



FOCUS

ABRAHAM BALDWIN AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

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ABAC Students Fill Every Space on Campus

Three months ago, a record number of students walked across the graduation stage with their bachelor's degree diplomas in hand. Today, enrollment is climbing and every available housing space on campus is filled to capacity. It's no wonder that ABAC President David Bridges eagerly anticipates the start of classes for the fall semester on Wednesday. In fact, he's downright ecstatic.

"I love the atmosphere on this campus when any new year begins, and this year that first day is really going to be exciting because of the preliminary numbers I have reviewed," Bridges, who begins his eighth fall term at ABAC, said.

Bridges said the enrollment could stretch toward 3,300 students from 151 Georgia counties, 25 countries, and 22 states. One of the key factors in that possible enrollment increase over last year is that almost 1,300 of those students will live on campus in either ABAC Lakeside or ABAC Place.

"One of our goals over the past six months was to try to fill every room," Bridges said. "Right now, we have more requests than we have space, but I am confident we can find a place for these students to live on campus."

Dr. Tim Marshall, Dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, said the increased popularity of bachelor's degrees at ABAC should send that school's enrollment soaring over 1,000 students for the first time ever.

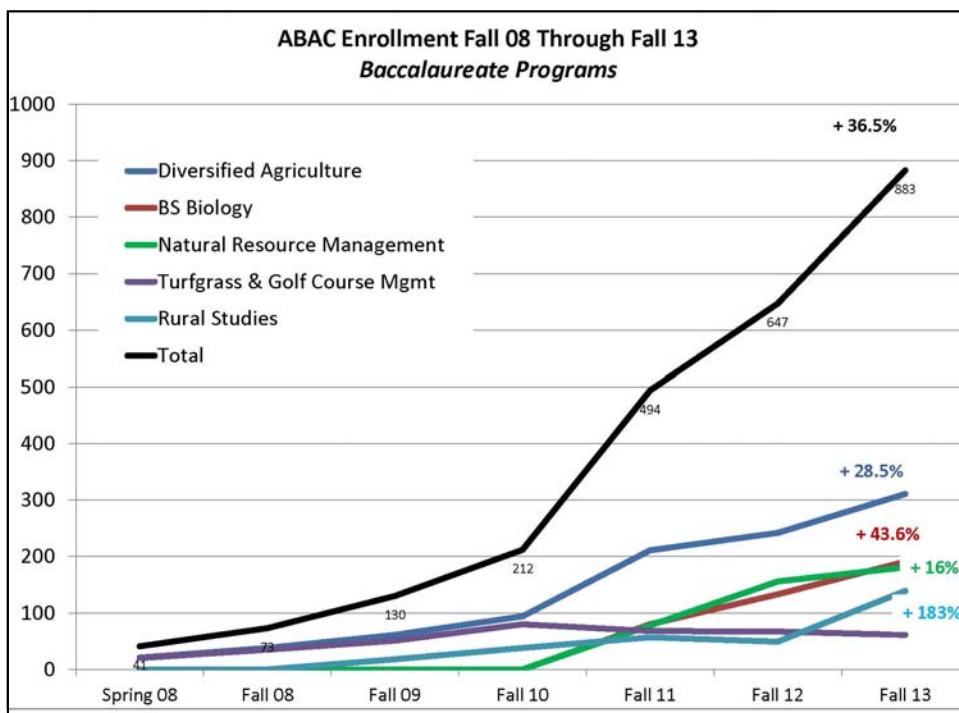
"We have had a lot of interest in the diversified agriculture degree and in the natural resources area," Marshall said. "I think one reason for that is that there are jobs available in the agriculture industry. Employers want to hire ABAC graduates."

Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Gary Black, whose daughter Caroline is an ABAC alumnus, said agriculture is Georgia's largest industry, generating more than \$71 billion in economic activ-

ity and accounting for more than 87,000 full and part time jobs in the state.

Over 800 students are expected to be enrolled in bachelor's degree programs

"The number of freshmen in the Stafford School of Business should be up 40 per cent over last fall," Dill Driscoll said. "We are very excited about that."



at ABAC during the coming year. That's the highest number in the 105-year history of the college. ABAC offers bachelor's degrees in biology, forestry, wildlife, and turfgrass and golf course management. Under the Rural Studies degree, ABAC students can also receive bachelor's degrees in social and community development, politics and modern culture, writing and communication, and business and economic development.

That business degree is one reason that enrollment in the Stafford School of Business will reverse a five-year trend and gain some students this fall. Dill and Susan Driscoll, Deans of the Stafford School of Business, believe the numbers will be even higher in the future.

"The curriculum now is at a level where graduates can start their own businesses, continue with the second, third, or fourth generation of their family businesses or just be sound business managers," Susan Driscoll said. "Some of them will like living in rural communities, and others will prefer Atlanta or even London. We're very excited that we have been able to create the curriculum so that our students will be ready for the real world."

The School of Nursing and Health Sciences has also filled every available slot for the fall term. Interim Dean Troy Spicer said the health care industry is still hungry for ABAC graduates.

"I was at a conference a couple of weeks ago, and the speaker said that

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health care is one of the career fields that is almost recession proof," Spicer said. "There's no end in sight for the shortage of nurses in this country."

ABAC Public Relations Director Ashley Mock believes another reason for the popularity of ABAC this fall is the affordability factor.

"The cost of coming to ABAC for a year is \$20,000 less than going to a research university, \$8,800 less than attending a regional university, and

\$2,400 less than going to another state college," Mock said. "Students and parents are trying to find the best way to get a great education at an affordable price."

The most recent study shows ABAC has almost a \$280 million annual impact on the Tifton area. That study includes the dollars generated from one of the city's largest employers, the construction at ABAC as the college rebuilt its front campus, and the cash that students spend on everything from gasoline to

pizza.

Bridges said with the increased number of students staying at the college for four or more years, that number could take a huge jump in days to come.

"It's just a fact," Bridges said. "Students who earn bachelor's degrees are going to stay here at least four years to get that degree. Some of them will choose to get jobs in this area and raise their families here. It's a win-win situation for ABAC and for this community."

ABAC Welcomes New Faculty Members

Fifteen new faculty members will take their places in classrooms across the ABAC campus when the fall term begins on Wednesday.

Academic Affairs Vice President Niles Reddick said the new faculty members include Dr. Johnny Evans, who will teach classes as well as serve as the Dean of the School of Sciences and Mathematics. Evans received his Ph.D. in chemistry from the University of Florida.

In the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, new faculty members include Dr. George Lowerts, Daniel Sollenberger, Dr. Justin Ng, and Dr. Martha Thomas-Moen.

Lowerts, an assistant professor in the Department of Forest Resources, received his Ph.D. from North Carolina State University in forestry, genetics, soils, and plant pathology. Sollenberger, a lecturer in the Department of Forest Resources, received his M.S. in wildlife biology from Western Carolina

University. Ng, an assistant professor in the Department of Agriculture, received his Ph.D. from Texas A&M University in soils, microbiology, and environmental science. Thomas-Moen, an assistant professor in the Department of Agriculture, received her Ph.D. from Texas A&M in animal science, crop science, and extension education.

Franzelle Mathis-Pertillo will be a lecturer in the Stafford School of Business. She received her M.B.A. from Mercer University in finance and international business.

Jennifer Wallin-Ruschman joins the School of Human Sciences as an assistant professor in the Department of Behavioral Sciences. She is completing her dissertation for her Ph.D. from Portland State University in applied social and community psychology.

Dr. J. Russell Pryor, Kaci West, and Adam Brumfield are the new additions in the School of Liberal Arts. Pryor is an assistant professor in the Department of

History and Political Science. He received his Ph.D. from Carnegie-Mellon University in social and cultural history. West will be a lecturer in the Department of Literature and Language. She received her M.A. from Valdosta State University in English literature. Brumfield will be a lecturer in the Department of Fine Arts and Communication. He received his M.A. from Valdosta State in communication.

New instructors in the School of Nursing and Health Sciences include Jessica Willcox, Tammy Carter, Yvonne Smith, Karen Dell, and Micah Willis. Willcox received her M.S.N. from Albany State University. Carter received her M.S.N. from Jacksonville University. Smith received her M.S.N. from Thomas University. Dell received her M.S.N. and N.P. from Kennesaw State University. Willis, who will also serve as Health Center Coordinator, received his M.S.N. and N.P. from Albany State University.



New faculty members at ABAC include (first row, l-r): Dr. Justin Ng, Jennifer Wallin-Ruschman, Micah Willis, and Franzelle Mathis-Pertillo; (second row, l-r): Dr. J. Russell Pryor, Jessica Willcox, and Yvonne Smith; (third row, l-r): Dr. Martha Thomas-Moen, Tammy Carter, Kaci West, and Daniel Sollenberger; (fourth row, l-r): Adam Brumfield, Dr. George Lowerts and Karen Dell. Not pictured is Dr. Johnny Evans.

Academic Achievement Center Receives International Certification

The Academic Achievement Center (AAC) on the campus of ABAC recently received the International Tutor Training Program Certification (ITTPC) from the College Reading & Learning Association (CRLA).

AAC Coordinator Rebecca Cofer said the Center offers free tutoring to all ABAC students in almost every subject. Cofer had previous experience with the CRLA and the year-long process necessary for a center to become certified.

"I worked with the organization in the past and worked on certification for programs at other institutions," Cofer said. "I started putting the lengthy application packet together in the spring of 2012. Kim Talley, our Office Coordinator for Academic Support, and I gathered all the physical proof they required, along with actually creating brand new training that had never been done before. The application was submitted and then reviewed by two professionals hired in the field."

The accreditation gives ABAC the ability to certify tutors on three levels – certified tutor, advanced certified tutor, and master certified tutor. This includes

more than 10 hours of training and 25 contact hours. All tutors will be required to meet the certified tutor level with the proper training that will be administered through the AAC. Tutors must maintain their certification and

continue this process each semester. "This certification adds a new level of professionalism to the tutoring center," Cofer said. "I see training as a developing process, not a static one, so I am constantly looking at making the training more engaging and informative, hitting critical topics that tutors need. Some of the topics we currently cover are tutoring students with disabilities, tutoring theory and philosophy, and adult learners."



ABAC students can receive free tutoring in almost every subject at the Academic Achievement Center.

Cofer is already setting the stage for the future of the AAC.

"We will be up for certification renewal again next year, and I am already gathering the materials for that now," Cofer said.

The ITTPC certifies tutor training in post-secondary educational institutions. It also authorizes each certified tutor train-

ing program to make sure that its tutors have met the approved ITTPC tutor training program requirements.

The CRLA is a group of student-oriented professionals active in the fields of reading, learning assistance, developmental education, tutoring, and mentoring at the college level.

For more information on ABAC's Academic Achievement Center, ABAC students can contact Cofer at (229) 391-4918 or at rcofer@abac.edu.

Black to Speak at ABAC Convocation on Friday

Caroline Black, the Education and Agritourism Coordinator at Jaemor Farms in Alto, will be the featured speaker on Friday at the annual freshman convocation at ABAC. The 11:30 a.m. ceremony in Gressette Gym will conclude the Welcome Week activities at ABAC.

Black joined the Jaemor Farms staff in June where her duties include writing and designing a curriculum for fall and spring student field trip programs, managing the website, planning major events, facilitating farm tours, maintaining the Facebook account, designing brochures and posters, and promoting the corn maze to consumers.

Prior to her employment with Jaemor Farms, Black served as a graduate teacher and research assistant in the Texas A&M University Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications. She assisted undergraduate students in the areas of media writing, magazine writing, photography, public relations, radio broadcasts, and web design. She also created a study abroad recruitment video and helped plan a 10-day Midwest agricultural tourism and field journalism trip for 45 students.

Black studied agriculture at ABAC

for two years prior to receiving her bachelor of science degree in agricultural education from the University of Georgia (UGA). While at ABAC, she was named the Agriculture and Natural Resources Outstanding Agriculture Transfer Student. At UGA, she was named to the AG-HON Honorary Society, the highest honor that students in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences can receive.

This year, she graduated from Texas A&M with a master of science degree in Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications with a perfect 4.0 grade point average. She was named the Outstanding Graduate Student in Ag Communications and Journalism in 2012 and the Ag Leadership, Education, and Communications Outstanding Masters Student in 2013.

In 2011, Black was one of five UGA students chosen for a 12-week fellowship on agricultural policy in Washington, D.C. where she researched 16 federal food nutrition assistance programs for the Appropriations Subcommittee for Agriculture and Research Develop-



ment and established an agricultural profile for the 25 counties located in Georgia's 1st Congressional District. She also helped to prepare and set up a weekly Theme Team breakfast for members of the U.S. Congress.

Black also worked at East Jackson Comprehensive High School in Commerce as an agricultural education apprentice teacher in 2011. She de-

signed curriculum and taught 58 students in three courses. She also coached the state FFA winning marketing plan team and assisted FFA chapter officer candidates.

She has served in a number of leadership positions in both a professional and collegiate capacity including active roles in the Farmers Fight Agricultural Advocacy Campaign, I Love Farmers, and the A&M Mentoring for Success in Research Cohort. Black also served as a UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Ambassador in 2011, a state FFA Vice President in 2007-2008, and a State 4-H Board Member in 2005-2006.



ABAC Students Move-In to Residence Halls

ABAC faculty, staff, alumni, students and community members help new students move-in to the residence halls.

Hart Named Recreational Sports Director

Stoney Hart has never seen a Georgia pine tree up close and personal. In fact, he has never seen many trees of any shape or size in the section of Oklahoma where he has lived his entire life.

But on Aug. 5, Hart left his Rocky, Okla., home and traveled to Tifton, Ga., to begin his position as Recreational Sports Director in the School of Human Sciences at ABAC.

"I have never lived anywhere except Oklahoma so this is a new adventure for me," Hart said. "My wife, Melissa, is originally from Louisiana but has family in Georgia so she is really excited about the move. We are both really looking forward to exploring our new surroundings. Georgia has trees and beautiful scenery, something we don't have in southwest Oklahoma."

Hart has been the assistant director of facility operations and intramural/club sports at Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU) since 2009. He also served as an athletic department intern in 2010. In 2008, Hart taught physical education at Boone-



Apache High School in Apache, Okla. An avid hockey player and fan, Hart coached hockey players from junior high to the adult level in Oklahoma City, Okla., from 2006-2011.

"I've been playing in a recreational hockey league for about 17 years," said Hart.

"My father is from northern Nevada, and he's the one that got me playing. I'm also a big fan of boxing."

Hart earned his B.S. in education degree with a major in health, physical education, and recreation and his M.Ed. in sports management/parks and recreation degree at Southwestern Oklahoma. His thesis, "The formation of an amateur hockey team", was published in 2011.

He is a member of several professional organizations including the National Strength and Conditioning Association, Kappa Delta Phi, the Oklahoma Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (OAHPERD) Teaching Organization, and the National Intramural Recreational Sports Association.

ABAC Birthdays

- 14 Cindy Epperly
- 17 Vicki Sherling
- 18 Bobbie Baldree

McCray Named Grounds Crew Employee of the Month

Jakiel McCray earned the grounds crew employee of the month. He was awarded a gas card for his hard work. Job well done!



The FOCUS is an electronic publication produced by the ABAC Public Relations Office. Please submit information by **Thursday at noon** to Ashley Mock at amock@abac.edu for inclusion in the next FOCUS.