What makes a good president?

Members of the AU Presidential Search Advisory Committee asked a simple question of the campus community last week: What makes a good president? The responses covered the gamut during five public forums at the AU Hotel, but committee members noted that several themes had emerged.

Committee member Earlon McWhorter, president pro tem of the Board of Trustees, observed that nearly all speakers placed a high priority on seeking candidates who communicate well and relate well to people from all walks of life.

Another trustee and committee member, Sarah Newton, noted that, despite different views about the background of the ideal candidate, there were numerous references to personal traits such as accessibility and the ability to approach issues with an open mind.

Sessions for university staff, students and the local community were lightly attended, but sessions for professional staff and faculty each drew 30-40 persons. In general, the two groups differed significantly on the type of experience the next president should bring to the job.

The majority of speakers at the professional staff session recommended someone with either a business background or extensive exposure to the corporate sector, and most faculty speakers said Auburn would be best served by a president who has extensive experience in and appreciation for an academic environment.

Committee members said they think the search will produce someone who can satisfy both sets of needs. Committee Chair Charles McCrary said the search firm, Korn Ferry International, has an excellent track record with other universities and should help steer good candidates toward Auburn. He encouraged forum participants to aid in the search by nominating and encouraging candidates to apply.

Committee members said they hope to identify the next president of AU by the end of the year, when interim President Ed Richardson has said he would like to step down. For search information online, see www.auburn.edu/administration/trustees.
Veres picked to lead AUM after Nance retires in July

Interim AU President Ed Richardson has announced the appointment of John G. Veres III, as interim chancellor of Auburn University Montgome- ry, following the retirement of Guin Nance in July. The appointment of Veres, currently executive di- rector of AUM University Outreach, is subject to the approval of the AU Board of Trustees, which meets June 30 in Auburn.

“Dr. Veres inherits an institution with a strong foundation and tremendous potential,” Richardson said. “His experience with connecting the academic community with business and government make him the ideal choice to lead AUM during this prom- ising years.

In addition to almost 30 years at AUM as a re- searcher, administrator and faculty member, Veres earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in psychol- ogy from AUM and a doctorate in industrial and organizational psychology at Auburn. “I’m proud to be an AUM graduate and to serve our community,” he said.

AU Report Editor Roy Summerville. Contributing editors and writers: Katie Wilder, Teresa McCall and David Greager, AU Communications; Jamie Crocker and Kayla Gable, AU Student Publications; Jeff Etheridge, Trice Megginson, Photographic Services. Historic photos courtesy of AU Archives and AU Photographic Services.

At the AU Office of Communications & Marketing: Deddie Doxsel.

The AU Report is published by the Office of Communications and Marketing at Auburn University. Issues appear each Monday during fall and spring semesters and every two weeks in summer term, except on the Monday of or the Monday after some major U.S. holidays. Copies are distributed free by campus mail to full-time faculty and students. Questions about the position or an application, including a letter of interest and curriculum vitae, may be submitted electronically to deanstu_srch@ auburn.edu.

Jenda: New programs will help Auburn recruit, retain minority faculty, students

AU is conducting an internal search for an interim dean of students, with an applica- tion deadline of Friday, June 9. The interim dean will succeed Kent Smith, who leaves in July to become a vice president at Ohio University, and will serve until a new administr- ation makes a permanent appointment.

Applicants for this senior position must have a doctoral degree and, preferably, a degree in higher education, student affairs adminis- tration or counseling. Candidates should also have at least four years of related experience at a large public university, including oversight and leader- ship of student associations and events.

Questions about the position or an application, including a letter of interest and curriculum vitae, may be submitted electronically to deansrch@auburn.edu.

Internal search under way for new dean of students

AU has added several new programs to recruit and retain minority faculty and students since Overton Jenda assumed the role of assistant provost for diversity and multicultural affairs in January.

“It’s exciting to see some of these programs already under way and working,” Jenda said.

One such program, AU’s Summer Salary As- sistance program, provides financial assistance to nine African American junior faculty to allow them to focus on research this summer without having to teach classes. The program is designed to help Af- rican American tenancy-track faculty with four years or less of rank enhance their chances toward tenure and promotion through encouraging their summer research projects.

Through the Summer Salary Assistance program, AU provides up to $20,000 per faculty member for summer research. The faculty member’s college, school or department may supplement the univer- sity assistance, as long as those additional funds are not contingent on teaching.

In addition, AU is providing one year of financial support to five African American postdoctoral fellows, each of whom will study for a year with an AU faculty member.

AU is also awarding scholarships of $2,000 per year, renewable for up to three years, to 40 incoming freshmen under the new Provost Leadership Undergraduate Scholarship program. The scholarship recipients must be first-generation college students, exhibit need under federal guidelines and be Alaba- mians or have a diverse background.

Summer blossoms

Although early summer brings more suburban floral displays than AU experienced in the spring, Lakescape Ser- vices has increased the number of plants, such as these hydrangeas across the campus land- scape for year-round color. Adding to the campus color in June will be the numerous magnolias and crapemyrtles that have been planted across campus since the early 1990s.

AU Report, 23 Samford Hall, Auburn University, AL 36849. Telephone: 334/844-9999. E-mail: summerville@auburn.edu.

Jenda said such private support is critical to the university becoming an exemplary educational institution. “Our students and alumni demonstrate the potential our graduates have in earning higher education,” he said.

“After adequate resources are deployed to support those programs, any remaining funds will go toward infrastructure improvements,” he said.

The Smiths’ gift represents the largest single donation made to the college.

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Sesquicentennial Scene
Images from Auburn's first 150 years

New Main
The Chemistry Building, later renamed Hargis Hall, was a solitary landmark in 1887, during construction of the building that would later be named Samford Hall. The new building was constructed on the site of Old Main, Auburn's first campus building, which burned a few months earlier. This scene is one of a series that the AU Report will carry in coming months as AU celebrates its sesquicentennial.

Sumners named head of AU-ACES institute for economic development

Joe Sumners, former director of AU’s Economic Development Institute, has been named director of the new AU-ACES Economic and Community Development Institute, a partnership between the AU Office of University Outreach and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

In his new role as a University Outreach director and as a member of the Extension program management team, Sumners will lead economic and community development for both Extension and the main campus.

Sumners said the partnership presents new opportunities for the people of Alabama. “There is a lot that needs to be done to improve economic conditions throughout Alabama, especially in our rural areas. We believe that combining the resources of AU and ACES in a common effort puts us in the best position to make a positive difference for our state.”

“The long-term strategic goal of the ECDI is to bring rural economic and community development programming to a much higher level of visibility than it has ever had in the past in our state, and to ensure that it continues as one of Extension’s important base program areas,” said Gaines Smith, interim director of ACES.

On June 16 at the AU Hotel, Sumners and the ECDI staff will host a statewide roundtable discussion for state and community leaders to evaluate needs and opportunities for development in rural areas of Alabama.

Sumners has worked since 2000 at EDI, where he served as associate director until his appointment as director in 2002. Before joining the EDI staff, Sumners served as training and research coordinator for Auburn’s Center for Governmental Services.

He has also served on the political science faculty at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and at Stephen F. Austin State University in Texas.

Sumners has conducted more than 150 workshops and courses for Alabama county and municipal officials, and has more than 15 years experience in providing technical assistance to Alabama cities and counties. Also, he has provided strategic planning and other assistance to numerous statewide associations and organizations.

Sumners, who holds a Ph.D. from the University of Georgia, has authored numerous journal articles, research and issue papers, book chapters, outreach periodicals and other publications on economic development practices and issues.

Bailey assisting program on Louisiana coast restoration
The U.S. Geological Survey has appointed Rural Sociology Professor Conner Bailey of the AU College of Agriculture as social science representative on the Science Board of the Louisiana Coastal Area Ecosystem Restoration Program.

The restoration program has gained emphasis among federal programs since hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated the Louisiana coast in 2005. The Science Board will provide oversight of the program’s general scientific processes and structure.

Ag Heritage Park hosts vendors for fresh fruits, vegetables
Looking for fresh produce, homemade baked goods, herbs, cut flowers or ornamental plants?
You can find all that and more every Thursday afternoon this summer at The Market at Ag Heritage Park.
The Market is an outdoor farmers’ market held each Thursday from 3 p.m.-6 p.m., through Sept. 28 at Ag Heritage Park on the south side of campus. The Market offers locally grown fruits and vegetables, honey, ornamental plants, herbs, cut flowers, stone-ground grains, fresh eggs, cheeses, shrimp, salad dressings and other agricultural products.

Entrance to the farmers’ market is from Samford Avenue, across from the AU athletic department complex.

How Auburn Stacks Up
Distribution of AU full-time faculty by rank, 2005-06

Source: Institutional Research and Assessment

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