Health insurance to cost more in January

The cost of health insurance for faculty and staff will increase 7 percent on Jan. 1, with AU employees paying from $3 to $17 more per month, depending on salary and family status.

The Board of Trustees approved the increase Friday on the recommendation of the administration and the university’s Insurance and Benefits Committee, a 16-member panel of faculty, staff and administration representatives.

Executive Vice President Don Large said the increases are necessary to offset rising costs. The university’s health insurance is administered by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama, but all costs are paid from a fund financed through employee premiums and university contributions. The university pays from 60 percent to 80 percent of the total cost of health insurance for employees, depending on the amount of each individual’s salary.

The 7 percent increase follows a 10 percent increase in 2004 and a 7 percent increase in 2003 and is part of a nationwide pattern of increases in health insurance that is driven by continuing increases in medical costs across the United States.

For family coverage, employees earning below $22,500 per year will pay $132 per month, up from $124; those earning $22,500 to $33,699 will pay $199, up from $185; and those earning $33,700 or more will pay $265, up from $248.

Employees with individual coverage and earning less than $22,500 will pay $64 per month, up from $61; those earning $22,500 to $33,699 will pay $94.

(String)
Financial Aid, Bursar’s Office merged, Quad Center to house recruiting staff

AU last week combined the Office of Student Financial Aid and the Office of Bursar and Special Funds Accounting to create a one-stop shop for student financial services.

Administrators said the new Office of Student Financial Services will offer improved services for students. Also, they said the merger clears the way for a move that will give a much higher profile to Auburn’s student recruiting efforts.

The Bursar’s Office will join Student Financial Aid in Mary Martin Hall early in 2005, followed by the move of admissions staff from Martin Hall to the Quad Center.

“Student recruiting will get a tremendous boost with the move to the Quad Center,” said Wes Williams, AU’s vice president for Student Affairs. “That is a lovely building in a lovely setting. It will make a good impression on prospective students and their parents, and it will provide an excellent base for all our student recruiting activities.”

Mike Reynolds, formerly director of Student Financial Aid, is director of the new Office of Student Financial Services, which is part of the Business Services Department.

The merger follows the appointment earlier this year of Fred Bobo, former director of the Bursar’s Office, to a new position as project manager for the AU Quad Center.

Reynolds said the merger brings together two offices that had long worked closely together and will result in improved services to students.

SACS response

(continued from page 1)

The university’s response is due at SACS head-quarters in Atlanta on Nov. 15 for the association’s annual meeting. At that meeting, SACS could express satisfaction that Auburn has met its criteria regarding governance issues and lift the probation that it imposed in December 2003, or it could rule against Auburn to continue the probation or impose other penalties.

On Oct. 20, AU said in a one-year probation last December, the agency cited concerns about the role of the Board of Trustees in administrative matters, business relationships among individual trustees leading to a potential conflict of interest as well as inadequate control over authorizations to spend money.

In the committee’s final report, all the issues had been resolved except for the two areas addressed by the full Board on Friday.

Richardson said he felt that the SACS committee’s concern about business relationships and minority control of the board had been resolved through two previous external reviews and an internal audit of business relationships.

But, with the review committee requesting an additional external review, the board authorized the continued work of Jack Etchison, assistant vice president for Finance, and John Fletcher, assistant vice president for Enrollment Management.

John Fletcher said he will ask the external auditor to complete the review before Dec. 4 but is not optimistic that goal can be met.

The board also agreed to establish a process to re-examine the performance of the president, with the first review to be complete by next June.

SACS administrator Bob Richardson said he had taken steps toward establishing an evaluation process for the president before SACS cited the need for one.

The latest action follows through on the previous commitment, he said.

Upcoming Events

Continuing


• Photography Exhibit: “Images of the Southwest,” photographer Loo Marmon, Tillie Faye Gallery, through Nov. 23.

Monday, November 15

• Student Art Exhibit: Graphic design, senior project exhibition, this week until noon Thursday, Bizzig Gallery.

Tuesday, November 16

• Information Forum: Discussion of SunGard SCT Banner System, software planned for AU student, personnel and financial records, 3 p.m.-4:30 p.m., Foy 227.

• AU Theatre: “Festival of Shorts,” 7:30 p.m., Nov. 16-19 and Nov. 30- Dec. 4, Tillie Faye Theatre. Box Office: 844-4154. For details, see www.auburnuniversity-theatre.org.

Wednesday, November 17

• GIS Day Public Seminar: Speakers discuss geographic information systems as part of Geography Awareness Week, noon-5 p.m., first-floor auditorium, Draughon Library.

• Conference: “Renewable Energy and Efficency in Agriculture,” 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., Dixon Conference Center.

Thursday, November 18

• Public Lecture: “James Adair and His History of the American Indians,” Kathryn Braund, AU Department of History, 3 p.m., Special Collections & Archives Room, Draughon Library.

• Arts & Humanities Lecture: Frys Gaillard, author of “Cradle of Freedom,” account of the Civil Rights struggle in Alabama, 6:30 p.m., Auburn City Library.

Monday, November 22

• Next AU Report.

• Thanksgiving Holidays: No classes this week; offices open Monday and Tuesday.

Wednesday, November 24

• Campus Close: Classes dismissed Thursday and Friday for Thanksgiving holidays, reopen Monday, Nov. 29.

Souvenirs doormat in eyes of AU supporters, scholarship recipients

From all sorts of apparel to such items as keys, Christmas ornaments and candy bars, the Auburn mark is everywhere and that means more scholarship money for Auburn students.

Auburn distributed more than $1 million in scholarships in 2003 through revenues from AU trademarks and logos, and the university may surpass that record in 2004.

“I am anticipating that, based on what I’ve seen so far, the number will be significantly higher this year,” said Susan Smith, director of AU’s Trademark Management and Licensing Office. In total, $1,025,036 was distributed from the sale of officially licensed and trademarked AU products.

The popularity of collegiate merchandise has increased over the past few years, and Auburn merchandise is no exception. Smith said figurines and handbags are among the most popular items.

But collectors can find more AU-themed merchandise to buy, including almost anything imaginable with the AU logo on it, including orange-and-blue doormats, AU desk accessories such as lamps and nameplates, stuffed animals bearing the AU logo, rings and slippers, picture frames, watches and clocks, and even an AU Barbie doll.

“Parents and students many times confused the AU logo with the Auburn logo,” she said. “I am always amazed at the enthusiasm of Auburn fans for the number of things they buy.”

Smith said fall has always been the busiest time of year for her office. A combination of football and the Christmas season puts Auburn merchandise in high demand.

“I am always amazed at the enthusiasm of Auburn fans for the number of things they buy,” she said. “The more success we have in the early part of the football season, the more things people buy for Christmas. Our retailers will tell you that winning the Alabama game makes their Christmas season.

Increased sales of merchandise translates into even more money for scholarships, which are divided evenly between academic and athletic awards.

Smith said Auburn’s royalties skyrocketed last year in anticipation of a big season, resulting in the increase in scholarship revenue. “Our royalties went through the roof,” she said. “It is amazing the royalties we saw just based on that anticipation.”

In addition to monitoring royalties, Smith works closely with the Collegiate Licensing Co., the dominant licensing representative for U.S. colleges and universities.

“Every year we know that Auburn’s marks are protected and used properly,” she said.

Smith said vendors of Auburn products must adhere to strict criteria when they use Auburn’s marks. For example, Auburn colors must be accurately reproduced, logos must be used correctly and the pred-
EDI report offers strategies to combat poverty, other problems in rural areas

“Crossroads and Connections: Strategies for Rural Alabama” is a new publication from Joe Sumners, director of AU’s Economic Development Institute, and Larry Lee, former director of the Southeast Alabama Regional and Development Commission.

The 46-page report from AU Outreach and the Economic Development Institute suggests solutions to some of the problems defined in the authors’ earlier report, “Beyond the Interstate: The Crisis in Rural Alabama.” Those problems include double-digit unemployment, low percentage of high school graduates and low household incomes in Alabama’s rural counties.

“Here is a roadmap of many crossroads the state could take to shared prosperity,” said AU Vice President for Outreach David Wilson.

Sumners and Lee say they found many excellent programs, projects and initiatives that have been put together by all kinds of groups. However, they said, “We are accustomed to working on the equivalent of one-way streets. We need more crossroads.”

The report recommends the following for rural Alabama:

- Create a state rural development council.
- Create a state government position or office to focus on rural development.
- Implement a regional economic and community development strategy.
- Support the Alabama Communities of Excellence Program.
- Upgrade the rural technology infrastructure.
- Support Interstate highway expansion in rural Alabama.
- Create a comprehensive strategy for retraining displaced rural workers.

English Department head eulogizes instructor

English Instructor Barber Bancroft, an AU faculty member since 1988, died Nov. 5 of an apparent heart attack while teaching an 8 a.m. World Literature class.

Bancroft was a full-time instructor at AU from 1988 to 1993. Since 1993, he had served as a part-time instructor. He had also taught at Troy University Montgomery since 1988.

English Department Head George Crandell said Bancroft had a passion for teaching and writing that he readily shared with his students and colleagues alike. “In the classroom, Barber led lively discussions and always challenged his students to stretch their abilities.”

“He was the rare kind of teacher who could stimulate students to think — even in a required core course such as freshman composition or world literature,” Crandell said. “He was the rare kind of teacher whom students wrote about long after graduation. We are accustomed to working on the equivalent of one-way streets. We need more crossroads.”

Crandell added, “He was the kind of teacher that others aspire to be — one who seeks the truth, loves with all his heart and inspires in others the desire to be better than we are.”

Bancroft specialized in English literature and literary critical theory. He regularly taught English Composition I & II and World Literature I & II.

Crandell said Bancroft was also a creative writer and novelist, often honing his writing skills at the Hambidge Center for the Arts and Sciences in the mountains of North Georgia.

Bancroft is survived by his wife Fletcher and son Webb.

S.D. Worley wins award for work in chemistry

S.D. Worley, a chemistry professor in AU’s College of Sciences and Mathematics, has won the Charles Stone Award for 2004 from the American Chemical Society.

The Carolina Piedmont Section of the ACS presents the award each year to an outstanding chemist in the Southeast who has made significant contributions to the field through activities in the scientific community, public outreach, education and research.

Worley’s research focuses on making new materials from compounds that kill bacteria, particularly biocidal polymers. His research discoveries have been used in Third World countries to purify water supplies. He has also developed a paint to help prevent the spread of diseases in hospitals and nursing homes.

This is the second time in three years an AU chemistry professor has won the Charles Stone Award. College of Sciences and Mathematics Dean Stewart Schneller received the award in 2001.