A brand new college degree that focuses on rural America will begin this fall at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, Dr. David Bridges, president of ABAC, told members of the Dothan (Ala.) Rotary Club on June 29 that the degree is “the only one of its kind in the country.”

“There are a lot of programs out there that focus on urban studies,” Bridges said. “But this program concentrates entirely on rural life.”

Longtime Dothan Rotarian Gene Ragan invited Bridges to speak to the club about the college and the state of agriculture. Ragan is an ABAC alumnus who received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the ABAC Alumni Association in March. He said he rolled his Harley Davidson motorcycle to a stop at the college in September of 1941 with all his possessions tied to the back with a plow line.

Bridges said students can pick from three areas of concentration in the new Rural Studies degree.

“Students can choose from Business and Economic Development, Arts and Culture, and Community and Social Affairs,” Bridges said. “We think the internships will be a big part of this degree as well.”

Board of Regents Approve Promotions For ABAC Faculty Members

The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia recently approved promotions for seven faculty members at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College effective Aug. 1, 2009.

Avijit Kar and Lee Ann Taylor were promoted to the rank of assistant professor from instructor. Dr. John Farrar, Jeffrey Newberry, Dr. Brian Ray, and Dr. William Reynolds were promoted to the rank of associate professor from assistant professor. Dr. Joseph Njoroge was promoted from associate professor to professor.

Kar has been a part of the ABAC faculty since 2006. He received his B.S. in Computer Science from the University of Nebraska and his M.S. in Mathematics from the University of Florida. He teaches in the School of Science and Mathematics.

Taylor earned her B.S. in Accounting and her M.S. in Taxation from the University of Mississippi. She has been a part of the ABAC faculty since 2004 and teaches in the School of Business.

Farrar received his B.S. in Chemistry from Western Kentucky University. He then went on to attain his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Organic Chemistry from Vanderbilt University. He has been a part of the ABAC faculty since 2005 and teaches in the School of Science and Mathematics.

Newberry joined the ABAC faculty in 2006, teaching in the School of Liberal Arts. He received his B.S. and M.S. degrees in English from the University of West Florida.

Ray received a B.S. in Theatre from Yankton College. He continued his education, attaining a M.S. in English from the University of South Dakota. He attained his Ph.D. in English from Middle Tennessee State University. He teaches in the School of Liberal Arts and has been with the college since 2005.

Reynolds has been a member of the ABAC faculty since 2005. He received his B.S. in Liberal Arts and his M.S. in English from Mississippi State University. He attained his Ph.D. in English from Western Michigan University. He teaches in the School of Liberal Arts.

Njoroge received his B.S. in Political Sciences and Economics from the University of Tennessee. He then went on to earn his M.S. in Political Science from Eastern Kentucky and his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Tennessee. Njoroge joined the ABAC faculty in 2000. He teaches in the School of Liberal Arts.

Bridges said ABAC also offers bachelor’s degrees in Diversified Agriculture and Turfgrass and Golf Course Management. About to begin his fourth year as the ABAC President, the Parrott, Ga., native is the only president in the 101-year history of the college to have actually been a student (Class of 1978).

“For over one hundred years now, ABAC has been producing great alumni such as Gene Ragan,” Bridges said.

“With these new degrees and our traditional programs in agriculture, forestry, wildlife and a host of others, we believe that trend will continue.”

PSBO Still Offering Exciting Classes For Children This Summer at ABAC

Blast into Space students work diligently on their papier mache planets. The students also had the opportunity to launch rockets on the last day of class. Check out www.abac.edu/psbo for a complete lists of classes available for the rest of the summer.
Alyssa Simmons has always had a history with Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College. So when she graduated from Cook High School as valedictorian in 2008, she knew exactly where she was heading.

“I had visited the campus many times to attend softball games and just loved the size,” Simmons said. “I come from a small town (Lenox), and I knew I wouldn’t survive on a big campus. ABAC is the perfect fit.”

Simmons received a Foundation Scholarship to attend ABAC as well as an athletic scholarship to play softball with the ABAC Fillies.

“It is awesome that I can receive a top notch education while being a part of an amazing college athletic program and still be close to home,” said Simmons.

The transition to college was not as rocky for Simmons as it is for some. “I already knew my teammates,” Simmons said. “It is so easy to make friends here. The only real adjustment was learning where to go and what to do.”

Simmons’ activities reach out past the borders of ABAC. She is very active in her College and Career group at the Tift Avenue Church of God. Because of her involvement with the Church of God, she hopes to attend the denomination’s four-year institution, Lee University in Cleveland, Tenn.

“Because it is a Church of God school, I will be able to go on study abroad/mission trips overseas,” Simmons said. “If I could go anywhere through these trips, it would be either to Israel to experience the Holy Land or to the Ukraine to study education and get first-hand experience in student teaching.”

Her experiences at ABAC have reached their halfway point, and she has learned a lot in her first year here. “While here, I have learned that I can handle an advanced course load, play a college sport, and still manage to make time for family and friends,” Simmons said. “ABAC has definitely prepared me to attend a four year university and one day to have a career while knowing that I will succeed.”

She plans to attain her B.S. in History and her M.S. in History Education.

“I would love to teach at the high school level and then hopefully at a college. Maybe even at ABAC,” said Simmons.

The deadline for applications for the fall term at ABAC is Aug. 1. Fall semester classes begin Aug. 17.
Tenure Approved By Board For ABAC Faculty Members

The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia recently approved tenure for two faculty members at ABAC effective Aug. 1, 2009. Those receiving tenure are Dr. John Farrar and Dr. Jewrell Rivers.

Farrar received his B.S. in Chemistry from Western Kentucky University. He then attained his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Organic Chemistry from Vanderbilt University. A part of the ABAC faculty since 2005, he will be promoted to associate professor on Aug. 1.

Rivers, associate professor of sociology, has been a member of the ABAC faculty since 2001. He received his B.S. in Psychology and his M.S. in Sociology from Valdosta State University. He then attended Florida State University, where he earned his Ph. D. in Family Relations.

Tenure may be granted to a faculty member who has served at least five years as an assistant professor and has shown the potential for making significant contributions to the college and in the professor’s field.

ABAC Birthdays
9 Caren Gladin
9 Lisa Lishman
9 Kim Ascani
11 Anita Hobbs
11 Robin Crumley
11 Danny Parham, Jr.
11 Bertha Williams
12 Mary Willis
12 Elizabeth Stone

Thank You
To ABAC faculty & staff:
Thank you for the lovely flower arrangement sent to my son, Adam, during his recent hospitalization. We are so blessed that his health problem can be treated with medication.

I am very touched by your many acts of kindness, whether it was an inquiry, phone call, or email message. But more than that, thank you for your prayers. It means so much to work with people who care! Nancy Brannen & Family

Don’t Forget the Upcoming Deadlines!
Financial Aid Application July 15
Fee Payment August 1
August 5

Job Opportunities
- ABAC Police Officer
- Admissions Counselor
- Assistant Professor/Instructor in Psychology and Nursing
- Coordinator of Student Services
- Mentor, Student Services
- Part-time Credentialed Faculty
- Accountant for Grants, Scholarships & Fees

Full position descriptions can be seen at www.abac.edu/hr/employ

Sign Up For PSBO Classes Starting July 13
- ABC—About Crafts & Books
- Algebra Review
- BB Basics
- Computer Mania
- Excellence in Writing
- Fun Math
- Gymnastics Camp
- Pre-Algebra Review
- Sing & Dance Disney
- Swimming

To see complete list of classes visit www.abac.edu/PSBO/

Kilgore Wins Monthly Award
Diane Kilgore, Director of the Public Service and Business Outreach Center, is the June High Five winner. Her nomination by Dr. Eddie Seagle reads: “Diane Kilgore goes that extra mile for ABAC. Whether she is completing a task in PSBO or assisting with an interdisciplinary activity across campus, she gives it her all. Diane is always smiling and very professional. She is a great AMBASSADOR for ABAC. She loves what she does and it shows. Thank you, Diane, for all that you do for ABAC and beyond. We appreciate you. Cheers to you!!! Xie xie!!!”

Staff Forum July 15
The next Staff Forum meeting will be held at 3 p.m. on July 15 in Health Sciences Room 237.

The FOCUS is a weekly electronic publication produced by the Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College Public Relations Office.

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Please submit any information to Ashley at awilliamson@abac.edu by Thursday at noon for inclusion in the next FOCUS.