



FOCUS

ABRAHAM BALDWIN AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

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ABAC Fall Semester Classes Begin Wednesday

Beginning Wednesday, a new small town sets up shop inside Tift County. That's the day when over 3,400 students begin fall semester classes at ABAC.

"There's always a lot of excitement centered on the first day of classes," ABAC President David Bridges said. "I can imagine that all the local merchants are quite excited to have the students back in town."

ABAC administrators, faculty, staff, and returning students planned to spend much of Saturday helping the new students move into their living quarters at ABAC Place and ABAC Lakeside. It is always a time for lots of laughter and a few tears as parents headed back home.

The latest figures from the University System of Georgia indicate that ABAC has an economic impact of \$281,563,172

on Tift and surrounding counties. One huge reason for that impact is that 1,400 students actually live on the campus. That instant population is larger than many small towns in Georgia.

The best news for local businesses is that many of those students are now staying in Tifton longer than ever before because nearly a third of ABAC's students are enrolled in bachelor's degree programs.

"I think more of our students have a start-to-finish mentality," Bridges said. "We have more committed students, and we certainly have more graduates. Our graduation rate is 200 per cent of the state college average."

Over 1,100 ABAC students now major in four-year degree programs ranging from biology to business to wildlife. Those students take at least four years to finish

their bachelor's degrees. That means ABAC students stay in the area twice as long to consume food, buy fuel, purchase clothing, rent apartments, and add dollars to the cash registers of area businesses.

Bridges, who begins his 10th fall term as president, sees an even longer term impact.

"After staying in Tifton for four or more years, you know some of these graduates are going to make friends here, find jobs here, and raise their families here," Bridges said. "They will get involved in churches, the school system, and community events. The intangible benefits are incredible."

In his annual address to the ABAC faculty and staff on Thursday, Bridges encouraged every ABAC employee to engage students and the community in the upcoming year.

"Our goal is to be a destination

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New Faculty at ABAC for 2015 Fall Term

Dr. Gail Dillard, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs, announced 15 new faculty appointments at Thursday's fall conference. She said the new faces in Liberal Arts include Brandi Arrington, Dr. Jay E. Baldwin, Dr. Brian Hanson, Dr. Melissa Slawsky, and Dr. Jess A. Usher.

Arrington, a lecturer in English, received her M.F.A. in fiction from The New School and her B.A. in English from Valdosta State. Baldwin, an assistant professor of communication, has a Ph.D. in culture studies from the University of Arkansas, an M.A. in communication and leadership from Gonzaga, and a B.A. in

English-Communication from Fort Lewis College.

Hanson, an assistant professor of political science, has a Ph.D. and M.A. in political science from the University of Kansas and a B.S. in Political Science/Spanish, English, and International Studies from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Slawsky is an assistant professor of piano and theory who received her Ph.D. in music education and her M.M. in performance piano pedagogy from the University of South Florida. She received a B.M. in music performance from Florida Southern.



Pictured (l to r): Richard Berry, Laura Hanna, Allison Miller, Melissa Slawsky; second row (l to r): Sarah Beach, Brian Hanson, Brandi Arrington; third row (l to r): Stuart Alan Moss, Kennon Deal, Cindia Dubravcic; back row (l to r): Jay Baldwin, Jess Usher.

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Hall Appointed Trustee for ABAC Foundation

Carla Hall, Director of Occupational Medicine at the WorkSmart Occupational Health Clinic at Tift Regional Medical Center, has been appointed to the Board of Trustees of the ABAC Foundation, Inc., according to an announcement today by Foundation Board Chair Lynn Lovett.



Pictured (l-r): New Foundation Trustee Carla Hall and Lynn Lovett, chair of the Board of Trustees.

“Carla is an ABAC alumnus who is very active in the community,” Lovett said. “I know she will do a great job promoting the value of an ABAC education.”

A 1989 graduate of Tift County High School, Hall received her business degree from ABAC in 1991. One special moment during her ABAC career was the night she was crowned Miss ABAC.

“I have very fond memories of ABAC, and I loved the time I spent there,” Hall said. “This is an opportunity for me to serve the very institution which served me so

well during those two years.”

In 1993, Hall graduated from Georgia State University with a bachelor’s degree in business. After a 10-year career with State Farm Insurance, she joined the staff of Tift Regional in 2003.

“ABAC is an integral part of the economic development

of the community, not only because of the students, but also because of the faculty and staff who are employed there,” Hall said. “The partnership which allowed ABAC to bring in the Agrirama breeds education, leadership, and tourism.

“The partnership with the local school system fosters learning and growth. Everywhere I go in the state of Georgia or anywhere around the world, I often run into someone who knows about ABAC.”

Hall served as chair of the board of directors of the Tifton-Tift

County Chamber of Commerce in 2011. She was selected Ambassador of the Year for the Chamber in 2006 and graduated from Leadership Tifton in 2005.

President of the Tiftarea Human Resource/Employer Committee in 2008-09, Hall has also served as a board member for the Tift County Foundation for Educational Excellence and the Kids Advocacy Coalition. She is credentialed by the Georgia Academy for Economic Development and the Insurance Institute of America.

A member of First Baptist Church, Hall has directed the seventh grade Sunday School department since 2009. She has also served as treasurer of the Tiftarea Tidal Wave swim team booster club, technology chair for the Tift County High School swim team booster club, and as a member of the TCHS advisory committee.

Hall and her husband, Gannon, have been married for 21 years. They have two children, Casey, 16, and Ty, 13.

ABAC Volunteers Help with The Summer Feeding Program

What is the significance of the number 37,222? This is the number of meals that ABAC Volunteers served to children at Puckett Park this summer! The Summer Feeding Program was sponsored by USDA and participation was free to all children under the age of 18. Many ABAC volunteers spent their lunch hour this summer handing out meals to children. Shirley Wilson did a wonderful job coordinating ABAC’s schedule of volunteers. The top volunteers were Erin Campbell (Housing), Stoney Hart Corey Langston, Amy Willis, and Shirley Wilson. Great Job ABAC!

Fall classes from page 1

for students who want to come here because it’s the best place to kick-start the rest of their life,” Bridges said. “We’re life developers. We prepare people for life. Every one of you has the potential to change the life of a student at ABAC.

“Graduation is the ultimate prize. When our students walk across that stage at graduation this December and next May, we should celebrate every one of them. That’s the ultimate sign of success for us. You can make a difference in their lives one student at a time.”

Bridges reflected on how much ABAC has changed since he became the 10th president in the history of the college on July 1,

2006.

“We were a two-year college then,” Bridges said. “Now we are a four-year college. We had 853 students living on campus. Now we have 1,400 living on campus. We had no Greek life. Now we have fraternities and sororities. We had about \$200,000 in private support for students. Now we have over \$500,000 in private support for students.”

Bridges said ABAC’s future will be much different than its past.

“ABAC must create for itself a future that embraces its identity, builds on its legacy, ensures greatness, and focuses its resources and effort to maximize impact,”

Bridges said. “We must become more financially self-reliant and be nimble so we can respond to the ever changing needs of those we serve.”

Freshman students at ABAC are in the midst of the annual Welcome Week activities. Gloria Beard (Class of ’87), a longtime teacher at Tift County High School and a member of the ABAC Alumni Association Board of Directors, will address the freshmen in the annual fall convocation ceremony at 11 a.m. on Tuesday in Gressette Gymnasium.

The fall semester runs through Dec. 2. The fall commencement ceremony is set for 10 a.m. on Dec. 10.

ABAC PRESENTS! SEASON PREVIEW EVENT -- TUESDAY, AUGUST 18, 2015 • 6 P.M.

Join us as we preview the outstanding schedule of performances for the 2015-2016 ABAC Presents! Season at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture Conference Center on August 18. The Season Preview will include a reception and the opportunity for you to purchase your tickets. RSVP by Monday (August 10) via www.tinyurl.com/ABACpreview or by calling 229.391.4895



Thank you to those
that helped students
move-in this weekend!



New Faculty from page 1

Usher, an assistant professor of history, received a Ph.D. and M.A. in history from the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, and a B.A. in history from Winston-Salem State University.

New faculty in the School of Science and Mathematics include Dr. Kennon S. Deal and Allison Miller. Deal is an assistant professor of chemistry who received his Ph.D. in chemistry from Auburn and his B.S. in chemistry from Georgia Southern. Miller, instructor in biology, received an M.S. in animal and dairy science from the University of Georgia (UGA) and a B.S. in animal science from Berry College.

New additions to the School of Human Sciences include Dr. Marcus E. Johnson, an assistant professor of education; Dr. Sarah S. Beach, an assistant professor of sociology; and Dale White, lecturer in physical education and the coach for men's and women's tennis.

Johnson received his Ph.D. in educational theory and practice from UGA, his M.A. in philosophy from Georgia State, and his B.S. in psychology from UGA. Beach received her Ph.D. in sociology from Kansas State, her M.A. in sociology from Colorado State, and her B.S. in environmental sciences from Northern Arizona. White received his M.A. in kinesiology from Georgia Southern and his B.A. in psychology from Armstrong Atlantic.

In the Stafford School of Business, new faces include Dr. Richard H. Berry, associate professor of management; and Dr. Casey Brasher, assistant professor of economics. Berry received his Ph.D. in business from UGA, his M.S. in accounting from James Madison, and his M.B.A. in business from the University of New Orleans. Brasher received a Ph.D. in economics, an M.S. in economics, and a B.S. in business and economics, all from the University

of Kentucky.

New faculty in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources include Dr. Erin R. Daly Porter, an assistant professor of agriculture; and Dr. Stuart A. Moss, assistant professor of forest resources.

Porter received Ph.D. and M.S. degrees in biosystems engineering from Oklahoma State and a B.S. in biosystems engineering from Clemson. Moss received a Ph.D. in forest resource science from West Virginia, an M.B.A. in business from Georgia College and State University, an M.S. in forestry and forest products from Virginia Tech, and a B.S. in forestry from the University of Kentucky.

Dubravcic is the new Health Center Coordinator who is also an instructor of nursing in the School of Nursing and Health Sciences. She received an M.S.N. in nursing FNP-BC from Albany State and a B.S. in nursing from Georgia Southwestern.

Applications are Now Being Accepted for the ABAC Ambassadors

Ambassador applications are available on the ABAC web site at www.abac.edu/ambassadors. Completed applications must be turned in to the Public Relations Office by 3 p.m. on Aug. 21.

All applicants must attend a social on Aug. 24 from 4:30-5:30 p.m. on the second floor of Tift Hall and complete an interview with the selection committee on Aug. 25. Those students who are selected as ABAC Ambassadors will attend the mandatory leadership retreat on Aug. 28-30.

For more information on the Ambassadors, students can call Lindsey Roberts at (229) 391-5055 or Donna Webb at (229) 391-5016.

Please submit information by **Thursday at noon** to Lindsey Roberts at lroberts@abac.edu for inclusion in the next edition of the FOCUS.

ABAC
Birthdays

10 Deidra Jackson 11 Josie Smith
12 Kristen Beasley 12 Randi Walden
14 Cindy Epperly