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Back to class

Fall semester got off to a busy start last week as approximately 23,000 students converged on Auburn for the new academic year. In many cases, the start of new construction projects, such as the new student center, and finishing touches on other projects, such as the Roosevelt pedestrian way, resulted in detours and fresh challenges for travel between buildings.

New rules for directed readings courses take effect immediately

ew, more stringent standards for directed readings courses went into effect with the start of fall semester, following their announcement this month by interim AU President Ed Richardson.

Richardson also announced that two faculty members who taught an unusually large number of directed readings courses, also known as independent studies, have stepped down from administrative positions in their academic departments. He said a nearly complete investigation had found no evidence of misconduct in the matter, but, he added, the faculty members displayed poor judgment in taking on more students for independent study courses than they could effectively handle.

Normally an esoteric topic outside academe, directed readings courses became a hot topic in the mass media this summer after a New York Times article noted that 18 members of AU’s 2004 SEC Championship football team had attained a total of 97 hours of academic credit in independent study under one professor during their college careers.

Although most students in the courses were not athletes, and non-athletes, on average, had better grades in the courses, the Times article and ones that followed in other news media suggested that a link existed between those courses and the NCAA’s recent high academic ranking for the Auburn football team.

However, despite the media’s focus on athletics, Richardson said an investigating committee comprised of faculty and administrators found that only 1 percent of AU’s class enrollment over the past three years has been devoted to directed readings, and only 7.5 percent of students taking the courses were football players.

Richardson said the investigators did not find any evidence that faculty members acted unethically.

See Directed readings courses, page 2
AU Vet Med dean elected head of association of veterinary colleges

AU College of Veterinary Medicine Dean Timothy Bossinger has been elected president-elect of the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges.

The association elected Bossinger and other officers in July during its summer meeting in conjunction with the annual convention of the American Veterinary Medical Association.

Bossinger, who joined the AU faculty in 1983, has served as veterinary dean since 1995. In 2004 he received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from Purdue University’s School of Veterinary Medicine.

He also serves on the American Veterinary Medical Association’s Council on Education and is board certified in veterinary pathology by the American College of Veterinary Pathologists.

The Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges coordinates the national and international affairs of all 32 veterinary medical colleges in the United States and Canada. Its mission is to advance veterinary medical education, improve animal health and welfare, strengthen biomedical research, promote food safety and food security and enhance environmental quality.

Sollie named to lead women’s initiatives in Provost’s Office

Donna Sollie, a professor in Auburn’s College of Human Sciences, has been named assistant provost for women’s initiatives.

The new position is in the Office of the Associate Provost for Diversity and Multicultural Affairs, where Sollie will lead efforts to establish and foster programs that improve opportunities for women throughout the university. She will also coordinate women’s initiatives in AU’s schools and colleges.

“Donna has demonstrated her ongoing commitment to women’s and diversity issues through her career, in her teaching, her research and her administrative work,” said Overton Jenda, associate provost for diversity and multicultural affairs.

Sollie added, “Her commitment and vision will be invaluable in developing initiatives that will advance the interests, status and well-being of all women in the Auburn University community.”

In addition to working on existing initiatives such as mentoring programs for women faculty and a campuswide survey of child care needs, Sollie will help develop a women’s resource center that will address health and safety needs and foster leadership development and advancement for women.

Sollie, a member of the Auburn faculty since 1986, is a professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies. Her research focuses on gender influences on communication, support and conflict behaviors in marriage and family relationships.

A former director of the Women’s Studies Program at AU, she recently served in the Office of Provost as special adviser on women’s leadership.

Program helps smokers kick the habit

Looking to kick the smoking habit? The Pharmaceutical Care Center in AU’s Harrison School of Pharmacy can help through the school’s “Pack It Up” program.

Targeted toward individuals who want to quit smoking, the program pairs patients with pharmacists who work one-on-one to develop an individualized treatment plan and provide ongoing monitoring, education and support.

During a patient’s initial appointment, the pharmacist will collect a complete smoking history including the duration and pattern of tobacco use, information on past quit attempts, reasons for relapse, smoking triggers, past history, medication history and social history.

Basic medical information such as weight, body composition analysis, blood pressure and pulse will also be recorded. In addition, the pharmacist will help the patient develop a plan for quitting, establish a quit date and discuss coping strategies.

Patients will then meet with their pharmacists for follow up appointments after their quit date. Vital signs such as blood pressure and pulse will continue to be monitored, and the pharmacist will also check carbon monoxide concentrations to monitor the patient’s cessation attempt.

The university will cover costs incurred by employees who enroll in the program. For more information or to schedule an appointment, contact the Pharmaceutical Care Center at aspccare@auburn.edu or 844-4099.
AU campaign breaks record

The “It Begins at Auburn” fundraising campaign reached a milestone this month, when total support for the AU campaign reached $390 million.

The continuing flow of gifts enabled the campaign to set the record for the largest campaign fundraising effort by any university in Alabama. With a goal of $500 million, the “It Begins at Auburn” campaign is the largest campaign in the university’s history.

“The large outpouring of support by alumni and friends of Auburn is a great show of support for the university and its students,” said Robert McGinnis, AU’s vice president for development.

“With continued support like that we have seen, especially in recent months, we are well on our way to meeting not just the campaign goal, but also the broader educational objectives that these funds allow us to achieve.”

The six-year “It Begins at Auburn” campaign began in June 2002 and entered its public phase last February. The campaign encompasses all colleges and schools on campus as well as AU’s libraries, athletics, the Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art and AU-Montgomery. Endowments for students, faculty, programs and unrestricted dollars make up 63 percent of the campaign’s goal.

The previous record, $388.7 million, was set by “The Campaign for UAB,” which ended in 2003.

Hansen to lead Honors College

James Hansen, a professor of history in the College of Liberal Arts at Auburn, has been named director of the AU Honors College.

He succeeds Jack Rogers, who returned to a full-time faculty position in the Department of Mathematics.

Hansen, an AU faculty member since 1986, earned his Ph.D. in history at Ohio State University in 1981. Among Hansen’s books is First Man: The Life of Neil Armstrong, which drew favorable reviews and national attention when published last year.

“I am very pleased that Dr. Hansen has accepted this appointment because I know he will bring to the Honors College the same high levels of energy and vision that have resulted in his recognition internationally as a leading scholar in aerospace history,” said Provost John Heilman.

Hansen said he will spend this year performing a self-study of the Honors College program.

“I will be visiting other premier programs around the country to see what we can emulate,” he said.

“Then I’ll make a report at the end of the year outlining our strengths and weaknesses.”

Magazine ranks Auburn 39th in its latest survey

Auburn is ranked 39th among public universities nationwide in an annual survey released Friday by U.S. News & World Report. The ranking marks the 14th consecutive year the magazine has included AU among the nation’s top 50 public universities.

“We’re pleased that we have again been ranked among the top 50 public universities in the country,” said interim AU President Ed Richardson. “When you look at the data, what stands out about this university is our rising academic reputation and programs, including our College of Engineering, which performed exceptionally well in this survey. We are attracting outstanding freshmen and the value-added ranking, among the region’s best, shows we are providing them with meaningful academic opportunities when they arrive on campus.”

“As always, the ranking reflects hard work by the faculty, staff, administration and students and the commitment of the Board of Trustees.”

Among institutions with doctoral programs in engineering, AU’s Samuel Ginn College of Engineering was ranked 60th nationally overall and 35th among public universities.

To establish its rankings U.S. News categorizes colleges and universities primarily by mission and, in some cases, region. The magazine then gathers data from each on up to 15 weighted indicators of academic excellence.

Session to discuss building alumni ties

The AU Office of Alumni Affairs will sponsor a web conference Aug. 31 on ways for faculty, staff and administrators to build bridges with alumni.

Alumni Affairs will host the program, “Forging Campus Partnerships in Alumni Relations,” from noon-2:30 p.m. in the Goodwin Room of the Auburn Alumni Center.

“This session will prove beneficial to all who wish to work together to enhance alumni connections,” said Debbie Shaw, interim vice president for alumni affairs.

The web conference will conclude with a 30-minute discussion on ways to advance Auburn’s mission by working together and sharing resources.

To register, contact Rita Whitman at whitmrm@auburn.edu or 844-3820.

How Auburn Stacks Up

Percent of annual credit hours earned in summer term by Auburn students

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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Source: Institutional Research and Assessment

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