Auburn’s fall semester enrollment hit a record high, and the university’s freshman class boasts the highest average ACT score of any class at AU, according to numbers released by AU’s Office of Institutional Research and Assessment.

AU enrollment stands at 24,137 students with all student groups – undergraduates, first-professional and graduates – seeing an increase in enrollment numbers.

“The university’s commitment last fall to improving and strengthening the recruitment of students to Auburn along with the Board of Trustees’ support for the Spirit of Auburn scholarship program are key factors in the improved academic profile of our freshman class,” said Wayne Alderman, dean of enrollment management.

AU’s graduate student enrollment saw the largest percentage increase, rising from 3,245 last year to 3,375 this year, a 4 percent difference. Undergraduate enrollment for fall semester 2007 stands at 19,812 – a 2 percent increase from last year’s undergraduate enrollment of 19,367. AU’s first-professional student enrollment, which includes students in audiology, pharmacy and veterinary medicine, increased from 935 students last year to 950 this fall, a change of 1.6 percent.

Auburn enrolled the second-largest freshman class in the school’s history and potentially the smartest. The total number of entering freshmen is 4,191 compared to 4,092 enrolled last year. The record for freshman class enrollment stands at 4,197, set in fall semester 2005.

Additionally, the average ACT score and high school grade-point average for this year’s freshman class is notably higher than last year’s class and better than that of any freshman class at least as far back as 1992. This year’s class averaged 24.8 on the ACT, up from 24.3 last year, and recorded a 3.61 average GPA, up from last year’s average of 3.56.

Auburn’s freshman class totals exceeded last year’s totals in nearly every demographic. AU enrolled 2,477 new freshmen from in-state compared with 2,472 last fall, and 1,714 out-of-state new freshmen compared to last fall’s 1,620. AU continues to enroll a high number of out-of-state students as more than 40 percent of the current freshman class comes from beyond Alabama.

A record 706 new minority freshmen are enrolled, up from last year’s record-setting 691.

The number of new transfer students at AU also increased this semester with 1,307 enrolled, compared to last fall’s 1,278.

These numbers are official enrollment numbers, which are calculated after the 15th class day of the semester.

Auburn is ranked 45th among public universities nationwide in an annual survey released by U.S. News & World Report. The ranking marks the 15th consecutive year the magazine has ranked AU among the nation’s top 50 public universities.

“The people of Alabama can be proud that three of the state’s institutions rank in the top tier of national universities, and the Auburn family can be proud that AU has enjoyed this distinction for 15 continuous years,” said AU President Jay Gogue. “The U.S. News & World Report assessment is another helpful tool that Auburn will use as we prepare a new strategic plan and continue to strengthen our instruction, research and extension programs.”

The undergraduate program of Auburn’s Samuel Ginn College of Engineering is ranked 57th nationally overall and 34th among public universities that offer doctoral programs in engineering, moving up from 60th and 35th, respectively, in the previous year. Larry Benefield, dean of the college, commented that “this is the second consecutive year the college has moved up in the rankings, a trend reflected in graduate rankings as well.”

Also moving up in the undergraduate

(Rankings, continued on page 6)
Message from the President

Dear Auburn Alumni and Supporters,

Now that fall is here, we hope to see many of you as you come back to campus to be a part of another great season of AU football. Meanwhile, I’ve enjoyed spending my first few months reconnecting with individuals both on and off campus – those who are part of, or tied to, Auburn and its land-grant mission.

It is important to spend this time talking with people, and listening to them, so that we establish a collective vision for Auburn’s future. And no matter where or with whom these meetings occurred, I saw the same thing: people who are passionate about their university. With such a dedicated and loyal following, I see no obstacles in Auburn’s path as we move forward.

Auburn has a responsibility to help the state and its people through our instruction, outreach and research. Along with students who come here to prepare for their futures, we also help others away from campus – from farmers who need to know how to maximize crop growth and entrepreneurs who are starting up a small business to major companies that need our know-how. I am gratified to think that Auburn’s economic impact on our stated now exceeds $4 billion.

I offer the following as one example of how we impact our people: Since 1950, the U.S. agricultural output has increased more than 500 percent despite a 60 percent reduction in the farm labor force and far fewer acres of agricultural land. If the agricultural technology of the 1950s were used today to feed our nation, we would need more than 400 million more acres of land under cultivation. Much of the credit for improved agricultural methods and technology has come from the fruit of agricultural research by land-grant institutions.

So, when I look at where we’ve been and where we’re going, I see an Auburn University committed to finding solutions that work for us in Alabama and beyond, in a wide array of areas and industries.

Fundamental to a great land-grant university is service, and helping people achieve their hopes and dreams. Many of you, who are among our 210,000-plus alumni, have shared with me that Auburn helped you do just that.

War Eagle!

Jay Gogue

Support AU With Spirit of Auburn Credit Card

Do you have your Spirit of Auburn credit card? This Bank of America credit card is the only card that directly supports your alma mater. AU’s scholarship fund benefits when you use your card – and that means more students benefit from an AU Some Auburn education. So use your Spirit of Auburn card for all your everyday purchases — and share the spirit with an Auburn student. For more information on the card, or to apply, go to www.auburn.edu/spiritcard.

Alumni Establish Forestry Professorship In Honor of Luce

The AU School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences has established the Dwain G. Luce Endowed Professorship in Forestry, which has received $380,000 in contributions from 125 donors, including Luce, his family and friends.

“Dwain Luce is the embodiment of a conservation-minded forestland owner,” said Forestry and Wildlife Sciences Dean Richard Brinker. “He remembers the past, but always looks to provide for generations to come. His investment in forestry education at Auburn University through the Dwain G. Luce Professorship is the consummate contribution from a true Auburn man.”

Luce stated, “Forestry, wildlife and the outdoors have always interested me. I even attribute some of my survival in World War II to my love of the outdoors. Foresters, despite some stereotypes, are true conservationists. Therefore, it is natural for me to support my alma mater, which I love, and the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, which prepares the leaders who will care for the forests and wildlife in the future.”

In addition to his financial support, Luce has served on the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences Advisory Council and as a member of the school’s development team.

The endowment is part of the support for AU through the “It Begins at Auburn” campaign, which encompasses all colleges and schools as well as the AU libraries and museums, athletics and Auburn University Montgomery.

Alumni Commons

Auburn Commons

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Submit questions or comments to 23 Samford Hall, Auburn, AL 36849. Telephone 334/844-9999. E-mail: commons@auburn.edu.
Message from the Provost

The 2007 fall semester has been abuzz with activity at Auburn University. The enhanced academic accountability steps initiated under former President Ed Richardson, such as post-tenure review and academic program review, continue and are now coupled with academic excellence initiatives supported by Auburn University's new president, Dr. Jay Gogue. We are in the formative stages of developing a Writing Initiative and a university strategic plan.

The Writing Initiative builds on the premise that written communication is an essential life skill regardless of discipline. Engineers, nurses, agronomists and geographers must all be able to communicate effectively in their professional and personal lives. A writing educator, Joseph Harris from Duke University, has been asked to advise on how we can best work with our excellent existing faculty to enhance writing beyond the freshman year into major coursework in the junior and senior years.

Another academic excellence initiative is the development of the Auburn University Strategic Plan. The provost and executive vice president are building upon the assessment work that has been done over the past two years by engaging stakeholder groups to provide input into the planning and determination of our strategic future. The plan will set the foundation for Auburn’s continued positive trajectory in excellence.

Thank you for your continued support of Auburn University!

War Eagle

John Heilman

Boyd, Dute Win Leischuck Awards as Auburn’s Top Teachers For 2007

Pamela C. Boyd of the College of Education and Roland Dute of the College of Sciences and Mathematics are this year’s recipients of the Gerald and Emily Leischuck Endowed Presidential Awards for Excellence in Teaching. The Leischucks joined then-President Ed Richardson and Provost John Heilman in honoring Dute and Boyd in a July 9 ceremony at the President’s Home.

“Education, at any level, is only as good as the quality of teaching,” said Heilman. “Dr. Boyd and Dute help elevate the quality of teaching to a very high level at Auburn University. They consistently serve as an inspiration for their students and are role models for other faculty at Auburn and beyond.”

The award carries a $10,000 stipend for each recipient. Emeritus senior administrators Gerald and Emily Leischuck established the endowment in 2005 to recognize the university’s top teachers, and AU presented the first Leischuck Endowed Presidential Awards the same year. Both the Leischucks had taught in public schools in the 1960s, and both maintained close ties to the AU College of Education during lengthy careers as administrators at Auburn.

Boyd and Dute were nominated by other faculty and former students and were recommended for the award by a selection committee and the provost.

Boyd, an associate professor of curriculum and teaching, is a teacher of teachers. A faculty member at AU for 14 years, she teaches undergraduate students in the College of Education and active teachers in public schools across the region through the college’s outreach programs and AU’s Graduate School. Among other activities, Boyd was coordinator of the college’s elementary education program from 2002-05, and she has been active in formal and informal partnerships with several Alabama schools, including Auburn City Schools.

Dute, an AU faculty member for 25 years, is a professor of biological sciences in the College of Sciences and Mathematics, where he teaches freshman biology courses for majors and non-majors as well as advanced undergraduate and graduate courses. He also advises undergraduates in the zoology and pre-veterinary medicine curriculum, mentors graduate students and has served on 38 graduate student committees.

Robert Lishak, a 2006 Leischuck Award winner, said Dute stands apart from many other talented teachers because of his extra efforts to help students master complex subjects in terms that even non-majors can comprehend. Having witnessed Dute in the classroom, Lishak wrote: “Roland’s expository speaking style is punctuated with matter-of-fact presentations of complex concepts and a conversational manner that allows students in large classes to think he is having a one-to-one conversation with each of them.”

Marty Chandler, a 1994 Auburn graduate and pilot of the Goodyear blimp, flew over Samford Hall October 5 on his way to Talladega so that AU’s Office of Communications and Marketing could capture it on film and video for a broadcast feature for the upcoming merit scholars TALONS Days.
Cancer Claims Life of Former AU President

William F. Walker, the former professor, dean and provost who served as AU’s president from 2001-04, died Aug. 7 of complications from cancer. He was 69.

Walker came to Auburn in 1988 as dean of the College of Engineering, and 11 years later was promoted to provost. He was named interim president in February 2001, succeeding William Muse, and was elevated to president in June 2002. He served until January 2004.

As AU president, Walker led efforts to ensure the university’s financial soundness, focus its sense of mission and accountability and improve communications among faculty, staff, students, alumni and the Board of Trustees.

“We mourn the loss of an important member of the Auburn family,” said AU President Jay Gogue. “Our thoughts and prayers are with Dr. Walker’s family and friends.”

Among those who knew Walker best was Engineering Dean Larry Benefield. “I am deeply saddened by the untimely death of former Auburn President Bill Walker, who was both a friend and mentor to me,” said Benefield. “Bill understood what made a great university just that — and had a vision to meet the criteria necessary to greatness. His goal was to recruit faculty who were outstanding both in teaching and research, and to give them the resources they needed to succeed.

“He also believed in students, not as numbers but as individuals who came to Auburn to strive to make the world a better place to live, and he supported them in many ways,” Benefield added. “Bill Walker laid an incredible foundation that resulted in Auburn’s move into a new era of excellence that we continue to build on today. From the day I met him, nearly two decades ago, he served as a teacher and a sounding board and much more. It is my hope that his family understands how much the College of Engineering, where he served as dean, and Auburn University, where he served as president, have benefited from his leadership, both as an educator and as a person.”

Before coming to Auburn, Walker was engineering dean and a professor at Rice University, where he was a faculty member from 1965-88. At Rice he served as chair of the Department of Mechanical Engineering and Materials Science for nine years. During much of his tenure at the Texas institution, he was a professor of both mechanical engineering and mathematics.

Auburn Developing Program to Improve Writing Skills

A nationally prominent authority on the teaching of academic writing visited Auburn in September to discuss ways to implement an intense, comprehensive program to upgrade the writing skills of AU students.

In a report to the Board of Trustees in August, Provost John Heilman said Joseph Harris, director of the Duke University Writing Program, will advise faculty and administrators as they develop an expedited program to raise the writing skills of Auburn students. The goal is to enable AU students to surpass their peers on a national standardized assessment of writing skills within four years.

The AU Board set the target for writing improvement in a resolution on June 29. Heilman and faculty leaders Richard Penaskovic and David Cacci said Thursday that, as long as faculty are fully involved in developing the plan, they expect it to have widespread faculty support.

Heilman said he expects to have a prospectus ready by the board’s Feb. 1 meeting. With most board members present, Trustee Jack Miller, chair of the Academic Affairs Committee, said he expects the board to find the funds if it receives the framework for a program that will produce results.

Such a program, Heilman said, would likely include freshman courses involving intensive, individualized instruction in writing technique and critical thinking, with class size limited to 15 students.

Beyond the writing-intensive course, Heilman said the proposal will address ways to include writing assignments as part of the course requirements in all disciplines.

Starting with the 2009 freshman class, Auburn will require all prospective students to take a test of writing ability as part of their college entrance exams. Although it is too late to require the tests for the 2008 freshman class, Wayne Alderman, dean of enrollment management services, said the university will recommend the test for next fall’s prospective students.
Rare ‘Gold-standard’ Piano Rediscovered, Restored

It is widely known among musicians that the best violins were made by Antonio Stradivari in the early 1700s. Among pianists, a similar gold standard applies to Steinway grand pianos made before 1930.

The Department of Music in AU’s College of Liberal Arts recently acquired two of these rare pianos, one of which had long been in storage and largely forgotten elsewhere on campus. That piano, a 1927 D-scale nine-foot Steinway grand piano, was discovered languishing in Beard-Eaves-Memorial Coliseum, where it had fallen into disrepair.

Roy Wylie, a professor of piano who has since retired to emeritus status, and Robert Greenleaf, former interim chair of the Music Department, recognized the piano’s potential and recovered it for the department. With funding from the College of Liberal Arts, they turned to Piano Works of Marietta, Ga., for the restoration. Piano Works also rebuilt the other piano, a 1919 Steinway A-scale piano, which the department purchased with a grant from the Provost’s Office.

The Department of Music’s Joseph Stephenson Hall now houses the rediscovered Steinway grand piano, while the department’s piano teaching studio features the Steinway A-scale grand piano.

Music faculty describe the rebuilt pianos as two of the finest grand pianos in the Southeast. Jeremy Samolesky, Auburn’s new professor of piano, will present a public performance on the rediscovered nine-foot concert piano next spring. Samolesky, a graduate of the Eastman School of Music, said the two Steinways are among the finest pianos he has ever played, including pianos he played at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

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Faculty and administrators examine the newly restored 1927 Steinway grand piano in the Music Department. From left are Liberal Arts Dean Anne-Katrin Gramberg, Professor of Piano Jeremy Samolesky, Provost John Heilman and Music Professor Robert Greenleaf. The piano is one of two pre-1930 Steinway grand pianos recently restored and added to the department’s musical inventory.

CADC Surpasses $20 Million Goal With McWhorter Gift

With a $5 million commitment from Auburn alumnus and Trustee Earlon McWhorter and his wife Betty, the College of Architecture, Design and Construction has surpassed its $20 million goal in AU’s “It Begins at Auburn” Campaign.

The gift will provide endowments for the Department of Building Science, the Design-Build Fund for Excellence Endowment for students in the progressive, context-based master’s program to continue their mission of learning through experience and integrated practices. The Endowed Eminent Scholar Chair in Building Science, the Endowed Chair for the future Department Head of Building Science and the Endowed Chair for the future CADC dean will recognize outstanding teachers and administrators and their academic units by providing resources to ensure these key positions are adequately funded.

Visit Auburn’s ALUM Network and Join the AAA

The Auburn ALUM Network (online directory) is a service to AU graduates that allows members of the Auburn Alumni Association to log in securely and access online services such as updating address information, finding fellow graduates, enabling a permanent forwarding e-mail address and more. Now graduates can also enjoy the ALUM Career Center where they can post a résumé and search for jobs.

Check www.aualum.org/aoc/ for more information.

Members have been vital to the Auburn Alumni Association throughout its history. To learn about all the benefits of being a member or to join your Auburn Alumni Association, visit www.aualum.org/membership/.

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Rankings (continued from page 1)

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Northrop Grumman Corp., a Fortune 100 company, will be the first tenant in the new Auburn Research Park south of AU’s main campus.

The global defense and technology company has confirmed to City of Auburn and AU officials that it will locate one of the corporation’s new National Work Force Centers in the 156-acre research park. A coalition of university and government entities is developing the site west of South College Street.

With 120,000 employees, the $30 billion corporation provides services and products in four business areas: information technology; systems support and technical services; electronics; aerospace; and ships.

The company has described the National Work Force Centers, such as the one planned for Auburn, as part of a new initiative to provide high-quality, cost-effective technology centers in the United States as an alternative to off-shoring.

“Northrop Grumman is a home run for the Auburn Research Park,” said AU President Jay Gogue. “Its commitment demonstrates the potential the park holds for fueling economic growth in the state and academic and entrepreneurial opportunities for Auburn faculty and students.”

Auburn Mayor Bill Ham said the Northrop Grumman agreement is the culmination of a collaborative effort among AU, the City of Auburn, the city’s Industrial Development Board and the State of Alabama to attract research and high-technology companies.

“This announcement is the very reason city officials knew it was imperative the city play a role in the development of the Auburn Research Park,” he said.

AU Provost Emeritus Paul Parks, chair of the Industrial Development Board, said, “For many years, the highly successful partnership between the Industrial Development Board and AU has allowed the City of Auburn to recruit technology-based, value-added manufacturers.”

Parks added, “That same partnership has now resulted in the development of the Auburn Research Park and the recruitment of Northrop Grumman Corp., an outstanding research-based company.”

Gov. Bob Riley and State Rep. Mike Hubbard of Auburn were instrumental in securing a $10 million state commitment for the research park.

A non-profit organization, the Auburn Research and Technology Foundation, is overseeing development of the Auburn Research Park. Workers are in the final stage of infrastructure development of the site and the first building is scheduled to open in the fall of 2008.

HHP Renamed Kinesiology Department

The College of Education’s Department of Health and Human Performance has changed its name to the Department of Kinesiology, which refers to the scientific study of human movement.

“Everything we do in teaching, research and outreach is directed toward intervening in the lives of those with whom we interact to enhance health or performance,” said acting Department Head Mary Rudisill. “Kinesiology is broad in scope and represents all areas of instruction within the department and therefore more accurately describes our activities.”

The department has 306 exercise science majors, 104 health promotion majors and 76 physical education majors. Approximately 60 graduate students are enrolled in kinesiology-related programs.

Rankings

Workers put finishing touches on the sign at the main entrance to the new Auburn Research Park. The bridge, which displays the sign, and the road under construction in the background are part of the infrastructure for the 156-acre research park. The first building is scheduled to open in the fall of 2008.

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Fortune 100 Company To Locate In New Research Park

The AU College of Business, which rose to 48th from 51st last year and 57th in 2006.

To establish its rankings, U.S. News categorizes colleges and universities primarily by mission and, in some cases, region.

“The U.S. News ratings are based on indicators that some prospective college students may value, such as general reputation or selectivity,” said Drew Clark, director of AU’s Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. “But AU also uses assessments that provide direct information on equally important indicators of quality, such as how much students are actually learning and what kind of college experience they have.”

HHP Renamed Kinesiology Department
Auburn Playing Role In Food Safety For Olympics

When more than 10,000 athletes and 22,000-plus international journalists converge on Beijing, China, next August for the 2008 Summer Olympic Games, an AU faculty member will have played a pivotal role in helping ensure that the foods they are served are safe to eat.

Yifen Wang, an assistant professor in AU’s interdisciplinary biosystems engineering program, was one of 15 food-safety authorities named to a Beijing Olympics food security panel in 2005. That international group of experts took on added importance this year amid growing global concerns over repeated recalls of contaminated Chinese food products.

Wang, a Shanghai native who joined the AU faculty in 2004, has focused his research on food safety issues for 15 years. The Beijing Food Safety Administration and the Beijing Organizing Committee for the 2008 Olympic Games sought him as a board member on the basis of his expertise on food safety and his fluency in Chinese and English. Wang is one of four U.S. authorities on the panel and is the board’s designated liaison for the English-speaking members. Other members include food safety authorities from China, Australia, the European Union and the World Health Organization.

Since its establishment, the group’s main charge has been to write the protocol manual for the rigorous food safety program for the 14-day August 2008 games. The Beijing Organizing Committee announced recently that this program will rely heavily on the use of Global Positioning System and radio-frequency identification technology to monitor and track all Olympic food products through production, processing and distribution. Wang was instrumental in the committee’s adoption of the RFID system.

The board has met in Beijing annually since 2005 and will convene for the final time next summer before the Olympics.

Wang, who holds a doctorate in food engineering from Washington State University, said the panel is devoting extensive efforts to develop effective standards. “There is great pressure on us to ensure that all foods that enter the athletes’ village, media villages, main press center and international broadcasting center at the games are safe,” he said.

He added, “We are confident that the security program that has been established is a very good, highly effective system.”

Estate Gift Raises Value of Lettermen Scholarship Fund to Nearly $1 Million

A $265,000 gift from the estate of Florence Hawkins Brooks of Columbus, Ga., has increased the Auburn Football Lettermen Club Scholarship Endowment to nearly $1 million.

Football Lettermen Club leaders Tom Bryan, Rusty Deen and Sam Oates recently presented the new funds to AU President Jay Gogue to support the scholarship endowment. The endowment combines funds from four of the club’s existing scholarship funds, named for Ralph “Shug” and Evelyn Jordan, Pat Dye, Robert A. Sammons and Eddie Welch, and will provide scholarships for the children of club members.

“We began working to build our endowments in the mid 1980s,” said Rusty Deen, executive secretary of the AFLC, “and were building it with nickels and dimes as fast as we could. Mrs. Brooks’ generous gift has put us well beyond where we thought we’d be at this time and will help our club assist generations of deserving young men and women in achieving an Auburn education.”

“Members of the Lettermen Club made an impact on Auburn University as student-athletes, and now they are making an impact by creating academic scholarships,” stated Auburn University President Jay Gogue.

“The Auburn family is grateful for what they have done through the years and what they continue to do today.”

Beginning in AU’s Shug Jordan era, coaches recruiting in the area would eat at the Black Angus in Columbus, Ga., a restaurant owned by Brooks and her husband, Leo. Through the years, Brooks became acquainted with AU coaches and learned about the university and its football program.

“I think they were impressed with what we were trying to build,” he said. “Individual scholarships awarded from the fund will continue to carry the names of the Jordans, Sammons, Dye and Welch, in addition to Brooks.”

Deen said the AFLC Endowment for Scholarships funded 29 scholarships in the fall of 2007.

The “It Begins at Auburn” Campaign encompasses all colleges and schools as well as the AU libraries and museums, athletics and AUM. Endowments for scholarships, faculty, programs and unrestricted dollars make up 58 percent of the campaign’s goal.
Ray McCain of Bailey-Harris Construction Co. prepares one of two entry portals on Thach Pedestrian Way near Foy Student Union for terra cotta panels that provide a symbolic link to the College of Education. The eastside Thach display is the third set of panels this year with links to AU’s colleges and schools. Three more are scheduled for the coming year, as part of a program to install portal art for each Auburn University college and school and Draughon Library.