The Samuel Ginn College of Engineering at Auburn University is committed to providing students with state-of-the-art classrooms and laboratories that play an integral part in their engineering education. With a mission of advancing engineering practice in a variety of disciplines, the institution’s much anticipated Transportation Technology Center will house research, instructional and administrative offices for a multitude of engineering programs.

U.S. Sen. Richard Shelby has been an important player in bringing the building to reality. As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee and chairman of the Transportation Subcommittee, he has made highway safety a priority, working to ensure that our nation’s highway system receives appropriate levels of funding to maintain and enhance safe traveling conditions. Thanks to Shelby’s efforts, $30 million in federal funds for the Transportation Technology Center have been secured.

Slated for completion in November 2007, the facility will house laboratories, classrooms, lecture halls and administrative and faculty offices in a central pavilion flanked by two L-shaped wings. A second phase is anticipated to provide an additional building on either end.

Transportation Center To Open In 2007

CBS Documentary On Rural Studio Wins Emmy

“Heart of the Country,” a documentary on CBS chronicling the life of the late Samuel “Sambo” Mockbee and the work of Auburn’s Rural Studio, has won an Emmy Award for 2004 from the National Television Academy of Arts and Sciences.

“Heart of the Country” tells the story of Mockbee, who, along with fellow AU Architecture Professor D.K. Ruth, founded Auburn’s Rural Studio. The documentary, produced by Irene Taylor Brodsky, shows many of the houses and structures built by Auburn students from free or low-cost materials in economically stressed rural West Alabama.

The documentary was one of five submitted in the category, “Outstanding Feature in a Regularly Scheduled Broadcast” and judged by a panel of broadcast industry professionals.

Mockbee taught that architects could change lives by building houses and structures for people in need. He argued that West Alabama towns, which have few economic opportunities, provide an ideal setting for a unique approach to architecture.

“Irene Taylor Brodsky, correspondent Martha Teichner and editor Terry Manning invested a huge amount of time in this project, and they did an excellent job of telling the story of Sambo Mockbee, our faculty and the students who participate in the Rural Studio,” said Dan Bennett, dean of Architecture, Design and Construction.
Message from the President

Dear Auburn Friends and Supporters,

As we approach the end of the calendar year and begin a new fiscal year at Auburn University, the time is ideal to communicate progress in 2004 and identify initiatives critical to a comprehensive strategic plan.

Progress in terms of our accreditation has been steady and positive. The report from the regular 10-year accreditation visit of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in February was excellent, and a second committee visited at the end of September to review the five criteria that led to probation. That visit was productive and positive, and although there may be some additional suggestions to which we can and will respond, I anticipate a favorable final review from SACS at its December meeting.

This month, I presented to the Board of Trustees six initiatives I believe are key to setting the stage for a bright future for the university and a successful tenure for its next president. Two of those initiatives — a plan for a research park and for a partnership with the state in developing Gulf Shores State Park — have already received a great deal of attention and support. Both projects will generate new funding sources to help overcome inadequacies in state funding and curb steep tuition hikes, in addition to improving economic development and job creation for the state. In fact, the governor has committed $10 million and the City of Auburn $5 million for the research park; the effort will be instrumental in extending educational opportunities for Auburn students as well as attracting new funding and top faculty.

I also brought forward academic initiatives. We must adhere to our land-grant mission but meet the future head-on in our College of Agriculture, examining structure, programs, target audiences and research efforts in the context of significant and shifting agricultural challenges being faced worldwide. Additionally, other academic programs will be reviewed in terms of accountability based on defined criteria, and core curriculum examined in terms of content and coursework. The goal is to establish measurable results in academic programs, results that will serve us well through increasing competition from surrounding states.

We will also look carefully at the Auburn/Opelika airport, considering recommendations to improve its appearance, function and growth capability, and perhaps involving establishment of a regional authority and autonomous operation.

Finally, it is imperative the relationship between Auburn and Auburn University Montgomery be examined. That relationship is at best ill-defined and unclear, which serves neither institution well. We need to determine if there are opportunities to share programs, eliminate duplicate programs, for AUM to become more independent and/or to enhance distance learning.

Amid these planning initiatives, we expect to complete the search for a new athletic director in November; we’re working with the city to improve football game traffic and create a more welcoming and inviting campus; construction projects continue at a record pace; and both the new leadership of the alumni association and the administration are striving toward the common goal of doing what’s best for Auburn University.

War Eagle,

Ed Richardson

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Baby Oaks Keep Tradition Growing

Auburn University alumni and friends can own a piece of an Auburn tradition thanks to the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences.

Through a project dubbed “Baby Toomer’s,” seedlings were grown from acorns of the historic oaks at Toomer’s Corner, site of campus celebrations for decades.

Faculty from the school gathered acorns from the two iconic oak trees located at Toomer’s Corner where the campus meets downtown Auburn. From those seeds, students and faculty have grown approximately 800 seedlings that they delivered to donors.

The trees are available for gifts of $50 each and a portion of that amount is tax-deductible. The money will go toward scholarships for students in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences and for support of activities of the Forestry Club and Wildlife Society.

Crim said the student organizations would continue growing the trees each year for several years so the university will have a variety of sizes to plant on campus. For more information, call 844-1001.
Student Interns In Australia With Crocodile Hunter

Lindsey Harris may not look like a typical pioneer but the Auburn student has been where no other college student has been before. The conservation major was chosen as the first intern ever accepted to work at the Australia Zoo.

The zoo has been made famous by its owner Steve Irwin, otherwise known as the Crocodile Hunter. Irwin is famous for wrangling crocodiles, snakes and other animals for his show on the Animal Planet network.

“I’ve always liked Australia, and I was looking for an opportunity to work there because I really like marsupials,” Harris said.

She coordinated the trip through AU’s study abroad program. In addition to her internship, Harris took classes at Australia’s University of the Sunshine Coast, located about an hour north of Brisbane.

On her behalf, a representative from the Australian university approached the zoo about an internship for Harris. The zoo declined initially, however, saying they didn’t accept interns due to Irwin’s and the zoo’s worldwide popularity.

“They are always getting requests from people who want to work there just to be close to Steve. It is just easier for them to say no,” she said. But Harris’ resume made zoo officials take a second look. She had already spent four years working for Zoo Atlanta, near her hometown of Roswell, Ga., and she displayed a genuine interest in working with animals through her biological sciences curriculum.

“I had to write a lot of essays about why I wanted to work with the animals and let them know that it wasn’t just because I was impressed with Steve,” she said, adding, “They wanted to make sure I was legitimate.”

Harris worked for six months at the zoo while taking classes. During her internship, she did behavior studies on Tasmanian devils and gray kangaroos. Occasionally, she was asked to help with crowd control while Irwin gave a demonstration to visitors or taped a segment of his “Crocodile Hunter Diaries” television show.

“It was really exciting and wild. People fly from all over the world just to see Steve, so not only did I get to work with animals but I also had to play bodyguard.”

She also got to assist Steve during the taping of “Croc Week,” a series of live shows broadcast on the Animal Planet network.

Harris concedes she loves to travel and her experience in Australia only sparked her desire to see other places around the globe. This winter she will travel to Antarctica on an ecotourism cruise, spending 12 days aboard ship while studying wildlife and animal conservation.

“I want to look at the impact of tour groups on Antarctica, which is ironic since I’m going with a tour group. But I want to see what happens when groups visit there,” she said.

Maddie’s Fund To Create, Support Shelter Medicine Program

In memory of a special little Miniature Schnauzer, Auburn University’s College of Veterinary Medicine will receive $1.5 million over the next six years to create and support a comprehensive shelter medicine program.

The national Maddie’s Fund Pet Rescue Foundation has already awarded Auburn a first-year, $250,000 grant to establish the program and will give $250,000 a year for the following five years.

“This generous support will allow us to create a clinical rotation in shelter medicine and a new ambulatory service in which our students will visit animal shelters for on-site consultation, diagnostic support and teaching,” said Brenda Griffin, an AU assistant research professor who will direct the program at Auburn.

The endeavor is designated Maddie’s Shelter Medicine Program in honor of Maddie, a Miniature Schnauzer that died of cancer in 1997. She had been the companion of a California couple who, after Maddie’s death, started the Maddie’s Fund foundation to help all dogs and cats have quality lives. One of the foundation’s primary missions is the non-lethal controlling of the pet surplus through humane strategies for pet population control.

“We look forward to collaborating with Auburn to improve the lives of shelter pets, decrease shelter deaths, and increase animal adoptions,” said Laurie Peek, veterinary consultant for Maddie’s Fund. “We hope to create a pool of shelter veterinarians who will practice in this emerging field and bring an awareness of shelter issues.”

In addition to the college’s new clinical rotation, three core classes will include lectures on shelter medicine topics, such as the veterinarian’s role in animal sheltering, infectious disease epidemiology in shelters, and strategies for pet population control.

Veterinary students at Auburn can apply for Maddie’s Summer Fellowships to research shelter medicine topics or choose from shelter medicine electives, such as animal behavior or issues surrounding feral cats. Maddie’s Fund will also help Auburn offer postgraduate resident training, non-lethal shelter medicine research, and continuing education for private practitioners.

www.auburn.edu/commons
Enrollments in American graduate schools, where much groundbreaking research takes place, are falling because of student visa restrictions associated with the Patriot Act. Asian and Indian scientists, educated in the U.S., are returning home to teach at their native universities, improving their quality and making them more competitive with U.S. schools.

Here at Auburn, a young, energetic African-American professor has ideas that might help solve all of these problems. Juan Gilbert is an assistant professor of software engineering at Auburn. He is the linchpin of an AU computer engineering faculty that has the largest percentage of African-American Ph.D. professors of any in the U.S. and is attracting more minority graduate students in computer science than any school in the U.S.

Auburn has almost 10 percent of the nation’s 32 black Ph.D. computer science faculty — three of 32 — and more than five percent — eight of 150 — of the nation’s African-American computer science Ph.D. students.

What’s more, Gilbert has developed a model aimed at attracting more women and minority Ph.D. students into science and engineering fields. He has received a $750,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to further develop the model at Auburn and, after it’s streamlined, put it in place at Virginia Tech, too.

Throughout this process, students from the University of Florida will study the model from the perspectives of social scientists. Gilbert believes that his model could hold the key to more highly trained American scientists and engineers. He believes that he can fill, with women and minorities, the grad school slots left vacant by the decline in foreign students. “This is serious. Our technological advantage is at stake,” Gilbert said. “If international enrollments continue to drop, who will be our engineers? White males can’t fill the gaps. Women and minorities are the solution.”

And he believes diversity offers particular advantages. “If all of our technology is created by the same people, then our solutions will be limited and they will only serve those people. Diversity is the key,” Gilbert said. “Diverse backgrounds yield diverse minds, which yield diverse solutions.”

Powell Keeps Spirit Alive Through Music, Teaching

With a deep passion for music, for teaching and for historical tradition and preservation, an associate professor of voice in AU’s Department of Music is blending this trio of interests into a multimedia package unlike others found in the classroom.

Rosephanye Dunn Powell calls the project Spiritual Renaissance. Her objective is to foster an appreciation for the traditional African-American spiritual among the general public, especially among young African-Americans.

“I use the term renaissance as it relates to rebirth,” Powell says, adding that the traditional spiritual is quickly becoming another casualty among the lost cultural arts and artifacts.

“I want to get this music back into the schools and churches to keep it alive,” she says.

Unlike European music that serves primarily as entertainment, African music, of which the spiritual is an outgrowth, functions in and accompanies every aspect of African society, Powell said.

Musical traditions are handed down from one generation to the next, and people simply know from tradition what to sing or play for daily activities and special events.

Spirituals and their secular counterpart, work songs, became the mechanism for expression during periods of struggle and difficulty, Powell added. Spirituals continued to prevail in importance through the civil rights movement, but began to lose their societal impact by the early 1970s. This, according to Powell, has prevented almost an entire generation from experiencing the spiritual.

(Powell, continued on page 6)
Auburn Participating in ‘War On Hunger’ Campaign

The World Food Programme, the largest humanitarian agency in the world, has selected Auburn University as its lead partner to establish a comprehensive model for a student-led “War on Hunger” campaign. The Rome-based United Nations organization assists 80 million people annually through feeding programs, reforestation projects, and other infrastructure development initiatives in more than 80 countries worldwide. By targeting a student population, the WFP is attempting to educate the next generation about global hunger and the poverty associated with it.

The Committee of 19, an AU student leadership group, kicked off a two-year campaign in late August with a “hunger banquet” to illustrate the hardship faced by more than 800 million hungry people globally. The goal of the “banquet” was for participants to experience how food and other resources needed for survival are inequitably distributed around the world. Consistent with global income patterns, 55 percent were fed a meager tortilla; 30 percent ate beans and rice; and 15 percent were served an ample three-course dinner.

Auburn’s Committee of 19 takes its name from a World Food Programme request that donors contribute 19 cents a day — $34 per year — to help feed a hungry child in any of the world’s poorest nations. This group represents members from every school, college and major student organization on campus. Its mission is to increase hunger awareness, highlight hunger-related academic initiatives, advocate for hunger relief and participate in hunger fundraising activities. The Committee of 19 will organize events throughout the year to call attention to the millions of people at home and abroad who suffer from chronic hunger and malnutrition.

AU Professor Teaches, Learns From Middle Eastern Educators

An AU faculty member recently spent a week in Spain leading educators from the Middle East and North Africa in an examination of the challenges they face in that volatile region.

Paul Starr, a professor of sociology in AU’s College of Liberal Arts, organized and taught classes in “Navigating Organizations” for approximately 25 secondary education leaders from countries along the southern and eastern Mediterranean as part of an Education Leadership Institute of the University of the Middle East Project. He also assisted other internationally prominent educators in teaching related subjects.

The University of the Middle East Project is a Boston-based non-profit, independent organization that brings together educators and policy makers from the Middle East and North Africa in a non-political environment for study of problems confronting their region.

Starr, who has taught six years at three universities in the Middle East during a 35-year career, organized and taught sessions in Spain for the education leaders, who must navigate stringent bureaucratic oversight from powerful government officials in their home countries. Drawing upon his background in sociology, he organized classes to help the Arab, Israeli and Palestinian educators operate effectively in governmental power structures that could inhibit their educational efforts.

“These were all very dedicated, highly accomplished individuals who were looking for ways to improve education within systems that exercise a great deal more control than we face in this country,” said Starr, who has been an AU faculty member since 1975.

Starr noted that political instability poses problems for educators in some countries along the eastern and southern Mediterranean, and economic problems often complicate efforts to provide quality education in several countries. However, he said, conflicts between nations or religions never interfered with the working relationships among the institute’s students.

Starr taught at American University in Beirut and Cairo in the 1970s and at Zayed University in the United Arab Emirates in 2000-01 and has been a Pew Faculty Fellow in International Affairs at Harvard. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of California at Santa Barbara and conducted post-doctoral studies at Harvard, the University of California at Berkeley, Oxford and Sussex University.

Alumni Association seeks teaching-award nominees

The Auburn Alumni Association is seeking nominations for its Undergraduate Teaching Excellence Awards.

To nominate a faculty member or support a nomination, send a letter explaining how that person is an exceptional teacher. In the letter, discuss the nominee’s quality of teaching, knowledge of his or her field, interest in and availability to students, influence within Auburn’s academic community and influence on your educational experience.

For more information on submitting nominations, contact Elizabeth Peel at 844-1146. The nomination deadline is Nov. 30.
The center’s design and landscape provides for the programmatic functions of a 21st century research and teaching facility while still evoking the traditional architecture and green spaces of the Auburn campus. Arched passages lining the center’s ground floors lead to open-air courtyards with stairs descending into a spacious lawn—a new campus destination for student congregation and study.

The vision of the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering is to position itself to join the nation’s top 20 engineering institutions by 2008 and the top 10 by 2014. Enhancements of Auburn’s teaching and laboratory facilities such as those of the Transportation Technology Center will help us attract and retain outstanding faculty and students and provide a quality education for the engineers of tomorrow.

An artist’s rendering of the Transportation Technology Center depicts arched passages that lead to open-air courtyards, evoking a sense of the traditional architecture and green spaces of Auburn University and creating a place where students can meet.

White Named Interim Education Dean

Bonnie J. White, Humana-Germany-Sherman Distinguished Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Teaching, has been named interim dean of the AU College of Education.

White replaces Fran Kochan, who has served as interim dean since July 2001 and will return to a faculty position within the college.

AU Provost Thomas Hanley said a committee has been formed to search for a permanent dean in the College of Education and will meet this month.

White came to Auburn in 1976 as an instructor in what was formerly known as the Department of Vocational and Adult Education, which she later also served as chair. Upon completion of her doctoral work at the University of Tennessee in 1979, she was made an associate professor.

White was named Humana-Germany-Sherman Distinguished Professor in 2002. White is a member of the U.S. chapter of the International Society for Business Education, which she served as president in 2003-04, and the National Business Education Association, which she has served as a member of the executive board and the strategic planning and membership committees. The author or co-author of more than 60 publications related to research and best practices in education, White is the co-author of “The Office: Procedures and Technology,” a textbook now in its fifth edition. She has received two awards for textbook excellence.

Two departments in the College of Sciences and Mathematics have new names this semester.

The college’s Department of Chemistry has been renamed the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, and the Department of Mathematics has merged with the Department of Discrete and Statistical Sciences to form the Department of Mathematics and Statistics.

The name changes, which were approved by the Board of Trustees last spring, were in response to changes in the disciplines, said Sciences and Mathematics Dean Stewart Schneller.

“Chemistry and mathematics have both been traditional disciplines for a number of years, but the disciplines have transformed as times have changed, as the needs of students have changed and as research has changed,” Schneller said.

With advances in computing and other technologies offering new opportunities in research and scholarship, biochemistry and discrete and statistical sciences have emerged as well-defined academic disciplines.

While biochemistry developed alongside chemistry in the same department at Auburn, AU spun off the disciplines that became discrete and statistical sciences from mathematics in the mid-1980s. The merger brings those disciplines back together after nearly two decades.

The heads of those departments said the name changes give the academic units a clearer identity.
In a few years, people all over the world will have a single source for everything they may ever want to know about Alabama. That source will be the online Encyclopedia of Alabama, which faculty at Auburn University are assembling.

Still in an early stage of development, the Encyclopedia of Alabama is a major undertaking for scholars in virtually all subjects that describe Alabama, its history, politics, culture, literature, natural environment and unique characteristics, says Jeff Jakeman, the encyclopedia’s managing editor.

The online encyclopedia is scheduled for launch in 2007 or 2008, depending on financing and logistics, Jakeman said. A partnership of the Department of History in Auburn’s College of Liberal Arts and the Alabama Humanities Foundation, the project will eventually involve dozens of scholars from public and private agencies, foundations and universities.

The editorial staff from AU’s Department of History includes Jakeman, Editor-in-Chief Wayne Flynt and Associate Editor Steve Murray. They are coordinating technology and content plans with faculty and staff in several other offices across campus, including Information Technology, AU Libraries and the Truman Pierce Institute in the College of Education.

Bob Stewart, executive director of the Alabama Humanities Foundation, is coordinating efforts to raise funds during the developmental stage and for long-term maintenance.

“The Alabama Humanities Foundation is very excited to be working in partnership with Auburn University to develop an online encyclopedia for the citizens and students of Alabama, not to mention people from across the United States and around the world who are interested in our history and culture,” said Stewart.

Historians at Auburn and other universities are contributing material, but the encyclopedia is not limited to historical topics, Jakeman said. “We are looking at literature, popular culture, sports, entertainment and other areas that help define Alabama,” he said. “This will be an authoritative reference work that will be very helpful to scholars, government, businesses and anyone who has an interest in the history and culture of Alabama.”

Stewart added, “The Encyclopedia of Alabama represents an unprecedented collaborative opportunity for scholars, citizens, and educational institutions from across the state to make this resource a reality. The humanities belong to all Alabamians, and the encyclopedia will tell all our stories for generations to come.”

Additional partners in the project include the University of Alabama Press, the Alabama Department of Archives and History, the Alabama State Department of Economic and Community Affairs, the Alabama State Council on the Arts, and Alabama Public Television.

Powell

(Continued from page 4)

“Many of today’s African-American adults and young people simply have had no exposure to this music and the traditional history that it contains,” Powell says. “They don’t know about the journey that has brought them to the present, and that it is a duty for this history to be passed on to future generations.”

To reach a youth culture, the message must be presented as a contemporary one, Powell says. To achieve that objective, she aligns traditional melodies with contemporary instrumentation and background. To listeners, her classically trained but soulful soprano voice weaves the lyrics into a musical tapestry that is unmistakably influenced by traditional African modes and rhythms, jazz, rhythm and blues.
It’s Twilight Time
This early evening scene of Samford Hall is among images of Auburn in “Twilight on the Plains,” the 2005 AU calendar produced by AU’s Office of Communications and Marketing and Photographic Services. The photographs were taken by Jeff Etheridge and Trice Megginson. The calendars are on sale locally at Photo Services in the L Building, the AU Bookstore in Haley Center, Anders and J&M bookstores and Tiger Rags. The calendar can also be purchased online at auphoto@auburn.edu or by calling 334/844-4560.

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