

AUBURN UNIVERSITY WAR ON HUNGER

In 2004, Auburn University (AU) was selected by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) as its lead academic partner in a newly launched War on Hunger student campaign. With hunger on the rise and more than 850 million people suffering from chronic hunger worldwide, the need for new action strategies is clear. What is also clear is that students in the United States need to become more aware of the conditions of the world in which they live. They need to better understand the concept of sustainability and those circumstances which have the potential to do irreparable harm to us as individuals and to the world community. They need to internalize the serious nature of complex problems like global warming and world hunger. And, finally, they need to be inspired to believe that they have the ability to make a difference for those less privileged than themselves both in this country and abroad. The War on Hunger has offered Auburn University the opportunity to develop a best practice in international programming and to create a learning environment where intellectual discovery and social responsibility converge in pursuit of a sustainable world.

- Our **vision** was that AU would become the catalyst mobilizing universities across the nation and around the globe to make fighting hunger a core value of higher education institutions worldwide.
- Our **mission** was to create an academic hunger model suitable for replication or adaptation by universities in the US and abroad.
- The **founding goal** of the campaign was to develop and implement an action agenda for students and faculty that encompasses: **hunger awareness and consciousness-raising, fundraising, advocacy, and academic initiatives** – www.auburn.edu/hunger.

AU's War on Hunger is led by a Committee of 19 students, reflective of the 19 cents a day required by WFP to feed a school child in the developing world in 2004. The committee is composed of one representative from every school, college, and major student organization, each supported by an academic advisor. These students are responsible for organizing War on Hunger subcommittees within each respective unit to lead the campus campaign. The official launch of AU's War on Hunger occurred in October 2004 and included a benefit concert, the announcement of the student logo contest winner, and presentation of the Committee of 19 at the AU vs Arkansas football game before 86,000 fans.

Since 2004, AU students have sponsored a variety of awareness, advocacy, and fundraising activities that target both domestic and global hunger. By way of illustration, a few highlights include: Eat Less – Feed More; I Sacked Hunger; Annual Empty Bowls Dinner and Auction; AU Can; Just Skip It; This One's for the Girls; Bring a Turkey to Work Day; Hunger Banquets; Peace Dinners; Advocacy Training Workshops; Food for Thought; Beat Bama Food Drive; Clean Out Your Cupboard; and Hunger Awareness Week. In addition, AU's War on Hunger has been cited in the *Congressional Record*, presented with the WFP Humanitarian Award, recognized by the Governor of Alabama, and featured in a variety of media outlets. To date, AU has raised more than \$50,000 for global hunger relief and contributed more than 600,000 pounds of food to the local Food Bank.

Hunger, as an academic initiative spanning teaching, research, and outreach, continues to gain strength at AU. For example, the Honors College chose hunger as the topic of its Fall Freshman Lyceum in 2007; an introductory course in hunger studies will be launched in Fall 2008; a two-year statewide 4-H research/outreach project focusing on hunger was launched in Winter 2008; a hunger studies minor and living/learning community are planned for Fall 2009; an Institute on Global Hunger is under review; and WFP has assigned a senior staff member to AU for two years to help move UFWH to the next level.

Following is a chronology of national and international presentations that have been instrumental in promoting Auburn University's War on Hunger and the *Universities Fighting World Hunger* alliance:

- (March 2005) Invited presentation of the *AU Hunger Model* at the UN Global Compact Regional Conclave in Jamshedpur, India.
- (November 2005) Presentation of the *AU Hunger Model*, with two Committee of 19 students, at the annual meeting of the National Association of State Universities and Land-grant Colleges (NASULGC) in Washington, DC.
- (February 2006) First University Hunger Summit held at AU with representatives from 29 universities from across the country. Reached agreement to form an alliance called *Universities Fighting World Hunger* (UFWH) and to sponsor a national launch on World Food Day, October 16, 2006. Keynote addresses presented by NASULGC President Peter McPherson, former WFP Executive Director Catherine Bertini, and WFP Student Ambassador Lauren Bush.
- (October 2006) National launch of UFWH and press conference at Georgetown University including key hunger activists (e.g., Ambassador Tony Hall, Bread for the World President David Beckmann, Peter McPherson, James Morris, AL Congressman Spencer Bachus). Premiere of hunger documentary, "To a Willing Mind: Universities Fighting World Hunger" produced at AU as part of FAO's World Food Day Teleconference.
- (February 2007) AU site of 2nd Annual University Hunger Summit with participation of numerous US universities, corporations, and leading NGOs. Featured speakers included former Congresswoman Eva Clayton, WFP Executive Director James Morris, Alliance to End Hunger Executive Director Max Finberg, and global hunger consultant David Lambert.
- (April 2007) Presented an overview of *Universities Fighting World Hunger* to administrators of more than 40 member institutions of the Association of American College and University Programs in Italy (AACUPI) at AU's overseas campus in Ariccia, Italy.
- (November 2007) Update on UFWH at the NASULGC Annual Meeting in New York City featuring an address by former South Dakota Senator George McGovern.
- (February 2008) 3rd Annual University Hunger Summit at George Washington University was co-hosted by GWU, AU, and the Alliance to End Hunger. Distinguished speakers included: WFP Executive Director Josette Sheeran; KS Senator Pat Roberts; MA Congressman Jim McGovern; Gates Foundation Representative Catherine Bertini; and Congresswoman Eva Clayton.
- (May 2008) Presented UFWH as a best practice in international programming at the annual meeting of NAFSA, Association of International Educators, in Washington, DC.
- (February 2009) 4th University Hunger Summit to be held at George Washington University.
- (April 2009) UFWH Inaugural European Conference planned as a part of the 30th anniversary celebration of AACUPI in Rome, Italy.

To date, more than 70 institutions of higher education across the US and Canada have joined *Universities Fighting World Hunger*. For more information, see www.universitiesfightingworldhunger.com.