Harvard Study: AU Among Best Places to Teach

In the first report of its kind for any Alabama institution, a survey of faculty satisfaction by a higher education collaborative at Harvard University has found that Auburn University has one of the most favorable working environments for new faculty in the United States.

Auburn scored among the top four institutions in four of seven categories in a recent survey of tenure-track junior faculty at 31 doctoral universities, including Harvard, by the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education at Harvard’s Graduate School of Education. Evaluating responses of faculty in their first few years of employment at each institution, the survey assessed how faculty feel about their careers, colleagues and institutional support.

Pharmacy School to Have Branch at USA

Auburn’s Harrison School of Pharmacy will soon offer doctor of pharmacy degrees at the University of South Alabama in Mobile under an agreement signed in December by AU President Ed Richardson and USA President Gordon Moulton.

Classes are projected to start in fall 2007. Graduates of the pharmacy program in Mobile will receive a degree from the Auburn University Harrison School of Pharmacy at the University of South Alabama.

Richardson said the agreement enables the two institutions to work together to improve pharmacy care in the southern part of the state while making efficient use of state funds.

“Pharmacy students will receive the same high-quality education in Mobile as at Auburn, and residents of Mobile will soon see an increase in the number of well-educated, highly competent pharmacy graduates serving all of South Alabama,” Richardson added.

“The University of South Alabama is pleased that, through this cooperative program, we will be able to work with Auburn University to address the shortage of pharmacists in South Alabama,” Moulton said.

AU Provost John Heilman said Auburn joined the higher education collaborative at Harvard to identify the needs of junior faculty. He noted that AU has raised faculty salaries to the regional average and has taken a number of initiatives, such as establishing the nationally prominent Biggio Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, to help new faculty improve their skills and stay on track toward tenure.

“We are committed to making sure that Auburn is a great academic environment for our faculty as well as our students,” said Heilman. “The COACHE survey shows us that Auburn is a national leader in making that commitment a reality for tenure-track junior faculty.”

Heilman added that the positives will not lessen the university’s commitment to further improving conditions for junior faculty. “We plan to use the COACHE survey results to...”

(Survey, continued on page 5)
Message from the President

Dear Auburn Alumni and Supporters,

For Auburn University, 2006 was a remarkable year of achievement. Not only did we celebrate our 150th anniversary, we began writing the university’s next chapter by advancing our commitment in many areas including enrollment, scholarship, development, legislative efforts and alternative fuels.

I am happy to report to you that Wayne Alderman has assumed the helm of AU’s student recruiting efforts as dean of enrollment management. Restructuring the admissions and scholarship process reflects this administration’s ongoing commitment to aggressively recruit top-quality students and to raise the academic achievement of Auburn’s student population. Attracting the best and brightest to Auburn is among the top priorities for the Board of Trustees and for me. Dean Alderman will be responsible for ongoing design, development, implementation, monitoring and assessing of the university’s admissions, enrollment and recruitment processes and support operations to ensure all are consistent with the university’s enrollment and diversity goals. Dr. Alderman holds the right combination of faculty experience, management skills and strategic vision to lead a vigorous enrollment program to augment Auburn’s academic reputation.

Thanks to a record state appropriation for 2006-07 and commitments from alumni, the Board of Trustees and friends of the university, we have crossed a milestone in scholarship funding at Auburn. The university is offering a school record $15.5 million in scholarships for the 2007-08 academic year, including more than $2 million in new Spirit of Auburn scholarship offers for Alabama’s top high school students. While the number and amount of scholarships have been rising rapidly, students entering AU next fall will have more opportunities for financial assistance than ever before.

State appropriations are also making it possible for AU to dedicate $3 million to the Auburn Alternative Fuels Initiative, a new endeavor aimed at advancing economic development in the state by reinvigorating natural-resource based industries and establishing new industries based on energy and value-added products from renewable biomass.

Another area in which we are making great strides is in Development. Private giving to the university broke records during the 2005-06 fiscal year by reaching $105.3 million. This year’s total tops the previous year’s record of $101.2 million, representing an outstanding achievement for the “It Begins at Auburn” campaign. To date, the campaign has generated more than $425 million, or 83 percent of the campaign goal and is the highest level of campaign giving in Alabama history.

I want to voice my gratitude to the faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends for making 2006 a benchmark year for Auburn University. Your continued dedication, loyalty and support are essential to reach and surpass the goals we have set, and I am confident that our efforts will bring about positive results.

War Eagle!

Ed Richardson
CADC Programs Among Best in U.S., Survey Says

AU’s Architecture and Industrial Design programs both ranked in the top six degree programs nationally in DesignIntelligence magazine’s “America’s Best Architecture and Design Schools 2007.”

The annual rankings for architecture, industrial design, landscape architecture and interior design programs are based on input from the nation’s architecture, design and engineering employers, as well as deans and chairs of design programs.

In the survey, AU professor Tin-Man Lau was named one of the Industrial Design Educators of the Year.

AU’s Architecture program was ranked sixth nationally along with California Polytechnic State University and the University of Kansas. Deans and department chairs ranked its program the second most admired, after Harvard’s.

“The 2007 national rankings by DesignIntelligence are a testament to the quality of Auburn faculty and students, and reflect their dedicated commitment to studio teaching and scholarship,” said Dan Bennett, dean of the College of Architecture, Design and Construction. “Having our program listed as the second most admired in the country by our peers is especially gratifying. That kind of recognition is rare, and is a significant compliment to both our faculty and students.”

Regionally, AU’s undergraduate Architecture programs ranked first in the Southeast for the fourth consecutive year, and both the graduate and undergraduate Industrial Design programs ranked first in the Southeast.

AU’s Department of Industrial Design’s undergraduate program was ranked sixth best in the nation, and its graduate program was named the third best. In addition, the program ranked second in ecodesign practices and principles, third in academic balance and fifth in both research and analysis and collaborative learning with business, engineering and other disciplines. The program ranked nationally in preparedness of recent graduates.

The Interior Design undergraduate program ranked seventh nationally and second in the Southeast region. The graduate program in Landscape Architecture ranked fifth in the Southeast region.

Message from the Provost

As calendar year 2006 has ended, we are midway through an academic year in which Auburn University strengthened its commitment to academic excellence and integrity.

The respect that the university’s academic programs have achieved has been reaffirmed by improved national rankings for several of our colleges and programs. For example, Auburn’s undergraduate Architecture program is now ranked 6th nationally (2007 Design Intelligence Rankings). The College of Business is ranked 51st nationally and 31st for public universities among undergraduate business programs (2007 U.S. News and World Report) and the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering is ranked 60th nationally and 35th among public universities (2007 U.S. News and World Report).

In academic year 2006, the university has already undertaken three new initiatives to enhance academic excellence. First, Academic Program Review (APR) is being pilot-tested this academic year. This review is designed to assess strengths and opportunities in academic units. Second, Post Tenure Review (PTR) is another new program being pilot-tested in 2006-2007. PTR is designed to recognize, encourage and promote strong faculty quality and engagement, after tenure, in the mission areas (teaching, research and service) of the university. Third, the development of the Spirit of Auburn Scholarship program, bringing scholarship funding up to $15.5 million, will help Auburn University continue to recruit the state of Alabama’s best and brightest undergraduate students.

Finally, at the end of calendar year 2006 academic excellence and accomplishment were “center stage” at the December graduation: nearly 1,500 bachelors, master’s, specialist and doctoral candidates were awarded diplomas. These graduates of Auburn have demonstrated their commitment to academic quality and integrity and, as the Auburn Creed states, to “work, hard work.” The support of the alumni, friends, students, faculty and staff is central to the advancement of Auburn’s mission. I want to thank all members of the academic community for their and your steadfast commitment to this institution.

War Eagle!

John Heilman

Shaw Named VP of AU Alumni Affairs

Debbie L. Shaw has been named vice president of Auburn University alumni affairs.

AU President Ed Richardson removed “interim” from Shaw’s title in recognition of her leadership on alumni issues and performance as a senior university administrator.

“Dr. Shaw is well-respected on campus and by members of the Auburn family around the country,” said Richardson. “She is an effective manager with an outstanding record of finding new and creative ways to promote Auburn to our alumni and friends and raise funds for scholarships.”

While serving as interim vice president, Shaw was instrumental in increasing scholarship dollars through the Auburn Spirit credit card and License to Learn vehicle tag programs. Shaw also serves as executive director of the Auburn Alumni Association, which last year raised more than $2 million for student scholarships.
Veterinary Professor Develops New Avian Flu Vaccine

An Auburn veterinary professor, in collaboration with researchers at Vaxin Inc. of Birmingham, has developed the first egg-injected vaccine to protect chickens against avian influenza, a virus threatening human health and global poultry populations.

Haroldo Toro, whose research is in press in the scientific journal, Vaccine, says the vaccine will provide 100 percent protection once an outbreak’s strain is determined.

“We have proven the principle, which is the major step in leading to commercially produced vaccine that could be vital to the poultry industry,” Toro said. “When an outbreak occurs, we would determine the strain and quickly create a vaccine within three months specifically for it.”

The researchers inserted a gene from a low pathogenic avian flu virus strain into a non-replicating human virus, a Vxin proprietary technology, which was then injected into developing chicken embryos still in the egg. When protection induced by the vaccine was tested against two highly pathogenic avian flu viruses, a Vietnamese strain and a Mexican strain, the results showed 68 percent and 100 percent protection, respectively.

“These strains have slightly different genetic makeup which account for the different percentages in protection,” said Toro, who is also collaborating on the project with the Southeast Poultry Research Laboratory in Georgia. “Our results indicate that we can provide effective protection against any strain after incorporating the gene of the field strain into our vaccine construct.”

The disease has decimated poultry populations in Asia in recent years. Toro says United States health officials are continuously monitoring both chicken flocks and migratory birds that might bring new, highly pathogenic strains of the disease and infect poultry flocks, possibly killing 90 percent or more in affected areas.

The current policy of health officials during an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian flu is mass euthanasia and disposal of infected birds, and strict biosecurity measures.

Mass vaccination programs around the perimeter region would reduce the risk of spreading the pathogen from the site of a localized outbreak to neighboring areas. Because this new vaccine also allows easy differentiation between naturally infected birds and vaccinated birds, its use could help prevent outbreaks of the disease in any given area, especially when there is a risk of a known strain in neighboring countries.

“We can vaccinate lots of birds in a quick, cost- and labor-saving manner which otherwise would not be possible,” Toro said. “Most poultry operations already have automated injection machines to vaccinate against Marek’s disease, injecting up to 40,000 eggs per minute. Our vaccine is produced through cell cultures, so we can easily make enough vaccine for thousands of birds.”

Pharmacy (continued from page 1)

The memorandum of understanding between the two universities provides that the AU pharmacy school establish a satellite program in facilities at the USA Health Services Center, staff and administer the program with AU faculty, and establish the same admission requirements and academic criteria as the Harrison School of Pharmacy at Auburn campus. AU will administer the admission process to the pharmacy program, and a USA faculty member is expected to serve on HSOP’s admission committee.

In some cases, AU pharmacy faculty will teach USA medical students and USA medical faculty will teach AU pharmacy students. USA will extend clinical pharmacy appointments to AU pharmacy faculty involved in education programs for student physicians, medical residents and other health care students. AU, in turn, will extend affiliate faculty appointments to USA faculty who participate in the Harrison School of Pharmacy program.

Lee Evans, dean of AU’s Harrison School of Pharmacy, said the agreement provides a timely and flexible way to address a nationwide shortage of pharmacists. “The quickest and most cost-effective way to meet the shortage of pharmacists is for an established, accredited pharmacy school to establish a satellite campus, preferably in partnership with a school that has an accredited medical program,” Evans said.

“The program will be identical to our program at Auburn, it will be taught by Auburn faculty, and we expect to teach the first students in the program next fall,” he added.

The impact of the AU pharmacy program at USA will be felt throughout the region, Evans said. “We are going to move quickly to help reduce the shortage of well-trained pharmacists, not just in the Mobile area, but all along the Gulf Coast, from the Florida Panhandle to the Biloxi area and beyond.”

Foundation, Alumni Association Choose New Leaders for 2007

Both the AU Foundation and the Auburn Alumni Association recently selected new leaders.

The AU Foundation Board has named Charles Hudson, a 1950 AU graduate in business administration, as its president, and the Alumni Association elected Ralph Jordan Jr., Class of 1970, as its president for the next two years.

Hudson succeeds Sally Jones Hill as the president of the AU Foundation. Hill, who was recently named co-chair of AU’s “It Begins at Auburn” campaign, served as AU Foundation president from 2004-06.
Survey
(continued from page 1)

identify policies, practices and issues where we can further improve the working and teaching environment at Auburn.”

Researchers for COACHE conducted the survey between October 2005 and January 2006 with faculty hired before summer 2005 who were working toward tenure. The 67 percent response rate for Auburn faculty was significantly higher than the overall response rate of 58 percent. Drew Clark, executive director of institutional research and analysis at Auburn, said the response rates for AU and overall were very strong indicators that the survey produced an accurate reflection of junior faculty attitudes.

Auburn was the only institution in Alabama to participate in the COACHE survey. Among participating universities across the South besides Clemson and North Carolina State, the collaborative includes the University of North Carolina System, Duke, Memphis, Virginia, Virginia Tech, Tennessee and Texas Tech. Nationally, other major participants include Notre Dame, the California State University System and flagship universities in Washington, North Dakota, Arizona, Iowa, Kansas, Connecticut, Ohio, Minnesota and Michigan.

Andrew Freear, director of AU’s Rural Studio in the College of Architecture, Design and Construction, has won a major architectural award, the 2006 Ralph Erskine Award, for his leadership of the Rural Studio.

The Ralph Erskine Award is an international award presented every three years by the Ruth and Ralph Erskine Nordic Foundation. The award, established in 1988, places special emphasis on architecture to benefit underprivileged and deprived groups in society.

Freear said the award has special significance because of its namesake and its attention to housing needs of the poor. “Ralph Erskine was a great architect. This acknowledges our work in a global context. It shows that good architecture can be provided for everyone in society, even the poor.”

Andrew Freear has established himself as one of Auburn’s very best faculty,” said Dan Bennett, dean of the College of Architecture, Design and Construction. “The leadership he has shown in moving our Rural Studio forward has brought both national and international acclaim to the university.”

Bennett added, “The Erskine Award is certainly an honor that is well-deserved and is significant international recognition, not just for his accomplishments, but also for his labor on behalf of those in our culture who are disadvantaged.”

Freear served as co-director of the Rural Studio from 2002-06 and recently became director. He taught for five years at the University of Illinois-Chicago before coming to Auburn and received degrees from Polytechnic of Central London and the Architectural Association, London.

Lechner Wins Fulbright Specialist Grant

Professor Emeritus Norbert Lechner of AU’s College of Architecture, Design and Construction has been named a Fulbright Senior Specialist by the Council for International Exchange of Scholars.

Lechner was a professor in the Department of Building Science for 32 years until his recent retirement, and he continues as a visiting professor for the department.

“For the past three years I have been teaching energy responsive design in Thailand,” Lechner said. “The Fulbright fund will allow me to continue to do that. In May, I was invited to Korea to give lectures on the same topic. I hope to give lectures and workshops all over the world in the future.”

Lechner, who earned his bachelor’s degree from City College of New York and his master’s from Columbia, is author of Heating, Cooling, Lighting: Design Methods for Architects. The textbook is used by more than one-third of architecture schools in the United States, has been translated into Chinese and Persian and is being translated into Korean, Indonesian, Thai and Spanish.

“I have become committed to make buildings more energy efficient because they play such a large role in sustainability,” Lechner added. “Buildings use 50 percent of all energy, of which 10 percent goes into construction and 40 percent for operation. There is no way that the world could ever produce enough clean energy if buildings keep wasting energy as they are doing now.”

Marking history

Agronomy Professor Charles Mitchell of the AU College of Agriculture and Mary Norman of the Auburn Historical Society unveiled a federal marker in November designating the Alabama Agricultural Research Station’s 95-year-old Cullars Rotation Site behind the Jule Collins Smith Museum as a site on the National Register of Historic Places.
Private Giving to Auburn Set Record in 2005-06

Private giving to Auburn set a record by reaching $105.3 million for the 2005-06 fiscal year, topping the previous year’s record of $101.2 million.

The fiscal year ended on Sept. 30. Gifts to AU through the “It Begins at Auburn” Campaign to date exceed $425 million, placing the campaign within striking distance of its $500 million goal.

“The numbers we have seen this year have been exceptional,” said AU President Ed Richardson. “We are appreciative to all of those who have given to ensure the continued growth of both our university and the future students of our state. Private donations are fundamental toward achieving sustainable development for Auburn University, now and in the future.”

Alabama Associations Honor Two from AU

Susan Hubbard of AU’s College of Human Sciences and Hans van der Reijden of The Hotel at Auburn University won awards in November from the Alabama Restaurant Association and the Alabama Hospitality Association.

Hubbard, associate dean for academic affairs in Human Sciences, won the award for Hospitality Educator of the Year, while Van der Reijden, general manager of the AU Hotel, is Hoteller of the Year.

During the previous 12 months, AU recorded 29,088 donations in the form of pledges and deferred and outright gifts. Nineteen donors gave more than $1 million each for a total of $30 million. These gifts represent 28 percent of the total giving for the year. An additional $33.3 million, 31 percent of the fiscal year’s gifts, was from donations of $100,000 to $999,999.

Money generated through Auburn’s Annual Fund accounted for a portion of the remaining donations to the university. The Annual Fund raised more than $2.4 million from more than 16,000 donors in the 2005-06 fiscal year. The fund focuses upon unrestricted gifts, which can be allocated by schools and colleges for their most immediate and pressing needs.

In Birmingham on March 16, Auburn publicly launched the first of 31 regional campaigns. The regional campaigns raised a total $16.8 million in cash and pledges in fiscal 2005-06 as part of the larger “It Begins at Auburn” Campaign.

“The success of this campaign can be credited to both those who have generously given to Auburn as well as our team of volunteer leaders, deans and development staff,” said Bob McGinnis, vice president for development.

They have all given their best to this endeavor, and I thank them for their hard work and dedication.” McGinnis added.

Of the $105.3 million contributed to the university within the last year, $26.7 million went to student support, $5.2 million to faculty, $6.8 million to facilities and $66.5 million to programmatic support.

Brown Honored As NSCS's 2006 Faculty Member of the Year

The National Society of Collegiate Scholars, an honor society with chapters at 218 campuses across the United States, has named AU College of Liberal Arts faculty member Steven P. Brown winner of the society’s Faculty of the Year Award for 2006.

The student-nominated award recognizes faculty members at member institutions who inspire high achievement in and outside the classroom.

Brown, an Auburn faculty member since 1998, teaches American government and other courses in the Department of Political Science.

He received an Undergraduate Teaching Award in 2003 from the Auburn Alumni Association, and his book Trumping Religion, published in 2002, won a major award from the National Communication Association.

Alternative Energy Initiative

Speaking to a conference of industry and government representatives and university experts at AU in October, U.S. Sen. Jeff Sessions of Alabama urged rapid development of biological alternatives to fossil fuels as a way for the United States to reduce its dependence on petroleum from unstable foreign markets. The conference brought together researchers and representatives from government and several industries as part of the Auburn Alternative Energy Initiative to address America’s energy supply issues. Auburn University is developing alternative fuels from renewable energy sources such as switchgrass and other agricultural produce and dedicated $3 million in 2006 to the initiative.
Part of Haley Center now has a “green” roof, but no paint is involved.

A section of the Haley roof is covered with rows of specially potted native plants that a group of students placed there as an environmental project. Sponsored by the College of Liberal Arts, student participants in the Auburn Sustainability Project devised the “Green Roof” display to demonstrate ways in which nature can be used to improve a man-made environment.

Students involved in the project say the “Green Roof” concept has several advantages. “The plants will absorb significant amounts of water and prevent polluted runoff from going into the drains and sewage systems,” said Valerie Grupp, a political science major and intern with the Auburn Sustainability Initiative project.

“Ultimately the ‘Green Roof’ will decrease the amount of polluted water flowing out to our rivers and streams,” Grupp added.

The Auburn Sustainability Initiative organized the project following a challenge from College of Liberal Arts Dean Anna Gramberg to ASI Director Lindy Biggs, who is also a history professor in the college.

Last year, when Biggs approached the dean for funds to bring in a well-known speaker about environmental awareness, Gramberg responded that there had been enough talk and it was time for some action. The dean said she would be happy to fund something the students could really get involved in, and something that everyone could benefit from and enjoy.

Within an hour, Biggs came up with the idea for a sustainability class. Her proposal outlined a small class. Students would have to apply for the class and those accepted would receive internship credit. Gramberg approved the proposal and Biggs received more than 40 applications in one week. Only 14 students were accepted into the class.

“I met the selected students and knew they were up to the task of a project like this. And I was right!” said Gramberg. “I am truly impressed by the students involved with this initiative. They are outstanding, interesting, creative, forward-thinking and bright. I thank Dr. Biggs for her leadership and for her incredible dedication to sustainability. Dr. Biggs and her students designed and implemented something the college can be proud of. What they have accomplished will benefit our environment and everyone who comes to Haley Center.”

Besides being environmentally friendly and attractive, Biggs said the “Green Roof” concept makes fiscal sense as well. “The average roof reaches temperatures of more than 120 degrees, while plants never become warmer than 80 degrees. So by insulating the roof with plants, you are effectively cutting down on energy costs.”

Information about the Auburn Sustainability Initiative is online at www.auburn.edu/projects/sustainability.

CADC Honored for Modular House Design

Auburn School of Architecture professors David Hinson and Stacy Norman and their students recently won the 2006 Honor Award of the Alabama Council of the American Institute of Architects for their work on the Designhabitat 2 house in Greensboro.

The Designhabitat program is a partnership between the AU School of Architecture and the Alabama Association of Habitat Affiliates.

For the award-winning project, the AU architecture group and the modular housing industry formed a partnership to search for ways Habitat could build more homes with fewer volunteer resources to meet the housing demand along the Gulf Coast following the hurricanes of 2005.
Tiger retires

It is not every day a living icon or symbol retires. Tiger, a living symbol of AU for 20 years, was officially retired as War Eagle VI at the AU-Georgia football game on Nov. 11. Nova, another golden eagle, has been designated War Eagle VII.