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Experts, scientists converge at AUM

BY ADRIENNE NETTLES • ANETTLES@GANNETT.COM • NOVEMBER 3, 2009

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Scientists, engineers and other industry leaders from around the globe are visiting Auburn Montgomery for five days this week for the 12th annual Society for Design and Process Science Transdisciplinary Conference.

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Guest speakers at the conference include Oktay Sinanoglu of Yale University, Eugene H. Spafford of Purdue University and Raymond A. Paul with the Department of Defense. AUM's Informatics Institute is serving as the host of the conference, which kicked off Sunday.

The conference will focus on informatics, cyberspace research and education, according to a news statement on the event.

Mehmet Sahinoglu, director of the Informatics Institute, said in the statement that Montgomery was chosen as this year's location for the SDPS conference because of its strategic importance of carrying the banner of Air Force-related Informatics research of cyberspace and due to its pleasant climate, historical Southern sightseeing spots and genuine hospitality.

The conference's draw to the international community centers on it being an opportunity for international scientists and thinkers to present their cases in an interdisciplinary framework and to brainstorm viable solutions to the current problems of our times such as security, communications, management or education, school officials said.

"Through this global event, AUM has captured what might be an effective chance to open a new page on the brink of 2010's fresh decade, to be proactive in the flow of international trends

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regarding the two key words of this gathering, Informatics and cyberspace, which are applicable to a slew of disciplines," Sahinoglu said.

"International guests bring global thinking patterns that tend to synergize with the existing trends and create an opportunity to exchange working ideas since one nation's problems may be another's solution," he added.

He hopes international guests will return home with knowledge and tools that will enable them to contribute even more to the vibrant cyberspace community, Sahinoglu said.

As part of the conference, out-of-town guests will take a tour of the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts followed by a Chancellor's reception at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, a riverboat dinner cruise on the Harriott II and sightseeing and dinner in downtown Montgomery.

Carolyn Kinney, spokeswoman for AUM, said the conference is bringing international attention to the university and Montgomery.

"This is a really big deal for us," she said. The conference, which ends on Thursday, is dedicated in memory of Dr. Percy Levon Julian (1899-1975), an African-American Montgomery native and one of the first transformative scientists, a visionary and transdisciplinary, Sahinoglu said.

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