AU United Way seeks $135,000 for local needs

The United Way campaign for 2004 is under way at AU with a goal of $135,000 to assist more than 30 charities and social service organizations in East Alabama.

The AU campaign began Sept. 8 and is part of the Lee County United Way campaign, which started on Aug. 25 and as of last week had raised 30 percent of its $905,000 goal.

This year’s campus goal is $10,000 more than the goal in 2003, but campaign coordinator Susie Hall noted that the AU campaign surpassed that goal with more than $131,000 in donations. “The goal is a little more this year, but the needs continue to grow,” said Hall, who is executive assistant in the Office of Administrative Services.

“Most people on campus know others in our area who are less fortunate than ourselves, and those are the ones that United Way agencies are set up to help,” she added.

United Way contributions are important to many people in the local area, Hall said, because the money supports local charities and social services. Of the money raised at AU and elsewhere in Lee County, more than 90 percent remains in the local community (See United Way, page 3). 

Top marching band

The AU Marching Band received the Sudler Trophy in a ceremony at Saturday’s football game. The award is presented annually to the nation’s top marching band by the John Philip Sousa Foundation, which is named for the legendary marching band leader of the late 19th century. Shown above are historic scenes of the AU Band on a poster commemorating the award.

SACS committee visiting Auburn this week

A delegation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools will visit Auburn this week to assess AU’s compliance with governance criteria set for Auburn by SACS last December.

A committee is scheduled to visit from Tuesday-Thursday to review documents and interview administrators and representatives from faculty, students and other AU constituencies regarding the university’s commitment to meeting the criteria. 

The compliance review team will issue its report in October and members of the regional accrediting agency will vote in December on lifting or continuing the probation for another year.

The governance criteria cited by SACS are posted online at www.auburn.edu/administration/special-reports/sacsdocuments.html.

AU has implemented several major changes to its policies since last year’s report (See SACS review, page 2).
Two departments get new names

Two departments in the College of Sciences and Mathematics have new names this semester.

The college’s Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, and the Department of Mathematics has merged with the Department of Discrete and Statistical Sciences from the Department of Mathematics and Statistics.

The name changes, which were approved by the Board of Trustees at its last spring meeting, were in response to changes in the disciplines, said Sciences and Mathematics Dean Stewart Schneller.

“Chemistry and mathematics have both been traditional disciplines for a number of years, but the disciplines have transformed as times have changed, as the needs of students have changed and as research has changed,” Schneller said.

With advances in computing and other technologies offering new opportunities in research and scholarship, biochemistry and discrete and statistical sciences have emerged as well-defined academic disciplines.

While biochemistry developed alongside chemistry in the same department at Auburn, AU spun off the disciplines that became discrete and statistical sciences from mathematics in the mid-1980s. The merger brings those disciplines together after nearly two decades.

The heads of those departments said the name changes give the academic units a clearer identity.

United Way

The campus campaign is organized around leadership teams that reach out to colleges, schools and all other units at Auburn.

United Way volunteers on campus have been distributing pledge cards to faculty and staff during the past two weeks. Hall said the campaign can reach its goal by Thanksgiving if most donors return their pledge cards promptly but is prepared to continue through the semester, if necessary.

Biggio group to discuss books on higher education

The Biggio Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning is organizing a book group for members of the university community interested in books and higher education.

The center will host meetings in Foy 213 at noon and 5 p.m. on Oct. 20 for discussion of Ernest Boyer’s “Scholarship Reconsidered.”

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Based on that study, Boyer proposes a broad definition of scholarship that integrates discovery, teaching and application.

For information about book purchase and discount, contact Isabelle Thompson by e-mail at thomp- sio@auburn.edu.
Student's internship takes wild turn with 'Croc Hunter' Irwin

Lindsey Harris may not look like a typical pioneer but the Auburn student has been where no other college student has been before. The conservation major was chosen as the first intern ever accepted to work at the Australia Zoo.

The zoo has been made famous by its owner Steve Irwin, otherwise known as the Crocodile Hunter. Irwin is famous for wrangling crocodiles, snakes and other animals for his show on the Animal Planet network.

"I've always liked Australia, and I was looking for an opportunity to work there because I really like marsupials," Harris said.

She coordinated the trip through AU's study abroad program. In addition to her internship, Harris took classes at Australia's University of the Sun-shine Coast, located about an hour north of Bris-bane.

On her behalf, a representative from the Australian university approached the zoo about an internship for Harris. The zoo declined initially, however, saying they didn't accept interns due to Irwin's and the zoo's worldwide popularity.

"They are always getting requests from people who want to work there just to be close to Steve. It is just easier for them to say no," she said. But Har-ris's resume made zoo officials take a second look. She had already spent four years working for Zoo Atlanta, near her hometown of Roswell, Ga., and she displayed a genuine interest in working with animals through her biological sciences curriculum.

"I had to write a lot of essays about why I wanted to work with the animals and let them know that it wasn't just because I was impressed with Steve," she said, adding, "They wanted to make sure I was legitimate."

Harris worked for six months at the zoo while taking classes. During her internship, she did behavior studies on Tasmanian devils and gray kan-garoos. Occasionally, she was asked to help with crowd control while Irwin gave a demonstration to visitors or taped a segment of his "Crocodile Hunter Diaries" television show.

"It was really exciting and wild. People fly from all over the world just to see Steve, so not only did I get to work with animals but I also had to play bodyguard," she also got to assist Steve during the taping of "Croc Week," a series of five shows broadcast on the Animal Planet network.

Harris concedes she loves to travel and her experience in Australia only sparked her desire to see other places around the globe. This winter she will travel to Antarctica on an ecotourism cruise, spending 12 days aboard ship while studying wildlife and animal conservation.

"I want to look at the impact of tour groups on Antarctica, which is ironic since I'm going with a tour group. But I want to see what happens when groups visit there," she said.

AU trustees reschedule meeting, now set for Oct. 7

The AU Board of Trustees will meet at Dixon Conference Center on Thursday, Oct. 7. Committee sessions start at 8:30 a.m., and the board meeting is scheduled for 12:45 p.m., but could vary, depending on the length of the committee meetings.

The AU Board was originally scheduled to meet on Sept. 17 but had to postpone the meeting when Hurricane Ivan targeted Alabama.

AU's operating budget for 2004-05 is the main item on the agenda. The fiscal year starts Oct. 1, but the university will follow financial patterns in the 2003-04 budget until the board approves a new budget.

When an operating budget for 2004-05 is approved, it will be retroactive to the start of the fiscal year, said Executive Vice President Don Large.

'Galileo,' first play of season, is next week

The AU Department of Theatre will present the Bertolt Brecht play "Galileo," the department's first production of the 2004-05 season, on Oct. 5-8 and Oct. 12-15 at Telfair Peet Theatre, with a matinee on Oct. 10.

All performances are at 7:30 p.m., except the mati-ne, which is at 2:30 p.m. For tickets or related infor-mation, call 844-4154.

The play examines the struggles faced by one of history's greatest scientists and philosophers as he expressed thoughts in the early 17th century that powerful religious leaders of the time denounced as heresy. The play is among the most famous works by Brecht, a German-born playwright who was described by critics as one of the greatest poets and dramatists of the 20th century.