

# beyond

AUBURN

## Auburn's Transformative Change Agent

*The McWhorter School  
of Building Sciences'  
Scott Kramer Receives  
Award for Excellence  
in Faculty Outreach*



AUBURN

UNIVERSITY OUTREACH

FALL/WINTER 2019





## ON THE COVER

Scott Kramer

- Recipient of the Award for Excellence in Faculty Outreach;  
Atlanta Alumni Professor, McWhorter School of Building Science  
College of Architecture, Design and Construction

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# Auburn University Outreach

## Impactful Service – Impactful Outreach

The recently implemented Auburn University Strategic Plan includes a strong emphasis on the university's land-grant mission of outreach. The plan's "Goal 3: Impactful Service" encourages us to "expand our land-grant and service capabilities to foster greater innovation and engagement that enhances the quality of life and economic development in Alabama and beyond." Already, there is a strong base of programming responsive to this goal, representing our strong commitment to expand access to those in need and to engage our communities to improve the quality of life for all. This is our outreach mission at work, and it is making a difference.

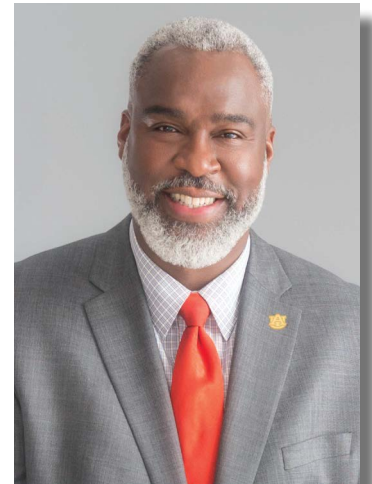
Recognizing that faculty engagement is at the forefront of this strategic charge, University Outreach sponsors the Auburn University Award for Excellence in Faculty Outreach. This award program honors the engagement of exemplary faculty members and demonstrates the tremendous impact Auburn's outreach has on our community, state, nation and beyond. This year's recipient is Scott Kramer, Atlanta Alumni Professor, McWhorter School of Building Science, College of Architecture, Design and Construction.

Kramer is recognized for his robust record of innovative teaching, meaningful scholarship and impactful service through his engagement in international design-build service learning projects in Ecuador, Haiti and Panama. These projects provide hands-on, immersive learning experiences for students while serving economically under-resourced communities in building housing, community centers, churches, medical centers and schools, all built with local materials and construction techniques. He has also recruited additional Auburn colleagues in his projects, thus expanding the scope of their impact through multidisciplinary engagement.

Together, Kramer and his teams are building community, lives and hopeful aspirations through engaged learning, research scholarship and outreach.

Clearly, Scott Kramer's inspiring work is making a difference.

Impactful outreach like this makes Auburn University a special institution—one that engages its campus community to reach out to the community beyond campus, to help people of all ages meet their educational goals and improve their quality of life. You can be a part of this critical work, too.



***Join us in making a difference!***

***War Eagle,***

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Royrickers Cook". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**ROYRICKERS COOK, PhD**  
VICE PRESIDENT FOR UNIVERSITY OUTREACH  
AND ASSOCIATE PROVOST

**[Aub.ie/outreachmakesadifference](http://Aub.ie/outreachmakesadifference)**



making a difference

# Auburn University Makes \$5.6 Billion Impact on the State, Says New Study

Auburn University and its alumni make a \$5.6 billion economic contribution to the state of Alabama, including creating nearly 27,000 jobs in addition to university employment, according to a new study.

“Auburn is a critical economic engine that benefits all Alabamians,” Interim President Jay Gogue said. “We are establishing partnerships that provide students with learning experiences, while companies, organizations and communities benefit from Auburn’s renowned research and outreach.”

The study notes Auburn’s longtime support for established and emerging industries, its extension presence across the state, research enterprise, outreach and faculty engagement as major assets for Alabama communities.

Researchers based the study on 2018-2019 statistical and financial data from Auburn’s main campus, Auburn University at Montgomery, the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, which has offices in all 67 counties. Economic Research Services Inc. in Montgomery and Auburn’s Division of University Outreach conducted the study.

*“This study confirms again what Alabamians already know about Auburn, that the university greatly contributes to the quality of life in Alabama.”*

**Royrickers Cook**  
Vice President for University Outreach  
and Associate Provost

The major components of Auburn’s \$5.6 billion impact are:

- An earning capacity of more than \$3.4 billion by Auburn graduates in Alabama.
- A direct economic impact of \$2.2 billion, representing Auburn’s in-state expenditures, such as payroll and purchases, student spending on local housing and food, construction and spending by visitors to university events. Auburn’s direct impact returned to the state’s economy more than eight times its state appropriation, or an \$8.5 return for each dollar appropriated.
- Auburn provides the primary academic support for a number of major state industries, businesses, and occupations through its wide range of degree programs, professional education and training.
- Auburn supports development of innovative research and technologies, industry collaboration and entrepreneurship that promote the economy of the state as well as the economic and security interests of the nation as a whole.

• Auburn’s impact is responsible for creating 26,623 jobs in Alabama in addition to university employment.

The \$5.6 billion economic contribution marks a 4 percent increase from a 2017 study conducted by University Outreach, which has led the studies since 1996.

“This study confirms again what Alabamians already know about Auburn, that the university greatly contributes to the quality of life in Alabama,” said Royrickers Cook, vice president for University Outreach. “The university supports both emerging and traditional industries and provides services for the well-being of our citizens.”





Scott Kramer  
 - Recipient of the Award for Excellence in Faculty Outreach;  
 Atlanta Alumni Professor, McWhorter School of Building Science  
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*“Scott Kramer has an exemplary record of engagement promoting student learning, research scholarship and community outreach on an international level.”*

- Royrickers Cook, vice president for University Outreach at Auburn University



# Auburn's Transformative Change Agent

## *The McWhorter School of Building Sciences' Scott Kramer Receives Award for Excellence in Faculty Outreach*

In building a robust record of innovative teaching, meaningful scholarship and impactful service, this Auburn professor is also building community, lives and hopeful aspirations. Scott Kramer, the Atlanta Alumni Professor, McWhorter School of Building Science, College of Architecture, Design and Construction, is the 2019 recipient of the Auburn University Award for Excellence in Faculty Outreach.

One of Auburn's highest university recognitions, the Award for Excellence in Faculty Outreach honors the engagement of exemplary faculty members and demonstrates the tremendous impact Auburn's outreach has on our community, state, nation and beyond. Kramer is recognized for his international design-build service learning projects in Ecuador, Haiti and Panama.

These projects provide hands-on, immersive learning experiences for students while serving economically under resourced communities in building housing, community centers, churches, medical centers and schools, all built with local materials and construction techniques.

"Scott Kramer has an exemplary record of engagement promoting student learning, research scholarship and community outreach on an international level," said Royrickers Cook, vice president for University Outreach at Auburn. "He is highly respected by his fellow faculty and students, and his work has been honored across the academy. Most importantly, his engagement is making a real and sustained impact in the challenged communities touched by these extraordinary projects."





While the College of Architecture, Design and Construction's nationally-recognized building science program has long focused on hands-on and immersive learning, Dean Vini Nathan credits the "full expression" of service-learning in the curricula to Kramer's "focused leadership, dedicated participation and enlightened mentorship." Nathan also said, "Dr. Kramer has the breadth and depth of substantive knowledge, pedagogical experience and professional expertise to undertake these exacting projects, to hold his students to high standards and to produce remarkable learning outcomes."

Kramer earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in civil engineering from Auburn in 1982 and 1983. He received his doctorate in learning design and technology from Purdue University in 2003. After almost a decade as an engineer and project manager in private construction firms, Kramer began his teaching career as a visiting assistant professor at Ferris State University in Michigan before coming to Auburn as an assistant professor in 1993.

During his tenure at Auburn, Kramer's innovative engagement has been recognized for his powerful integration of teaching, research and outreach. His honors include the International Innovation Award from



the Decision Sciences Institute, the Associated Schools of Construction National Teaching Award, the McWhorter School of Building Science Faculty Excellence Service Learning Award and more. In 2015, Kramer received the Atlanta Building Science Alumni Endowed Professorship, recognizing his strong commitment to students and the provision of high quality instruction, research and service.



Quito 2015: Class at Equator with costumed Ecuadorians.





Quito 2015: Class jumping at Cotopaxi base.

While providing learning experiences for his students, Kramer's projects serve economically under-resourced communities by building housing, community centers, churches, medical centers and schools, using local materials and construction techniques.

"The diverse projects that are designed and built through Dr. Kramer's service learning projects span

different aspects of the building construction discipline," said Nathan. "[This demands] a keen understanding of local materials, labor practices, cultural norms, etc." These projects help develop students' critical thinking skills, ability to relate to local contexts and ability to connect theory to practice in a variety of environments.







Quito Fall 2016: Group at Equator.

In addition to his own students, Kramer has recruited Auburn colleagues from other disciplines on campus, thus expanding the scope of the engagement's impact. For example, projects in Haiti included graphic design faculty and students who designed public health posters for a medical clinic and a team from industrial design who designed and fabricated a sun shade for the clinic's outdoor waiting area.

Since 2010, Kramer and SIFAT, or Servants in Faith and Technology, a non-profit focused on utilizing "appropriate technology" in helping poor communities worldwide, have partnered in 13 classes and four different construction projects in Quito, Ecuador. These projects have engaged more than 150 building science students. Tom Corson, SIFAT executive director, knows the impact of Kramer's work.

"I have seen firsthand over the years how the building science students serve the communities in Quito by helping the Ecuadorians address their own needs in the areas of building design and the construction of daycare centers," explains Corson. "The students are not only able to participate in hands-on construction trades (concrete, rebar, brick, etc.) with the Ecuadorians, but the experience also helps broaden their horizons to become global citizens and become aware of other cultures," said



Corson. "[Kramer] has been a role model to colleagues and students."

Kramer's work with SIFAT produces a real human impact on a significant scale.

"There is not room ... to list all of the Quito lives that have been impacted by the building science students and Dr. Kramer over the past nine years," said Corson. "At a minimum, 200-350 children at each of the four after-school programs are certainly better in countless ways." For Corson, himself well experienced in international engagement, Kramer's programs have "exceeded all aspects of the definition of an international service learning class."

Kramer's engagement and scholarly reach extends to other nations, ranging from Panama to Pakistan. His innovative techniques helped the Gnobe people of Panama adapt a tube-steel substitute for traditional bamboo to build houses with other locally sustainable materials. As a result of his vast experience in design and construction in developing countries, Kramer was invited to be a keynote speaker at an international conference in Lahore, Pakistan.

Stan Buckley, executive director of But God Ministries, another frequent Kramer partner, said, "Dr. Kramer has played a huge role in much of our



work.” With But God Ministries, Kramer led the design and construction of a new medical complex in the mountainous village of Thoman, Haiti. The project consists of living quarters for visiting volunteers, medical and dental clinics and a pharmacy. “Dr. Kramer’s work with our organization was a perfect example of blending teaching, research and outreach in a creative project that resulted in the actual construction of buildings in Haiti.”

The impact of Kramer’s integrative engagement is particularly meaningful to his students.

“Dr. Kramer is a role model to not only me, but also other students and colleagues,” says former student Kelley O’Reilly, a project manager with Layton Construction in Mobile, Alabama. Kramer mentored O’Reilly in a rigorous international undergraduate research thesis project, which earned the 2015 Building Science Outstanding Senior award for the student.

“Dr. Kramer has opened up opportunities to countless students through his innovative teaching methods in service learning and study abroad classes,” said O’Reilly. “I hope other students will benefit from his love of teaching, research and outreach.”

Despite the steady stream of accolades, awards and honors that he has received for his teaching, research,



scholarship and service, Kramer is not distracted from his mission of engagement, said Dean Nathan. “Each recognition drives him to delve deeper into his core mission as a transformative change agent in his numerous classrooms in Auburn and communities in different parts of the world.”

Truly, “transformative change agent” is a fitting description for Kramer, whose dedicated and passionate engagement with students, colleagues and community alike is indeed a model of excellence in faculty outreach.





# Department of Communication Disorders Pursues Phonetic Grading Tool Invention

Two assistant professors in the Department of Communication Disorders in Auburn's College of Liberal Arts are working with the Department of Computer Science and Software Engineering, or CSSE, to develop a web-based application for helping students to learn to transcribe the sounds of words. The Department of Communication Disorders faculty members Marisha Speights Atkins and Dallin Bailey have been working with Cheryl Seals of CSSE, housed in the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering, to develop the Automated Phonetic Transcription Grading Tool, or APTgt, since fall 2016. The APTgt is a web-based tool designed to help teachers of phonetic transcription provide more efficient practice opportunities for their students, while also providing automated feedback for each individual student, as well as the class as a whole.

Phonetic transcription is a core skill for students studying to become speech-language pathologists. It uses the International Phonetic Alphabet as a standardized representation of the sounds of spoken language. For instructors of phonetic transcription, the APTgt provides a complete learning management system to support the creation of assignments and automate the grading process with embedded computer algorithms.

The APTgt was designed to fill an important gap in the existing teaching tools. Traditionally, students complete phonetic assignments by hand on paper or in word processing documents by downloading or copying symbols from websites. When learning methods for the transcription of disordered speech, it is beneficial for students to receive regular feedback on their progress. However, students rarely get immediate feedback on transcriptions since grading by hand is time-intensive



Pictured from left: Marisha Speights Atkins, Cheryl Seals and Dallin Bailey

for instructors. By automating the grading process via a unique algorithm, the APTgt can assist instructors in providing feedback to students in a more timely manner.

For students, the learning management system component of the APTgt provides access to assignments, scores, a point-and-click IPA keyboard and graphs of individual and class results.

In addition to saving time for both instructors and students, the APTgt allows for sound files to be embedded into assignments, providing useful examples of typical and disordered speech for transcription practice.

Original funding for the tool came from the Biggio Center as a Breeden Teaching Award. Research is ongoing into the usability of the application and the impact of the increased practice it provides on transcription confidence in students. The APTgt is in phase two of development and is seeking further funding to develop the application beyond the Auburn University campus to testing at other sites and eventually to an LMS marketplace.



# Students Prepare for Future Careers and Develop New Skills with Auburn Youth Programs

Auburn Youth Programs, or AYP, within the Office of Professional and Continuing Education, offers camps and programs specifically designed to educate and inspire youth in a variety of academic, athletic and extracurricular endeavors. Each summer, thousands of campers come from around the globe to attend one, or more, of the 60 summer camps and programs and experience life at Auburn University.

Academic camps, offered in partnership with schools and colleges across campus, are led by Auburn University professors and faculty members who provide campers the opportunity to explore potential majors. In Junior Vet Camp, students interested in the veterinary medicine profession gained hands-on experience alongside Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine faculty, technicians and staff. Participants prepared for surgery, learned to perform sutures, inserted IVs, drew blood, intubated for surgery and bandaged wounds in an operating room.

Architecture Camp is an intensive week-long workshop that takes place in the studios of the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Architecture. Students work on real projects while engaging and learning from professors. High school students who attended AU Brain Camp used advanced technology at the Auburn University MRI Research Center to scan and map their own brain, learning methods and concepts in neuroscience from professors in the Department of



Camp, participants took a field trip to the Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport in Atlanta, Georgia, where they went behind the scenes with Delta Technical Operations. They also spent time in the sky.

Outdoor Adventure campers experienced whitewater rafting, zip lining, archery and hiking.

E.A.G.L.E. Camp provided campers a real world experience in science and agriculture with a visit to the local farming operation Randle Farms.

Some campers earned medical certifications. During Emergency Medical Responder Camp, students were able to acquire two certifications: the American Safety and Health Institute Emergency Medical Response and American Heart Association Basic Life Support. Campers also had interactions with local first-responders, including the helicopter crew from an air medical transport team, ambulance medics, firefighters and police officers.

Auburn Youth Programs helps youth find their passion, shape their future and become future leaders. From academics to athletics to creative skills, there is a camp for every interest.

Camp registration for summer 2020 opens on Dec. 2. Visit [www.auburn.edu/auburnyouthprograms](http://www.auburn.edu/auburnyouthprograms) for more information.





# Office of Professional and Continuing Education's Online Programs Create Opportunities Around the Globe

The Office of Professional and Continuing Education, or OPCE, expanded its online course offerings in an effort to provide flexible learning options. The virtual classrooms expand the borders of Auburn University to provide learning opportunities with global reach and local influence.

Santana Nyanje is a 21-year-old student studying graphics, communication and advertising at Rongo University in Kenya. She recently enrolled in OPCE's Online Graphic Design Certificate Program to supplement the case study and theory discussed in her academic program.

"With the help of the online classes I'm taking, I can say that I'm able to work with Adobe Illustrator and InDesign comfortably," said Nyanje.



Santana Nyanje, a student at Rongo University in Kenya, is enrolled in the Graphic Design Online Certificate program.



Nyanje's goal is to start her own design company in Kenya and use her acquired skills to raise awareness regarding the turmoil and social issues that continue to affect her

region. She's looking forward to introducing new design elements into the design industry in Kenya.

Alicia Benoit, a military spouse, is stationed 1,300 miles from Auburn's campus in New Mexico. Her husband serves in the U.S. Air Force. She recently completed the Mental Health Technician Specialist Certificate Program offered through the My Career Advancement Account, or MyCAA, a scholarship program for eligible military spouses. In partnership with the MyCAA program, OPCE offers more than 100

online programs that provide licensure or credentials leading to employment in portable career fields.

"Having successfully completed the Mental Health Technician program, I have a much better understanding of how other people think and will use these skills while building a career," Benoit said.

Online learning is an opportunity for local experiences to influence a wider audience.

James Brann works in emergency management with the federal government on the U.S. west coast, and he recently completed the Crisis Management Certificate Course taught by Rick Rainer. Rainer was the principal at Enterprise High School in Enterprise, Alabama, when a tornado devastated the school in 2007. Rainer walks participants through the process of developing a crisis management plan for their organization.

"We can deploy anywhere, but tornadoes are not taught out west," Brann said. "I wanted to learn from a real practitioner like Rick Rainer, and I appreciated his down-to-earth teaching style."

According to the Adult Training and Education Survey conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics, non-degree continuing education for adults

has favorable job-related outcomes including getting a job, increasing marketability to employers or clients and improving work skills. By providing these resources online, OPCE is able break the geographic barriers and maximize the educational impact of Auburn

University both locally and around the world.

To view online course offerings, go to [www.auburn.edu/opce](http://www.auburn.edu/opce).



Devastation caused by an EF4 tornado at Enterprise High School. Rick Rainer, the high school's former principal, leads participants through the process of creating a crisis management plan in the Crisis Management Certificate course.



# CEOE's Elocutionist Academy

Expediently executing eloquence with elegance. These words best describe elocution, a style of speaking utilizing voice control diction and gesture, and is what A. Faye Boykin Calhoun brings to the Center for Educational Outreach and Engagement, or CEOE, K-12 programs.

Calhoun, a best-selling author, educational consultant and 2007 inductee into the Toastmasters International Speakers Hall of Fame, has directed the Elocution Academy for CEOE since 2016. She has provided elocution training to students at the Black Belt Legacy and GEAR UP summer camps and the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lee County arts program, which are supported by Auburn University Outreach.

The focal point of Calhoun's training has been to offer students with limited or no public speaking skills, the opportunity to improve their diction, style of speaking and self-confidence. As a former social worker, Calhoun has counseled students on personal issues pertaining to their behavior, identity, relationships and day to day life experiences. In addition, she has taught students the art and importance of "self-disclosure" which has ultimately enabled them to properly articulate and channel their emotions in a positive direction.

In 2018, Calhoun wrote and taught the curriculum for CEOE's first Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lee County arts program. In delivering this program, she incorporated the techniques of elocution training,

Emotional Intelligence Theory and Reader's Theater with musical instruments. These combined strategies have proven to be beneficial, particularly for youth who experience trauma and day to day stressors in life, by boosting confidence and motivation, improving interpersonal communication skills and releasing negative feelings and anxiety. At the end of each session, students are given the opportunity to showcase what they have learned from Calhoun's classes in open forums attended by parents, administrators and community members, all of which have warranted positive responses.

Calhoun's impact on students has been described as immediate, powerful and valuable. She encourages her students to strive for nothing less than excellence. The lessons that students acquire go far beyond teaching them how to properly speak, perform and conduct themselves in public—the lessons prepare them to be resilient and successful throughout life.



A. Faye Boykin Calhoun teaching students.



# Touchdowns for Trees: A Green Initiative Sponsored by Toyota and the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences



Two Southern magnolias planted at Tallassee High School by students and football players.

Touchdowns for Trees is a green initiative sponsored by Toyota, Auburn University School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, Alabama Urban Forestry Association, Alabama Power and other partners.

By planting trees, the program will help Toyota offset its carbon footprint, increase urban forest canopy, improve water quality and provide numerous other

social, environmental and economic benefits on college campuses across Alabama. The program will increase visibility of the urban forest scenario and teach students about selecting and planting trees.

Trees can naturally sequester carbon dioxide over long periods of time and planting them in viable locations will give Toyota a means to sustainably reduce its carbon



School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences student-volunteers, Auburn University's Michelle Cole, city of Montgomery's Ethan Fowler and Auburn University arborist Alex Hedgepath at the Auburn Touchdown for Trees event.



Auburn University arborist Alex Hedgepath talks to School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences students about proper planting.





A tree planted this season on UAB's campus.

footprint. Program partners will donate trees based on the number of regular season touchdowns scored by participating football teams.

Planting locations will be selected by university arborists and campus planners. Trees may also be planted in nearby community parks, terraces and green spaces where erosion mitigation, shade, wildlife habitat and other benefits are needed. University football teams will assist with plantings and experience first-hand how beneficial their on-field success can be for local communities.

Auburn University has planted 14 trees this year, as of press time.



School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences student and urban forestry class member Orum Snow shows off his Touchdown for Trees T-shirt.

Touchdowns for Trees planting efforts have been supported by volunteers from Alabama Cooperative Extension System, U.S. Forest Service, local city foresters, tree commission members and students.

To date, committed and participating schools include Alabama A&M, University of Alabama, Tuskegee University, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Jacksonville State University and Tallassee High School. Additional planting events will be scheduled for the next planting season.



George Barker of Land and Trees Unlimited discusses proper tree planting with Tallassee High School football players.



Southside Middle School football players plant a Southern magnolia at their school in Tallassee.



UAB football players and staff, UAB grounds manager Tim Sullivan, UAB sustainability manager Julie Price and Michelle Cole at the UAB Touchdown for Trees event.



# Memoirists to Celebrate the 30th Anniversary of Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Auburn University

Memoir is the focus for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Auburn University's, or OLLI at Auburn, upcoming 30th anniversary celebration.

OLLI at Auburn will mark three decades of sharing life knowledge and stories by hosting a series of lectures, book signings and workshops during the upcoming academic year presented by nationally acclaimed memoirists Michael Martone, Janisse Ray and Margaret Renkl.

"These authors, all with ties to Alabama or the south, write across several genres such as fiction, nonfiction and poetry," said Scott Bishop, organizer of the series and interim director of OLLI at Auburn. "Through those genres, they have penned personal memoirs that touch on topics of universal interest from our relationships to nature and the environment to our families."

Since 1990, OLLI at Auburn has fostered lifelong curiosity and intellectual creativity in adults ages 50 and older by offering a diverse array of classes ranging from science to Shakespeare and Chinese culture to chair caning. Many of the classes are taught by OLLI members who possess an abundance of knowledge, expertise and stories.

Life stories are the focus of one of OLLI's most popular classes, "Writing Our Lives," which has been taught by Terry Ley, a retired Auburn professor of English education, for the past 15 years. Through the class, OLLI members study the work of professional memoirist, and they explore and record their personal life experiences.

"This class has had a profound impact on the people who have taken it, as well as their family members," said Bishop.

The 30th anniversary author presentations are made possible in part by an endowment honoring the legacy of a former "Writing Our Lives" class member Alice Leahy.

Leahy was a native New Yorker, who along with her husband, Bob, raised nine children in the Long Island area.

"Her days as a fulltime mother were busy, yet every night she nurtured her endless appetite for knowledge by



reading well into the wee hours," said Leahy's daughter, Gina Leahy Touchton.

"I once asked her if she had any regrets about her life, and her answer was never attending college," said Touchton. When Leahy moved to Auburn in 1996, she quickly found OLLI and began her education anew. "She felt it was akin to going to the university."

After Leahy's death in 2008, Touchton and her siblings found their mother's memoirs and decided to carry on her legacy by endowing the Alice M. Leahy Lecture Series through OLLI at Auburn.

"It was the perfect way to honor her memory and her experience with OLLI," said Touchton.

According to Bishop, the three memoirists scheduled for the 2019-20 academic year offer the perfect way to further Leahy's legacy and OLLI's commitment to providing lifelong learning opportunities in the Auburn and Opelika area.

"We want to help make writing as a means of self-discovery available to everyone, especially the senior citizens, in our region," said Bishop.

The authors' readings and book signings will be free and open to the public. The memoir writing workshops will be offered at affordable rates or through scholarship opportunities.

To learn more, go to [www.auburn.edu/olli](http://www.auburn.edu/olli).





# Outreach Global and the School of Nursing Make a Difference through Free Healthcare Program in Ghana

The Auburn University Outreach Global office in conjunction with the School of Nursing provided free medical care and health education for over 800 patients and “adopted” the pediatric unit of Effia-Nkwanta Regional hospital in Sekondi, Ghana, in March.

“The goal of the program is to promote health and wellness, good nutrition and eating habits and help enhance primary healthcare system in Ghana,” said Elizabeth Quansah, director of Outreach Global.

“Most people in the world, especially in developing countries, classify weak primary healthcare system as one of the threats to sustainable growth and development. Primary healthcare is the first thing people seek when they get sick. For Ghana, we realized that providing free medical care in the low to middle income communities and providing substantial medical supplies and children books to the pediatric ward would serve the city well. That is why the Auburn University Outreach Global office decided to ‘adopt’ the pediatric ward,” Quansah said.

The mayor of Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly, Hon. Anthony K.K Sam, visited Auburn University in June to express his gratitude for the sustainable

programs Auburn had provided in his community and throughout Ghana. Sam also initiated inter-city relations with the Auburn city mayor in areas of business and commerce, sanitation and other developmental programs.

The Outreach Global office honored the mayor during his visit with a welcome dinner. The office awarded certificates to the nursing students who made the healthcare program successful and presented certificates to donors who supported the program with free medication, stuffed animals, books and their time.

The office encourages faculty, students, staff, sponsors and donors to participate in Outreach Global initiatives. For more information about the healthcare and other training programs, contact Outreach Global at 334-844-5716 or email Elizabeth Quansah at [cid0001@auburn.edu](mailto:cid0001@auburn.edu).





“JOIN US IN  
MAKING A  
DIFFERENCE”



Dr. Royrickers Cook  
*Vice President for University Outreach  
and Associate Provost*



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[aub.ie/outreachmakesadifference](http://aub.ie/outreachmakesadifference)



# Center for Educational Outreach and Engagement and Culture Bump™ Partner with *Golf My Future My Game*



The nationally recognized mentoring program *Golf My Future My Game*, or GMFMG, provided educational seminars for local youth and an event through the Sanford Bishop Golf Classic in Columbus, Georgia, in July.

Founded in 2014 by former political strategist Craig Kirby, GMFMG creates “strategic alliance initiatives for education and career development in the sport of golf,” according to Kirby. With support from leaders of the National Golf Course Owners Association and the World Golf Foundation, Kirby is confident the program will continue to grow.

“As we expand, local civic and business leaders welcome GMFMG and its participants as an opportunity to reach previously underrepresented audiences,” said Kirby.

The Center for Educational Outreach and Engagement, or CEOE, has partnered with GMFMG, a non-profit designed to introduce underrepresented youth to both the game of golf and career opportunities in the \$80-billion-dollar golf industry, since spring 2019.

CEOE provides educational programming to GMFMG by offering Culture Bump cross-cultural communication seminars to participants, according to CEOE director Stacey Nickson. This enhances participants comfort and familiarity with golf culture.

Before working with students in Columbus, CEOE provided seminars for GMFMG students in Detroit, Michigan, via virtual seminars.

“GMFMG plans to continue this national partnership with Auburn University’s CEOE as they are positioned to provide Culture Bump seminars to our participants, uniquely framing the educational component of our program,” said Kirby.

Nickson and Culture Bump founder Carol Archer lead seminars for GMFMG.

“Our plans include training Auburn University graduate students to deliver Culture Bump seminars to youth in the program as GMFMG expands,” said Archer.

GMFMG has been highlighted on the ABC reality game television show “Holey Moley,” and it will conduct its next seminar in Miami, Florida.





# Office of Professional and Continuing Education and United States Air Force Air War College Hosted Hap Arnold Lecture Series

The Office of Professional and Continuing Education, or OPCE, in partnership with the United States Air Force Air War College hosted the annual Hap Arnold Lecture Series this spring.

The lecture featured a four-person panel including Lt. Col. John Popiak, U.S. Army Cyber Warfare Officer; Lt. Col. Mark Tallo, Army National Guard Judge Advocate General; Lt. Col. Jared C. Nelson, U.S. Air Force Officer; and Tiffany L. Herring, senior quality assurance specialist for the Defense Contract Management Agency. Panel members shared their personal and professional stories as well as their views on a wide range of military and policy topics, followed by an open forum.

Named for the pioneering five-star General of the Air Force, the Hap Arnold Lecture Series is an outreach effort with the goal of fostering constructive dialogue between officers and the community on issues such as national security and public policy.

“OPCE is proud to offer programming that supports the university’s new strategic plan goal of increasing its service impact through community engagement,” said Hope Stockton, OPCE executive director. “The open

## HAP ARNOLD LECTURE SERIES In Partnership with the United States Air Force Air War College



forum provides a platform for community members to engage in discussion with some of the nation’s top leaders.”

To learn more, go to [auburn.edu/opce/haparnoldseries](http://auburn.edu/opce/haparnoldseries).



# Virginia Davis Awarded Grant to Focus on Community Aspects of STEM

It's safe to call Virginia Davis an outreach superstar. The alumni professor in the Samuel Ginn College

of Engineering joined the Department of Chemical Engineering in 2005 and immediately took a leading role in a wide array of university outreach initiatives. Her work with the Women in Engineering Camp, Science Olympiad, summer NanoDays, BEST Robotics and E-Day was more than enough to earn her the 2016 Award for Excellence in Faculty Outreach, Auburn University's highest honor for faculty whose outreach efforts inspire significant community engagement.

Davis has received national recognition for research in nanotechnology and materials engineering. She has also received the National Science Foundation CAREER Award, the Young Investigator Award from the American Institute of Chemical Engineers' Nanoscale Science and Engineering Forum and the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers, a prestigious award for young career scholars.

Her latest accomplishment includes winning a \$342,502 grant from the National Science Foundation to investigate the factors influencing the attitudes of minority youth in underserved communities toward science and engineering, something she plans to do using an unconventional approach.

"We're going to focus mostly on the community aspects of STEM," Davis said, "not the technological aspects."

Davis has partnered with Alabama STEM Education, a non-profit organization based in Bessemer, Alabama, that aims to spark early interest in STEM by engaging local elementary, middle and high school students through activities in hands-on teaching environments.

"We're looking to see how involving community-minded kids in a STEM camp that focuses in part on

making an impact in your community affects how they view STEM," Davis said. "The goal isn't to make them

all engineers, but if they want to be politicians or community activists, the goal is to help them see how STEM can also affect their communities."

Daniela Marghita, a faculty member in the Department of Computer Science and Software Engineering, and one of Davis' co-principal investigators on the project, serves as an Alabama STEM Education co-chairman. Co-principal investigators also include assistant materials professor Edward Davis and

Joni Lakin, an associate professor in the Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership and Technology.

"We just want to understand how a more community-focused offering versus a more traditional STEM offering affects the professional identity development and career aspirations of those students," Davis said.

Davis said the study's target demographic represents one of the largest untapped sources of future engineers in the south.

"Auburn does a lot of outreach in nearby communities like Loachapoka and Notasulga, which is great," Davis said. "But I think this will show that we are reaching out across the state. From our perspective as a land-grant university, helping people see their career options and helping build up communities is pretty important."





# Woodland Wonders Nature Preschool Opens at The Kreher Preserve and Nature Center

The Kreher Preserve and Nature Center, or KPNC, has introduced the community to the innovative and revolutionary concept of nature-based, emergent learning with the first nature preschool in east Alabama. Classes started at the newly established Woodland Wonders Nature Preschool on Aug. 20.

The nature preschool concept, a movement in innovative, child-led education sweeping across the United States, was first put to practice in Scandinavian countries over a decade ago. Woodland Wonders, like all nature preschools, has one foundational principle to its organization: nature. All learning is done with and through nature, embracing the great outdoors as a classroom. Students explore and uncover knowledge while immersed in the natural environment of the Kreher Preserve and Nature Center. Every rain puddle, butterfly, pine tree and blade of grass has stories to tell and lessons to be learned.

Woodland Wonders Nature Preschool is guided by an emergent curriculum which supports children's individual interests and voices while incorporating developmentally appropriate strategies through play-based and explorative activities. This innovative approach to education has been proven to support the child's whole development including increased attention, self-discipline, physical activity and motivation. All domains of growth are engaged and activated including cognitive, physical, social, emotional, aesthetic and spiritual. All domains are paired with a strong environmental ethic.

The importance of environmental awareness cannot be overstated, and yet, more children are growing up without that critical environmental literacy. Woodland Wonders aims to change that trend and ensure that its students start their lives with our precious and delicate environment in the forefront of their thoughts and aspirations.

This is the first year for Woodland Wonders Nature Preschool in Auburn. The 2020-21 school year plans include adding more students, more days per week and more hours per day.

The KPNC is a non-profit, outreach facility of Auburn University's School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, offering education, recreation and leisure resources to the communities of Auburn, Opelika, Lee County and the entire region. With almost 120 acres of preserved and managed native forest, the KPNC offers visitors over six miles of hiking and running trails through beautiful woodlands in addition to an 1800s-style homestead site with barn and organic garden, a butterfly garden and wildflower meadows. Visitors can participate in many events, workshops and programs throughout the year. Rental opportunities ranging from birthday parties, to family reunions, to weddings are offered and customizable. Diverse field trips are offered to schools of all grades in addition to robust home-schooled and preschool programs.

For more information, go to <https://aub.ie/woodlandwonders/>.





# GEDI Partners with Business and Investment Community to Present Opportunity Zone Forum

Auburn University's Government and Economic Development Institute, or GEDI, partnered with sponsors HSBC, Regions Bank and Sadis and Goldberg, along with Acumen Capital Group and Opportunity Alabama to present a one-day forum designed to help participants learn how to better position their communities for development and investment.

Established by Congress in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, the Opportunity Zone program was created to drive private investment into rural and impoverished areas. All Alabama counties have at least one designated Opportunity Zone that enables investors to benefit from reduced or deferred capital gain taxes when investing in a qualified fund.

In response to the legislation, Auburn University hosted its first Opportunity Zone Forum on May 1 at The Hotel at Auburn University and Dixon Conference Center. National experts and regional thought leaders were on hand to educate the 249 registered attendees and provide them with practical insights to help their regions benefit from this latest economic and community development tool.

"We felt the program was necessary to help our leaders learn how to better position their communities to attract capital and to understand all the players involved and how they interact," said David Mixson, associate director of GEDI.



The event provided an opportunity for participants to share ideas on how to use recent opportunity zone legislation to improve their communities.

Event organizers included James Barth, Eminent Scholar in Finance in the Harbert College of Business; Royrickers Cook, vice president for University Outreach and associate provost; Alex Flachsbart, founder and CEO of Opportunity Alabama; Ralph Foster, assistant vice president for University Outreach and Public Service; Alex Helm, chairman and CEO of Acumen Capital Group; Paul Marino, partner at Sadis and Goldberg; David Mixson, associate director of GEDI; and Richard Shamos, general counsel at Sadis and Goldberg.

Opportunity Zones continue to be a growing area of importance and interest in Alabama. University Outreach and GEDI are committed to offering education and assistance for community and business leaders who want to leverage the legislation to help their areas thrive.



The Alabama Opportunity Zone Forum hosted 249 participants.



Alabama Opportunity Zone Forum organizers Alex Helm (left) and Jim Barth (second from left) are pictured with event participants and panelist Kenneth Chan (far right).



# Research Helps Small Businesses Make Smart Decisions About Loans

Small businesses in impoverished nations depend on loans and microfinancing to get off the ground. Whether these families operate a vegetable stand or sell goat milk, a little financial jolt from the bank helps kick-start the operation.

Microfinance has been credited as being successful in lifting individuals and communities out of poverty that some pioneers have been internationally felicitated with awards like Charity Navigator Awards, Magasasay Foundation Awards and Nobel Prizes.

However, if these loans go unpaid there are consequences.

“If lenders cannot successfully maintain a profit through these loans, then they aren’t going to do this much longer,” said Shashank Rao, the Jim W. Thompson Associate Professor in Supply Chain Management at Auburn University’s Harbert College of Business.

“For the recipient, if this is their only source of funding, then that source is going to dry out. Guess then what will happen to entrepreneurship at the bottom of the pyramid?”

This is a recent and emerging problem. Historically, owing to things such as group liability, non-repayment in microfinance was seen as a minor issue with rates less than 1 percent, but it seems to be turning into a bigger challenge as the non-repayment rate has now increased to 12 percent for microfinance companies in some countries.

In his co-authored article, “On operations and marketing in microfinance-backed enterprises: Structural embeddedness and enterprise viability,” Rao explores why some businesses in impoverished nations are able to repay their microfinance borrowings and others are not. His premise is that voluntary non-repayment is still low in microfinance, and non-payment is an issue of inability rather than unwillingness to repay. This drives one to



**Shashank Rao**, the Jim W. Thompson Associate Professor in Supply Chain Management at Auburn University’s Harbert College of Business



question why some microfinance-backed ventures fail, thereby failing to repay, and how they can avoid the failure trap.

His paper was accepted for publication into the International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management.

“There is a lot of work out there that says in very small entrepreneurial firms, there are two key investment priorities: one is operations and the other is marketing,” Rao said. “We demonstrated that borrowers who are more embedded in their communities with larger social networks typically tend to invest the proceeds of microfinance loans into marketing—better signage, printing posters and fliers. People who are less embedded in the community invest the proceeds of microfinance into operations—more inventory and better scales. In an ideal world, both are good if you have enough money.”

That isn’t the case in such micro enterprises in impoverished nations. In such cases, “Which of these drives business profitability, marketing or operations?” Rao asked.

The answer is operations. “Marketing is valuable when there are multiple sellers competing for your business,” Rao said. “But these are underserved communities. They are starving for products. Most established businesses do not yet find it financially viable to distribute goods to them, which means that there is a major shortage of products, sellers and distribution channels to cater to this segment of the population. When that happens, there is limited value that marketing can add. As it stands, marketing and advertising are concepts that emerge after there is some sort of competition in the market. At the bottom of the pyramid, marketing does

not seem to have an influential impact on a return of investment because of this likely shortage of competition. Operations, on the other hand, does.”

The added twist in this paper is the role of the social network.

“In most typical cases, who is the borrower going to turn to for business advice? Their social network,” Rao said. “The conventional wisdom has been that increased networking is better, but what we show is that in such markets there is a big penalty to networking. Networking creates a go with the flow mindset where highly networked entrepreneurs tend to invest in marketing, probably to impress their network, while the less networked ones tend to do their own thing [i.e., operations], which as we have seen, tends to work out better in terms of return on investment.”

In other words, increased networking at the bottom of the pyramid may be a deleterious thing.

“What we learn from this is that the microfinance vendor, in order to be successful moving forward, can’t just be a lender,” Rao added. “If you want to break to poor repayment spiral, the lender has to also become a business consultant and advisor and try to advise the entrepreneur on the best use of the financing.

“Offering these findings is a small something that can help people and businesses make better decisions toward a sustainable future. Making a difference is awesome, right? That’s the whole point. You’re doing something that has the potential of impacting and meaningfully changing the quality of people’s lives.”

Rao’s work was supported by Bandhan Bank, a microfinance enterprise in India.





a spirit of collaboration  
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# Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work Receives Grant from Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act

Fusihatchee is a well-known Creek settlement located on the Tallapoosa River in Elmore County, Alabama. Fusihatchee was first occupied by the Creek Indians in the 1600s and grew into one of the major Creek settlements in Alabama. According to a news release from 1995, the town was burned during the Creek Indian War of 1814 by Gen. Andrew Jackson's army following the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. Residents of Fusihatchee fled the site just ahead of the advancing army and many artifacts were left behind, creating one of the largest collections of Creek Indian artifacts in the country. Over the past few decades, archeologists have excavated the large site for Creek artifacts. The Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work in Auburn's College of Liberal Arts recently received a grant to host a consultation event with the ultimate goal of repatriating human remains and burial objects.

Meghan Buchanan, assistant professor of anthropology, and Savannah Newell, a Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, or NAGPRA, coordinator, worked together to secure the funds from NAGPRA in the amount of \$83,070 to continue work on the Fusihatchee site.

"This site represents one of the largest single site excavations in the state, and includes hundreds of burials and tens of thousands of associated funerary objects," said Newell, who works on organizing the archaeological artifacts to identify their origin and to repatriate them to the tribe from which they belong. Working with descendant communities of the Creek, Buchanan and Newell will create a strategic plan for culturally-appropriate curation and preparation of the human remains until their return and reburial.

"This project will determine right of possession, so a final decision of disposition and reburial can be agreed upon," Buchanan said.

The proposed project focuses on a single consultation event, which will bring tribes to Auburn University to

meet and consult over the course of several days. Time will be allocated to include viewing curation space and any items of interest, meetings covering cultural affiliation, culturally appropriate storage and treatment and discussions regarding plans for disposition and reburial.

"We very much appreciate the hard work and dedication by Dr. Meghan Buchanan and Savannah Newell," said College of Liberal Arts Dean Joseph Aistrup. "Their research is pivotal to the state of Alabama and the Creek descendants. I am incredibly pleased NAGPRA recognized the value of the work being done on the Fusihatchee site."

Enacted in 1990, NAGPRA requires museums and federal agencies to inventory and identify Native American human remains and cultural items in their collections and to consult with Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations regarding repatriation. Section 10 of the Act authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to award grants to assist in implementing provisions of the Act. The National NAGPRA Program is administered by the National Park Service.

The NAGPRA grant secured by Buchanan and Newell is one of 12 awarded by the national organization. The combined 12 awards will go toward the transportation and return of 58 cultural items, more than 32,000 funerary objects and human remains representing 1,601 ancestors.

"The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act grants are critical to the longevity of Native American cultural heritage," said National Park Service Deputy Director P. Daniel Smith. "Increasing awareness and respect of all Americans' stories is a core mission of the National Park Service, and we are honored to be stewards of such an important grant program."

To learn more, go to <https://www.nps.gov/>.

# Opelika Bulldogs of Ward 2 Academy Participate in Auburn Days

The Opelika Bulldogs is a group of young men and women who are part of Ward 2 Academy, created by councilwoman Tiffany Pitts of Ward 2 in Opelika, Alabama. The academy, comprised of an after school program and summer camp, provides a safe space for 60 children from the Opelika area. The program curriculum offers academic support, career guidance and field trips to institutions of higher education and various businesses and organizations. The field trips enable students to interact with government officials and other dignitaries within the surrounding communities.

The Center for Educational Outreach and Engagement, or CEOE, partnered with the Ward 2 Academy to provide high school students the opportunity to participate in Auburn Days once a week in July. The students attended workshops and participated in hands-on experiences with career fields such as engineering, urban forestry and nursing.

During the student's first visit to campus, Ambria Berksteiner, an industrial engineering student, provided a workshop on how the STEM field is incorporated into daily life. The students were given tours of various labs within the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering, and they were particularly fascinated with the 3D printing lab.

The second and third visits included a tour of the School of Nursing, a lesson on dressing for success and a lesson on the urban forestry board by Michelle Cole, coordinator in the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences.

The students participated in an entrepreneurship workshop presented by Messiah Williams, a junior in interdisciplinary studies; Jarette Maye, a graduate student in



master of social work; and Jonathan Walker, a graduate student in the education degree program.

The students enjoyed the exhibits at the Jules Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art during the final Auburn Day visit. They observed the artwork and learned about the history of brothers Roger and Greg Brown, both born and raised in Opelika. While at the museum, they created their own artwork, which was displayed during their end of the summer performance at the Ward 2 Academy.

CEOE will continue to partner with the Ward 2 Academy on various other initiatives throughout the year.





# Outreach News

## Office of Professional and Continuing Education Welcomes New Staff Members

**Carlie Cave** joined the Office of Professional and Continuing Education, or OPCE, in January as a program developer for Auburn Youth Programs. She received her undergraduate degree in 2016 and graduate degree in 2019 in human development and family studies from Auburn University. Cave works with campus partners to coordinate academic learning camps. Prior to joining OPCE, she worked in various roles in youth programming.



**Rebecca Gibson** joined OPCE in January as a program developer for Auburn Youth Programs. She received her undergraduate degree in biology from Valdosta State University in 2014 and her master's degree in fisheries, aquaculture and aquatic sciences from Auburn in 2019. Gibson works with off-campus partners to coordinate client camps for Auburn Youth Programs, including cheer and dance camps and the summer reading program.



**Tammy Pannell** joined OPCE in June as an administrative support associate. Pannell is a native of Opelika, Alabama, and earned her associate's degree from Southern Union State Community College. She brings more than 20 years of experience in customer service and administrative support to her role.



## Bishop appointed Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Interim Director

**Scott Bishop** was named interim director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Auburn University, or OLLI at Auburn, in the Division of University Outreach, effective April 15.



“Scott Bishop brings to the interim director’s role extensive experience working in adult education, including developing and implementing a diverse set of educational programs,” said Royrickers Cook, vice president for University Outreach.

Bishop worked for 15 years in Auburn University’s Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art developing academic and public programs and facilitating campus and community partnerships. She earned a bachelor of fine arts in philosophy and a master of arts in English from Auburn University. She studied art history at the graduate level at Emory University. Raised in Elmore County, she has been a resident of Auburn since 1974. She and her husband, associate professor emeritus of art Gary Wagoner, raised two daughters who attended Auburn City Schools, one of whom is a graduate of Auburn University.

“In my work at Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art, I have had the opportunity to get to know OLLI and many of its members,” said Bishop. “I am excited for this opportunity to work for and with this vibrant community of lifelong learners.”

Bishop succeeded Ileeia Cobb, who had served as OLLI director since 2016.

## All In All Pink Breast Cancer Awareness Event 2019



## Baker Named Interim Executive Director of Auburn University's Government and Economic Development Institute

**LaKami Baker** has been named interim executive director of Auburn University's Government and Economic Development Institute, or GEDI, in the Division of University Outreach. Her appointment was effective Aug. 1.

"Dr. Baker brings both outreach and corporate management experience to GEDI as well as a passion to assist communities across Alabama," said Royrickers Cook, vice president for University Outreach. "GEDI is a premier resource for the state's economic and community development; Dr. Baker's base of experience will be an asset to the institute in fulfilling this mission."

Baker is an associate professor of management and is managing director of the Lowder Center for Family Business and Entrepreneurship in the Harbert College of Business. She received her bachelor of science in electrical engineering degree from Prairie View A&M University in 1991 and a master of science in technology commercialization from the University of Texas at Austin in 1999. She completed her doctorate from the University of Texas at San Antonio in 2007. Prior to her academic career, Baker worked at 3M Corporation.

In addition to her corporate and teaching experience, Baker serves as a business expert on an Auburn PAIR grant awarded \$1.275 million to develop and commercialize biomedical implants and rehabilitative orthotics using additive manufacturing. She is also a co-principal investigator with GEDI on a \$590,000 U.S. Department of Commerce grant to develop an EDA University Center at Auburn focused on advancing regional commercialization efforts, entrepreneurship, innovation, business expansion and developing a high-skilled regional workforce in Alabama.

"I am excited for the opportunity to serve as the interim executive director of GEDI," noted Baker. "I'm looking forward to working with our civic and elected officials across the state to help expand Auburn's efforts to drive and support policy, economic development and entrepreneurship growth initiatives that increase economic prosperity and improve quality of life for the state of Alabama and its communities."

Baker succeeds Joe Summers, GEDI executive director emeritus, who recently retired.



## University Outreach's Government and Economic Development Institute hosts Intensive Economic Development Training Course

University Outreach's Government and Economic Development Institute, or GEDI, is a leading provider of the state's economic development education and training. This is the 35th year that Auburn University has hosted the Intensive Economic Development Training Course. The class of 2019 included 57 participants from the Southeast region.

The course is divided into two one-week sessions and introduces participants to all phases of economic development. Program leaders and faculty have proven success in economic development practices and techniques. Instructors represent the field's most effective practitioners from throughout the state and nation.

The first week of the Intensive Course was held July 8-12 and was accredited by the International Economic Development Council. It fulfilled one of the prerequisites for those who wish to take the exam for the Certified Economic Developer designation. It provided an intensive overview of general economic development concepts and principles.

The second week was conducted Sept. 9-12 and focused on important issues and resources. It was valuable to economic developers and community leaders practicing in Alabama. The second week included field trips to the Auburn Industrial Park, East Chase Shopping Center and Hyundai Motor Manufacturing Alabama. These hands-on experiences allowed participants to directly experience the impact of these businesses and industries on Alabama's economy.

For more information, go to [auburn.edu/gedi](http://auburn.edu/gedi).



**Class of 2019:** Intensive Economic Development Training Course at Auburn University





**CULTUREBUMP™**

## **Auburn Outreach App Promotes Cultural Understanding**

Auburn University's Center for Educational Outreach and Engagement, or CEOE, has launched Culture Bump®: Learn to Connect Beyond Differences, a new mobile device app fostering cross-cultural understanding. CEOE, a unit in Auburn University's Division of University Outreach, provides academic, social and cultural experiences promoting college and career readiness for Alabama youth.

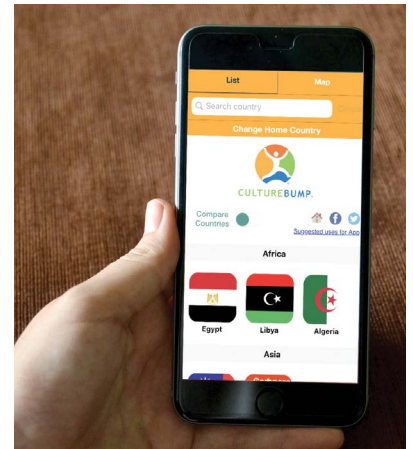
CEOE's Culture Bump® App provides users with quick and easy to understand solutions to common cultural situations people face throughout the world. The app is based on the "Culture Bump® Approach," a unique and effective cultural and communication training program which has taught thousands of students, business people and groups to better connect with people around them.

The Culture Bump® App represents a paradigm shift in common methods for teaching and understanding cultural differences. Instead of focusing on the differences between countries, the app uses universal similarities between cultures as a way to highlight the common elements shared among cultures. This information design allows users to simultaneously understand not only points of difference but also points of connection between themselves and others of differing backgrounds.

The Culture Bump® App currently hosts over 25 different country profiles which examine how each country handles specific situations, such as being late to a class or unprepared for a test. The app allows the user to compare cultural differences in multiple countries simultaneously. "Culture Bump™ redefines cultural understanding to give people the tools and the confidence to interact with anyone anywhere," says CEOE director Stacey Nickson.

The cultural data for the Culture Bump® App was collected at the Language and Culture Center, an intensive ESL center located on the University of Houston campus, which has served over 20,000 students from 79 different countries since its establishment in 1975. International students from six LCC classes were surveyed through purposive sampling for a one-year period to build a foundation of accurate and authentic cultural information for each country on the app. CEOE collaborated with Cheryl Seals, an Auburn professor in the Department of Computer Science and Software Engineering, and her graduate student team, Ahmad Safdar, Ai-Te Kuo and Tian Xia, to bring the cultural information to life with a user-friendly, intuitive mobile application design.

The Culture Bump® App is ISO and Android compatible and can be found on the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store. For more information on the Culture Bump® App and training programs, visit CEOE's website at [www.auburn.edu/outreach/ceoe/culturebumptraining.htm](http://www.auburn.edu/outreach/ceoe/culturebumptraining.htm).



## **TEACH FOR OLLI!**

*Course proposals for all terms are being accepted now.*

Deadline to submit a course proposal for spring 2020 term is Feb. 7, 2020.

Fall 2019 term: Sept. 16 - Nov. 7

Spring 2020 term: April 6 - May 14

Winter 2020 term: Jan. 27 - March 12

Summer 2020: June 8 - 26 (three weeks)

## Essamuah-Quansah Recognized with Emerging Continuing Education Leader Award

Elizabeth Essamuah-Quansah, director of Auburn University Outreach Global, was honored with the Emerging Continuing Education Leader Award at the University Professional and Continuing Education Association's 2019 South Regional Conference in Orlando.

Essamuah-Quansah received the award for her innovative global outreach programs for faculty, students and staff. Outreach Global is a unit under University Outreach.

"In her four years at the university, she has significantly expanded University Outreach's initial international program initiative into a full-fledged divisional office with an impressive array of continuing education and outreach programming," said Royrickers Cook, vice president for University Outreach.

"Dr. Essamuah-Quansah's energy, enthusiasm and vision for adult and continuing education has driven global program expansion over four continents and growing."

As director, Essamuah-Quansah oversees an extensive body of training exchanges and continuing educational programs between Outreach Global and academic departments. Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, as well as educational institutions and governmental agencies across several countries in Africa, Central and South America and Asia.

As a regional award recipient, she is eligible for consideration in UPCEA's national award program in 2020.



Elizabeth Essamuah-Quansah received the 2019 UPCEA South Emerging Continuing Education Leader award.

## Elder Planning Counselor Designation Available as Online Program

The Elder Planning Counselor, or EPC, designation is available as an online program through the Office of Professional and Continuing Education. The EPC designation seeks to help working professionals enhance their understanding of the aging population by focusing on the evolving needs of this segment of Americans. The program prepares professionals, including insurance and financial advisors, real estate agents, attorneys, CPAs, accountants, caregivers, medical personnel and those who work with the 55-and-older age group with a total needs approach for providing advice to the aging population.

Offered in partnership with the American Initiative for Elder Planning Studies, the programs cover aging and health issues, the social and psychological issues associated with long term care, financial issues and ethics.

For more information, go to [aub.ie/epcauburn](http://aub.ie/epcauburn).





# Experiences at The Auburn Plainsman Allow Students to Excel at Auburn and Beyond

Lily Jackson's experience at The Auburn Plainsman, Auburn University's student newspaper, gave her the skills necessary to land a prestigious internship and job after graduation.

Jackson, who interned at the Chronicle of Higher Education and currently works for AL.com said, "The Plainsman was a perfect opportunity to try everything. I've got a diverse set of clips that allow me to apply for a variety of jobs, and in today's job market, I'd say that's what is necessary."

Founded in 1893, The Auburn Plainsman is among the most-decorated college newspaper, including more than 20 national Pacemaker Awards, which are given to the top college newspapers in the country. It's editorially independent, and it doesn't receive funding from the university or the Student Government Association. The Auburn Plainsman raises revenue through ad sales.



better," he said. "That's the fun part of this job. Failing—that's how I've learned and that's what I gained at this incredible paper. The success comes through that, I think.

"Every Monday, at our weekly budget meetings, I get to see a room full of the most talented, hungry journalists out there, all eager to tell great stories, all consistently punching above their weight," he said. "It's hard to not be inspired and motivated by that. And all of it is for our readers—that's the crux of this paper. I'm looking forward to continuing The Plainsman's excellence, and I can't wait to give readers some damn good journalism."

That drive, determination and goal to continually adapt is what makes The Auburn Plainsman successful. The paper's recent awards include the Online Pacemaker from the Associated Collegiate Press, three first-place awards from the Alabama Press Association, Best Sports Writer in the South from the Society for Professional Journalists' Green Eyeshade Awards and two first-place awards in the Society for Professional Journalists' regional Mark of Excellence competition.

"The Plainsman comes with a rich network of former employees who love to help out spunky young journos," Jackson says. "I'm beyond grateful for those connections. Working for The Plainsman, in every way, was the best decision I ever made."

To read the latest edition, go to [theplainsman.com](http://theplainsman.com).

# The BIG Event Helps Shape Auburn's Newest Fulbright Scholar and the Community

The BIG Event is a one-day student led community service project. Over the past three years, the event has served 536 homes, churches and businesses throughout the Auburn area with 3,962 student volunteers.

Julia Dickenson began volunteering with The BIG Event during her freshman year and became president of The BIG Event in 2018. She initially joined The BIG Event because she liked that it brought Auburn students together to serve throughout the community.

Dickenson graduated in May with concurrent degrees in biomedical sciences and psychology as a University Honors Scholar, and she was recently awarded a prestigious Fulbright grant. She will relocate to Poland in the fall to teach in the Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Program where she will teach English to aspiring scientists in bachelor's and master's programs in Polish universities.

"When you drive around Auburn on the day of The BIG Event and see everyone out volunteering, I think it's really cool that it's so accessible for students that might not be involved in community service otherwise," she said. "I think it shows students how much of an impact they can have with just a few hours of their time. It also builds such a connection between the students and the community."

Dickenson's love for serving others directed her to the field of medicine. She has been accepted to the University of Tennessee College of Medicine and will attend medical school after the Fulbright Program concludes. She says her experience leading and serving others at Auburn helped shape her personally and professionally.

"Involvement in any capacity teaches you to work well with a group and work toward the goals of the group," said Dickenson. "When I got the opportunity to

be in leadership positions at Auburn, I began to learn how to lead my peers, communicating consistently and delegating tasks. Everything I learned in my roles in involvement bettered me as a person and communicator, and these are definitely lessons that will serve me well in the future."

The BIG Event has served the community since 2003 and takes place on a Saturday during spring semester. In the 16 years since it began, the one-day event has grown exponentially. In 2019, The BIG Event launched a new system to more easily communicate with the hundreds of jobsites and student volunteers.

As students spend their Saturday performing basic yardwork, painting and cleaning, the impact they have on the community is evident.

One homeowner said, "Words can't begin to express my gratitude to The BIG Event and the fifteen amazing young men and women who worked so hard at my house. They came at a time when I was totally overwhelmed with the tasks at hand. Everyone worked so diligently, were so polite and gracious and remained enthusiastic until the end of the job."

The BIG Event will be held on March 28, 2020. Registration for jobsites and volunteers will open during the spring semester. To learn more, go to [auburn.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/bigevent](http://auburn.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/bigevent).





30 plus years of service

# Joe Sumners Named GEDI Executive Director Emeritus

Joe A. Sumners, executive director of University Outreach's Government and Economic Development Institute, or GEDI, retired July 1 with over 30 years of service in outreach and instruction. He was recently awarded emeritus status in recognition of his achievements.

Sumners is well respected for his work with communities and local governments in Alabama and for his extensive experience assisting communities with strategic planning and civic engagement initiatives. His contributions to economic and community development are numerous, and his legacy will be felt long after he retires.

"I have loved having a job and a career that has allowed me to make a difference in a state that I love, representing a university that I love. I can't imagine a better job," Sumners explained.

"Dr. Sumners' record in education and public service has been exemplary. He has worked tirelessly to improve the state's economic capacity and governmental excellence. His leadership has contributed greatly to the advancement of Auburn's outreach mission, as well as enhancing our reputation as a land-grant university," said Royrickers Cook, vice president for University Outreach and associate provost.

Sumners previously served for 15 years as director of the Auburn University Economic and Community Development Institute and seven years as training director for the Auburn University Center for Governmental Services. He is the author of numerous publications on the topic of rural economic and community development, including "Beyond the Interstate: The Crisis in Rural Alabama" and "Crossroads and Connections: Strategies for Rural Alabama." He wrote the chapter, "Politics and Economic Development in the Southern Black Belt," for the Oxford Handbook of Southern Politics. He coordinated a multi-year Kettering Foundation research project in Alabama's Black Belt and published articles that focused on the link

between civic engagement and community economic prosperity and authored the publication "Community Questions: Engaging Citizens to Address Community Concerns."

He has served as a member of the Auburn University graduate faculty and taught the graduate seminar, "Economic Development and Competition," as the core course in the university's graduate minor in economic development. Sumners previously taught at the University of Georgia, the University of Alabama at Birmingham and Stephen F. Austin State University.



He served as a technical advisor to the Alabama

Commission on Tax and Fiscal Policy Reform, the Alabama Task Force on Economically Distressed Counties, Alabama's Black Belt Action Commission, Alabama Rural Action Commission and Alabama Small Business Task Force. He is a founding board member of the Alabama Communities of Excellence Program and has served on the Board of Directors for the David Mathews Center for Civic Life.

"They have enriched my life in ways they will never know," said Sumners.

Sumners is originally from Creswell, Alabama. He received his bachelor of science summa cum laude and master of art degrees from Auburn University and his doctorate in political science from the University of Georgia.

# Representing Conservation and Ecology Around the World

The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the College of Sciences and Mathematics Robert Boyd traveled almost 9,000 miles to Ekaterinburg, Russia. Boyd's experiences in Russia embodied the line of the Auburn Creed that says, "I believe in the human touch, which cultivates sympathy with my fellow men and mutual helpfulness and brings happiness for all."

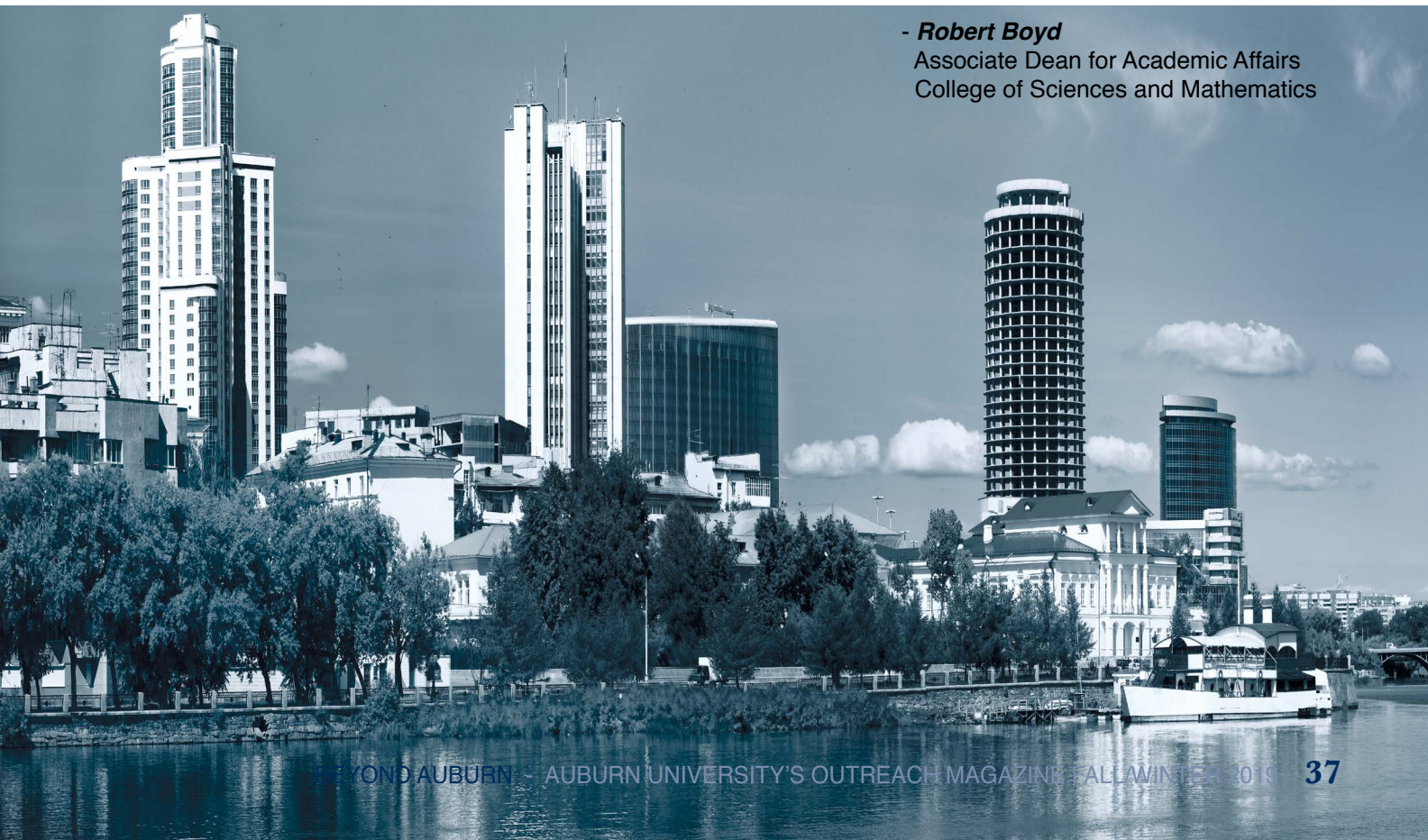
"When I arrived in Russia, my hosts were scrambling to wrap up their academic semester at Ural Federal University," Boyd shared. "Even though they were busy, they took the time out of their schedule to help me have the best stay possible, and I appreciated this as an example of the human touch that is valued by the Auburn Creed."

Boyd gave a presentation called, "Exploring nickel hyperaccumulation: A plant elemental defense." He is

part of the global committee that organizes and plans conferences on serpentine ecology.

*"Next year, I will have the chance to return to Russia and represent the people that make up our incredible university once more," Boyd said. "I believe in the human touch, and I believe that it is the most genuine and sincere way to build relationships even 9,000 miles from home."*

- Robert Boyd  
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs  
College of Sciences and Mathematics





“It is an absolute honor to be part of an international scientific forum that provided me with the opportunity to proudly represent Auburn University on the other side of the world,” explained Boyd.

In addition to working at the university, Boyd visited a biological station in the Klyuchi village where he was able to experience Russian culture.

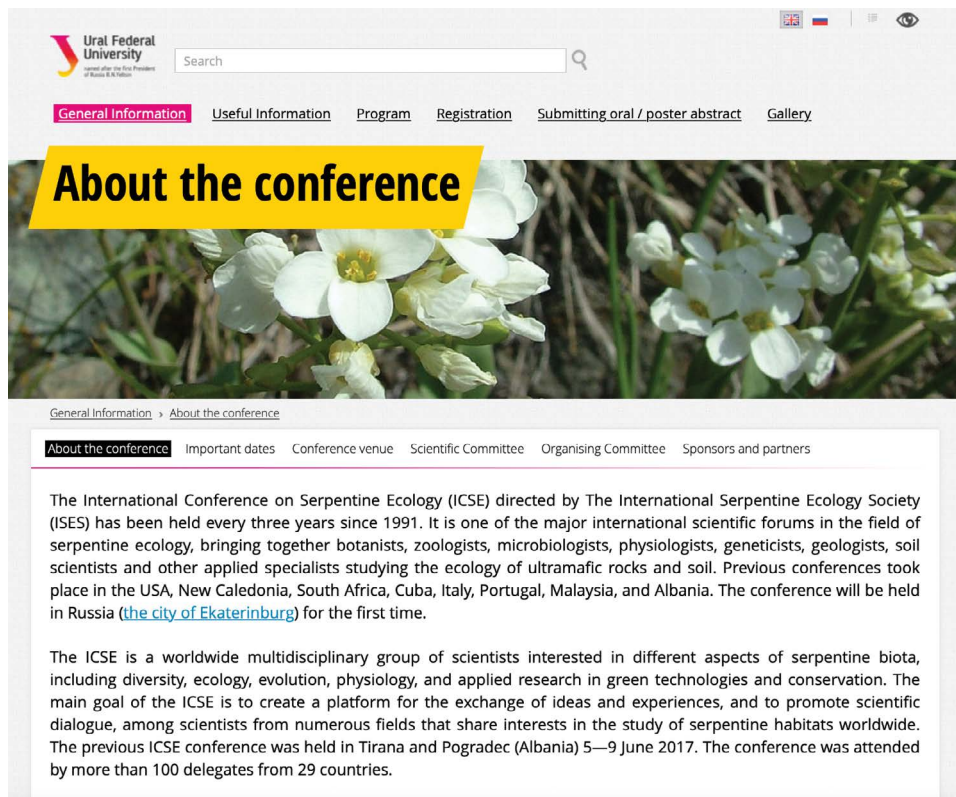
“Uncle John, as he was lovingly known, made everyone working at the field station a lunch of plov, pronounced plof, which is a delightful Russia comfort food similar to rice pilaf,” Boyd said. “I also had the chance to try their version of a homemade fish stew.”

Although the language barrier could be intimidating, Boyd enjoyed having lunch with faculty from Ural Federal University and appreciated the time to create connections while sharing a meal.

“I even had the chance to sample kvass, a well-known drink made from dark Russian bread soaked in water and strained,” Boyd added. “Our host, Uncle John, was very proud to share this homemade drink with visitors from America.”

Boyd gave each of the members of his host team artwork with a personalized meaning.

“I gave each of my Russian hosts a signed and framed copy of a drawing of *Melanotrichus boydi*, a new species of plant bug discovered in 2001, as a gift to thank them for their efforts,” explained Boyd. “The drawing was done by a talented student in one of my classes a number of years ago and is on display here in my office.”



10th International Conference on Serpentine Ecology. Source: <https://icse10.urfu.ru/en/>

Boyd will be returning to Russia in June 2020 for the 10th International Conference on Serpentine Ecology at Ural Federal University where he will provide a retrospective talk about the accomplishments of this group.

“Next year, I will have the chance to return to Russia and represent the people that make up our incredible university once more,” Boyd said. “I believe in the human touch, and I believe that it is the most genuine and sincere way to build relationships even 9,000 miles from home.”







[www.auburn.edu/outreach](http://www.auburn.edu/outreach)





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