Board endorses plan for salaries

The AU Board of Trustees approved budget guidelines Friday that, among other provisions, would make permanent the one-time salary supplements faculty and staff received last spring.

The administration will use the guidelines in drafting a university budget for the 2004-05 fiscal year, which starts Oct. 1. The board last year approved increases averaging 6 percent of the total salary pool, but the national economic recession in 2003 raised doubts about the level of state funding beyond 2004. With the state budget picture stabilized, the AU board agreed Friday that the university could proceed with plans to add the increases to employee pay this fall.

Subject to final approval of the AU budget by the board in September, faculty and staff will receive the increases incrementally over each pay period rather than in another lump sum.

Including the salary supplements with faculty pay for 2003-04, AU met its goal of reaching the Southern average for faculty pay. Including the supplements with regular salary this year, the average salary for professors at AU is 102 percent of the regional average. For associate professors, the AU average is 102 percent of the regional average, and for assistant professors, the AU average is 99 percent of the regional average.

Trustees noted that the achievement fulfilled a primary goal set by the board five years ago to raise AU faculty salaries to the regional average by the end of the five years.

The salary provision is projected to cost more than $11.7 million next year.

Other key guidelines for budget outlays in 2004-05 include an additional $1.5 million for reducing deferred maintenance and $1 million for additional scholarships.

The key feature on the income side for budget planners is a 9 percent increase in tuition approved Friday by the board. That increase is projected to generate $11 million in additional revenue.

Interim President Ed Richardson said AU will take a close look at its operating costs over the next six months. One of several key goals, he said, will be to minimize future increases in tuition.

Also, board members favorably discussed but did not vote on the concept of a research park outlined by Vice President for Research Michael Moriarty.
In his own words: Charles McCrary

Charles D. McCrary, one of two new members of the AU Board of Trustees, has made a career with Alabama Power Company, joining the company following his freshman year at Auburn.
McCrary joined Alabama Power Co. in 1979 and rose through the ranks of the utility and its parent company, the Southern Company, until he was named president and CEO of Alabama Power in 2001.

After earning his bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering from AU, he began his drive to the top of the company. In addition to a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering from Auburn, McCrary earned a law degree from the Birmingham School of Law.

A native of Birmingham, he is very active in many civic organizations in the Birmingham area, including the Metropolitan Arts Council, where he is chairman Emeritus; the Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce, where he serves on the Board of Directors and Trustees; and Children’s Hospital, where he serves on the Board of Trustees.

Why did you choose Auburn after graduating from high school?
My father went to Auburn. From my childhood, Auburn was a physical presence. When I was about 15, I was an Auburn fan and wanted an engineering degree from Auburn.

Why were you interested in becoming a member of the Board of Trustees?
I have always been a fan of Auburn and felt that I had a resource or skill that Auburn could use. It is an honor because my Auburn University education gave me a priority.

What special talents do you believe you bring to the board, and how would they be applied?
I have a strong background in finance, a working association with business leaders in the state and a large dose of how the legislative process impacts our citizens.

Getting Auburn off SACS probation is obviously the No. 1 priority of the board. What is the next priority?
I believe this is a rare time in Auburn’s history. A time for healing fractured constituencies, for leadership that is strong. With the finances of the state in limbo, Auburn needs people with financial creativity. With a half-a-billion dollar budget, we need people who understand that business and understand the importance of education. This is the greatest university in the state of Alabama and through its mission of education, research and outreach, Auburn can shape the economic conditions of this state. We are educating people to make life better for others and I want to have a stronger role in moving Auburn into the future.

What special talents do you believe you bring to the board and how would they be applied?
“Auburn would make best use of my financial background, my work as a United Methodist minister) I bring value across the state (primarily because of my husband’s job). When you couple that knowledge with the many great educational experiences I had as a child, I hope that I can be a person of high integrity who is committed to doing what is right for the university as a whole.”

Should Auburn concentrate on land-grant programs or be a comprehensive public university?
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Virginia N. Thompson of Opelika, one of two new AU trustees, initially resisted the urge to follow her two older brothers to the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa, but she graduated from Jeff Davis High School in Montgomery.

After her freshman year at Auburn, however, she transferred to Auburn and was one of the first three women to graduate from Jeff Davis High School in Montgomery. She graduated from Jeff Davis High School in Montgomery after three days to discover she had made a mistake. She immediately transferred back to Auburn, where she was able to graduate with Cum Laude with a bachelor’s degree in business administration in 1979.

With a background in accounting and marketing, she is now marketing director of the Joomla Medical Center, where she is described by colleagues as a passionate communicator with a strong commitment to education.

Following are Thompson’s responses to questions about her Auburn experiences and views on the university and the Board of Trustees.

Why did you choose Auburn?
“My two older brothers attended the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. I actually attended Alabama a total of three days. For whatever reason, Tuscaloosa did not sit right with me. I came to the ‘Loveliest Village and found home.’

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“Many memories, many I’ll never forget — sever-

Upcoming Events

- **Thurs., June 17**: Free Night at Museum: Free admission to Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art, 5 p.m.-9 p.m.
- **Wed., June 23**: Gallery Talk: Catherine Ward, curator of exhibitions, discussion on works on display by UAB artist Gary Chapman, 2 p.m., Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art.
- **Mon., June 28**: Next AU Report.

New AU Trustee

In her own words: Virginia N. Thompson

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Poultry Science
Scheduled for occupancy later this year, the new Poultry Science building at P. O. Davis and Lem Morrison drives is in the final stage of construction. Financing for the $21 million, 85,000-square-foot facility has come from industry, federal, state and AU sources.

White named head of department in Human Sciences
College of Human Sciences Dean June Henton has announced the appointment of Douglas White as head of the college’s Department of Nutrition and Food Science.

White, an associate professor in the department, became department head on May 15. He succeeds interim Department Head Robert Keith, who remains on the faculty.

A graduate of Auburn with a bachelor’s degree in chemistry and a master’s in physiology, White holds a doctoral degree in physiology from LSU Medical Center. He was on the faculty of the University of Georgia before joining the AU faculty in 1996.

At Auburn, White was named an outstanding professor in 1999 by the Panhellenic Council and was voted outstanding faculty member in the College of Human Sciences by the Student Government Association in 2001. His research has been widely published in refereed journals.

AU unit honored for excellence
AU’s Department of Human Resources has received the Excellence in Human Resource Management Award for 2004 from the Southern Region of College and University Professionals Association. The award recognizes the AU department’s quality and accomplishments over the past year.

AU, state enter agreement for new hotel, conference center resort at Gulf Shores
AU has entered into an agreement with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources that Gov. Bob Riley says will lead to a new resort hotel and conference center at Alabama’s state park at Gulf Shores.

“This is a great opportunity for the state and Auburn University to partner together to make one of our most popular state parks even better,” Riley said in Friday’s announcement. “The new hotel and conference center will allow Gulf State Park to host more events and serve more guests while preserving the natural beauty of Alabama’s Gulf Coast.”

AU has agreed to a long-term lease for the footprint of a new facility along 2.7 miles of undeveloped beachfront property. State officials said the development team chosen to construct and manage the project will have the approximately $100 million needed to build the 350-room hotel and conference center that will accommodate 1,200-2,000 people. An existing structure on a different site on the property is in disrepair and will be demolished.

“The partnership on this project brings together the enterprise of many innovative and talented people,” said interim AU President Ed Richardson. “The considerable intellectual assets of a major research university are once again being tapped to be of direct and long-lasting benefit to the people of Alabama.”

Auburn will use the Gulf Shores facility as an educational venue for college students from Alabama institutions in areas of study such as hotel and restaurant management, forestry, wildlife sciences, marine biology and other disciplines. The primary academic programs will be similar to the current arrangements at the AU Hotel and Dixon Conference Center, where students from the College of Human Sciences participate in the administration and operation of the facility as part of their educational experience. That hotel is managed by the West Paces Group of Atlanta.

State Conservation Commissioner Barnett Lawley said the new facility will be on a smaller footprint than the existing structure to protect the aesthetics and character of the site. Also, the new facility will occupy less beachfront footage and will be set back farther from the shoreline.

“Thousands of acres of beachfront, wetlands and lakes will be protected while careful development will provide a world-class resort for both recreation and business meetings,” said Lawley.

Panhorst to lead AU Museum
Michael Panhorst has been named director of AU’s Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art.

Panhorst, who will assume his duties Aug. 15, comes to Auburn from his post as director of the Chesterwood Museum in Stockbridge, Mass.

A native of Montgomery, Panhorst returns to his home state with nearly three decades of experience as a director, curator, researcher, writer, editor, teacher and project manager at several museums and universities throughout the eastern United States.

“Dr. Panhorst’s experience should prove extremely beneficial in our quest to grow the Jule Collins Smith Museum into one of the finest university-affiliated museums in the country,” said AU Provost Thomas Hanley.

Panhorst was the founding director of the Marshall Fredericks Sculpture Museum at Saginaw Valley State University in Michigan, where he helped build the endowment from zero to $1.1 million and led a successful effort to meet the museum’s goal of $2.5 million in a capital campaign.