



# FOCUS

## ABRAHAM BALDWIN AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

VOLUME XLIV

ISSUE 7

AUGUST 16, 2010

### Fall Semester Classes Underway at ABAC For 2010-11 Academic Year

Over 3,000 students from almost every county in Georgia will begin fall semester classes today at ABAC.

ABAC President David Bridges said the college attracted students from 152 Georgia counties last fall as well as students from 17 other states, and 11 other countries. He expects that same kind of geographic distribution this year.

"ABAC is so different than most state colleges," Bridges, the only ABAC President to have ever been a student (Class of 1978) at ABAC, said. "Because of our wide range of courses in the agriculture field, we draw students from all over the world. But we also have a nursing program that attracts hundreds of students from right here in south Georgia. So we actually have the best of both worlds."

Bridges said despite constant news about budget cuts and the economy, ABAC students and employees have much to look forward to in the upcoming year.

"We expect to matriculate the best prepared and most committed class of

freshmen in years," Bridges said. "Our enrollment in the bachelor's degree programs in agriculture has quadrupled, and I believe those numbers will increase again this fall."

Bridges will be back in the classroom this semester, teaching a Biofuels class for the second year in a row.

"I like the interaction with students," Bridges said. "I get to see them around campus and when I eat in the dining hall, but there's nothing like being in the classroom with them."

ABAC began classes for its bachelor's degree program in Rural Studies last fall, and this year a new track in Writing and Communication will be added. The new track joins business and economic development, arts and culture, and community and social affairs. Rural Studies is the only bachelor's degree of its kind in the United States. Enrollment has tripled since its inception. ABAC also offers bachelor's degrees in Diversified Agriculture and Turfgrass and Golf Course Management.

The return of the students to ABAC always means an economic uplift to the community. A recent economic impact study showed that ABAC had a \$251 million annual impact on the south Georgia economy. One big reason for that impact is the fact that over 1,000 ABAC students live on the campus in modern residence halls and apartments.

"I'm sure the area merchants welcome the return of our students each fall," Bridges said. "We have students living on campus who all need the necessities of life, whether it's food or fuel."

#### North & South Lots Designated for Students

Faculty and staff who have been parking in the north or south lots during the summer should begin parking in either the lot between the Donaldson Dining Hall and the Carlton Center, the Health Sciences lot, or the Weltner Hall lot beginning Tuesday. Thank you for your cooperation.



### Making A New Home At ABAC

ABAC Presidential Scholar Sara Beth Pelham from Bainbridge is all smiles as she moves into her room at the ABAC Lakeside residence hall. Over 1,000 students will live at ABAC Lakeside and ABAC Place this fall.

## Ambassador Applications Due Friday by Noon

ABAC Ambassador Applications are due Friday by noon. If you know a student who would make great Ambassadors, please encourage them to apply. Also, please make sure if you have been asked to write a letter of recommendation, it is submitted to the PR office by Friday at noon.

## ABAC Family

Ashley Williamson and Bernard Green appeared on FOX 31 in Albany Aug. 10 to talk about the ABAC Ambassadors.

## ABAC Birthdays

- 16 Amy Williams
- 17 Vicki Sherling
- 17 Marquis Roberts
- 18 Gerald Fowler
- 18 Janie Baldree
- 21 Javier Gonzales
- 21 Alan Kramer
- 22 Rita Wade
- 22 Rod Brown

## Welcome Week Water Balloons



Freshman students ABAC enjoyed a water balloon toss competition on a hot Friday afternoon as a part of the Welcome Week activities. The event, which also included inflatables, ultimate Frisbee, tug-of-war, and pool volleyball, was a part of the President's Picnic. Friday's main event was the Freshman Convocation which featured ABAC alumnus Joel McKie as the keynote speaker in Gressette Gym.

## J. Talmadge Webb Served 30 Years

When J. Talmadge Webb walked up the steps of Tift Hall on Aug. 15, 1958, he had no idea that he was about to begin a 30-year career as Comptroller at ABAC.

Webb, 83, passed away on Aug. 6.

"The ABAC Family has lost one of its most faithful members," ABAC President David Bridges said. "Mr. Webb loved to help people, and he certainly did more than his share with his service to the College and to the ABAC Foundation."

Webb served under five ABAC presidents during his career which ended with his retirement on March 31, 1988. Former ABAC President Pete Donaldson recruited him in 1958 from the Bank of Tifton where he was an assistant cashier.

"Dr. Pete just walked in one day and asked me to go to work," Webb said in a 1988 interview with ABAC Public Relations Director Mike Chason. "Back then, we didn't have all the rigamarole that we have now to be Comptroller."

The youngest of six children, he put



aside his early thoughts of becoming a Methodist minister to serve his country in the armed forces, take up banking, and shepherd the financial and physical progress of ABAC. Twenty-six buildings were added to the campus during his time as Comptroller.

Webb recalled an early utility bill at ABAC that was only \$4,000 for the entire year. He also remembered when the entire professional staff of ABAC was only 23 people.

ABAC honored Webb in 1977 with the Carlton Award for Excellence in Administration. The University System of Georgia awarded him Comptroller Emeritus status on April 1, 1988.

Webb was a longtime member of the ABAC Foundation Board of Directors.

Chason said Webb's personal motto really summed up his life.

"Mr. Webb's motto was 'do something every day to help people and live one day at a time,'" Chason said. "He was the epitome of a true gentleman who really cared about other people."



## ABAC Alumnus Speaks To Freshmen

ABAC alumnus and former Ambassador Joel McKie (Class of 2004) from Abbeville spoke to over 1,000 freshmen at ABAC on Friday at the annual Freshman Convocation. Now an attorney in Atlanta, McKie spoke on "Focused Distraction."