Searches Bring Two New Vice Presidents, Dean to AU

In June, Auburn concluded national searches with announcements of a new vice president for development, a new associate provost and vice president for research and a new graduate school dean.

AU President Jay Gogue named veteran higher education fundraiser Jeffrey P. McNeill as vice president for development and John M. Mason of Penn State University as associate provost and vice president for research.

Also, Provost John Heilman announced the appointment of George Flowers of Auburn’s Samuel Ginn College of Engineering as dean of the AU Graduate School.

Jeffrey McNeill, the new vice president for development, is president of the McNeill Group, a fundraising and higher-education management consulting firm in South Carolina. He has nearly 30 years experience leading development initiatives at other large institutions, including 25 at land-grant universities.

“Jeffrey McNeill’s experience with land-grant institutions makes him an ideal choice for this position,” Gogue said. “He has dealt with many models of fundraising, has extensive foundation experience and has been involved with four campaigns, all of which will be vital to Auburn in the coming years.”

McNeill holds a bachelor’s degree in political science from Gardner-Webb University and a master’s degree in forest and resource management from Clemson University.

McNeill was a manager in Clemson University’s first capital campaign and led the development office to win the U.S. Steel Award for sustained giving in a national competition. At North Carolina State University, McNeill helped grow the university’s endowment by $136 million, moving it into the top 25 public universities for endowment market value, and led a campaign focused on student scholarships to a successful conclusion.

At the University of Alabama, McNeill established several giving societies and set a record in overall giving to the university.

Bob McGinnis, the previous vice president for development and president of the Auburn University Foundation retired at the end of June, but will continue to support the university as senior counsel to the president.

Ralph Zee, who has served as acting associate provost and interim vice president for research at Auburn since January 2007, also serves as associate dean for research and professor in AU’s Samuel Ginn College of Engineering and will return full-time to those duties.

As Graduate School dean, George Flowers will report to the provost and supervise

(Searches, continued on page 2)
Message from the President

Dear Auburn Alumni and Supporters,

The message I have for the tens of thousands of Auburn University alumni and friends around the world is a simple one: Thank you.

Because of you, Auburn University surpassed its campaign goal for the “It Begins at Auburn” Campaign and raised more than $608 million dollars. This six-year effort concluded in June and will help support Auburn’s goal to enrich the Auburn experience for students, staff and faculty well into the 21st century.

The overwhelming success of this campaign is a testament to the Auburn Family – the people who realize the importance of a quality education for AU graduates and the essential role education plays in the state’s and nation’s economy and quality of life.

Most of you know Auburn University has provided instruction, research and outreach to benefit the state and nation for 152 years and is among a distinctive group of universities designated as land-, sea-, and space-grant institutions. But did you know that the latest economic impact study shows that Auburn makes a nearly $5 billion economic contribution to the state economy each year? And that we surpassed 250,000 graduates this year?

And now, your generosity to Auburn University paves the way to achieve even higher goals, many of which are detailed in a new strategic plan to be finalized this year:

- To attract outstanding undergraduate and graduate students and enrich their learning experience through scholarships, fellowships, global learning and teaching assistantships.
- To expand research efforts that create solutions and improve the quality of life for our residents.
- To retain and attract preeminent faculty through endowed chairs and professorships. Such faculty, in turn, draw top students. Endowed faculty positions represent scholarly excellence as well as provide competitive salaries and resources for research, travel and professional development.
- To build AU’s future by providing renovated spaces, advanced facilities, equipment and technology for study, instruction and research.

This institution has accomplished much throughout its history, and this record-breaking effort, again thanks to many of you, has positioned us to make an even stronger impact in the decades to come.

War Eagle,

Jay Gogue

Searches (continued from page 1)

A staff of 13 charged with the admission, advising and graduation activities for all graduate students. He also will chair the Graduate Council, which oversees graduate faculty credentialing, curriculum and program reviews.

Flowers, an Alumni Professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, served as acting associate dean of the Graduate School in 2005-06.

He joined the AU faculty in 1990 after working with the Georgia Institute of Technology and the University of South Florida. At Auburn, he received the Alumni Teaching Award in 1995 and the College of Engineering’s William F. Walker Merit Teaching Award in 2004.

Auburn Alumni Association Offers New Career Network

Did you know your Auburn Alumni Association is now offering Tiger2Tiger...the newest, hottest and most exciting social and career network system exclusive only to Auburn alumni and members of the Auburn Alumni Association? This exclusive network went live in February.

Log onto www.aualum.org to register.

Auburn COMMONS

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President, Board Say Lean Budget Won't Deter AU

AU President Jay Gogue and Board of Trustees members said they will not let an unprecedented drop in state support harm the value of an Auburn degree.

With state appropriations to the AU System reduced nearly $41 million and an $18.6 million increase in mandatory expenses in the coming fiscal year, Auburn will have to cut costs in all areas, forgo salary increases and look for more revenue from other sources, including a 12-percent increase in tuition approved at the AU Board meeting on June 27.

The tuition increase is the same percentage as the cut Auburn will sustain in the state appropriation for the 2008-09 fiscal year, which starts Oct. 1. But the tuition increase will equal only about half the total financial loss for the main campus, where the tuition revenue will be applied.

Auburn University Montgomery, the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System also face cuts because of reduced state appropriations and rising costs. Of the three, only AUM receives funds from tuition.

In-state tuition on the main campus will increase to $2,940 per semester from $2,625, effective fall semester. Other fees will also rise by 12 percent. Out-of-state tuition will rise to $8,820 from $7,875.

At the request of Trustee Jimmy Rane of Abbeville, the board asked the administration to add money to a fund for students facing exceptional financial hardship.

The AU increase was preceded by a 12-percent increase at the University of Alabama and increases at institutions across the state.

Several AU trustees said the tuition increase and shared sacrifices are the only way to preserve the academic gains of the past decade for current and future students. Trustee Virginia Thompson of Opelika, said, “As a parent, I expect Auburn to continue moving forward. I want and expect excellence at Auburn.”

Trustee Bobby Lowder of Montgomery concurred, saying, “If we are going to have quality here, it is going to cost money.” He said the university cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of the early 1990s, when several years of little or no tuition increases left AU unprepared for large cuts in state appropriations.

Speaking later, Gogue said, “We cannot let these cuts affect the quality of education for our students.”

Under guidelines approved at the meeting, the university will face widespread budget cuts. These include a reduction of $4 million in deferred maintenance, which includes repairs and long-term upkeep of facilities. Every department will also sustain a 2-percent budget rollback totaling $5.8 million, and selected cuts in non-academic accounts will total nearly $10.6 million.

On a positive note, Vice President for Development Bob McGinnis, in his last official act before retiring, reported that the “It Begins at Auburn” Campaign received $608.9 million in gifts for the university, exceeding the campaign goal by nearly $109 million. More than 75,000 donors participated in the campaign from 2002-08.

Since donors designate their gifts for specific uses aimed at enhancing quality, the university cannot use those funds to offset cuts in state appropriations.

Message from the Provost

As we prepare for the start of the 2008-09 academic year, we do so with the benefit of the experience and stability provided by President Jay Gogue who has now completed a full year at Auburn University. His leadership and experience have helped Auburn University to advance in reputation and innovation.

As in any new year, there will be some new beginnings. After a national search, we have named a new dean of the Graduate School, who will start in August. We have asked the new dean to work with the colleges and schools to increase graduate student enrollment toward the Board of Trustee-approved level of 5,000 graduate students. Importantly, increasing graduate student enrollment will positively impact Auburn’s research productivity.

Research funding and productivity is also important at this time as Auburn has hired a new vice president and associate provost for research. As a land-grant research university, Auburn must continue to develop new ideas, information, technology, products and knowledge to help Alabama, the nation and the world. Thus, the new vice president will be busy working to further Auburn as the leading research university (complementing our instruction mission), in Alabama, and a leader in the country.

Finally, we are also beginning a national search for my position, the provost and vice president for academic affairs. After 35 years at Auburn University, in a variety of faculty and administrator roles, I will retire at the end of 2008. A search committee is working closely with the president and a search firm to find this new chief academic officer. This person will continue to guide the academic component of the university—working closely with the college and school deans—toward new achievements for our students, faculty and staff. While I will miss all of you, I will leave Auburn University in December 2008, knowing that the university is well poised for further greatness.

War Eagle!

John Heilman

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Students Apply Green Concepts For Salvation Army Facility

With the May dedication of a new retail store on Opelika Road for the Salvation Army, Auburn-Opelika residents saw the results of teamwork between AU’s College of Architecture, Design and Construction and local architects and builders involving some of the latest concepts in environmentally friendly design and construction.

A team of six students from the college’s Design-Build master’s program worked with John Randall Wilson Architects and J&L Contracting in an outreach project to incorporate concepts the college is developing in its academic programs.

The facility includes office, retail and warehouse space. D.K. Ruth, director of the college’s Design-Build program, said integrating alternative practices, sustainability and “green” design was a priority in construction of the new store.

In addition to drawing upon natural light and airflow for the facility, the builders found a use for old shipping containers in the structure. Design team members said use of such materials provides a socially responsible answer for one of the “leftovers” of today’s society, while providing a resource for the building’s main load-bearing system. Members said reuse of materials helps convey the spirit of the Salvation Army, which resells donated clothing and household goods at low cost to consumers.

Dan Bennett, dean of the College of Architecture, Design and Construction, said such projects are as important to the students as they are to the community. “For example,” he said, “the experience with the new Salvation Army Building provided first-hand experience regarding the value of service learning. That is, as citizens of a community, the students reaped the personal reward of providing a much needed service to others.”

Bennett added, “Equally important is the opportunity to experiment with alternative and environmentally sustainable construction materials, and set an example for others to follow. It is also important that the students worked collaboratively with professionals from the design and construction fields, thus providing them with examples of the work they will be engaged in after graduation.”

Auburn Program Featured At White House

The Alabama Community Healthy Marriage Initiative in AU’s College of Human Sciences was one of five projects featured at the recent White House Compassion in Action Conference highlighting innovative policies, new research and successful public-private partnerships that help to promote and strengthen stable marriages and families.

The April roundtable was hosted by the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

Francesca Adler-Baeder, a state extension specialist and associate professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies, outlined the model for the Alabama initiative. She noted that the initiative works with numerous partners, including the Alabama Children’s Trust Fund, Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect, eight family resource centers, two mental health centers and the Montgomery chapter of 100 Black Men, a service organization focused on strengthening youth and families. Ed Brown, president of 100 Black Men, was also an invited guest for the roundtable.

Draughon Center Launches Book Series

The Caroline Marshall Draughon Center for the Arts and Humanities in AU’s College of Liberal Arts has announced the creation of Pebble Hill Books, an imprint series published in collaboration with the University of Alabama Press.

The recently released first book in the series is In the Path of the Storms: Bayou La Batre, Coden, and the Alabama Coast, by writer Frye Gaillard and artists-in-residence Sheila Hagler and Peggy Denniston.

The book’s publication is a result of a community history project funded by the Kettering Foundation of Ohio and undertaken in collaboration with the Truman Pierce Institute in the AU College of Education.
Regions Contributes $1 Million to AU School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, College of Business

Regions Financial Corporation announced a $1 million commitment to Auburn University, which will be split equally between the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences and the College of Business. The funds will support a special endowment for a new professor in forestry in addition to scholarships for the business college.

“Regions is proud to support Auburn University,” said Arthur Ducote, Regions Central Alabama area executive. “Helping our communities to expect more is a vital part of the Regions mission, and, through our support of Auburn University, we’re able to help fulfill that mission for the students and faculty at Auburn, as well as the local community.”

According to the Alabama Forestry Association, forestry generates approximately $13 billion for Alabama and an additional $4.2 billion in wages each year, making it one of the leading industries within the state. The new distinguished forestry professorship will focus on product development and research, identifying creative additional markets for the use of trees. Coupled with the scholarships for the College of Business, Regions’ contribution emphasizes the importance of education to drive the economic engine in the communities it serves.

“With some 22.6 million forested acres in Alabama, the endowment for a new forestry professor and student scholarships represents an innovative partnership between business and education,” said Ducote. “We see the ultimate economic impact on business in general and our communities overall as the major incentive behind this contribution. By discovering new markets, the research of the new forestry professor will lead to market growth and opportunity for those benefiting from the scholarships, which is a winning combination.”

“This gift from Regions Bank will enhance Auburn’s ability to attract top business students from a 16-state region through scholarships,” said Jay Gogue, Auburn University president. “At the same time, it will fund an endowed professorship in forestry that will help us lead state efforts to develop more forest products and be more competitive in that industry.”

The AU president added that such corporate gifts are an ideal example of university-corporate partnerships that bolster the economy.

Faculty In The News

Woody Inducted Into Alabama Healthcare Hall of Fame

Mary Florence Woody, former dean of the AU School of Nursing, was recently inducted into the Alabama Healthcare Hall of Fame at a ceremony in Montgomery.

The Alabama Healthcare Hall of Fame, whose honorees are chosen every two years, honors Alabama citizens for outstanding accomplishments in the healthcare field.

Wayne Finley, chair of the selection committee, said the Alabama Healthcare Hall of Fame recognized Woody for leadership in nursing education at Emory University as well as at Auburn and for personal attributes that have made her a role model for young nurses.

Woody spent much of her nursing career in Atlanta, where she worked at Emory University and Grady Memorial Hospital. She came home to her native Alabama in the spring of 1979, when she accepted the position of dean of the AU School of Nursing. By September of that same year, Auburn’s first class of nursing students was enrolled.

In less than six months, Woody was able to develop curriculum, renovate Miller Hall, hire faculty, secure private and federal monies and obtain state permission as well as student and wide community support for the school. After the first class graduated, the school was granted national accreditation at the highest level.

On the national level, the American Academy of Nursing honored Woody as a “Living Legend” in 1997.

Institute Honors Sankar

Chetan Sankar, Thomas Walter Professor of Management Information Systems in the AU College of Business, recently received the 2007-08 Distinguished Alumnus Award of the National Institute of Technology, Tiruchirappalli.

Sankar received his bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering from the institute in 1971, his master of business administration degree from the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta, and his doctorate from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

(Faculty, continued on page 6)
Williams Endows Scholarship for Journalism Majors

Journalism Professor Ed Williams has marked his 25th year on the Auburn faculty by endowing a scholarship for students in the program.

Williams continues to teach in the Department of Communication and Journalism after stepping down as faculty adviser to the Auburn Plainsman student newspaper after 23 years in that role.

“My students tell me that I’ve impacted their lives, but I wanted to leave another kind of legacy, something that will be here long after I am gone,” said Williams. “I felt that funding an endowed scholarship is something that will be a part of Auburn forever and something that demonstrates the commitment that I’ve had to my students and to the Auburn Plainsman for the past 25 years.”

The endowment will provide scholarships for students who have demonstrated a commitment to journalism through working at the Plainsman.


During Williams’ 23 years as adviser, the Plainsman was awarded 13 of its 23 Pacemaker Awards, the highest honor awarded in college journalism. Only one other collegiate newspaper, the Daily Texan at the University of Texas, has received more Pacemakers than The Plainsman.

“I’ve had the perfect job,” said Williams. “But I felt it was time for new leadership as the adviser, and I want to concentrate on classroom teaching and advising students in our internship program. It’s been a fun ride. I wouldn’t take anything for my association with student journalists at the Plainsman.”

Besides teaching, Williams will continue to serve as journalism internship director.

Faculty

(continued from page 5)

Sankar has been at Auburn since 1989 and has won several national and international awards as well as awards within his college. These include the Recognition Award by the International Network for Engineering Education and Research, Outstanding Research Award of the AU College of Business, ASME Curriculum Innovation Award and the Decision Sciences Institute Instructional Innovation Education Award.

Elton, Gupta Get NSA Grant To Study Earthquakes

Civil Engineering Professor David Elton and Ram Gupta, alumni professor in the Department of Chemical Engineering, have received a $260,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to study earthquakes.

The research project, “Water Stabilization using Microparticles,” addresses fundamental aspects of soil liquefaction during earthquakes, when loose, saturated sands can turn into a fluid state during shaking, causing severe distress to buildings on those soils.

While current technology requires significant building disruption during the preventative retrofitting process, Elton and Gupta’s method will allow the liquefaction risk to be removed without upsetting building services.

The technique will use specially coated nanoparticles to immobilize water and stop the liquefaction process.

The microparticles will be placed in large-scale liquefaction tanks to evaluate particle installation methods and actual reduction in liquefaction susceptibility.

NASA Applies Technology Developed at AU

Auburn researchers have built a rechargeable microscope illumination system for NASA scientists, who are using it during Antarctic expeditions.

Veterinary Medicine Professor Vitaly Vodyanoy and research assistant Oleg Pustovyy built the patent-pending Ilumna 120 to help NASA scientists observe microscopic life in areas where there is no electricity. NASA used it on a preliminary, 11-day trip in February and will take it in November for three months during the Tawani Foundation International 2008 Schirmacher Oasis Antarctica Expedition.

The device, which contains a battery pack, condenser and bulb with a built-in collimator, attaches to standard research microscopes, producing high-resolution images. “This one is brighter and does not depend on the weather,” Vodyanoy said. “The condenser produces annular (ring-shaped) illumination, so they can see smaller objects better. They can see small bacteria now.”

The February trip allowed the NASA team to assess requirements for the main, upcoming expedition to Antarctica in November.
AUM Students to Take Classes in Auburn Facilities in 2008-09

Approximately 100 Auburn University Montgomery students will attend late afternoon and early evening classes at Auburn this fall under a pilot program for prospective transfer students.

Under an Auburn Montgomery program called Seamless Admission, the AUM freshmen will take up to 30 semester hours of coursework this fall and in spring 2009 in Auburn classrooms. AUM faculty will teach most or all of the classes, with assistance from graduate instructors in some AU departments for laboratory sections.

AU Provost John Heilman said the AUM classes would enable Auburn to make more efficient use of facilities that are underutilized in late afternoon and early evening. AUM will reimburse the main campus for costs associated with use of the facilities.

In recent remarks to the AU Senate, Auburn Montgomery Chancellor John Veres said the program will provide an option for students with good high school grades and an ACT average in the 22 to 25 range who did not make the cutoff for admission to AU’s freshman class.

Instead of following the common practice of attending a two-year college for a year and transferring into Auburn as sophomores, the select group of AUM students will become acclimated to university-level academic requirements as well as the Auburn campus, he said.

Students may transfer to Auburn from another institution after they have completed 30 hours of academic credit and have at least a 2.5 cumulative grade-point average. Those students replace some of the approximately 300 AU students annually who do not return for their sophomore year.

The AUM chancellor said the Montgomery campus will benefit financially from the increased enrollment, especially out-of-state students, who pay three times the in-state tuition. The program could benefit the main campus by providing a steady pool of capable transfer students, he said.

Abdullah Appointed Head of AU’s Multicultural Center

Ohio-based minority affairs authority Shakeer Abdullah has been appointed director of the Multicultural Center in AU’s Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs, effective July 1.

Abdullah comes to Auburn from his position as director of multicultural affairs at Capital University Law School in Columbus, Ohio, where he recruited and counseled prospective students and implemented diversity and service learning programs for all students.

With diversity identified as a core value of Auburn, the Multicultural Center is one of several major programs and centers that the AU Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs coordinates, directs or assists as part of its vision to foster and sustain a campus environment that promotes academic excellence, respects differences and accepts inclusiveness.

AU Dedicates New Dormitories at Solon Dixon Center

Auburn University’s School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences dedicated new dormitories at the Solon Dixon Forestry Education Center near Andalusia on May 22. Of the $1.2 million cost of building the dormitories, $950,000 was provided by the Solon and Martha Dixon Foundation.

Dean Richard Brinker presided over the ceremony and AU President Jay Gogue expressed appreciation to the Foundation for its generous contribution. James W. Rane of Abbeville, representing Auburn University and its Board of Trustees, also made comments on the importance of this gift to Auburn University and the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences.

The dormitories include five four-room cottages that will accommodate eight students each. With this increased capacity, the curriculum for the wildlife science major can be expanded to include a 10-week practicum that will provide students with hands-on experience.

For the past 29 years, Solon and Martha Dixon and their foundation have given more than $3 million to AU’s School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences as well as the 5,300 acres on which the center is built.

The facilities will also be used for adult continuing education programs sponsored by Auburn University and for in-service training for employees of state and federal natural resource agencies.

“The School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences is very grateful to the Solon and Martha Dixon Foundation Board of Directors for their continuing generous support,” Brinker said. “With help from private donors, the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences is able to continue as a distinguished leader in forestry education throughout the region.”

Students taking classes and professionals participating in workshops at AU’s Solon Dixon Center near Andalusia have access to new lodgings. The School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences recently expanded student housing at the center with five four-room cottages at a cost of $1.2 million. Most of the construction cost was covered by a gift of $950,000 from the Solon and Martha Dixon Foundation.
A selection of classic Depression Era images of rural Alabama by Walker Evans, one of the 20th century’s greatest photographers, opened in June at AU’s Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art. The photos were part of Evans’ work with writer James Agee on the book *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. The exhibit is on view through Aug. 23.