Auburn's 2005-06 Funding Picture Improving

Continuing improvement in AU’s finances enables the university to provide faculty and staff pay raises and increases for operating budgets across campus for the 2005-06 fiscal year which started on Oct. 1.

Under the 2005-06 AU System budget approved by the trustees on Sept. 16, AU System funding increased $46.3 million to $664.1 million. Of that amount, the main campus was budgeted to receive a $36.5 million increase to $497.4 million.

Other will received proportionately similar increases to $52.4 million for the Cooperative Extension System, $53.7 million for the Agricultural Experiment Station and $60.6 million for Auburn University Montgomery.

Interim President Ed Richardson said state revenues for education have increased much faster than most analysts predicted a year ago, when some analysts warned of possible proration. The state allocation includes $18.8 million in new funds for the main campus. Rather than contracting, the state’s economy is continuing to expand, offering cautious hope for more economic improvement in Auburn’s finances next year, Richardson added.

The other factor in AU’s financial improvement is the board’s commitment to set tuition near the regional average. A combination of the latest tuition increase and a record enrollment this year is projected to add $7.3 million to AU’s revenues.

Executive Vice President Don Large said the changes in AU’s tuition policy enabled Auburn to become more competitive with its peers in the Southeast and provide need-based scholarships to more students, including a $1 million additional allocation in the new budget.

Adhering to guidelines established last spring, the budget includes a 4 percent increase in funding for salary and wage increases. The increases, which vary for each individual, are based on merit decisions for faculty and a combination of merit and across-the-board increases for staff.

In other action at the Sept. 16 meeting, the board hired an executive search firm to assist in the search for a new president. The board selected John H. Kuhnle, managing director of Korn/Ferry International Education Practice, to work with campus groups to set a timetable and conduct the search.

Fall Enrollment Increase Sets AU Record

A record number of new freshmen helped push AU’s enrollment to an all-time high this fall.

Auburn’s total enrollment of 23,333 exceeds its previous record of 23,276 in fall 2002. The record 4,197 new freshmen eclipses the old record of 4,184, also set in fall semester 2002.

“These numbers make it very clear there is an exceptional demand for an Auburn University education,” said interim President Ed Richardson. “We are excited about our record enrollment and, particularly, about our outstanding new freshman class. They enter Auburn exceedingly well-prepared for their collegiate experience.”

Auburn’s 2005-06 freshman class averages a 24.1 ACT test score and a 3.52 high school grade point average.

In addition, the freshman class exceeded last year’s totals in almost every demographic. AU enrolled 2,468 new freshmen from in-state compared with 2,178 last fall, 1,729 out-of-state new freshmen compared to last fall’s 1,416 and 398 new African-American freshmen, up 15 percent from last year’s 347.

“With regard to our new freshman class, we’re up in almost all ethnic groups, in out-of-state and in-state students and in most of our larger feeder states, including Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and North Carolina,” said John Fletcher, AU’s assistant vice president for enrollment management services. “All of this is tremendously exciting for us — both as a reward for our hard work and a harbinger of a bright future.”

Fletcher credited both his staff and Auburn students for the university’s successful recruiting year. In particular, he mentioned...
Message from the President

Dear Auburn Friends and Supporters,

The fall semester at Auburn University is off to a great start and I want you to know that there’s a tremendous feeling across campus that it’s going to be an exciting year for the university. As thousands of students returned to campus, we also welcomed an outstanding freshman class. Auburn experienced record attendance at Camp War Eagle, and our fall enrollment has exceeded all previous records. At the same time, US News & World Report ranked Auburn 38th among National Public Universities. AU was also named by the Princeton Review to its “best colleges” guide. We are proud of these accomplishments but be assured that we will not rest on our laurels.

The university has an ambitious agenda for the coming year. We are working on a number of important initiatives that will continue to move Auburn forward. In all areas of the university – academics, athletics and our infrastructure and campus environment – we will achieve innovative and responsible solutions to the challenges we face. We will also bring forward a comprehensive strategic plan for approval by the Board of Trustees. This plan will give the university direction for the coming years and is of vital importance if we are to be accountable for our efforts.

All of us have seen on television and read in the newspapers about the devastation caused on the Gulf Coast by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Many have lost their lives. Those lucky enough to survive have lost homes, businesses and any sense of normalcy in their lives. We have some 10,000 alumni and 1,500 current students who live in the areas that have suffered severe damage. With that in mind, Auburn is actively exploring ways to provide help to those most in need.

The university is already at work in several ways. Most importantly, we are committed to our current students. The university will do everything within its ability to ensure that students who are residents of the Gulf Coast areas hardest hit by the storm are able to continue their education at Auburn. Such students who need to make special arrangements for payment of tuition and fees are encouraged to call Student Financial Services. I also urge these students to stay in close contact with their respective dean’s offices to ensure we can provide the help they need. Auburn will make its resources available to college students whose education has been disrupted because of hurricane-related damage to their schools.

We have already enrolled some from those schools and will continue to assist others where we can. The university’s surplus property has been targeted for transfer to public schools and school districts directly impacted by the hurricane in south Alabama. Surplus computer equipment, chairs, tables, and desks will be made available for transfer to the schools. Finally, we will help in unique ways, especially in areas where Auburn is already a national leader. One such effort uses the talents of students in our College of Architecture, Design and Construction to explore alternative long-term housing options for those who have been displaced by Hurricane Katrina. Auburn University will continue to discuss and evaluate ways we can help. The generosity displayed by the entire Auburn family continues to be a source of pride for the university.

War Eagle,

Ed Richardson

Visit AU Alumni’s Online Community, Join The AAA

The Auburn Online Community is a service allowing alumni and friends to log in securely and access online services such as updating address information, finding friends from Auburn University, enabling a permanent e-mail address and more. Check www.aualum.org for more information.

Members have been vital to the Auburn Alumni Association throughout its 108-year history. To learn about the benefits of being a member, visit www.alumni.auburn.edu/.
Rural Studio Honored for Rural Service Program

The AU School of Architecture’s Rural Studio has received the 2005 Award for Distinguished Service to Rural Life from the Rural Sociological Society.

The award recognizes outstanding contributions to the enhancement of rural life and rural people by individuals or groups not formally affiliated with the Rural Sociological Society. This is the first time the award has gone to an educational program.

**U.S. News Rates AU 38th in Latest Ranking**

Auburn is ranked 38th among public universities nationwide and as Alabama’s top university by *U.S. News & World Report*.

In the annual survey released in August, Auburn is ranked among the nation’s top 50 public universities for the 13th consecutive year. This year’s ranking was AU’s best in the survey since 1999, when it also ranked 38th, and was a four-spot improvement over last year, when *U.S. News* ranked Auburn 42nd among public schools.

“Obviously the Auburn family was pleased to learn that AU has improved its national standing,” said interim President Ed Richardson. “These improvements are the result of hard work by the faculty, staff and administration and the commitment by the Board of Trustees to establish and support long-term improvements. I remain optimistic that further improvements will be forthcoming.”

AU’s Samuel Ginn College of Engineering was ranked 67th nationally overall among engineering schools with doctoral engineering programs. The college was ranked 40th in the same category among engineering schools at public universities.

The newstand book, *America’s Best Colleges*, contains the *U.S. News* college rankings. Most of the rankings and some of the articles from the book were also in the issue of *U.S. News & World Report* weekly news-magazine.

To establish its rankings *U.S. News* categorizes colleges and universities primarily by mission and, in some cases, region. The indicators the magazine uses to define academic quality fall into seven categories: academic reputation among its peers, retention of students, faculty resources, student selectivity, financial resources, alumni giving and (for national universities and liberal arts colleges) the graduation rate performance, or the difference between the proportion of students expected to graduate and the proportion who actually do.

“Auburn’s Rural Studio struck us as a program with a very distinctive mix of professional development, collaborative learning and positive impact on rural communities,” said RSS awards committee chair Claire Hinrichs, who is an associate professor of rural sociology at Penn State. “The track record of the program exemplifies a model of rural social change that unites concrete material improvement and enlarged social understanding, both by architects in training and residents of the communities where the Rural Studio is active.”

The nationally recognized Rural Studio was established in 1993 by Auburn University architecture professors Dennis K. Ruth and the late Samuel Mockbee and is now led by Bruce Lindsey, head of the School of Architecture, and Andrew Freear, an associate professor of architecture. Mockbee and Ruth conceived of the program as a unique method to improve the living conditions in rural Alabama while providing hands-on architectural experience for students.

“The Rural Studio has built its foundation on the belief that regardless of your environmental and financial circumstances — be it rural, urban, affluent or modest — people have the right to be enabled by their environment,” explained Lindsey. “This award is significant to us because of the group from which it is awarded. The Rural Studio, known for its architectural and social mission, is honored that the work is seen to contribute to the community from the important perspective of sociology.”

A model plane suspended from the portico of the Aerospace Engineering Building appears to take flight over Wilmore Labs in this twilight scene.

Cooler nights following the passage of Hurricane Katrina far to the west of Auburn brought more colorful skies to the Plains on several evenings.

AU’s home page on the World Wide Web has a new, more-modern look and layout to help users find their way around the university’s many Web links more easily. The redesign is a joint effort of the offices of Communications and Marketing and Information Technology. The AU home page is at www.auburn.edu.
Auburn Gets $2.5 Million Grant to Establish Commercial Fish Farming Industry in Uganda

The AU College of Agriculture's International Center for Aquaculture and Aquatic Environments has landed a $2.5 million award to help establish a commercial fish farming industry in Uganda.

In the 40-month project, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, a team of faculty from the Department of Fisheries and Allied Aquacultures will establish in Uganda model cage- and pond-based fish farms that use high-quality fish feeds and best-management practices to demonstrate viable commercial production of fish such as tilapia and the Clarias catfish. These model production systems on private farms will be demonstration sites to spread the technologies to other farms in the nation.

Faculty from Auburn's Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology also will participate in the initiative.

The project's chief objectives are to increase the quality and quantity of protein food for Ugandans, boost employment and help the African country generate export revenue.

"This is a very significant project and will be instrumental in establishing the infrastructure so that an aquaculture industry can grow and thrive in Uganda," said Bill Daniels, an AU fisheries associate professor who is campus coordinator of the project.

Fish consumption is high and demand is increasing in Uganda, but the vast majority of the supply for both domestic consumption and export is natural catch from the country's lakes and rivers. With that supply threatened by increased pollution and unsustainable fishing practices, a conversion to fish farming is crucial.

A major hurdle to the establishment of an aquaculture industry in Uganda is the lack of local, high-quality fish feed, Daniels said.

"Fish require a top-quality, nutritionally complete and balanced diet to grow rapidly and remain healthy, so local feed production is critical to the overall success and sustainability of an aquaculture industry in Uganda," Daniels said. "During the first two years of the project, we will be working to facilitate the transfer of feed production technologies, using locally available materials, to local businesses, especially current manufacturers of other animal feed."

AU fisheries research associate Karen Veverica has moved to Uganda and will oversee the project there and serve as the technical expert on pond construction and management and fish production.

Magazine Lists AU Among Top Colleges

Auburn is classified in the new issue of the Princeton Review as one of the nation's best institutions for undergraduate education.

The New York-based education services company features AU in "The Best 361 Colleges," the 2006 edition of its annual "best colleges" guide. Only about 15 percent of the four-year colleges in America and two Canadian colleges are in the book, which has two-page profiles on the schools and student survey-based ranking lists of top 20 colleges in the book in various categories.

The book's profile on AU commends its "excellent programs in business, agriculture, engineering, nursing and architecture."

The lists in "The Best 361 Colleges" are based on the Princeton Review's survey of 110,000 students attending colleges in the book. Students rated their schools on several topics and reported on their campus experiences.


Based on student evaluations of their respective schools, the book cites AU as having an outstanding library, good "town-gown" relations and student sports fans among the nation's best. However, despite evidence of high academic achievement in the book's profile of Auburn, the AU students who participated in the survey were among the largest sets of participants who admitted that they do not study enough.
Robin Sabino does not speak fluent Cherokee but the linguistics professor at Auburn is helping teach others the language through a specially designed Web site.

“What I am providing is mainly vocabulary. It is a basis for language learning—a self-instructional language learning resource,” said Sabino, acting assistant director of AU’s Center for Diversity and Race Relations.

The Echota Tsalagi Language Revitalization Project Web site teaches a version of Cherokee spoken by members of the Echota tribe, the largest state-recognized Cherokee tribe in Alabama.

The site, which includes lessons on more than 1,700 words, is organized by semantic sets—lists that include colors, numbers, objects of clothing, animals, etc. Each entry contains the word written in Cherokee syllabary characters, a set of written characters used to represent different syllables, and the English spelling. Many entries also contain pictures and sound files so the learner can hear the words pronounced by a fluent Echota speaker.

Sabino began working in earnest on the project in 2002 when she received grants from AU’s Office of Outreach and Office of Research designed to encourage and broaden faculty participation in research and other scholarly pursuits.

She provided the content while Bradley Morgan of AU’s Office of Distance Learning designed the site and built the utilities used to maintain it.

However, the concept began years earlier when Patricia Edwards de Ortega, a member of the Echota, approached Sabino, who is an associate professor in AU’s Department of English, about helping to revitalize the Cherokee language. The College of Liberal Arts faculty member had focused her dissertation on the difficulties of learning a dying language in the U.S. Virgin Islands, so the Cherokee project piqued her interest.

“I thought the project would be incredibly interesting. I had worked with the last speaker of a language and I watched a language die, so I thought it would be a privilege to be able to help save one,” she said.

Sabino said there are 22,500 fluent native Cherokee speakers in Oklahoma and North Carolina but none in Alabama.

“It is not often that academic linguists get a chance to do something useful like this,” she said. “And it is always exciting to work with people who want to learn.”

Response to the site has been positive, said Sabino, who relied primarily on word of mouth to advertise its existence. The site has received more than 20,000 hits or visits to date. “Some people have been using the site quite consistently for a long time,” she said. “I have found that people who have used it really like it.”

Although the site currently focuses on vocabulary, Sabino says she hopes to one day include grammar as well. However, the difficulty of the language is often challenging.

“Cherokee is really complex and really different,” she said. “It is very different structurally from English.” For example, according to one grammar, Cherokee has 57 subject pronoun forms compared with eight in English.

“The pronoun forms change depending on if there is an animate object, an inanimate object or no object at all.”

To date, Sabino has relied on a few resources including a scholarly book from 1900 and a dissertation at the University of Georgia describing the Cherokee language. The hardest part, she says, is reconciling differences in the language from source to source.

Sabino dedicated the site to the memory of de Ortega, who had devoted the last years of her life to the cultural revitalization of the Echota.

Sabino said the project received much assistance from AU administrators, faculty and staff. “You could not do this type of project without the resources of the university behind you.” The development of the Web site is supported by the AU Office of Distance Learning and the Center for Diversity and Race Relations. To view the Web site, go to www.auburn.edu/outreach/dl/echota.

Since retiring as an emeritus professor from the AU College of Veterinary Medicine in 1999, Kyle Braund has established a new career as an artist. The Australian native, who taught at AU from 1976-99, paints in an abstract expressionist style influenced by early 20th century European and American artists such as Picasso, Chagall and Pollack.

Enrollment

(Continued from page 1)

the efforts of Auburn’s student Camp War Eagle counselors, who hosted 4,155 campers, also a record, at orientation sessions.

Auburn’s official enrollment numbers are calculated after the 15th class day of fall semester.

Richardson said the enrollment numbers are the latest in a series of good news for Auburn.

“More good news occurred in what is being called a very exciting fall,” Richardson said. “A record number of students, a ranking at 38th among public universities by U.S. News & World Report and being named among the ‘best colleges’ by Princeton Review. But we can’t rest; we have to work to continue our progress.”
Project Provides Role Models for Young Readers

In a program to spark greater public interest in reading, the Alabama Center for the Book recently completed a year-long project creating posters that show prominent Alabamians reading their favorite books.

With a grant from the Alabama Public Library Service, the center’s “Alabama Gets Caught Reading” initiative, recruited celebrities from a variety of professions to pose for photos in familiar settings with their favorite books. The photos are the basis for a series of posters encouraging Alabamians of all ages to take time for reading.

For the campaign, Charles Barkley took time off during the NBA playoffs to pose at the TNT studios. Kathryn Tucker Windham posed at her favorite cemetery in Selma, where she goes to catch a glimpse of Jeffrey, the ghost-story-teller’s most famous goblin. Naturalist and Alabama Public Television celebrity Doug Phillips trekked up and down the roads of Oak Mountain until he found the perfect spot for his photograph. Former NASCAR star Bobby Allison was also photographed in his element.

More than 20,000 posters of these and other famous Alabamians are being printed in phase one of the “Alabama Gets Caught Reading” promotion. The posters will be distributed statewide to independent bookstores and public and school libraries.

Phase one includes nine posters, each reflecting a different aspect of the diversity of well-known Alabamians, their interests, accomplishments and personalities.

For more information on “Alabama Gets Caught Reading,” call Connor Henton at 334/844-4948 or see the Web site www.alabama-bookcenter.org .

Forbes Places AU’s MBA Programs Among Best

The MBA program in AU’s College of Business is ranked 26th among those in the nation’s public institutions and 53rd overall in a new Forbes.com special report.

The biennial ranking measures best “return on investment” for MBA graduates of the Class of 2000.

For this year’s survey, Forbes sent 25,000 questionnaires to graduates of the top 111 MBA programs around the world. To determine the five-year MBA gain, Forbes asked for pre-MBA salaries as well as for compensation figures for three of the first five years out of school. The survey then compared post-MBA compensation with both costs of attending (tuition and foregone salary) and estimates of what the same students would have made in their old jobs.

The results show that Auburn grads experienced an 89 percent cumulative return, the seventh highest percentage return among all schools, for a gain of $54,000 in the five years since they began their MBA program. It took them just three years to recover the cost of their graduate education.
LEGO Art Shows Solution to Age-Old Math Riddle

When Auburn alumnus Eric Harshbarger looks at a pile of LEGOs, he thinks of geometry. For him, there is an innate relationship between mathematics and the popular children’s toy.

“They’ve been tied together for me my whole life,” he said. From learning basic mathematical functions like counting and addition at age 5, Harshbarger now uses complicated mathematical expressions and geometry when building with the multi-colored bricks.

This relationship has led him to a profitable, if bizarre, profession — as a freelance LEGO sculptor and toy consultant.

Harshbarger’s math background — bachelor’s and master’s degrees in the subject — is essential in helping him create mosaics and 3-D sculptures.

His latest pursuit is a nearly 6-foot by 6-foot configuration of 21 squares assembled entirely of LEGOs that hangs, appropriately, in AU’s math building, Parker Hall.

To a passer-by, the creation might look simply like an abstract work of art. What it illustrates, however, is something far more complex — the answer to an age-old mathematics problem: what is the minimum amount of times a square can be dissected into smaller squares so that no two squares are the same size? The answer: 21.

“This project was a perfect fit for me,” Harshbarger said.

Michel Smith, chair of the Department of Mathematics in AU’s College of Sciences and Mathematics, said he hopes the mosaic will spark an interest in the subject among Auburn students.

“I am delighted that we are able to use a toy that people are very familiar with as a symbol of the playfulness of mathematics,” Smith said. “I hope when students see it and realize the mathematical nature of the composition they’ll see that math is enjoyable.”

Mathematics Professor Andras Bezdek was familiar with Harshbarger’s work and suggested that Smith solicit him to build a math-themed LEGO structure. “He felt, and I agree, that it would be nice to have an artistic composition that represents the fun and ambition that we have with mathematics,” Smith said.

The only instruction Smith provided was to create a piece that was mathematically themed. “He gave me plenty of leeway,” Harshbarger said. “This particular geometric problem remained unsolved for many years until around 1978 and is not a trivial problem to solve. The squareness of it made me think of LEGO bricks so I thought it was the perfect illustration.”

The project took Harshbarger about a week to build but the preparation was more time consuming. “I had to make sure that I had 21 different colors of LEGOs and that I had enough pieces.” He relied on mathematics to lay out the piece. “Knowing the LEGO dimensions and how big I wanted the overall piece to be, I broke it up and drew it out using graph paper,” he said.

For more complicated mosaics and sculptures, Harshbarger uses a software program he created. 

Images by Jeff Etheridge and Trice Megginson of Photographic Services are featured in Echoes Strong and Clear, the 2006 Auburn University calendar, now available locally at Photo Services in the L Building, the AU Bookstore in Haley Center, Anders and J&M bookstores. The calendar, produced by AU’s Office of Communications and Marketing and Photographic Services, can also be purchased online at auphoto@auburn.edu or by calling 334/844-4560.
AU To Turn 150 ‘Neath the Sun-Kissed Sky
A great occasion to cheer comes early next year as Auburn University turns 150 years old. From its founding in 1856 as the East Alabama Male College, Auburn’s journey to the present has been nothing short of extraordinary. Beginning with a single building, a faculty of five, and a student body of 80, the university has become a preeminent land-grant and comprehensive research institution with more than 23,000 students and 5,000 faculty and staff. As part of this unique moment in time, Auburn University is planning the November release of a book with the university’s alma mater as the theme. Produced by AU’s Office of Communications and Marketing, ‘Neath the Sun-Kissed Sky views AU through the camera lens and attempts to give a sense of what more than 200,000 alumni have embraced during their time in the loveliest village – the Auburn Spirit. The publication also includes a few archival photos and bits of AU history to make the present day images even more meaningful.

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Auburn Commons Updates Now Sent by E-Mail and Available Online
Readers may now find electronic updates of Auburn Commons online at www.auburn.edu/commons. Updates are sent by e-mail eight months a year in addition to the printed issues mailed in January, April, July and October. To ensure you receive Auburn Commons, please submit any changes in information (i.e. postal address, e-mail address or name change) by e-mail to aurecords@auburn.edu, or call AU Records at 334/844-2944 or write to: Alumni Center, AU Records, 317 S. College St., Auburn, AL 36849.

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