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How Auburn Stacks Up

Average salary for assistant professors by academic year



Source: Institutional Research and Assessment

www.ocm.auburn.edu/au_report/aureport.html

AU FOR THE FACULTY AND STAFF OF AUBURN UNIVERSITY report



Batting for Oscar

Nels Madsen, in the foreground, has not “gone Hollywood,” but Hollywood has found the AU professor. Madsen was a key player on a software design team that won an Oscar for advancing the technology of film. The black-clad batter in the background sports strategically placed lights in a process that provided the breakthrough in film technology. See page 2 for more on Madsen’s role in winning the Oscar.

Dean gives keynote address on AU role in ‘War on Hunger’ at India conference

June Henton, dean of AU’s College of Human Sciences, will discuss Auburn’s role in the global “War on Hunger” in the keynote address at a United Nations-affiliated conference in India on Tuesday.

Henton will speak at the inaugural session of the Global Compact Regional Conclave in the Indian city of Jamshedpur.

Launched by United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan in 1999, the Global Compact brings together business leaders from around the world to discuss initiatives such as human rights, labor, environmental responsibility and anti-corruption. The Global Compact, with more than 1,800 participating companies, is the largest corporate-responsibility initiative in the world.

The theme of the conclave is “Key to Business Sustainability: Reducing Poverty, Fostering Entrepreneurial Development and Employment.”

Henton’s remarks on corporate social responsi-

bility and business sustainability will focus on the role of the college, university, state and nation in fostering social responsibility and sustainability through educational, research, and outreach programs. A key component of her presentation will be the AU/UN World Food Programme partnership featuring Auburn’s student-led World Food Programme Initiative.

“We face a great challenge in higher education to help students better understand the issues of sustainability facing us today which have the potential to do irreparable harm to us as individuals and to the world community,” Henton said.

“By participating in this international forum focused on corporate social responsibility, I will have a unique opportunity to showcase to the world what Auburn students have worked so hard to achieve in the ‘War on Hunger’ campaign and what they hope to accomplish in the future,” the Human Sciences dean added.

'Lord of the Rings,' 'Polar Express'

Madsen wins Oscar for film technology

An Auburn faculty member has something in common with Clint Eastwood, Jamie Foxx and other major Hollywood names. Each won an Oscar in February's Academy Awards ceremonies.

Nels Madsen, an associate professor of mechanical engineering in AU's Samuel Ginn College of Engineering, shared this year's Oscar for technical achievement with three software designers in the entertainment industry for a breakthrough that produces realistic motion in animated scenes and special effects.

"What I believe the Academy is recognizing us for...is the utilization of marker location."
Nels Madsen

The results of their work can be seen in such major motion pictures as "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy and "The Polar Express" in which the motion of computer-drawn characters mimics the movements of actual humans. Madsen and computer scientists from Motion Reality Inc. (MRI) developed the technology that made the characters motion more fluid and lifelike than animated characters of movies in the past.

Motion capture is the recording of movement – from simple change in body position to complex contortions of the face and muscle masses – for real-time or delayed analysis. Markers placed on a subject enable multiple video cameras to monitor movement. The video images are digitized, the markers are recognized and a three-dimensional computer model of the subject is derived.

Madsen shared the award with co-inventors Vaughn Cato, Matthew Madden and Bill Lorton. The three former MRI software designers are now at Giant Studios, an MRI affiliate that licenses technology to Hollywood studios. The design team

received the award in a ceremony in California two weeks before Oscar Night on Feb. 27.

"What I believe the Academy is recognizing us for, what we do so differently than other groups in this area, and why the recognition is for software, is the utilization of marker location," said Madsen, adding that the traditional use of markers is to construct a stick image of the subject by placing markers on each joint.

Madsen said the traditional approach was unsatisfactory for many animators and filmmakers. "You can't capture subtle movement because you get a lot of incompatibilities," he explained. "The body is not connected together very well."

Atlanta-based MRI takes a systems approach that enables a more comprehensive capture of motion. More markers in more places on the body are viewed simultaneously, and the software uses fundamental knowledge of body movement to deduce the most likely associated human configuration. Madsen said this approach to the body as a single integrated system as opposed to a collection of unrelated elements enhances accuracy and real-time performance. The software also enables captured human motion to be applied to an animated character, making the character more visually appealing.

"You can use human motion to drive a model of something else," Madsen said, "opening the door to all kinds of things you don't get with the marker-by-marker, point-by-point approach."

Madsen said these software features helped prompt director Peter Jackson to hire Giant Studios for work on "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy, which won an unprecedented three consecutive Academy Awards for visual effects. The third installment, "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King," also earned the 2003 Academy Award for Best Picture.

Faculty vote this week for new officers

Auburn faculty will vote by computer from Thursday through Monday for leaders of the University Faculty in 2006.

In the second year of electronic voting, faculty will cast ballots for chair-elect and secretary-elect of general faculty and its representative organization, the University Senate. The four candidates were nominated by a committee of the University Faculty.

The Senate will provide details of voting procedures to all persons with faculty status at AU.

Candidates for chair-elect are Richard Penaskovic of the Department of Philosophy and Christa Slaton of the Department of Political Science. Can-

didates for secretary-elect are Virginia O'Leary of Psychology and Kathryn Flynn of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences. Their statements and biographical information were in the Feb. 28 AU Report and are online at the 2005 Archives web site under www.ocm.auburn.edu/au_report/aureport.html.

Winners will be announced at the University Faculty meeting at 3 p.m. March 15 in the Broun Hall auditorium. At that meeting, Conner Bailey, the 2004-05 chair-elect, will succeed Willie D. Larkin as chair, and Patricia Duffy will succeed Debra Cobia as secretary. Larkin will then succeed John Mouton as faculty adviser to the Board of Trustees for a one-year term.

Upcoming

Continued

- Through March 13: Rodin sculpture by August Rodin and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation of Fine Art.

Tuesday,

- Meeting: University Senate, 3 p.m.

Wednesday,

- Gallery Talk: "Rodin and Michelangelo" by the curator of exhibitions, 2 p.m., J. M. Smith Fine Art.
- Professor Perspective: "Rodin in the context of AU Art Department, Smith Museum of Art."
- Environmental Institute Seminar: "The Economic Benefits of Bioenergy" by, 4 p.m., auditorium, Draughon Center.
- Faculty Recital: Bill Schaffer, AU Faculty Recital, 7:30 p.m., Goodwin Hall.

Monday,

- Next AU Report.

Tuesday,

- Distance Learning Seminar: "Orientation: Keys to Student Success," Prasanthi Pallapu at pallapu@auburn.edu, 10 a.m., Foy 202.
- Meeting: University Faculty, 3 p.m. Includes installation of new officers.

Wednesday,

- Professional Development Seminar: "Professional Development Seminar: Outreach Scholarship," Vicki Wilson, noon, Foy 202.
- Jay Sanders Film Festival: Top of the Mountain Student Video Competition, 7 p.m., Foy Center.



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