vodyanoy of the College of Veterinary Medicine has won AU’s Creative Research Award for 2005. Vodyanoy, a professor in the Department of Anatomy, Physiology and Pharmacology, will be honored at a reception from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesday at the Arcadia Lounge in the Hotel at Auburn University.

The Creative Research Award carries a $5,000 cash prize and plaque. It was established by the Office of the Vice President for Research in 1998 to recognize exceptional research and scholarly accomplishments.

Recipients are nominated by their peers and colleagues, and winners are selected by a committee comprised of one senior faculty member from each college and school, a representative of AU’s research institutes and previous Creative Research Award recipients.

“I can think of no other Auburn researcher or scholar more deserving of this year’s prize,” said Vice President for Research Michael Moriarty. Vodyanoy, who also directs the Biosensor Laboratory at the College of Veterinary Medicine, is the inventor of an ultra-resolution imaging microscope and a group of other technologies known as molecular recognition. The development company Aetos Technologies Inc. was formed in 2003 to commercialize Vodyanoy’s molecular technology and support university research developments.

A native of Russia, Vodyanoy earned a Ph.D. in biophysics from the Agrophysical Research Institute in Leningrad. His primary research interests are in sensory physiology, receptors, biosensors and optics.

“I have lived in the U.S. for 26 years and worked at New York University, the University of California, Irvine, and here at Auburn,” said Vodyanoy, who has been a member of the AU faculty since 1989. “Only at Auburn have I found my real academic home.”

Greenleaf music gets premiere in China

The Shanghai Jiao Tong University Orchestra in China recently performed the world premiere of “Celebration” and “ICPC Fanfare,” which were written by Robert Greenleaf, a music professor and composer at Auburn.

The orchestra performed Greenleaf’s music in April as part of the opening ceremony of the Association for Computing Machinery International Collegiate Programming Contest, a worldwide computer software-writing competition sponsored by IBM. Greenleaf also served as music director for the event, coordinating the music for the opening and awards ceremonies.

“The orchestra this year was a student orchestra which played with much enthusiasm,” Greenleaf said.

“I was honored that many members of the orchestra wished to have their picture taken with me,” he added.

Greenleaf’s “ICPC Fanfare” received its world premiere in April as part of the 2004 IBM competition in Prague.

Lockrow honored by ETSU for career

Lynn Lockrow of the AU Theatre Department was recently honored for career achievement by his alma mater, East Tennessee State University.

Lockrow, who is an associate professor and director of design and production in the AU Theatre Department, received the Hall of Fame and Outstanding Alumni Award of the Department of Communications, Division of Theatre at ETSU. A 1968 graduate of the Johnson City, Tenn., institution, Lockrow is the fourth recipient of the award.

Lockrow has been an Auburn faculty member since 1985. He has also taught at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, where he earned a Master of Fine Arts degree, and Indiana University of Pennsylvania and High Point University in North Carolina.

His professional experience in theatre has focused on outdoor drama, and includes work on plays by the artistic director, a scenic and lighting designer and a production manager.

Increased funding

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budget, the increase will enable budget planners to adhere to guidelines reviewed by the Board of Trustees in April. Those guidelines include plans for pay raises for faculty and staff and for increases in operating budgets for most departments as AU seeks to improve its competitiveness against major research universities in neighboring states.

The extra funding to partially reimburse higher education for the earlier unfunded mandates demonstrated the success of an alliance between AU and the University of Alabama. The universities broke with tradition this year to form a united front in their 2005 legislative agendas. During the legislative session, interim AU President Ed Richardson repeatedly stressed the importance of the alliance, stating that the state’s two largest universities would be treated more fairly in the future if they stood together and refused to back down on the major funding issues of the year.

The Alabama Legislature designated the additional money to higher education as an automatic conditional appropriation. If the state enters the new fiscal year with $283.9 million or more on hand, as state financial planners predict, the funds will automatically go to the institutions and could carry forward in future years as part of the institutions’ regular appropriations.

The total AU System appropriation for 2005-06 is $242.5 million, not counting the $2.9 million in conditional funding for Auburn and $297.0 million for AU-Montgomery. The Agricultural Experiment Station is slated to receive $29.1 million. Cooperative Extension is to receive $31.5 million and AUM is to receive $22.8 million.

Ritenbaugh elected treasurer of regional professional association

The National Association of College Auxiliary Services-South elected Bob Ritenbaugh, AU’s assistant vice president of auxiliary services, as the association’s treasurer during its recent annual conference in Kentucky.

Ritenbaugh succeeds Allie Snyder of the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, who had served in the position for the past three years.

NACAS-South provides professional development services to collegiate auxiliary services professionals in 12 Southern states. The regional association is a major component of the National Association of College Auxiliary Services.

For environment-friendly project

Architecture head shares design award

Bruce Lindsey, head of the School of Architecture at Auburn, is part of a team of architects whose project won a Green Project Award for 2005 from the Committee on the Environment of the American Institute of Architects.

The project, one of eight winners across the United States, was honored last week at the American Institute of Architects 2005 National Convention and Design Exposition in Las Vegas.

The COTE Green Project Awards recognize outstanding examples of architecture that address significant environmental challenges through designs that integrate architecture, technology and natural systems.

Lindsey worked with the firm of Davis, Garner, Cannon & Pope of Pittsburgh in the design of the Pittsburgh Glass Center. The center is an art studio and nonprofit organization dedicated to teaching, creating and promoting glass art. As part of a neighborhood revitalization project in Pittsburgh’s historic Friendship area, the center is housed in a building that has previously been home to a food co-operative, a mattress distributor, and an automobile showrooms. The design takes advantage of the building’s extensive natural lighting and ventilation.

The awards committee said the Pittsburgh Glass Center project was an “adaptive reuse project with a simple big idea to reuse the heat from the glass process — a great clear idea.”

“It is particularly fitting that the recognition is in the area of sustainability and green architecture,” said Dan Bennett, dean of the College of Architecture, Design and Construction. “We are leading advocate for a more sustainable architecture and this award is an outstanding demonstration of those values to both our students and alumni.”

The AIA’s Committee on the Environment represents more than 6,000 members committed to making sustainable or “green” design integral to the practice of architecture.

Five-year terms

Provost announces five new Alumni Professors

Provost John Heilman has announced the appointment of five Auburn faculty members to Alumni Professors.

Appointed for five-year terms, effective at the start of the 2005-06 academic year are Patricia Duffy of the Department of Economics; Paul Johnson, dean of Engineering; Jennifer Lockrow of the School of Architecture; Lynn Lockrow of the Theatre Department; and Robert Greenleaf of the College of Veterinary Medicine.

The professorships are funded by the Auburn Alumni Association and provide each recipient with an annual supplement of $3,500. The appointment awards are made by the president after a recommendation by a selection committee.

Provost will join 20 other Alumni Professors who were appointed over the previous four years. Alumni Professors are awarded on the basis of each professor’s accomplishments in instruction, research and outreach.

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Tops in 2005

Spirit of Excellence winners as employees of the year at AU for 2005 are, from left, Maxine Rather of Telecommunications, Carlos Flakes of Facilities, Kenneth Hornsby of Engineering and John Burgess of Student Affairs. The annual award, which includes a $500 bonus, honors the top four professional and support staff members at AU each year.
Challenges to Auburn may seem local but are part of global trends

Higher education throughout the world is facing a crisis that simply cannot be solved by making minor changes to the same old way of doing things. This crisis manifests itself in tightening budgets, escalating tuition, declining public trust and rising skepticism of the value of higher education.

Student fees at nearly all colleges and universities continue to climb, and reports from the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education confirm that students and their families are being saddled with increased debt due to rising tuition and other costs. A driving force in increased student costs is declining state support for higher education. For example, state appropriations declined by 45 percent of Auburn University’s operating budget in 1999-2000, down to 15 percent in 2002-03. Within the same seven-year period, the portion of Auburn’s budget coming from tuition and fees increased from one fifth to almost one third—a whopping 66 percent increase!

Inflation, recession, declining state tax revenues and shifting state priorities favoring homeland security and health care have forced many universities to institute deep spending cuts. Yet universities continue to face financial pressures from rising personnel health care costs, capital improvements and financial aid investments to attract and retain students.

Declining public confidence parallels the decline in financial support. State legislators have adopted public and financial agendas that are either indifferent or hostile to higher education. A fairly large proportion of students believe their colleges are expensive and wasteful. Institutions cannot continue to pass along their increasing costs in the form of higher tuition and fees needed to pay for programs through year-to-year, double-digit tuition and fee increases.

In light of these mounting pressures, financial viability and, for some institutions, survival may depend upon a unified campuswide effort to increase productivity. A key first step is for colleges and universities to recognize and accept the permanence of these issues. Short-term solutions for long-term problems will not be enough.

By James E. Groccia, Director, Biggio Center for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning

Institutions should implement assessment strategies that rest upon valid and reliable uses of measurement. A culture of assessment should be broadly adopted, demonstrating the impact of programs and activities that are tied to goals and outcomes. Instructional effort and faculty time, as well as the allocation of university resources, should be regularly measured against the attainment of desired institutional, faculty and student-learning outcomes.

Institutions should renew their focus on faculty development. Increased attention needs to be devoted to mentoring and training current and future faculty members on the work that is actually done—which is primarily teaching—and for an understanding of the interrelationships between cost and quality. Technology, when used appropriately and correctly, can also enhance productivity. While not a panacea, technology can increase access to information and to students, and have other positive impact on costs and quality.

The challenge, then, is for institutions to reduce costs and increase learning through curricular reform. Careful investigation can ensure that what is taught is up-to-date and relevant, as well as avoid unnecessary course repetition and redundancies. Palladium leaders must challenge and support their instructional staff to use effective, evidence-based classroom teaching strategies to increase learning productivity and quality.

A hopeful sign for the latter is that, after centuries of using the efficient but ineffective lecture, there is an evolution away from lecturing to more active learning methods. There is strong evidence that higher education professionals, as well as accrediting bodies, state legislators, governing boards and the general public, are increasingly focusing on student learning, access, graduation, productivity, and faculty work as much or more on research.

The good news is that colleges and universities are implementing many of these changes. Innovative approaches to increasing productivity are springing up across the globe. To continue this trend, all members of the institution—faculty, administrators, staff, students, alumni and governing boards—as well as an informed public, must accept responsibility for addressing economic and quality issues that rest at the core of the institution’s survival.

By Norbert Lechner, Professor, Building Science

Dorms had flat roofs. At some recent point, a decision was made to have black pitched roofs. For example, the Hill Dorms were retrofitted with black shingled roofs. I wonder if anyone who was involved in this decision knew that black roofs have double the heat gain of white roofs.

For example, the myth of increased energy costs, both in terms of money and impact on the earth by global warming, we must consider carefully our decisions. The Kyoto Treaty for controlling global warming has been signed by 141 countries. Of all the major countries, only the United States and Australia have not signed.

Should tradition be the controlling factor even if it is wrong? When I was a graduate student at Columbia University, an economics professor said to me: “If you remember just one thing from this course, remember this: ‘Don’t throw good money after bad money.’” When we continue to build new black roofs because we built them on previous buildings, we are doing just that, and wasting money.

Finally, it is ironic that a major argument against sustainable design is that it is too expensive; when it is often actually less expensive than traditional design.

“Declining public confidence parallels the decline in financial support.”

“I challenge people about this...”

“You can’t judge a book by its cover. This building ugly? It should be!”

“In a time of increasing energy costs, both in...
AU Libraries recently acquired "The 18th Century Collections Online," marking the libraries' largest single acquisition ever in the liberal arts and social sciences.

The collection covers one of the most important periods in American and world history. The 18th century, encompassing the American Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, the French Revolution, and the Age of Reason, is as crucial to students as it is to historians and literary scholars, said Glenn Anderson, assistant dean for collection development.

"The 18th century, along with thousands of important works from the Americas. Derived from the English Short Title Catalogue, "The 18th Century Collections Online" features 150,000 printed works with full text search capabilities across all 33 million pages.

The collection delivers the full text of every title from the national collections of Great Britain, the United States, and Canada. Through its collaboration with the British Library, the Library of Congress, and others, the library has been able to acquire works that previously were not available in American libraries.

The 18th Century Collections Online is accessible to all undergraduate, graduate, and professional students at AU.

"All of this confirms the state, regional and national significance of Alabama's green industry."
Hundreds of AU employees and their families converged Thursday on the lawn of the President’s Home for Auburn’s ninth annual Family Fun Day. The celebration at the end of spring semester pulls together faculty, staff and other members of the Auburn community for a relaxed afternoon of games, food and festivities. The festival was the culmination of weeks of planning and activities by volunteers throughout campus.

Above, Jon Waggoner with daughter Emery.

Below, Charnita Wright with daughter Keiericka.

Above, Chong Liu, a graduate student in the Chemistry Department, demonstrates winning form in the football-toss game.

Above, the face-painting pavilion was a favorite stop for children such as Katie Etheridge.

Below, from left, Will and Sam Anderson display prizes they won at Family Fun Day activities.