Two colleges join forces in Art in Agriculture effort

The College of Liberal Arts, the Department of Art and the College of Agriculture have launched Art in Agriculture, a year-long interdisciplinary initiative to explore the intersections of art, culture, ecology and the environment.

The fall 2009 focus of the project deals with a variety of responses to water issues in Alabama, Georgia and Florida. Events began with the opening of the exhibition “Water: Three States” in Biggin Gallery. The exhibition runs through Nov. 10 and includes works by tri-state artists Xavier Cortada, Xiaotian Wang, Martha Whittington, Daniel Kariko and Andy Behrle.

A committee from the Department of Art and the College of Agriculture has developed a schedule of themed exhibitions, lectures, a panel-discussion, workshops and activities for this academic year that will focus on the practical, ethical and aesthetic components of issues such as water conservation, gardening, eco-art and sustainability. Participants include exhibiting artists Cortada and Wang and other regional, national and international artists, scientists, writers and advocates such as Fabien Cousteau, Beth Maynor Young, Fritz Haeg and Linda Weintraub.

The Art in Agriculture initiative, which will run through next summer, was built on the interests of individuals in art, art history and agriculture. Art Professor Allyson Comstock recalled when the idea struck her: “One day after my three-dimensional design class, I was going through the trash can and sorting paper and cardboard into the appropriate recycling bins and it occurred to me that most of my students had no idea how much stuff ends up in a landfill.”

Comstock and others in art and agriculture began to discuss the idea of an interdisciplinary project focused on the environment that would effectively bring together interested students and faculty, and the local and regional community.

“The College of Agriculture welcomes this opportunity to partner with the College of Liberal Arts and to leverage our resources. Our goal is to connect with diverse audiences and help the community develop a better understanding of agriculture and its connection with life and the arts,” said the college’s dean, Richard Guthrie.

“We often focus on the differences between art and science,” said Barb Bondy, a professor of art, “but they have a lot in common. Both disciplines, for example,”

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Communication Professor Emmett Winn named associate provost

Following an internal campus search, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Mary Ellen Mazey has announced the appointment of J. Emmett Winn as associate provost.

Winn had served as interim associate provost for five months, following the departure of Sharon Gaber to be provost at the University of Arkansas. As associate provost, Winn is responsible for faculty hiring and personnel issues as well as issues related to academic policies and procedures. Reporting directly to him are the Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art, the Graduate School, the Office of Information Technology, English as a Second Language and the Office of International Education.

“Dr. Winn has performed admirably in an interim capacity and I am sure he will continue to serve Auburn well as associate provost,” said Mazey.

“I would like to thank the other candidates, as well,” she said. “I was very impressed with the quality of candidates on campus for this position; it is good to know that when the need arises, we have a number of highly qualified individuals who are willing to step forward and offer their services.”

Previously, Winn was the associate dean for curriculum and teaching in Auburn’s College of Liberal Arts. An Auburn faculty member since 1997, he holds the rank of professor in the Department of Communication and Journalism, which he represented in the University Senate from 2001-04.

Winn holds a Ph.D. in communication from the University of South Florida and bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Auburn. He has published in international and national journals and authored or edited two books.
Cousteau to present York Lecture on environmental issues

Oceanographer and filmmaker Fabien Cousteau will present the fall 2009 York Distinguished Lecture, “One Water, One People,” at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 22, at the Hotel at Auburn University.

His presentation will focus on water-related environmental issues.

Cousteau, grandson of the late undersea explorer and filmmaker Jacques-Yves Cousteau, grew up exploring the sea and the world with his grandfather and his father, Jean-Michel Cousteau, who is also a prominent environmentalist.

After earning a degree in environmental economics from Boston University, the young Cousteau meshed his family legacy of championing environmental protection with his business acumen by successfully spearheading the development of new environmentally sustainable products and business models.

He also helped launch Natural Entertainment, which works on exploration and environmental awareness projects for television and other media. In addition, Fabien joined forces with his sister, Celine, and their father to produce a three-year, multi-hour series, “Ocean Adventures,” for PBS. The series addresses topics such as grey whale migrations, ghost ships of the Great Lakes and exotic, environmentally vital locales from Latin America to the Antarctic.

Cousteau is also involved in initiatives to restore undersea environments and protect natural areas for future generations. Also, he is building an Oceans Educational Institute, which he designed, and is writing a children’s book trilogy and penning articles for international publications.

The Cousteau lecture is sponsored by the E.T. York Distinguished Lecture Series, which was established at Auburn in 1981. York, an Auburn graduate, was head of the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service from 1959-62. He later served as head of the Federal Extension Service in Washington, D.C., provost and vice president for agriculture at the University of Florida and then chancellor of the State University System of Florida until his retirement in 1980.

Art in Agriculture

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by studying basic materials and employing innovative concepts and approaches in order to gain a deeper understanding of the world we live in.”

Added Liberal Arts Dean Anna Gramberg, “It is my firm belief that art influences every aspect of our lives. From the clothes we wear to the cars we drive, art is an essential part of the process. Combining art with agriculture for this series is a magnificent way of showcasing the vitality and beauty of art and nature coexisting.”

“The Water: Three States exhibit,” said Gramberg, “is a unique opportunity to view the integral roles that art and agriculture play. I hope everyone will visit the exhibit and be inspired to locate the art in their own lives.”

A panel discussion on water issues in the Southeast, moderated by Katie Lamar Jackson of the College of Agriculture, will be at 5 p.m. Sept. 29 in 005 Biggin Hall. Panelists include Bill Deutsch of Alabama Water Watch, Eve Brantley of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Georgia-based artist Xiaotian Wang and Alabama-based conservation photographer Beth Maynor Young.

A schedule of lectures, receptions, workshops and other events, as well as information about the spring 2010 focus on gardening, can be found at the Art in Agriculture Web site at www.ag.auburn.edu/ArtinAg.

— Vicky Santos
No longer deferred

Little-noticed program upgrades buildings, campus infrastructure

While construction on the northwest corner of campus is yielding new residence halls and engineering buildings that reflect the neoclassical style of the 1930s, an exterior renovation across campus has given a fresh look to a different type of building.

After decades of wear and tear, the exterior of Spidle Hall, which opened on Duncan Drive in 1962, was transformed in a few months from one of several mid-20th century International Style buildings on campus hampered by leaking roofs and related problems into a watertight building that recalls its original 1960s appearance.

Unlike the new construction, which can cost tens of millions of dollars for similar-sized buildings, the Spidle work, with a more limited scope, cost approximately $650,000 through a scheduled maintenance program. Under that program, established in the 1990s to reduce a backlog of deferred maintenance, the university extends the life of buildings through infrastructure improvements and preventative maintenance.

Spidle was one of several buildings from the 1950s and ’60s that had suffered from persistent water damage due to a design feature common to buildings from that era. Until the development of new roofing materials and techniques in recent years, flat roofs presented a perennial maintenance problem with water leaks and years of water seepage that hurt these buildings aesthetically and, in some cases, structurally, while driving up maintenance costs. In some buildings from that era, such as Dudley Hall and the Hill residence halls, maintenance problems were addressed as part of complete and costly renovation projects that took years to plan and finance.

Due to its water intrusion problems, Spidle could not wait for a complete overhaul before the roof was replaced. In addition, planners determined it was a good candidate for exterior renovations under the deferred maintenance program to remove the water damage and prevent future water problems. Noting that Spidle had risen to the top of the university’s deferred maintenance list, Randy King, who managed the project for the Facilities Division, said, “It was time to fix it.”

In addition to replacing the old roof with new, higher quality materials, workers replaced some ductwork, removed obsolete rooftop equipment, sealed around the roof’s perimeter, installed new drains for rainwater, replaced 97 deteriorating pre-cast panels, made 52 concrete repairs and applied protective coatings and paint on exposed surfaces.

In terms of exterior safety, structural integrity and aesthetics, King said, Spidle is in its best condition in many years. “The need for extra maintenance in that building has decreased greatly,” he added.

Jann Swaim of Facilities Program Management said the economic recession enabled the university to hold the cost down. “We got a good job at a good price,” he said.

Swaim said LBYD Inc., a Birmingham-based architectural and engineering firm, had taken special interest in the building’s aesthetics, restoring the exterior of Spidle to the condition and general appearance it had when new, more than 45 years ago. He said consultants Williamson and Associates also helped the university develop a strategy for waterproofing that paid attention to aesthetics as well as structural repairs.

Fixing flat roofs

Although not noticeable on a sunny day, water leaks from flat roofs have long been a concern to the occupants of buildings from the 1950s and ’60s. Until its recent reroofing and exterior upgrade, Spidle Hall had been among campus buildings suffering from extensive water damage due to leakage from a flat roof. The building’s recent upgrade is the latest major project under a program of scheduled maintenance started in the 1990s to maintain and improve campus facilities.

Spidle was built in the heyday of flat roofs, a style that has since been largely abandoned. In the 1990s, Auburn began a shift from flat roofs to pitched roofs for most new buildings, and, in the case of the Hill residence halls, adding pitched roofs during renovation. If the building is too large for a pitched roof, as in the new dining hall, enough slope is built into the roof to reduce the potential for water to collect on its surface.

Despite these improvements in design and materials, Swaim noted that the campus has so many major buildings — more than 120 — that roofing and waterproofing are continuing concerns for Facilities personnel. “Deferred maintenance on roofs is always ongoing,” he said, adding that planners look at each building as a whole to identify ways to keep water out.

While major capital projects are necessary for complete renovations, Swaim said the deferred maintenance program looks at needed but more-limited improvements to buildings and infrastructure, such as heating and cooling systems and security features and roadways that are vital to campus maintenance. He said these projects help protect the structural integrity of buildings, making them safer and more secure and reducing the cost of routine maintenance.

While there will always be more work to be done, Swaim said the deferred maintenance program is paying off financially as well as structurally. He added, “We are taking care of much more square footage in buildings with fewer people today than 20 years ago. Just like with your own home, you have to make fewer repairs at less expense if you keep it up.”

—— Roy Summerford
NIH grant to consortium aids search for cure of rare Tay-Sachs, related genetic disorder

The National Institutes of Health has awarded a $3.5-million grant to the Tay-Sachs Gene Therapy Consortium, which includes Auburn, to continue research targeting the fatal genetic disorder.

The NIH grant will help advance an experimental gene therapy for Tay-Sachs and Sandhoff diseases from animal tests to human clinical trials.

Consortium research directors include Douglas R. Martin of Auburn’s College of Veterinary Medicine, Thomas N. Seyfried of Boston College, Timothy M. Cox and Begoña Cachón-González of the University of Cambridge in England, Florian S. Eichler of Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School and Miguel Sema-Estevés of the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

Also representing Auburn in the Tay-Sachs Gene Therapy Consortium are Henry J. Baker, Nancy R. Cox and Aime K. Johnson.

“We’re fortunate to be part of a consortium of world-class scientists dedicated to providing realistic hope for Tay-Sachs patients and their families,” said Martin, an assistant research professor in Auburn’s Scott-Ritchey Research Center. “With great support from private donors and foundations, the initial stages of the project have made success a realistic possibility in the NIH-sponsored research.”

“This is a tremendous achievement,” said Susan Kahn, executive director of the Boston-based National Tay-Sachs and Allied Diseases Association, which made establishing the consortium a top research priority. “While we know much work lies ahead, the potential success of this gene therapy effort gives hope to our member families and may one day go beyond Tay-Sachs to other diseases that affect the brain.”

Tay-Sachs is a fatal genetic disorder, historically known as a disease that affects Ashkenazi Jews. Those of Eastern European Jewish descent, Cajun, French-Canadian and Irish descent are at higher risk for this devastating disease, although this disease can strike anyone. Approximately 25-30 individuals die from the disease annually, though genetic screening has greatly reduced deaths from Tay-Sachs.

Infants can show signs of the disease as early as six months, cease meeting developmental milestones, and then begin to lose motor skills. Most children do not survive past age 5. Children affected by juvenile onset show signs after age three and quickly begin to regress physically and mentally. For adults afflicted by late onset Tay-Sachs, symptoms are often confused with mental illness or other neurodegenerative diagnoses.

Tay-Sachs and Sandhoff diseases are known collectively as GM2 gangliosidoses. Like Tay-Sachs disease, Sandhoff disease is a progressive neurological genetic disorder that is always fatal in children and can occur in all ethnic groups.

Engineering team wins grant for research on tough material for transparent shields

Faculty in Auburn’s Samuel Ginn College of Engineering have received a three-year, $450,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Defense for research that could lead to the development of a new type of transparent armor materials for use in protective face shields and windows in places subject to extreme conditions.

Such materials would be designed to withstand extreme mechanical stress and toxic chemical environments found with weapons of mass destruction. These high-performance materials would replace polycarbonates commonly used as transparent armor material for blast and shock mitigation.

In their research, Maria Auad, an assistant professor in the Department of Polymer and Fiber Engineering, and Hareesh Tippur, a professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, are focusing on the development, high-strain rate mechanical characterization and modeling of transparent interpenetrating polymer networks, or t-IPN, for protective eyewear, face shields, blast proof windows and aircraft canopies.

“This research will combat some of the challenges that personnel and military infrastructures face in the event of mass destruction situations,” said Auad. “Successful processing of t-IPN will provide a new, lightweight material for transparent armor applications, with superior performance under stress-wave loading conditions.”

Auad’s research group will focus on processing and characterization issues of the material. Her research will involve developing the t-IPN for optical, mechanical, thermal and chemical performance, which stems from projects exploring problems associated with the design, manufacture and behavior of polymeric materials.

“Developing stronger and tougher transparent materials is important in both aerospace and transportation engineering for the military and civilians,” said Tippur. “The project requires us to develop a nanoparticle reinforced multiphase material system that is transparent and fracture resistant under impact or shock loading to supplement the single phase or layered materials used now.”

Tippur’s group will examine the high-strain rate performance aspects of the t-IPN and create methods to understand the fracture and failure behavior of transparent materials. With the help of the grant, the group will expand the facilities that Tippur has developed for rapid loading of materials, real-time optical diagnostics and ultra high-speed photography in order to better understand the mechanics of the new materials.

— Sara Borchik
Back in time

English manor houses offer professor clues on class, cloth, culture

Screen adaptations of classic works by 19th and 20th century British writers ranging from Jane Austen to Agatha Christie hold a special interest for Ann Beth Presley in Auburn’s College of Human Sciences.

But, unlike traditional fans of the PBS and BBC productions, who focus on the characters and story, Presley, an authority on textiles and apparel, pays extra attention to the characters’ clothes and the home’s furnishings. In those details, the associate professor in Auburn’s College of Human Sciences sees clues into the social class and behavior of people who actually lived during various periods in British history. Yet, besides the standard limitations of any staged production, a screened image can only yield so much information.

This summer, Presley broke through the two-dimensional barrier of television and cinema to gain a fuller perspective on the lives of the people on whom Austen, Christie, Charles Dickens, Evelyn Waugh and others based their fictional characters. During an intense 18 days in July, Presley was part of an invited class of museum curators and scholars in a field study of historic palaces and manor houses throughout England.

An associate professor in the Auburn college’s Department of Consumer Affairs, Presley was the only academic scholar accepted and participating in a study group dominated by hands-on museum professionals from around the world. Since 1952, the Attingham Trust, an organization for the study of historic houses and collections, has led the summer study tours into legendary British country houses for scholars and curators from the world’s top museums and galleries, including New York’s Metropolitan and London’s Tate.

Sessions in the summer program were at some of England’s most famous national heritage sites. Among these are the Victoria and Albert Museum, Arundel Castle, Broughton Castle, Chatsworth, Hardwick Hall and Wentworth Castle.

Instead of tourist walk-throughs of a few rooms in manor houses and castles that are open to the public, the Attingham group spent intense 12- and 13-hour days exploring the history, grounds, architectural features and furnishings of private estates and sections of public estates that are normally closed to outsiders. For Presley, the summer program presented a rare opportunity to closely examine clothing, textiles, carpets, wallpaper and furnishings from different historical eras in their natural environment. Each home contributed a different aspect to the participants’ understanding of the historic diversity of English country homes, she noted.

Especially notable, she said, was the rare collection of textiles at Temple Newsam, an expansive country house near Leeds. “That was an incredible collection which was not only extremely well preserved but also had a direct connect with the current owners through many generations,” she said.

Among insights gained during the tour, Presley said, was a greater awareness of how people through the centuries used textiles and apparel to express themselves and their families in terms of social standing, economic status, politics and religion. Sometimes those expressions would be obvious, as in the richness of materials and design of clothing and furnishings for the British upper classes.

When a noble’s true political or religious views were counter to that of the crown, the expression of those views, even in the home, would be hidden from view or coded to prevent detection. For instance, Presley noted, during decades of strife after England’s state religion was changed from Catholicism to the Protestant religion under Henry VIII, many nobles secretly sewed crosses and rosaries into fabrics in places visitors would not see, such as inside a corner of the canopy of the lord’s or lady’s bed. If detected they could have been persecuted or even beheaded for treason to the crown.

Although Presley was aware of the importance of class distinctions and inheritance through male lineage for much of Britain’s history, she said the study tour of British estates showed how deeply embedded those factors were in British culture for several centuries. The nobility distinguished itself from the lower social classes through attitudes, language and clothing, and similar distinctions existed between levels of the nobility. Those distinctions can still be observed in the estates of the nobility, where the fabrics and furnishings of the houses became noticeably richer as the nobility progressed up the peerage ladder from baron to duke.

During the summer program, Presley collected an array of samples and slides that she plans to share with students in her apparel and textiles classes in the College of Human Sciences. “For my teaching, I gathered a massive amount of pictures and information about places that are closed to the public,” she said.

“A lot of this information ties into social history and how dress and furnishings reflect change over time. That is an important concept for students in this field.”

Ann Beth Presley
Human Sciences

“In Old England

These stock images illustrate the classic manor house and style of men’s clothing in upper-class 19th century England. Ann Beth Presley of the College of Human Sciences studied historic apparel and furnishings in similar locales this summer through Britain’s Attingham Trust.

“A lot of this information ties into social history and how dress and furnishings reflect change over time. That is an important concept for students in this field.”

— Roy Summerford
Road test
New sections expand capabilities of asphalt technology test track

Construction of 18 new test sections on the National Center for Asphalt Technology Test Track is complete and the heavily loaded trucks will soon begin circling the track 16 hours a day, Monday through Friday.

“This is the fourth cycle of testing for the track, and we are really excited about this group of experimental pavements,” said track manager Buzz Powell. The 1.7-mile NCAT Test Track is a one-of-a-kind accelerated testing facility that in two years allows researchers to apply more than ten years of typical interstate traffic wear-and-tear to the track’s test sections.

The sections are instrumented with thermocouples to continuously measure temperatures throughout the pavement, as well as stress and strain gauges. “We measure how the different pavement test sections respond to loads from the heavy trucks and different environmental conditions,” said David Timm, an associate professor of civil engineering in the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering.

Timm’s graduate students and NCAT engineers sample, test and analyze paving materials from the test sections and then compare the actual pavement response data to theoretical models in order to design better performing pavements.

NCAT Director Randy West said this cycle features several trials to make asphalt pavements more sustainable. “We have pavement sections that contain 45 and 50 percent recycled material; we have sections built with warm-mix asphalt technologies that can reduce asphalt plant greenhouse gas emissions by up to 30 percent, and we have super-quiet porous friction course mixtures that improve wet weather traction and water quality of road runoff.”

Sections for this round of testing are sponsored by state departments of transportation from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Tennessee, as well as the Federal Highway Administration, Shell USA, Inc., Kraton Polymers, Inc., Oldcastle Materials Group, Inc., Lake Asphalt of Trinidad and Tobago, and Cargill, Inc.

Since the track opened in 2000, section sponsors have conducted research on a variety of new technologies that help make roads safer, quieter, more economical and longer lasting. “Those successes keep them coming back because this is real-world research that has an immediate payoff,” said Powell.

The National Center for Asphalt Technology was created in 1986 through an agreement between the National Asphalt Pavement Association Research and Education Foundation and Auburn University. NCAT works with state highway agencies as well as the Federal Highway Administration, and the highway construction industry to develop and evaluate new products, design technologies and construction methods to create pavements that are durable, environmentally friendly, quiet, safe and economical. Its research center and test track make NCAT one of the world’s leading institutions for asphalt pavement research and an important source of information for those tasked with maintaining our nation’s infrastructure.

— Sara Borchik

Testing the test track
A truck traverses a section of the newly expanded test track of Auburn’s National Center for Asphalt Technology. The track will be in use 16 hours a day during test runs.

Achievements

P.K. Raju from the Department of Mechanical Engineering and Chetan S. Sankar from the Department of Management presented a workshop, “Bringing Real-World Experiences to Classrooms through AU LITEE Case Studies,” at the National Institute of Technology, Calicut, India, in August.


James Carr of Auburn’s College of Liberal Arts has been elected to a three-year term on the Behavior Analyst Certification Board.

Established in 2000, the certification board establishes practice and ethical standards and implements a national and international certification program for practitioners of applied behavior analysis.

Carr is the incoming director of the Department of Psychology’s master’s program in applied behavior analysis and developmental disabilities.
Physics professor at Auburn writes book of advice on how Christian students can succeed in college

Successfully transitioning from high school to college can be one of the toughest assignments in a student’s life, but an Auburn professor hopes to help smooth the process.

Michael Bozack, a physics professor who has taught at Auburn for 20 years, recently wrote “Street-Smart Advice to Christian College Students (From a Professor’s Point of View).” Bozack covers multiple aspects of student life, including how to choose a major, how to manage a schedule, how to study and even how to understand professors.

“There are a lot of students who come out of high school who are just not ready for college,” Bozack said. “That’s sad to me. These are important years of life for students and they should do various things to ensure their success.”

Bozack is best known on campus for teaching the freshman course “Foundations of Physics,” called “Dave Letterman Physics” by many students, which he describes as his version of the television show, “Mythbusters.” He said he encourages students to treat class the same way they would a job by being on time, being professional and getting the job done.

“If I could boil it down to one thing, it would just be to develop a good work ethic,” Bozack said. “A lot of students don’t have that and have never been taught how to study or discipline their life. They hit a speed bump of professors who aren’t going to settle for mediocrity, but expect students to keep up with them, rather than them slowing down to the student.”

Bozack, who became a Christian during his undergraduate years at Michigan State, said his book isn’t only about how to succeed academically; it also advises students on how to successfully live a Christian life in college.

“It’s what I passionately believe a college student should know to do better,” Bozack said. “A lot of books on the market I saw were too fluffy. I wanted to be honest. There’s a little tough love in there.”

“I think it’s good for a Christian student to get involved in a local church here,” Bozack said. “I think you need that spiritual input in your life. I don’t think it’s good for a Christian student to come here to Auburn and float. I’d say visit a few churches and then plant yourself in one because you’re going to need that boost in your life every week.”

Bozack has a doctorate in surface physics from Oregon Health and Science University and a master’s degree in systematic theology from Western Conservative Baptist Seminary. He has also taught a singles Sunday School class at First Baptist Church in Atlanta and now teaches a weekly Bible study at Cascade Hills Church in Columbus, Ga.

“Street-Smart Advice to Christian College Students” is available from a variety of online booksellers and may be purchased locally at the Auburn University Bookstore and J&M Bookstore. The 304-page book is published by VMI Publishers.

— Natalie Nettles

Lecture series, art exhibit, film to focus on Elvis’ era

An upcoming series of lectures at Auburn’s Jule Collins Smith Museum will examine American culture at the time Elvis Presley emerged as an icon of it.

The first of the eight-part series will begin at 4 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 22, with “America in the ’50s: The Culture of the Cold War” presented by historian and Professor Emeritus Larry Gerber.

At 6 p.m., Gerber’s lecture will be followed by a classic Alfred Hitchcock film from 1956, “The Man Who Knew Too Much.” The film is directed by Alfred Hitchcock and stars Jimmy Stewart and Doris Day.

The lecture and film are sponsored in part by the Department of Political Science, the College of Liberal Arts and the university.


Community Garden

Michael Mulvaney, a Ph.D. candidate in agronomy and soils, inspects the Auburn University Community Garden, which he manages. Relying on volunteer labor, the Community Garden donates all produce to the East Alabama Food Bank. Volunteers include students, university employees, members of the community and church groups. In 2008 the garden yielded 2,497 pounds of fresh produce for needy families in East Alabama.
Auburn developing Climate Action Plan

The Office of Sustainability is working with units across campus to develop the Auburn Climate Action Plan, which will outline specific approaches to address the Presidents’ Climate Commitment, which Auburn President Gogue signed in fall 2008.

By joining this national project, Auburn has pledged to significantly reducing its carbon footprint. The campus community will determine what actions to take and set a specific target goal and date to meet the overall goal. The Climate Action Plan will be a campus-wide inclusive process similar to the strategic planning process of 2007. The Office of Sustainability is establishing working groups to make recommendations in areas that encompass energy, information technology, purchasing, transportation, buildings, grounds, food and dining, recycling and waste reduction, campus and community engagement and student life.

Working groups will have 10-15 members representing the campus community. Each working group will have a chair who will serve on the CAP Task Force that will summarize the working group recommendations in a final report to President Gogue and the Board of Trustees.

Shelby announces Commerce grant

U.S. Senator Richard Shelby, ranking member of the Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, has announced that the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration has awarded $408,110 to Auburn University.

The university will use this funding to support geospatial mapping of critical utility infrastructure, such as electricity, natural gas, water and telecommunications, on Alabama’s coast. Shelby noted that in the aftermath of a natural disaster, it is necessary for communities to be able to quickly locate critical utility infrastructure in order to preserve essential resources.

Liberal Arts group to help lead sessions

Several faculty, students and staff from the College of Liberal Arts will serve as session leaders for the upcoming statewide conference “Lifetime of Learning: A Conference on Service-Learning, Civic Responsibility & Higher Education” at Birmingham-Southern College on Friday, Sept. 25.

The conference, sponsored by the Alabama Poverty Project, Auburn University and Birmingham-Southern College, will feature keynote addresses from nationally recognized leaders in university public engagement, including Peter Levine of the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement.

Prison Arts project receives funds

The Alabama Prison Arts + Education Project, in the Department of Psychology in the College of Liberal Arts at Auburn University, received $25,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts as part of the federal stimulus funds to support artists affected by the current economic situation.

APAEP will use the funds to support artists teaching classes in Alabama prisons, such as Staton Correctional Facility north of Montgomery and Donaldson Correctional Facility northwest of Birmingham, as well as an artist internship in arts administration and community engagement through the arts.

“These funds benefit artists as well as the individuals who take APAEP classes,” said Kyes Stevens of the Alabama Prison Arts + Education Project.

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