

**AUBURN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM
STRATEGIC PLAN
June 2008**

I. INTRODUCTION

This strategic plan is an important milestone for Auburn University in several respects. It is the first plan produced by the University in more than a decade - meaning also that it is our first strategic plan of the 21st century. It is our first plan to adopt a system-wide perspective that encompasses AU's campuses at Auburn and Montgomery. It is also our first plan created under a new generation of leadership - Dr. Jay Gogue, the newly-installed 18th president of Auburn University, and Dr. John Veres, the fifth chancellor of Auburn University Montgomery, appointed in 2006.

Most importantly, this document is the product of a participative effort across the University community and the broader Auburn Family that is unprecedented in its scope. During the first year of his presidency, Dr. Gogue hosted campus-based discussions for input into the plan, and, along with Auburn University trustees, expanded upon those discussions by holding listening sessions across Alabama. (This process is described more extensively in Chapter II). Hundreds of people - students, faculty, alumni, staff, trustees, and others - contributed ideas and engaged in vigorous discussion of the opportunities and challenges faced by the University.

The resulting document begins to define the Auburn University System in the first decades of the 21st century. It embodies a shared commitment to elevate Auburn University in realizing its potential and fulfilling its historic commitment of service to the state, region, and nation. The plan recommits the University to its historic land-grant mission of instruction, research, and outreach. Implementing the actions detailed in this document will further improve the quality of Auburn's programs and, as a result, enhance the University's reputation.

This plan builds upon Auburn's many strengths, among which we note the following examples:

- Due to the exceptional dedication and generosity of the Auburn Family, the recently-completed "It Begins at Auburn" capital campaign far exceeded its goals.
- Through master planning and an ambitious, multi-year building program, beautiful new campuses are taking shape at both Auburn and Montgomery.
- Daily, we see more evidence of Alabama's increasing role in the global economy and of Auburn's increasing importance in that role, including through the continuing implementation of the 2006 Strategic Diversity Plan that positions Auburn and the students it prepares for a multicultural future.
- AU is among a small and distinctive group of institutions designated as a land, sea, and space grant university.

- AU has achieved a top 50 ranking among public institutions for 15 consecutive years.
- Ratings from junior faculty place AU in the top four institutions in a Harvard-based national survey of best workplaces.
- Students give AU high marks for a supportive campus environment and demonstrate significant gains in learning as measured by national performance assessments.
- AU is committed to accountability as exemplified by its early participation in national assessments to measure its success and that of its students.
- Ninety-four percent of graduates surveyed say if they had the opportunity to choose again, they would attend AU.
- The extraordinary loyalty and cohesiveness of the Auburn Family are a source of strength and differentiation for the University. Recent graduates and older alumni are equally enthusiastic about their education and Auburn experience - they share the Auburn Spirit, embodied in the Auburn Creed, which they learned from their first days on campus.

Woven through this plan are other important attributes that will differentiate Auburn, help us increase our impact, and enhance our reputation. First, there is a strong commitment to increasing the value we deliver to students. Second, we embrace global engagement, and we are expanding our commitments and activities in this area. Third, we recognize the importance of sustainability as crucial for this century, and we are integrating this theme into our work. Finally, we are renewing and intensifying the University's historic spirit of service, a commitment that contributes tens of thousands of hours each year toward bettering the lives of those who live in our state.

Six strategic priorities form the backbone of our strategic plan. The first three reflect Auburn University's enduring commitment to our land-grant mission elements of instruction, research, and extension. The last three deal with imperatives for our future. The priorities are:

- Elevating **academics** and enriching the undergraduate experience
- Building the foundation for a stronger and larger **research** enterprise
- Redesigning **extension and outreach** for greater impact
- Supporting, developing, and strengthening our **people**
- Committing to **continuous improvement**
- Building the **financial resources** needed to advance

These priorities and initiatives associated with each are discussed in Chapter III.

Chapter IV contains descriptions of the action steps required to execute the initiatives and achieve the strategic priorities. Chapter V is an implementation plan that includes more detail such as timelines and

responsibility assignments.

We envision this plan as a living, fluid document. The president will make regular progress reports to Auburn trustees, and we will engage in an annual process of plan review and updating, as discussed in Chapter VI.

This plan explicitly recognizes the many challenges that Auburn University must address. Some of these are common across higher education, and some are specific to our institution. But as the process that has led us to this point illustrates, the Auburn Family accepts these challenges and, in the practical and straightforward spirit of the Auburn Creed, believes that there is untapped potential to be realized and a greater destiny to be fulfilled. Here, we demonstrate our collective will to create a future Auburn even more special than the one we know today.

II. THE STRATEGIC-PLANNING PROCESS

In parallel with planning a presidential search, the Auburn University Board of Trustees and President Ed Richardson initiated foundational work in strategic planning in 2004. Following a period of extensive institutional self-assessment, the management-consulting firm Messina & Graham was retained to work with Auburn and Auburn Montgomery leadership to prepare a fact base and assessment of the University's situation and prospects.

This activity resulted in several interim reports, all of which are available on the University's strategic planning Web site. A "Profile of the Environment," prepared in July 2006, provides a review of global trends and the forces affecting the higher education environment, identifying their implications for Auburn.

The October 2006 "Situation Assessment" for the Auburn and Montgomery campuses focuses primarily on the instruction mission element. It also contains summary information on funded research at Auburn and finances. Importantly, this draft document includes additional assessments of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats ("SWOT" analyses) for both campuses.

To further develop the review of instruction, a May 2007 "Supplement to the Situation Assessment" deals more specifically with graduate programs and also provides an overview of Auburn faculty.

At the guidance of the board and Dr. Richardson, Messina & Graham in 2007 engaged in continuing rounds of conversations with members of the AU community to review the draft information contained in these documents and receive their ideas and suggestions. In addition to ongoing discussions with trustees, this dialogue included the deans, department heads, senior faculty, university senate, and administrators.

Upon his arrival in July 2007, Dr. Gogue led the effort to broaden and deepen these conversations. These extended listening activities included meetings between Dr. Gogue and campus leaders, faculty,

county extension employees, city and state officials, donors, alumni, state residents, legislators, and others. The program also included focus groups of constituents, held in several locations across the state and led by AU faculty, as well as town-hall-style meetings on the campuses and in other venues. As the process continued, two internet surveys were conducted, generating a large number of responses from all constituents. In February 2008, an initial draft was presented to the Board of Trustees and posted on the Web.

The process that brought us to this point has itself proven beneficial beyond the strategic plan it produced. Healthy and extensive self-scrutiny has unified University stakeholders behind the shared objective of a stronger and better Auburn.

III. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR THE AUBURN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Six strategic priorities form the backbone of our strategic plan. The first three reflect Auburn University's historic, enduring commitment to the mission elements of instruction, research, and extension. The last three deal with imperatives for our future. The priorities are:

- Elevating **academics** and enriching the undergraduate experience
- Building the foundation for a stronger and larger **research** enterprise
- Redesigning **extension and outreach** for greater impact
- Supporting, developing, and strengthening our **people**
- Committing to **continuous improvement**
- Building the **financial resources** needed to advance

Pursuing these priorities will further strengthen our results as measured by several important metrics of the University's performance and effectiveness.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: ELEVATING ACADEMICS

The Auburn University System will elevate undergraduate education and enrich the undergraduate experience.

Undergraduate education is the core activity of the Auburn University System, requiring the largest fraction of the University's funding. Auburn has much strength in this mission element - including its solid reputation, the strongly positive experience reported by nearly all graduates, the supportive environment cited by students, and its many outstanding programs.

A longstanding strength of Auburn University is the quality of our undergraduate education. Among other indicators is the response to the following question given to AU graduates five years after their graduation:

"If you could start over, would you still go to AU?"

Responses show that 94 percent of Auburn graduates would make the same decision again, far surpassing the national average. Auburn's remarkable results point to both a strong undergraduate study program and a valuable out-of-class experience.

Even so, our situation assessment and ongoing discussions within the University community highlight the opportunity to elevate and enrich the Auburn undergraduate experience. Better serving our students and the state requires continuously raising AU's expectations and standards. By many accepted measures, AU's performance, while good, is not exceptional, indicating substantial opportunities for improvement. As we think of the world that our graduates will face, we want to ensure they have the appropriate skill sets and abilities that will make them successful throughout their careers during the next 40 years and longer. Our dedication to this priority must span the decades as it reaffirms the importance of undergraduate education to the institutional mission that was articulated in the 1997 Recommendations of the Twenty-First Century Commission.

The broadly-shared commitment to this priority encourages faculty, administrators, students, alumni, and other constituencies to make the sustained effort required to take Auburn to a higher level. It is supported by several initiatives that together represent a coherent approach for making significant progress. The initiatives are listed below; the associated action steps are described in Chapter IV. The faculty component of elevating academics is dealt with as a separate strategic priority whose associated initiatives are presented later in this chapter.

- **Increase selectivity in the admissions process.** Elevating academics requires becoming more selective in admissions to the University. Auburn will increase the value of its degrees, attract strong faculty, improve its position in national rankings, and enhance its reputation by attracting Alabama's brightest students through careful enrollment management.
- **Strengthen learning and teaching.** Improving educational outcomes is appropriately becoming an area of greater emphasis for all institutions. Global competitive forces serve to reinforce this trend. Auburn will build on our existing work that measures learning outcomes, strengthens teaching effectiveness, and enhances diversity. These efforts will include enhancing courses to ensure, for example, that students engage in problem-solving and critical writing and gain an understanding of other cultures, the global forces making this an interdependent world, and the growing sustainability challenge. Courses will also take advantage of students' readiness as digital learners to absorb computer-delivered content, and they will incorporate service and collaborative learning. A greatly invigorated Honors College will enrich learning opportunities for our academically strongest students.
- **Raise Auburn's position in academic rankings.** Auburn will improve its performance on important dimensions - such as student retention, graduation rates, class size, and alumni giving - that are considered in national rankings. A growing reputation for equipping our students with higher-order skills and readiness for global challenges will also positively impact our rankings.

- **Implement new projects.** The University will pursue new projects in the areas of sustainability, wellness, and health sciences.
- **Strengthen the academic organization structure and management processes.** Refining Auburn's academic organization and management approaches will enable it to more effectively and efficiently meet the needs of students and faculty and will also serve to improve planning.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: BUILDING THE RESEARCH-ENTERPRISE FOUNDATION

The Auburn University System values the research, scholarship, and creative endeavors of our faculty and will build the foundation for a stronger and larger research enterprise.

Research is a traditional mission element of Auburn. It helps attract strong faculty, enhances the University's reputation, and contributes significantly to the state's economy. While research activities have typically been performed by graduate students under the guidance of research-oriented faculty, undergraduate students are increasingly able to participate in research, thus enriching their experience.

Through the decades, Auburn has developed strengths in selected research disciplines. Still, research is expensive, invariably requiring supplemental funding beyond the revenue generated through research grants. Given its position and resources today, Auburn will aspire during this planning horizon to build the foundation for future competitiveness as a research university.

Building selectively on its strengths, capitalizing on its natural advantages, and putting in place a strong management foundation will enable Auburn to achieve near-term growth in research and the number of its graduate students. This approach will also help the University to identify longer-term opportunities to expand the scope of its research enterprise.

Three initiatives support this strategic priority:

- **Build on existing strengths and natural competitive advantages.** Auburn has many natural advantages and strengths in competing for research funding. Building from existing strengths will enable faster progress through focusing and leveraging scarce resources.
- **Expand graduate programs.** Graduate students are essential for research efforts, and they leverage faculty in many ways. Overall, Auburn has relatively fewer graduate students than many peer institutions engaged in research. Increasing the number of graduate students will allow Auburn to better develop its research programs in selected areas. We expect over time that more graduate students will be supported by sponsored programs.
- **Strengthen research administration and management.** Auburn's management infrastructure must be improved to enable the University to realize significant gains in its research activities. Revisions in structure, organization, and practices will improve Auburn's effectiveness in conducting research and its competitiveness in securing external funding. For example, we will

build relationships with granting agency staff and create a research foundation.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: EXPANDING EXTENSION AND OUTREACH IMPACT

The Auburn University System will expand the impact of the University's extension and outreach activities to better serve our communities and the state.

Auburn's service to the state has involved substantial engagement beyond the campus, including hands-on assistance to communities. The needs for such valuable work remain great. New technologies and delivery methods make it possible for Auburn to expand its impact across Alabama.

Three initiatives support this strategic priority:

- **Redesign and redefine extension and outreach programs, leveraging new technologies for greater impact.** Extension and outreach programs will continue to be reviewed, revised, and modernized, employing new delivery systems and adapting to changes in demographics and lifestyles.
- **Increase Auburn's involvement in developing communities and improving their schools (K-16).** Serving communities and schools builds on Auburn's strengths to make a high-impact difference in these important areas of need in Alabama.
- **Continue to expand Auburn's service to state government.** Auburn has a proven track record of providing value-added services to Alabama state government. Building on its strong capabilities at the Montgomery campus, Auburn will identify opportunities to broaden and elevate its government-service activities.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: DEVELOPING OUR PEOPLE

Recognizing that faculty and staff are central to the life of the University, the Auburn University System will redouble its efforts to support, develop and strengthen our people.

Committed faculty and staff have always been a key element of the Auburn experience. It is vital for the University to foster an environment that attracts and retains superior faculty and staff and supports their professional development.

Four initiatives support this strategic priority:

- **Strengthening faculty recruiting and retention.** We will take steps to ensure that we are appropriately supporting faculty in their teaching, research, and other endeavors. We will also confirm that we have the proper approaches in place to continue to recruit a diverse and high-quality faculty who will make significant long-term contributions to the Auburn experience and

help us carry out our strategic directives.

- **Enhancing faculty professional development.** Ongoing professional development is a shared responsibility of the faculty member and the University. Auburn will implement several proven approaches to enrich professional-development opportunities for our faculty. As we increase calls on faculty to design innovative teaching approaches and incorporate new material on global and sustainability issues into appropriate courses, we must provide them with best-practice tools, content, and experiences.
- **Better develop University staff to enable them to fulfill their potential, raise their productivity, and make a greater contribution.** Auburn benefits daily from the collective activities of our dedicated and committed staff. Further developing our staff and building their capabilities is a win-win for each individual and Auburn, and we will accelerate our activities in this area.
- **Reinforcing faculty and staff recognition and rewards.** The University will acknowledge the valuable contributions of our employees through appropriate recognition and reward programs.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5: COMMITTING TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Auburn University System will make a commitment to continuous improvement in strengthening our management approaches and increasing our efficiency.

Implementing the strategic priorities in undergraduate education, research, extension, and employee development will be expensive. Efficiency gains will be both an important source of funds and a vital demonstration to all constituencies of the University's good stewardship.

As an institution devoted to learning, Auburn must constantly strive to improve itself. Making better use of scarce resources is an evergreen management challenge that is made even more important by our deepening commitment to sustainability. This priority will steadily increase in importance as the proportion of Auburn's funding provided by the State of Alabama continues to decline.

The following initiatives support this strategic priority:

- **Strengthen Auburn's management approaches and processes.** To improve both effectiveness and efficiency, we will initiate a comprehensive review of important management and security policies and procedures and revise as necessary.
- **Increase the efficiency of the University's operations.** Better leveraging of information technology and facilities-management approaches has the potential to considerably increase our operational efficiency. Energy efficiency, waste reduction, and systems approaches to campus activities will facilitate managing operational cost and achieving sustainability.

- **Generate new auxiliary sources of income.** We will build on our unique competencies and attributes to produce additional revenue streams that benefit the University.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6: BUILDING FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The Auburn University System will continue to dramatically expand our endowment, annual fund, and gifts to the University to support academic excellence and increased scholarships.

Pursuing the strategic priorities presented earlier in this chapter will require significant new resources that can come only from private investments. Auburn is still substantially under-resourced for its scale and relative to its peers, even after accounting for the gains made during the recently-completed capital campaign and the anticipated benefits of the continuous-improvement initiatives described in Strategic Priority 5. Further, state funding as a percentage of Auburn's overall budget will continue to decline, as it has for more than two decades. Thus, meeting the challenges and opportunities described in this plan will require aggressively expanding the financial resources of Auburn University.

This strategic priority is supported by three important initiatives:

- **Implement a new capital campaign.** Planning for a new, larger capital campaign will begin immediately. The resulting funding will be essential for making significant progress on our strategic priorities.
- **Establish a new Auburn tradition of annual giving.** The "It Begins At Auburn" campaign underscored anew the tremendous esteem of the Auburn Family for its University as well as its willingness to contribute toward its long-term success. We will work to sustain and increase the financial commitment of the Auburn Family to improve the University and help ensure an even more special Auburn experience for its future generations.

IV. ACTION STEPS

This chapter contains descriptions of the action steps associated with each of the six strategic priorities and accompanying initiatives. Implementation details follow in Chapter V.

Two initial observations will help provide appropriate context for actions discussed here, which are considered significant in enabling the University to make progress on the strategic priorities. First, while many of these actions can be immediately carried into implementation, in several cases additional evaluation and planning will be required before implementation. In such instances, the additional study activity is described.

Second, in the extensive analyses and discussions conducted as part of this planning process, numerous ideas of benefit to the University surfaced. Some of these were operational improvements that would be right to undertake even in the absence of major strategic advances and, thus, may not be included in this

plan.

In the remainder of this chapter, each strategic priority is recapitulated along with its associated initiatives and action steps.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: ELEVATING ACADEMICS

The Auburn University System will elevate undergraduate education and enrich the undergraduate experience. Initiative 1: Increase selectivity in the admissions process

Enrollment Management

While the demand for an Auburn education continues to grow, our capacity for large increases in on-campus student enrollment is approaching its limits. This situation offers Auburn an opportunity to increase the academic quality of its entering freshman class as we remain true to our land-grant heritage.

We will continue to raise the standards for incoming freshmen, as guided by the Board of Trustees, through ongoing enrollment-management activities. The results of our efforts to date are already apparent in the increased levels of academic achievement among our freshman class and applicant pool.

Students applying to the Auburn campus who are not admitted may be offered places in a pilot program taught by Auburn Montgomery faculty on the Auburn or Montgomery campuses.

Honors College

The Honors College at Auburn is growing and, as it does so, enriching the intellectual life of the campus and providing exciting new opportunities for our students. We will perform a review of our traditional Honors College model and commit more resources to it with the objective of significantly improving its value to Auburn students. Among the new ideas we will consider are those relating to the pervasive themes of global engagement, sustainability, and service.

Redesigning the organization structure will also be a component of our review. We anticipate elevating the position of the Director of the Honors College to the rank of Dean.

Additional tactical improvements that support our drive toward greater selectivity include attracting outstanding students from in- and out-of-state through more effectively communicating the attributes of AU's outstanding programs and further engaging alumni participation in high-school recognition programs, a step that has been endorsed by the Auburn Alumni Association.

Initiative 2: Strengthen learning and teaching

Teaching and learning are at the heart of the Auburn experience. We need to review our approaches and content, redesigning them to meet new challenges. For example, the global economic competition Auburn students will face upon graduation will be far more demanding than that encountered by previous generations. Likewise, the strains on the Earth's resources they will experience will be unprecedented.

A specially-appointed task force on each campus will review the implications of these and other challenges and will recommend new requirements or initiatives to ensure that our students will build the skill sets needed for their careers. Such a review will encompass some or all of the following ideas and programs:

General Education

Both campuses will conduct a review of general education requirements and novel general education programs at peer institutions. While it is not imperative that we change our requirements, it is important to understand what other universities value in their general-education approaches. In the review, we will also consider opportunities for students to study and engage in the theory and practice of American democracy.

Enhanced Writing Center/Writing Initiative

Employers indicate that while writing is one of the most valued skills, more than 80 percent of their employees need writing help and improvement. Auburn will fully organize and staff a Writing Center to better prepare AU students to meet this need.

While the work of the Writing Initiative Task Force is ongoing, some of the basic functions and activities of the Writing Center may include the following:

- a. All entering freshmen will be evaluated on their writing skills during the admissions process. Either the ACT writing sample or a placement exam based on writing skills will be used for this review.
- b. Course selection and remediation plans will be developed for any entering student who does not have appropriate writing skills.
- c. Basic writing or composition courses in the lower division (freshman and sophomore levels) will be conducted in small classes, preferably of 20 students or less. The concept is that the small classes will allow students greater opportunities to have more writing assignments and stronger feedback.

- d. At the upper division (junior and senior levels), three writing intensive courses will be required within each major. Samples of each student's work will be reviewed and evaluated by the Center. Writing intensive courses will be approved by the provost at Auburn or vice chancellor at Auburn Montgomery. The logic of working on writing skills at the upper-division level is that students need continuing practice to retain those skills learned early in their college career and need experience in writing in their specific disciplines.

International Skills

Demonstrating international skills may take a variety of forms - including, for example:

- a. Earning eight credit-hours of language training
- b. Passing the U.S. State Department foreign language or equivalency test at the basic level
- c. Engaging in a study abroad program approved by the Office of International Education
- d. Exceptions to these representative requirements may be determined by the provost (Auburn) or the vice chancellor (Montgomery), who may add other experiences and/or combinations that would satisfy the concept of international skills or proficiencies.

The Auburn University Student Government Association (SGA) endorsed this step through passage of a resolution in the Student Senate.

Study Abroad

Approximately 5 percent of our students currently engage in study abroad. Our goal is that 25 percent of our students at the Auburn campus and 10 percent at the Montgomery campus receive such experience.

Learning Community or Service Learning

Data suggests that students who live on campus and are engaged in student activities are more likely to graduate and will complete their degrees at a faster pace. When the new residence halls on the Auburn campus are completed and a learning community is established, we will expect either participation in the learning community environment or participation in service learning, such as through the Cooperative Extension System or in the local community. The standards for both will be determined by the Provost's Office.

Teaching Excellence

All new tenure-track faculty with teaching assignments on the Auburn campus will be expected to participate in the offerings of the Biggio Center for Teaching Excellence. Faculty with classroom teaching evaluations below departmental averages (or those who have deficiencies based on peer review) will be expected to work with the Center to develop teaching-improvement plans. Auburn Montgomery will design and implement an equivalent professional development program to foster teaching excellence.

We will ensure that our teaching approaches are student-centered, reflecting best-practice techniques for addressing the varied ways in which students learn. We will also ensure that the role of the instructor at Auburn keeps up with the pace set by leading peer institutions. As part of this ongoing effort, we will benchmark the ways in which other nationally-ranked public universities deploy electronic media and other forms of information and communication technology to enhance learning. Our goal for IT-enabled teaching will be to ensure that Auburn is a smart adopter, investing in technology that is proven and cost-effective for pedagogy at a land-grant university and training faculty and students so that it is put to productive use.

Learning Assessment

We will continue our energetic commitment to accountability through implementation of national learning-assessment instruments and to specific and ambitious improvement on the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) and other outcome-based measures.

We will also enhance teaching and learning using evidence-based techniques. More specifically, we will further develop our ability to use CLA data to guide educational practice by means such as the following:

- a. Enlarging the basic cohort of students tested for CLA scores
- b. Initiating parallel studies using in-depth sampling - for example, Honors College students
- c. Training faculty to devise and score CLA-like performance tasks for teaching and assessment in their own classrooms
- d. Uncovering lines of inquiry for further study by linking CLA performance data at the student level to course-taking patterns, grades, other student-level assessments, National Survey of Student Engagement responses, or major-specific assessments

Ethnic Diversity

Auburn will maintain its strong commitment to ethnic diversity with standards to help ensure faculty, staff, and student diversity. We will continue ongoing and systematic implementation of the 2006 Diversity Strategic Plan, already published and accepted, and continue to monitor our progress. To supplement our efforts, we will evaluate possible additional programs, including a joint minority-recruitment program on both campuses, hiring additional senior-level minority faculty, and developing a Diversity Research Institute to provide leadership in diversity-related research. We have a significant new opportunity with the projected dramatic increase in the number of Hispanic high school graduates in Alabama and in neighboring states. We will develop undergraduate offerings designed to be effective for strong students from this ethnic background. In doing so, we will learn from those practices proven successful at other universities.

The Auburn University SGA endorsed this action through passage of a resolution in the Student Senate.

Student Services

The University plans to perform a comprehensive review of student services to ensure a supportive learning environment.

Additional tactical improvements that support our drive toward strengthening learning and teaching include regularly benchmarking best practices in applying new technologies, providing experience in online learning, and designing bridge opportunities for students who require additional support, especially those from rural secondary schools.

Initiative 3: Raise Auburn's position in academic rankings

Graduation Rates

Graduation rates at the Auburn campus should be in the top 25 percent of land-grant universities. Graduation rates at the Montgomery campus should increase 5 percent during the life of the strategic plan for that campus.

In striving to improve our graduation rates, we will develop and implement programs specifically targeted to student retention, beginning with freshmen.

Class Size

We will commit to specific goals for reducing class size, and we will design and implement approaches for achieving those goals.

Distinguished Visitors

Each campus expects to recruit two outstanding faculty members with national reputations and research records each year to serve as visiting distinguished professors. In addition, the campuses will develop a program that will consistently place in the classroom well-known and distinguished retired executives from various fields.

Communications and Marketing

The AU System will design and implement an integrated marketing and communications plan, including baseline research to measure effectiveness over time. The plan will promote Auburn as an institution (the Auburn brand), enhance Auburn's reputation as a top destination for students, and convey its contribution to the economic health and overall well-being of the state and region among its key constituents. In addition, we will develop and implement an annual public relations and marketing plan for specific academic programs that are nationally or regionally ranked.

Initiative 4: Implement new projects

Wellness and Sustainability Center

Students have asked for a new student activities facility and have indicated a willingness to help pay for it through fees. The concept has been endorsed by the Auburn University SGA through passage of a resolution in the Student Senate. The basic purpose of such a facility is to improve the physical and emotional health of students. Instead of the traditional student-activities building found at most universities, Auburn will consider constructing a Wellness and Sustainability Center. The Center would address human health both from an individual perspective and from the perspective of environmental health and the relationships between people and communities. The sustainability goals established by Auburn will be complementary to the focus of the Wellness and Sustainability Center.

Initiative 5: Strengthen the academic organization structure and management processes

Auburn - Auburn Montgomery Collaboration

The Auburn and Montgomery campuses currently collaborate on a small number of joint degree programs, such as the master's in nursing and the doctorate in public policy. We will improve joint academic collaboration in selected other majors and degrees. A committee composed of deans, department heads, and faculty leaders from both campuses will offer recommendations on those programs that should be considered. In addition, we are piloting an admissions process that allows interested students whose Auburn

admission has been deferred to enroll at the Montgomery campus and matriculate in Auburn.

Leadership Transitions

We will develop a five-year plan for anticipated leadership transitions, including senior administrators, deans, and others.

Additional tactical improvements relating to the academic organization and processes include improving the availability of selected course offerings, as endorsed by the Auburn SGA, and continuing to refine approaches to post-tenure review.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: BUILDING THE RESEARCH-ENTERPRISE FOUNDATION

The Auburn University System values the research, scholarship, and creative endeavors of our faculty and will build the foundation for a stronger and larger research enterprise.

Initiative 1: Build on existing strengths and natural competitive advantages

Unique Auburn Capabilities

We will capitalize on and leverage unique Auburn capabilities.

Auburn has many component disciplines that address healthcare including food and nutrition, family and child development, kinesiology, nursing, pharmacy, psychology, veterinary medicine, and others. A study will be performed to assess the possible creation of a Health Science Center (which would not include a medical school) to develop new approaches in healthcare delivery.

Recognized Auburn Programs

Building on the increasing recognition of Auburn programs, such as Fisheries and Allied Aquacultures and bioenergy technology research and development, we expect to attract additional funding.

Additional tactical improvements related to building on existing research strengths include reaffirming our commitment to technology transfer and continuing to support the development of the research park.

Initiative 2: Expand graduate programs

Graduate Students The Auburn campus will recommit to enrolling 5,000 graduate

students on campus or through distance learning. The Montgomery campus will set a goal of enrolling 800 graduate students. The Auburn campus will maintain stipends for graduate teaching and research assistants, in general, at national norms. The Montgomery campus will maintain stipends, in general, at regional norms. We will also continue to increase health benefits for graduate students to at least the SREB median.

In addition, the Auburn and Montgomery campuses should increase the number of international graduate students by 50 percent.

Distance Education

While the capacity to greatly expand the number of students on the Auburn campus is limited, we will examine specific disciplines that may present opportunities for distance education. Our goal is to offer 20 such graduate degree programs.

Graduate Programs

We expect to continue the systematic review and evaluation of graduate programs. The provost will charge the new dean of the Graduate School with performing a comprehensive review and situation assessment of Auburn's graduate programs in research disciplines.

Initiative 3: Strengthen research administration and management

Research Appointments

The Provost's Office will encourage the establishment of 100 joint faculty appointments to facilitate interdisciplinary research programs that can respond to new research questions and priorities.

To further engage undergraduates in research, 500 students will each receive \$1,000 for one semester to assist faculty in research.

Non-Profit Foundation

Auburn is structured such that it is a burden for faculty to respond to certain types of research opportunities. Establishing a 501(c)(3) foundation will help facilitate research activities. The foundation should be capable of performing atypical personnel actions and easing the current bureaucracy for international programs, classified research, construction, and renovation. Auburn Montgomery faculty and staff will participate in the new research foundation.

Proposal Submissions

Auburn will simplify the proposal submission process. The Vice President for Research on the Auburn campus will certify, via training and education programs, appropriate individuals at the college, school, or department level who can process proposals for submission to granting agencies. The Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs on the Montgomery campus will perform the same function for Auburn Montgomery.

Reporting and Measurement

Auburn will develop an annual report of the research, scholarship, and creative endeavors with appropriate metrics at the departmental level. The report will include agreed upon expectations (for example, a percentage increase in external research funding) for each college and school.

Research Organization

The newly-appointed vice president for research will review the research organization structure and redesign it as appropriate. In addition, the vice president will perform a detailed analysis and evaluation of the economics of funded research at Auburn.

Additional tactical actions related to strengthening research administration and management include actions such as maintaining our membership in the Association of Research Libraries.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: EXPANDING EXTENSION IMPACT

The Auburn University System will expand the impact of the University's extension and outreach activities, better serving our communities and the state.

Initiative 1: Redesign and redefine extension and outreach programs, leveraging new technologies for greater impact

Outreach and Continuing Education

The outreach and continuing education component, not including the Cooperative Extension System, needs to be reassessed. At most land-grant universities, outreach is the non-agricultural extension of the university to meet the needs of the citizens of the state and beyond. Auburn holds a similar view. Some typical activities may include a special cultural program, library-sharing with rural communities, and small business development centers.

Auburn will continue to view outreach and continuing education as engagement that provides important value-added services and extends the Auburn brand to agencies, corporations, major foundations, etc. Well-executed outreach and continuing education can greatly expand our impact as an institution.

We will perform a review of extension and outreach best practices and new ideas at leading land-grant institutions.

Cooperative Extension System Participation

AU will design a process to increase student participation in Extension projects and develop linkages with programs and departments that have not traditionally been affiliated with Extension.

Extension Employees

For Extension employees, a complete online master's degree will be developed that is appropriate for our outreach responsibilities.

Initiative 2: Increase Auburn's involvement in developing communities and improving their schools (K-16)

High-Impact Opportunities

The AU System will coordinate with the state superintendent and selected school districts to identify high-impact opportunities that match Auburn's strengths with school system needs.

English Courses

AU will provide courses in English as a Second Language (ESL) electronically via our Extension offices to better serve the growing Hispanic population in Alabama.

Initiative 3: Expand Auburn's service to state government

State Government Survey

Working together, the two campuses will survey state government customers for their ideas on potential improvements in the services that Auburn provides to them and the new challenges they face so that Auburn can begin planning its future approaches to service.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: DEVELOPING OUR PEOPLE

Recognizing that faculty and staff are central to the life of the University, the Auburn University System will redouble its efforts to support, develop and strengthen our people.

Initiative 1: Strengthening faculty recruiting and retention

Faculty Positions

We will increase the number of faculty positions for those departments that are 20 percent or more above the norm for student credit-hour production. Similarly, those departments that are less productive in credit hour terms than the norm (adjusted for sponsored research productivity) will see a lower rate of faculty replacement than others.

New Professorships

Within the next year, we will create 80 new professorships for existing faculty with exceptional merit. The salary support should be approximately \$12,500 annually.

Planning for Retirements

We will initiate planning for anticipated retirements of senior faculty and deans.

Initiative 2: Enhancing faculty professional development

Faculty Study Opportunities

Development and implementation of a faculty study policy will encourage further faculty skill development. Very few faculty members have had the opportunity for a study leave, and Auburn is atypical in this respect. Our policy should allow faculty to take one semester every seventh year at full pay or two semesters at half pay. With the large number of faculty who would be eligible based on national standards, interim policies will be developed to address the backlog over time.

Faculty Consulting

AU encourages faculty consulting and will annually recognize engaged faculty who are contributing to professional organizations, business and industry, state and federal agencies, etc.

Teaching Reviews

We are designing improved reviews of teaching, performed by faculty peers as well as students.

Faculty Study and Work Abroad

As part of our study leave program for faculty, we will design a structured, University-wide program that encourages faculty to work and study internationally.

Initiative 3: Better develop employees to enable them to fulfill their potential, raise their productivity and make a greater contribution

Online Courses

Online credit courses will be made available to employees as part of our existing policies. Any additional costs will be incurred centrally.

In addition, 50 online continuing education courses (ranging in duration from a few hours to several days) will be developed. Completion of these courses will compose a portion of the annual review process for staff.

Finally, online Spanish language training will be made available to employees at no cost.

Initiative 4: Reinforcing recognition and rewards

Faculty and Staff Salaries

The Auburn campus will maintain faculty and staff salaries, in general, at national norms based on merit. The Auburn Montgomery campus will maintain faculty salaries, in general, at regional or local norms based on merit.

Faculty Recognition

AU will design and implement a program for recognizing and rewarding faculty who demonstrate superior performance based on accepted reviews and measures. The program will devote particular recognition to faculty who make outstanding and innovative contributions within the strategic priorities of elevating academics and strengthening research.

Staff Recognition

We will develop and implement a strong staff recognition program based on ideas to make

Auburn more efficient. To ensure that this effort generates the desired results, we will designate cash awards of up to \$20,000.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5: COMMITTING TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Auburn University System will make an across-the-board commitment to continuous improvement in strengthening our management approaches and increasing our efficiency.

Initiative 1: Strengthen Auburn's management approaches and processes

Policies and Procedures Review

All universities have multiple sets of policies and procedures that have originated in various manners and at various times in the life of the institution. We will perform a comprehensive review of such existing policies and procedures at Auburn. Those policies that are necessary for compliance with federal or state laws as well as Board of Trustees policies and directives will be retained.

However, those that originated internally will be reviewed carefully for relevance. The goal is to ensure that our policies are current and add value to future operations.

Organizational Review

The president will examine the organizational structure of the University with the objective of increasing effectiveness and efficiency.

Priority Framework for Campus Facilities

As we move forward, we need to develop a priority framework that is open and transparent for new facilities, renovation, and infrastructure. The campus master plan for both campuses will be fully discussed with constituents on an annual basis, and these constituents will be afforded the opportunity for input. This discussion is important to determine the placement of specific projects in the appropriate categories listed below:

Top-level priorities:

Top-level priority projects are those that simply must be done. If no private funding is available, then Auburn must be willing to fully fund the amount. Some discussion on deviation from our standard 50 percent private investment for naming opportunities will be addressed.

Second-level priorities:

Second-level priorities are those projects that are clearly needed, but ones in which we would expect 50 percent private investment.

Third-level priorities:

Third-level priorities are those projects where an opportunity exists with the expectation that they be fully funded from external sources.

Standards for Athletics

Auburn has established a strong tradition for athletics. On the Auburn campus, we will formally adopt the following standards:

- Full compliance with NCAA rules
- Graduation success rates for student-athletes in the top 20 of land-grant colleges that participate in Division I athletics for each sport
- Financial self-sufficiency for the athletic department
- Well planned and high quality athletic events relative to ticketing, parking, traffic control, concessions, and safety
- Finish in the top 10 percent of Division I institutions in the annual NACDA (National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics) Directors' Cup standings, which measure athletic success in all sports.

On the Montgomery campus, we will pursue the following:

- Assess the desirability of moving from NAIA to NCAA Division II
- Increase graduation rates for student athletes by 5 percent
- Increase development efforts to reduce support of athletics from general University revenues

Accountability Guidelines

Auburn will define the metrics of accountability for each important constituent group. These groups include regional and specialized accreditation bodies; various state and federal bodies with responsibility for higher education; auditing bodies; and the Auburn

Family.

Campus Security

To enhance the security of campus and the safety of Auburn students, employees and resources, we will further develop our safety plans for the Auburn and Montgomery campuses and update security measures.

Initiative 2: Increase the efficiency of the University's operations

Information Technology

The System will develop a plan and cost analysis for a new information-technology facility that would, among other benefits, foster creation of a completely wireless campus.

Facilities Utilization

AU will review the utilization of facilities and develop alternative approaches that may better meet students' needs and/or reduce operating costs and energy use.

Sustainability Practices

There is rapidly growing national interest in the concept of sustainability, much greater and from broader segments of society than the environmental movement of the 1970s. Auburn will establish specific goals for sustainability based on national metrics.

We will develop and adopt "green building" or LEED guidelines for new construction and renovations.

Campus Master Plan

We will follow the protocols and footprint established by the Sasaki master plan, presenting to the Board annual updates of progress toward its implementation.

Initiative 3: Generate new auxiliary sources of revenue

Identify Sources

We will continue our efforts to identify supplementary sources of revenue based on our existing capabilities. Example opportunities include offering fee-based courses in areas of distinctive competence and high professional demand and expanding the university's

master's level distance education offerings.

As part of Auburn's commitment to continuous improvement, we will create a team of continuous improvement champions who will report to the executive vice president and will be charged with fundamentally reviewing operations improvement across the board. Achieving continuous improvement requires champions in all organizational units to promote a culture that "improvement is what AU is all about" and to spearhead a systematic process for identifying and capturing high-value improvement opportunities.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6: BUILDING FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The Auburn University System will continue to dramatically expand our endowment, annual fund, and gifts to the University to support academic excellence and increased scholarships.

Initiative 1: Implement a new capital campaign

Campaign Planning

Plans for our next capital campaign will be developed by April 2009. As part of that planning, we will perform a lessons-learned review of the recently-completed "It Begins At Auburn" campaign, identifying the reasons underlying successes as well as potential improvement opportunities.

The campaign should increase new professorships as described in other sections of this plan.

The campaign will also include a goal for a substantial increase in student scholarships. On the Auburn campus, our goal will be 7,000 students with an average scholarship of \$5,000 annually. The goal will be 200 students on the Montgomery campus. Increasing student scholarship has been endorsed by the Auburn University SGA through passage of a resolution in the Student Senate.

Finally, the campaign should include a new fundraising category for unrestricted funds, producing \$500,000 available annually to provide discretionary funds for departments, colleges and schools.

Initiative 2: Establish a new Auburn tradition of annual giving

Alumni Survey

We plan to survey alumni to better understand their perspectives and Auburn's needs. We will then develop revised communications approaches.

Peer Survey

To help advance our thinking as we build increased financial support from the Auburn Family, we will perform a comprehensive analysis of the approaches and results of peer institutions and aspirational peers.

V. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Please see attached.

VI. PROGRESS REPORTING AND ANNUAL REVISION

We are committed to achieving the previously described goals by pursuing the priorities in this plan and ensuring it remains a living document. Accordingly, we will institute a disciplined process for reporting progress and proposing annual revisions as we learn from our implementation experience and as the University's circumstances change.

At each meeting of the Board of Trustees, the president will report on salient strategic actions taken and any changes in performance on key metrics. Each priority owner (identified in Chapter V) will regularly update the president regarding significant action steps and milestones. The director of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment will report changes in performance based on key metrics to the president prior to each board meeting.

A Strategy Review Council, chaired by the provost, will be established to monitor progress, propose yearly revisions, and produce an annual report for the president and board.

To reinforce shared ownership and understanding across the entire Auburn Family, Council members will include a trustee, a deans' representative, a senior faculty member selected by the provost, and representatives of the University Senate, Auburn Alumni Association, and Student Government Association. With the advice of the chancellor, the provost will appoint representatives of the Montgomery campus. A member of the provost's office will act as lead staff person to the Council.

The Council will review a scorecard of performance against established metrics as well as steps implemented for each strategic priority. Council representatives will meet with each priority owner to fully understand progress, identify any challenges encountered in implementation, and review options for making changes to the plan.

In its report, the Council will share its findings on progress for each priority (e.g., above, at, or below expectation) and highlight particular successes. Challenges will be summarized along with recommended solutions. The Council will propose appropriate changes to actions or metrics contained in the plan. Relying on input from the Auburn community and updated information about the

University's activities and its environment, the Council will suggest new initiatives and those action steps that should be removed from the plan because of their successful completion or for other reasons.

The Council will discuss its draft report with the president six to eight weeks prior to the last board meeting of each calendar year. The president will then forward the report with his own comments and recommendations in a covering memorandum to the board approximately one month before the board meeting.

Year-end is a logical review point since several key metrics pertain to the freshman class, which changes each fall, and because there are advantages to beginning the annual cycle at the start of each calendar year. The 2008 review will cover less than a half-year's progress beyond the plan's formal launch. This initial review will provide a valuable pilot test of the review process, reinforce the focus of strategic priority owners so that implementation gets off to a strong start, and more quickly resolve issues with any actions in the plan that may require clarification or redefinition.