NSF grant going to partnership for development

The National Science Foundation has awarded a $1.3 million, three-year grant to an industrial development partnership led by the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering’s Auburn Engineering Technical Assistance Program and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

Other partners include the AU College of Business, NASA, Alabama Power Company, Alabama Development Office, City of Auburn, Bessemer Chamber of Commerce, Montgomery Chamber of Commerce, Wayne State University and 28 industries throughout the state.

The NSF Partnership for Innovation Program is a research and development effort that supports innovative partnerships to improve regional and national economies. The AU program was one of 10 programs chosen from more than 200 applicants.

“The primary objective of this partnership is to facilitate the transfer of knowledge into innovations that create new wealth and strengthen Alabama’s economy,” said P.K. Raju, director of the Auburn Engineering Technical Assistance Program.

“The uniqueness of this activity lies in the use of advances in knowledge developed through fundamental research in engineering at Auburn and in

Celebrating heritage

Pete Dunaway, who is of Creek Indian descent, demonstrates his spear-throwing technique during the recent War Eagle Native American Festival in Auburn. On other days, Dunaway is a heavy-construction supervisor in the Facilities Division. For more information about the event and other photos of the activities, see page 7.

Warning cites dangers of sharing computer access

The Office of Information Technology is reminding all Auburn faculty, staff and students that university policy forbids the sharing of individual computer passwords and related information.

The policy exists for the protection of individuals as well as for the university, said Richard Burnett, executive director of OIT. The university policy has been in effect for several years, and Burnett said OIT is issuing the campus-wide reminder because of a continuing influx of new students, faculty and staff.

“While all AU employees and students are afforded the privilege of using IT resources in their jobs and in pursuit of academic goals, it is critical that individual computer accounts, user names, PINs (Personal Identification Numbers) and passwords remain exclusively for the use of the individuals to whom they are assigned,” said Burnett.

(See Safeguards, page 2)
Transportation bill to fund AU study

Legislation that would appropriate $1.5 million in federal funding for the AU-based National Center for Asphalt Technology is pending a final vote in Congress.

The money will support additional research by NCAT, which operates a 1.7-mile asphalt test track, built in partnership with the Alabama Department of Transportation, about 15 miles east of Auburn. Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Ala., chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Treasury and General Government, announced the funding.

The funding is part of a package of transportation appropriation bills approved by a Joint House-Senate conference committee. The package awaits final approval by both chambers.

The NCAT funding will support new research to improve and evaluate pavement performance. In that effort, AU researchers will develop tests to pre-

improve and evaluate pavement performance. In

addition, AU researchers will use the oval track to test asphalt formulations that are more resistant to potholes and have smoother surfaces that result in less wear on tires and fewer highway work zone.

Safeguards

(continued from page 1)

The policy against sharing access to user names, accounts, PINs and passwords seeks to:

• Protect sensitive and restricted information for which AU or the user may be liable.
• Avoid denying valid users access to resources when needed.
• Protect university systems’ security.
• Protect the employees and students to whom the accounts are assigned.

Individuals who violate the policy could be subject to penalties for major violations, including loss of the access to OIT services, but Burnett said most people should be more concerned with the dangers they face from unauthorized users than from possible penalties.

“Everyone who cooperates in honoring this privilege and adhering to the policy by not sharing account information with anyone, including family and friends, is critical to the security of our campus network,” said Burnett.

Even seemingly harmless actions can backfire, he noted. A person may give out his or her account information, user name, PIN or password with good intentions, but the unauthorized user could come back later to gain access to student or employee records or other legally sensitive records. The unauthorized person could also pass along the access information to individuals who may not be trustworthy.

In one instance, AU students were unable to gain access to computers in a university computer lab to do lab assignments because high-school students were there, using a parent’s user name, password and account information.

The university and individuals may be legally liable for unauthorized access to student or employee records and other restricted-access documents because of federal privacy laws and regulations.

A person who gives out his or her user name and password also runs the risk of that person or a third party using the information to steal that person’s electronic identity through e-mail. “Once you give out your user name and password, someone could come back later and send false e-mail messages under your name,” Burnett said. “Your electronic signature is good only as long as it is protected.”

Drbaugh Library moves media lab to first-floor location for patrons

The media lab at Draughon Library has moved to the former staff area on the first floor near the Service Desk.

The media lab houses the large-format printers, GIS equipment, scanners and music listening equipment. The entire area is open for Auburn faculty, staff and students to use for academic projects.

Historical society elects Wayne Flynt president

Wayne Flynt, Distinguished University Professor of History, has been elected president of the Southern Historical Society.

Flynt has been a member of the Auburn faculty since 1977 and is a former head of the Department of History. He is author of 10 books on Southern cultural, economic and religious history.

Two of his books have been nominated for Pulitzer Prizes, and his 1990 book, “Poor But Proud: Alabama’s Poor Whites,” won the Southern Regional Council’s Lillian Smith Award for nonfiction.

The Auburn professor will deliver his presidential address on religious and poor whites at the 2004 Southern Historical Society meeting in Memphis.

The meeting will focus on the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in Brown vs. Board of Education, which was a landmark of the Civil Rights Era.

Bookstore association honors AU employee

The Alabama College Bookstore Association has named Teresa Dickman of the AU Bookstore Employee of the Year for 2003-04.

Dickman has been on the AU Bookstore staff for four years and is an insignia gifts buyer. She was nominated for the award by her supervisor, Katie Lee. The association represents bookstores on 15 campuses in Alabama.

Teams to play for school supplies

Want to trade school supplies for admission to a basketball game?

The College of Education’s Student Council, the honor society Phi Delta Kappa, the AU Athletics Department will sponsor “Team Up for Education” on Dec. 7 at Beard-Eaves-Memorial Coliseum.

The College of Education student organizations and the Athletic Department will sponsor the event to collect classroom supplies for kindergarten through eighth grade classes in area schools.

AU basketball fans will be admitted free to the women’s game at noon and the men’s game at 2 p.m. if they donate new school supplies.

Fall foliage

Last week’s cooler temperatures helped bring on the overdue show of brilliant foliage colors on the AU campus. This scene near Haley Center, which includes a multicolored maple, is only one of countless seasonal displays that have recently arrived — and will soon depart.

Mask named an assistant director in Cooperative Extension System

Paul Mask, an agronomy professor and Extension agronomist at Auburn, has been appointed an assistant director of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

ACES Interim Director Gaines Smith recently announced the appointment of Mask as interim director for agriculture, forestry and natural resources.

Smith saidMask will provide statewide leadership to Extension programs and personnel in those disciplines and will work closely with faculty at AU and Alabama A&M University in advancing those programs. He will also be responsible for seeking financial resources for agriculture, forestry and natural resource programs.

In his new position, Mask, an Extension agronomist since 1982, will play a major role in helping transform the Extension System from a primarily county-delivered program into one in which highly specialized agents will work across county lines.

“My goal is to help make this transition as smooth as possible for agents,” Mask said. “Yes, it represents change, but it also offers tremendous opportunities for agents to do what they are trained to do.”

Mask said his long-term goals include ensuring that all sectors of Alabama’s agriculture, forestry and natural resources industries are primed to withstand the pressures associated with global economic competition. All three of these groups — agriculture, forestry and natural resources — have huge challenges focused on them at the moment,” Mask said. “In agriculture, there is already a widespread concern among our producers about competing successfully with their counterparts in China and South America. So, obviously, one of our most pressing needs is to equip Extension educators so that they will be in a better position to help our producers compete globally.”

Mask has a bachelor’s degree from Georgia State University, a master’s degree from the University of Georgia and a doctorate from Ohio State University.

NSF grant

(continued from page 1)

The project is led by Dean Larry Benefield and Raju in the Ginn College of Engineering and Evelyn Clayton and Warren McCord in the Cooperative Extension System.
Magazine ranks AU Physicians Executive MBA program 14th

Modern Physician magazine has ranked Auburn’s Physicians Executive MBA program in the College of Business the 14th best in the nation.

Daniel Gropper, director of MBA programs in the College of Business, said the ranking represents a breakthrough for Auburn’s program, which is only four years old yet is ranked among many prominent universities that have medical schools.

“Our overall MBA strategy for advancement includes developing focused options that serve specific industry niches, and the physician program is a key part of that strategy,” Gropper said.

Stanley Harris, who teaches in the PEMBA Program, said Auburn’s program might have been ranked higher if Modern Physician had considered certain information. “Unlike the other schools on the list, our tuition includes books, a laptop computer, lodging and meals while the physicians are on campus, and the costs for study trips to Washington and Europe,” noted Harris, Everett Professor of Management in the College of Business.

“I am pleased that our young program, which combines the advantages of periodic face-to-face interaction with the flexibility of distance education, has received this well-deserved recognition,” Harris added.

Modern Physician ranked the University of North Carolina’s program No. 1. The only other Southeastern Conference-member school in the rankings was North Carolina’s program No. 1. The only other Southeastern program to make the list was the University of Tennessee at No. 10.

The rankings were based on a list of programs offering the PEMBA program and all are accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business or the Accrediting Commission on Education for Health Services Administration.

Programs were ranked on four factors: cost of tuition; number of days students must spend on campus (the fewer the days, the higher a program was ranked); number of years each program has been in existence; and number of students who have graduated from the program since it began.

The AU College of Business started the 21-month Physician Executive MBA program in fall 1999.

Kim Kuerten, assistant director of the AU College of Business MBA programs, said the PEMBA program was modeled after the successful Executive MBA program begun in 1998 by the College of Business.

The PEMBA program was an offspring of a certificate continuing education program for physicians that program was administered by AU and the Southern Medical Association.

The Auburn program is designed to accommodate doctors who may have difficulty leaving their practices for more than a couple of days a week, said Kuerten.

Modern Physician, published by Crain Communications Inc., describes itself as “a monthly business news magazine written for physician executives who are key players in the effort to reshape America’s major medical institutions.”

Upcoming Events

Monday, November 24
• Thanksgiving Holidays: No classes this week; offices open Mon-day-Tuesday, closed Wednesday-Friday.

Wednesday, November 26
• Offices close for Thanksgiving

Monday, December 1
• Classes resume; offices reopen.
• No AU Report on Monday following Thanksgiving holiday.

Tuesday, December 2
• Curator’s Choice Film Series: “Surviving Picassos,” 7 p.m., auditortium, Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art.
• Concert: AU Singers Fall Show, 7:30 p.m., Auburn High School.

Wednesday, December 3
• Great Flicks Film Series: “Looking for Richard,” on-camera discus-sions and scenes from performances of Shakespeare’s “Richard III,” 7:30 p.m., Haley 1203.

Thursday, December 4
• Tree Lighting: Holiday tree, Samford Lawn, 5:15 p.m.

Monday, December 8
• Next AU Report. Submissions due by 4 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 3.

Tuesday, December 9
• Health Insurance: Blue Cross-Blue Shield representative available for consultation, 10 a.m.-11:45 a.m., Ingram 212. No appointment needed.
• Concert: AU Community Orchestra, 7:30 p.m., Auburn High School.

Wednesday, December 10
• Classes end for semester.

BEST to Auburn competition

South’s BEST Co-Director George Blanks, who heads Business and Engineering Continuing Educa-tion for the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering, said the robotics competition is part of a broader effort to inspire young people to pursue careers in engineering, science and technology.

The competition at Auburn is an outgrowth of activities promoted nationally by BEST, a nonprofit, volunteer organization formed in 1993 by Texas Instruments engineers Ted Mahler and Steve Manum. Sponsors for the South’s BEST regional finals event were the Samuel Ginn College of Engi-neering, the AU College of Sciences and Mathemat-ics and the Southern Company.

Mary Lou Howard, BEST co-director and director of outreach for the College of Sciences and Mathemat-ics, said faculty and staff from three colleges worked together to organize the competition. Engi-neering and COSAM faculty and students prepared the kits of standardized parts with which each team began the competition.

The faculty and students also handled the techi-nical aspects of the competition and served as judges and referees for “Transfusion Confusion,” a nanotechnology-themed game.

First-year students from AU’s College of Archi-tecture, Design and Construction designed the glowing set that served as the backdrop for the day’s events.

Auburn High School in Decatur and Auburn High School placed first and second, respectively, in the BEST Award category. Davison High School from Davison, Mich., placed third in the robotics competi-tition. The winners advanced to the National Compe-tition Nov 22-23 at Texas A&M University.
Faculty profile

His interest is clean water, but Hairston never left the land

From a childhood in a tenant farming family in North Alabama to leadership of an Auburn team that has created one of the nation’s most comprehensive sources of water quality information, Jim Hairston has built a career shaped by certain key influences.

Hairston, leader of the Alabama Water Quality team, is a professor of agronomy and soils in the College of Agriculture and agronomy specialist with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. Although he grew up in a farming family, he took a round-about route to a career in agriculture.

Hairston, the second oldest of 21 children, was born and grew up near Section, a rural community on Sand Mountain in northeast Alabama. His family worked as tenant farmers until he was in the eighth grade, when they bought their first acre of land. Later, they bought another small farm and another until they had 200 acres.

While his parents encouraged all of their children to graduate from high school, they needed all family members to work on the family farm and could not understand the benefits of a college degree. With the help of his high school principal and the principal’s wife, the determined youth ran away from home to college in Rome, Ga.

“The principal and his wife were kind of like an extra set of parents to me. I still owe them a lot,” said Hairston. “They carried me to take the college entrance exam, and they actually took me to Berry College against my parents’ wishes. I graduated from high school in May and a week later I was on the Berry College campus working.”

Hairston initially thought he wanted to major in art. Naturally talented, he drew portraits throughout his high school years. He also displayed an aptitude for the sciences, and with encouragement from a professor at Berry College, he changed his major to chemistry.

After graduating from Berry College in 1968 with a bachelor’s degree in chemistry, and having convinced his parents that college was a good idea, Hairston started graduate school at the University of Georgia, where he studied organic chemistry.

Drafted for military service during the Vietnam War, Harris returned to UGA after his military discharge but felt harassed by professors in his original program. However, encouraged by professors in UGA’s College of Agriculture, he eventually changed his graduate concentration to agronomy.

As a doctoral student in the 1970s, Hairston worked with the U.S. Geological Survey and was matched with NASA on remote sensing technology that is now used in satellite imaging for improved use of farm land and conservation of natural resources. His work on this project stimulated another of his long-term research interests — spatial technology to help manage natural resources.

Hairston received his Ph.D. from the University of Georgia in 1978 in agronomy and soils, worked briefly for the Georgia Soil and Water Commission and spent most of the next decade at Mississippi State University developing a water-quality research program.

He came to Auburn in 1989 with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System as Water Quality Program Coordinator.

One of his most recent projects as Water Quality Program Coordinator has been developing the Alabama Water Quality Program Web site, which covers all aspects of water quality.

The site carries information about drinking water and human health, environmental restoration, volunteer citizen water-quality monitoring and animal waste management.

The Web site also has the nation’s largest online glossary of water-quality terms. Scholars from several countries have used information from the site to prepare water quality-related information for presentations at international conferences.

Hairston received the 2003 Distinguished Service Award from the Alabama Chapter of Epsilon Sigma Phi, a national Extension honorary fraternity.
Autumn twilight
Comer Hall, headquar-
ters for the AU College
of Agriculture, is pic-
tured here at twilight.
This photograph is one
of the features in the
calendar “Twilight on
the Plains,” produced
by AU Photographic
Services. The calendars
are available at the AU
Bookstore and at Pho-
tographic Services in
the L Building.

AU helps state launch new effort
to link environment, reading, art

A multidisciplinary partnership involving several major programs and units at AU has launched River of Words, an international program that blends envi-
ronmental science with art and literacy for school-
age children.

River of Words is a U.S. Library of Congress-affil-
iated environmental art and poetry program designed to promote watershed awareness, literacy and the arts among students from kindergarten through the 12th grade. This year, for the first time, the program is being offered in Alabama.

Major partners in the project include the Auburn-
based Alabama Center for the Book, AU Environ-
mental Institute, College of Agriculture, Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station, AU Libraries and other on- and off-campus affiliates.

The result is an interdisciplinary learning experi-
ce in the arts and environmental sciences to bene-
fit Alabama’s youngest stewards, said Jay Lamar of
the Alabama Center for the Book.

“The project weaves together natural, environ-
mental and forestry education with significant arts
education. Utilizing one discipline to teach the other
makes each subject more accessible to a wider range
of students, allowing for various learning styles and
approaches,” said Lamar.

The River of Words program invites students to
explore the natural and cultural history of their local
watersheds — the puddles and ponds of their own
backyards — and then to express through poetry
and art what they discover. That creative work is
submitted to a national contest, from which eight
national winners are chosen. Those eight students
receive a trip to Washington, D.C., where they are
recognized in a Library of Congress-sponsored award ceremony.

Alabama’s submissions will go to the national
competition, but they will also be judged on the
state level. State winners will be honored in an
awards ceremony in April in conjunction with AU’s
Earth Day celebration.

Although Alabama’s ROW program is available
state-wide, organizers are conducting an enhanced
pilot project in Alabama’s Black Belt region. “We are
creating special environmental/watershed outdoor
classroom experiences for under-resourced students
in Alabama’s Black Belt, beginning with students in
the Wilcox County schools,” said Pam Stein of
Auburn’s Environmental Institute.

“These were held this fall at the Black Freedmen’s
Living Historical Farm for Children, Inc., in Furman,
Ala., following two successful semesters in 2002,”
said Stein.

“We will follow up with in-class environmental
science and art-education opportunities,” she
added. “It is our hope that this program will provide
a framework for students to learn about their water-
shed habitats and use that information to better pre-
pare their ROW contest entries.”

For more information, contact the AU Environ-
mental Institute at 844-4132 or Alabama Center for
the Book at 844-4946.

Bursar now sending bills electronically
to students

Beginning this month, Auburn students are re-
ceiving their Bursar bills electronically.

The Office of the Bur-
sar and Special Funds
Accounting has teamed
up with the Office of
Information Technology

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