AU phasing out Social Security usage with new Banner system

Social Security numbers are becoming a thing of the past for university records as Auburn implements successive phases of the new Banner system for electronic record keeping. This summer, in the second major phase of Banner implementation, AU eliminated unnecessary use of Social Security numbers on many employee records, substituting recently generated employee ID numbers.

Leave forms on the Human Resources Web site, for instance, now ask for the employee ID number instead of a Social Security number. Each employee’s Banner-generated identification number is available from the computing coordinator in his or her department.

Because they are assigned for life to all working Americans by the federal government, Social Security numbers are highly valued by identity thieves, who use the numbers to establish fake credentials for illegal spending sprees that wreck the finances of their victims.

The next major step in removing Social Security numbers from AU records will be replacement of those numbers with the new system of employee numbers encoded in the magnetic strips on ID cards. The university is scheduled to start issuing ID cards with Banner-generated numbers for faculty and staff on Dec. 1, and for students and others in March 2007. The new ID cards will be issued without charge.

Auburn has been implementing the Banner system in phases. The first phase was Banner Finance, which went live in October 2005, followed by Banner HR in July. During July, the Business Office successfully ran two bi-weekly, two semi-monthly and a monthly payroll using the Banner system as the university switched from paying nine-month faculty on a monthly basis to twice per month.

The third major phase of Banner implementation, Student Records, involves registration and student files, as well as records for the university catalog and academic schedules.

The Admissions module of the Student Records phase went live in June, allowing prospective AU students to apply online for the fall 2007 freshman class, said Fred Bobo, AU project manager for Banner implementation. The Financial Aid module is scheduled to come online next February, and students will use Banner next spring to register for fall 2007 classes.

Bobo and Karen Chastonay coordinated the work of an Auburn task force that adapted the Banner system to meet AU’s needs and numerous volunteers who helped fine-tune the system. Chastonay is Auburn project manager for SunGard Higher.
Camp offers high school students glimpse from other side of desk

High school students from five Alabama counties experienced life on the other side of the desk as prospective future teachers this summer at a new series of camps hosted by the Truman Pierce Institute in AU’s College of Education.

During three week-long residential camps at Auburn, high school students from Monroe, Sumter, Lee, Tallapoosa and Fayette counties participated in activities from a teaching perspective in such areas as field biology, American art, literature and music.

Camp participants visited the AU Fisheries Station, Auburn Botarium, Paterson Greenhouse, Louise Kreher Forest Ecology Preserve and the Southeastern Raptor Center.

Taught by Auburn faculty and graduate students, the camp participants also trained in techniques for tutoring younger students in after-school programs to enhance reading ability or knowledge of mathemetics or environmental science. Students were expected to work as tutors for at least 40 hours in after-school programs in their school districts during the next school year.

The 21st Century Community Learning School Summer Camps are just part of Truman Pierce Institute’s research and outreach efforts with Alabama schools. The College of Education institute secured funding through the Appalachian Regional Commission to help rural schools “grow their own” teachers through programs that encourage high school students to consider careers in education.

“What makes this camp so unique is its ability to give back to the community,” said Pierce Institute Director Cindy Reed, who is an associate professor in the college. “In the three camps we have held this summer, there have been an abundance of exceptional students who will make a significant impact in their respective schools.”

College of Education Dean Frances Kochan added, “The 21st Century Community Learning Camp not only aids students in learning to teach others, but it also exposes them to the college experience. It is our hope that this experience, along with others, but it also exposes them to the college experience. It is our hope that this experience, along with others, but also to foster a love of teaching but also of Auburn.”

The Truman Pierce Institute is named for a nationally prominent educator who served as dean of the College of Education for two decades until his retirement in the 1970s.

Banner system continued from page 1

Education, which developed the framework for the Banner software, but once people get used to working in the Banner, they are finding that they can accomplish more resources, financial aid and student records on one system.

To use AU Access, go to the AU home page at www.auburn.edu and click on Employees, then see www.auburn.edu/oit/account_info/auaccess. For more information on the Banner system, go online to www.auburn.edu/banner. Additional information is posted under Employee Services/Self Service Banner.

NSF grant supports research by AU professor The National Science Foundation has awarded a $722,000 four-year grant to Gary Hepp, a professor in Auburn’s School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, for research that could ultimately aid environmental efforts to replenish the numbers of ducks in America’s wetlands.

“Our overall goals are to examine the importance of incubation temperature during early development and to provide a better understanding of how reproductive trade-offs made by females influence their fitness,” Hepp said. He is conducting the study at the Department of Energy’s Savannah River Site in South Carolina with a researcher from Virginia Tech University and with graduate and undergradate research assistants.

AU’s Office of Research helped launch the incubation project in 2003 with a $3,000 grant through the university’s Competitive Research Grant Program. “That grant enabled me to conduct the first phase of this study,” Hepp said.

Upcoming Events

Graduation 2 p.m., Coliseum

AU OFFICES remain open during break between summer term and start of fall semester.

Tuesday, August 15

Orientation for new faculty, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., site TBA; reception, 5 p.m.-6:30 p.m., Julie Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art

Wednesday, August 16

Classes Start for fall semester

Monday, August 21

NEXT AU Report; first edition of fall semester; return to weekly publication

Thursday, August 31

COMMITTEE SESSIONS AU Board of Trustees, site TBA, AU Hotel

Friday, September 1

MEETING AU Board of Trustees, time TBA, AU Hotel

Monday, September 4

LADY DAY Offices closed, no classes

Tuesday, September 12

SESQUICENTENNIAL LECTURE “Auburn University Desegregates,” Martin Oliff, author of “Just Another Day on the Plain: The Desegregation of Auburn University,” 4 p.m., Special Collections Section, Draughon Library

AU Report Editor Roy Summerville. Contributing editors and writers: Katie Waddy, AU Communications; Mitch Ermann, Research; Colleen Trent, Education; and Charlie Megginson, Photographic Services. Historic photo courtesy of AU Archives and AU Photographic Services.

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Christopher Roy of AU’s Samuel Ginn College of Engineering was among recipients of Presidential Early Career Awards for Scientists and Engineers who were honored recently at a White House ceremony in Washington. Roy, an assistant professor of aerospace engineering, received the award for his work with the verification and validation processes used in computational science programs.

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Student-designed water sculpture teaches, delights children at play

The sounds of water splashing filled the air last Tuesday as children at AU’s Early Learning Center got a first look at the newest addition to their playground: a water sculpture designed and built by students from the Department of Industrial Design in the College of Architecture, Design and Construction.

From research to construction, the concrete and tile sculpture took five weeks to complete and was part of Sang-Gyeun Ahn’s summer senior studio class. The studio’s three students – Brian Williams, a senior from Huntsville; Reathanak “Roxy” Lee, a senior from Selma; and Lane Scheiblauer, a graduating senior from Atlanta – met often with Linda Silvern and Margaret Vollenweider from the Early Learning Center to gather information and feedback they could apply to their design. The result was a multi-functional play structure.

In warm weather the children can control the water as it flows down the sculpture into a nearby sandbox. In cool weather, children can enjoy a crawl-through tunnel and use the water channels for small car and truck play.

“This project was a great confidence builder,” Williams said. “It proves we can do something that we’ve never done before.”

The students researched many elements before designing the structure. “We looked at the height of kids and what colors to use,” Scheiblauer said. “We also considered playground safety. We really had to think like a little kid.”

The structure is designed to allow children to interact with the water without getting soaking wet. The idea came after Silvern, the center’s director, saw a similar sculpture on the Web and contacted Ahn about getting his class involved. At the time, the center had to replace some of its playground equipment to meet safety and accreditation standards.

In warm weather the children can control the water as it flows down the sculpture into a nearby sandbox. In cool weather, children can enjoy a crawl-through tunnel and use the water channels for small car and truck play.

“The university needs more sculpture on campus. Children need to see art in their daily lives and what better way than a sculpture they can interact with,” Silvern said. “What these students have created is so exciting. We can’t wait for the children to come fall semester to play with it.”

Ahn’s students voted to design and build the structure instead of designing a folding chair for a manufacturer. “They told us that this is something that their future children may some day play with when they attend the Center and something they can proudly show their families when they return as alums,” Silvern said.

Williams, Lee and Scheiblauer also expressed thanks for several units from the Facilities Division, which assisted with many aspects of the project, including installing underground water pipes for the sculpture.

Sampling Zone D

Any vehicle with a valid AU parking permit may use the new Stadium Parking Deck for a few more days. Starting with the first day of fall semester on Aug. 16, only vehicles with Zone D hangtags will be eligible to use the new parking facility before 5 p.m. on class days. However, drivers with Zone D permits will not be eligible to park in Zones A or B.