ABAC Economic Impact Over $260 Million

The total economic impact of ABAC on Tifton and the surrounding area totaled $261,313,451 during the 2012 fiscal year, according to a new study commissioned by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.

The annual study of the University System of Georgia’s economic impact on the State indicated a 7.4 percent increase from fiscal year 2011 to 2012. In cash, that is a jump of $980 million, from $13.2 billion to a new high of $14.1 billion of direct and indirect spending fueling the regions served by the System’s 31 colleges and universities.

ABAC President David Bridges believes the economic impact of the college will be even higher in next year’s study.

“Look at the facts,” Bridges said. “We have more students this fall. More importantly, we have more residential students staying on campus in ABAC Lakeside and ABAC Place and in rental properties around town. We have over 900 students enrolled in bachelor’s degree programs. Those students are going to be here for four years or more.”

To calculate the economic impact for FY12, the Selig Center for Economic Growth in the University of Georgia’s Terry College of Business analyzed data collected between July 1, 2011, and June 30, 2012. The annual study is conducted on behalf of the Board of Regents and the study is conducted by Dr. Jeffrey M. Humphreys, director of the Selig Center.

“We have been analyzing the University System’s economic impact for a number of years and what is clear is the importance of these colleges and universities on local and state economies from just about every variable: direct spending, income, production of goods and services and jobs,” Humphreys said.

Dr. Jeff Gibbs, a retired professor of economics at ABAC, analyzed the data and found that ABAC sustained 15,205 jobs in Tifton and surrounding communities for the time period analyzed. He said that figure is based on direct expenditures of $107,389,226 from student spending, personnel services, operating expenses, and capital outlays.

“ABAC shows its importance as an economic engine for this area by not only educating people for future jobs but by directly supporting present jobs,” Gibbs said. “Job growth continues to be slow for the economy as a whole.”

Gibbs said ABAC today provides 512 direct jobs but expenditures support an additional 1,191 jobs, resulting in a ratio of 2.32 off-campus jobs for each on-campus position.

The FY 2012 study found that Georgia’s public university system generated nearly 139,263 full- and part-time jobs, or 3.6 percent of all the jobs in Georgia. The bottom line is that one out of every 28 jobs in the State of Georgia is due to the University System.

Both Humphreys and Gibbs believe there is a broader scope to the economic impact picture that is hard to capture in pure numbers.

“Our studies focus on spending and its economic impact, but do not attempt to measure the value the University System adds in terms of quality of life, the creation of a highly educated workforce to meet the needs of businesses, government and communities, or the overall health of communities,” Humphreys said.

Gibbs echoed those sentiments. “You should also remember that these numbers, impressive as they are, do not reflect the intangible contributions to the area that affect our quality of life or the impact that ABAC retirees have on the economy,” Gibbs said.

“Related activities at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture also have an impact.”

One of Bridges’ mantras from the time he assumed the ABAC presidency in 2006 has been that colleges are stabilizers to the community, no matter the economic climate.

“We have some businesses in Tift County that have been here a long time,” Bridges said. “That’s great. But we have other businesses that are gone before you know it. Businesses come and go,” Bridges said. “Colleges come and grow.”

Humphreys takes that analysis a step further.

“Even in the worst economic times in a generation or two, our colleges and universities proved to be strong pillars and drivers of the economies of their host communities,” Humphreys said. “That’s due to rising demand for higher education regardless of the overall economic climate.”

Bridges reasons that since ABAC has over 3,400 students from 24 countries, 21 states, and 151 Georgia counties, Tifton and the surrounding area will continue to benefit from the presence of ABAC students for many years to come.

“Some of these bachelor’s degree graduates will choose to get jobs in this area and raise their families here,” Bridges said. “It’s a win-win situation for ABAC and for this community.”
Criminal Justice Club Sponsors 9/11 Remembrance
The Criminal Justice Club sponsored a 9/11 Remembrance event today in the meadows. Students, faculty and staff had opportunities to commemorate the event by writing notes or illustrating pictures.

ABAC Namesake One of Two Georgians to Sign Constitution

The namesake for Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College penned his name on one of the most famous documents in the world 226 years ago. Abraham Baldwin was one of only two Georgia signers of the United States Constitution, which was signed by 39 men on Sept. 17, 1787.

Constitution Day celebrates the event, which took place in Independence Hall in Philadelphia. Fifty-five men attended the four-month long Constitutional Convention which resulted in the 4,543-word document, the oldest and shortest national constitution. Nine of the 13 states were required to ratify the Constitution.

ABAC President David Bridges said Baldwin was a key figure on the national level as well as in the history of Georgia.

“We are proud that our college is named for an individual who set the stage for higher education in Georgia and then helped to shape a document on the national level that has now lasted 226 years,” Bridges said. “One of our historical exhibits in the renovated Tift Hall honors Abraham Baldwin and his many accomplishments.”

ABAC Director of Public Relations Ashley Mock said the Baldwin exhibit is one of several historic panels on the lower floor of Tift Hall. Other panels focus on Tifton founder Henry Harding Tift, ABAC alumnus George T. Smith, and the history of the college from 1908 to present day. All the exhibits are open to the public. Tours can be arranged by calling (229) 391-5055.

Baldwin was born on Nov. 22, 1754 as the son of a Connecticut blacksmith. He enrolled at Yale University at the age of 14 and completed his degree four years later. He then studied theology at Yale and became a minister. He served on George Washington’s staff as a chaplain during the Revolutionary War before beginning a study of law. After being admitted to the bar, he moved to Georgia in 1783 to set up a law practice near Augusta.

One year later, Baldwin was elected to the Georgia House of Assembly and in 1787 he represented Georgia as a member of the Constitutional Convention where he was one of the signers of the United States Constitution. Of the Georgia delegates, only Baldwin and William Few signed the document.

Baldwin never had a wife or children but had strong convictions about the importance of a quality education for the youth of Georgia. He believed Georgia should “place the youth under the forming hand of Society, that by instruction they may be moulded to the love of Virtue and good Order.”

Beginning in 1789, Baldwin served Georgia for five consecutive terms as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives. He was then elected for two terms in the U.S. Senate, one of those as president pro-tem. Baldwin passed away on March 4, 1807 while serving in the Senate. Baldwin County is named for him.

On July 1, 1933, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia opened the institution known as Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in his honor.

Georgia Museum of Agriculture Photo Deadline Today
The deadline for the GMA’s Back Roads of Georgia photo competition is upon us. The deadline to submit a photograph showcasing an old barn, a forgotten dusty road, or any snapshot of rural Georgia life is October 12. Awards for the photo portion of the competition also total $1000, included are also publication consideration by Georgia Backroads Magazine, and GMA annual passes. All of the entries in the photo competition will be showcased in a three-month long exhibit in the GMA Gallery beginning on Oct. 19.

For more information contact Polly Huff at phuff@abac.edu or 229.391.5222.
2013
HISPANIC HERITAGE
“Hispanics: Serving and Leading our Nation with Pride and Honor”

Upsilon Piñata Bash
Hosted by Lambda Sigma Upsilon
Monday, September 16, 9:00 -11:00 a.m.
ABAC Meadows

Dancing Lessons
Hosted by Cultura Latina Club
Wednesday, September 18, 6:00 -7:00 p.m.
Nickelodeon

Hispanic Heritage Day Event
Featuring guest speaker Santiago Marquez
Thursday, September 19, 11:30 -1:30 p.m
ABAC Meadows

Symposium on the Impact of Latino Americans in the United States
Thursday, September 19, 2:00 - 3:15 p.m.
Howard Auditorium

Showing Your True Colors: A Diversity Educational Workshop
Hosted by L.A.D.I.E.S
Tuesday, September 17, 5:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Town Hall Classroom

Pride and Prejudice (1965-1980)
 Screening of Latino Americans Episode V
Thursday, September 19, 9:30 - 10:45 a.m.
Howard Auditorium

Guest Speaker Santiago Marquez
Mr. Marquez joined Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in September 2008, where today he oversees the daily operations, finances and development as the Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. Previously he has served the Boys & Girls Clubs across the country and the Latin American Association as the Director of Latino Outreach Development and as the Director of Employment and Housing, respectively. He is a native of Cuba, though he has resided in the United States since 1971. He has earned his BA from Georgia State University.

ABRAHAM BALDWIN AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE
Ag Classic Golf Tournament October 7

The 13th Annual Ag Classic Golf Tournament at ABAC will be held on Oct. 7 at ABAC’s Forest Lakes Golf Club. There will be an 8 a.m. flight and a 1 p.m. For more information, interested persons can contact tournament coordinator Vonda Fenn at (229) 391-5067 or e-mail her at vfenn@abac.edu

Stafford School of Business Forging Ahead in a Big Way

Coming from the lightning quick pace of international marketing, Dill and Susan Driscoll are accustomed to making things happen in a big way in a big hurry.

In their second year as Deans of the Stafford School of Business at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, they have big plans at a slightly more controlled pace for the days ahead.

“Last year was a very busy year for us,” Susan Driscoll said. “It’s not quite the pace we’re used to in the business world but I have been told that we have gotten a lot done.”

Building on a long standing relationship with the Coca-Cola Company and an eye-popping list of other clients, the Driscolls literally traveled the world with their marketing company, ignition. After selling ignition, it was perfect timing when ABAC invited them to the world of academia.

“It was really a pretty, simple decision,” Dill Driscoll said. “I had spent 35 years training over 400,000 young adults to do experiential marketing. I’ve always been a teacher and a coach. We live over in Osierfield, Georgia, and ABAC is basically right across the street, 30 miles away.”

Dill said a business school in Florida became interested in them because of their success in the business world. He said that contact sparked their interest in running a business school at a college. And the results are already showing in the 2013 fall term.

“We are up 55 per cent over last year’s freshman class and 13 per cent overall in the Stafford School of Business,” Dill said. “We are very excited about that.”

“We had worked with the Terry College of Business at the University of Georgia in the past,” Susan said. “Because of that, we had really good expectations of what the students were going to be like. There’s something new every day, and we have wonderful students at ABAC. I can tell you that we are going to be very proud of our future generation of business leaders in South Georgia.”

Shaping the business curriculum to prepare students for the business world of tomorrow and beyond was the Driscolls’ focus last year. With the ABAC bachelor’s degree in Business and Economic Development under the Rural Studies umbrella now firmly in place, they both believe enrollment is about to zoom into a new dimension.

“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 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 Driscolls are accustomed to innovation, and that’s why they have no qualms about a new creation at ABAC called “Stafford Hall”.

“It’s going to be an amazing experiment,” Dill said. “It will offer value-based room reduction for 120 students. They will be athletes, nursing students, agriculture students, music majors, science kids, and business majors. It’s just a cross section of the campus.”

The students in Stafford Hall will divide into four teams of 30 students each. Throughout the fall semester they will be involved in competitions including fun activities such as a field day, a scavenger hunt, and a talent show as well as grade competitions and business projects. A humanitarian program just before Thanksgiving will involve raising $3,000 for three pallets of food to feed 300 families.

Judging by their excitement about Stafford Hall, the Driscolls are obviously planning for the project to be a huge success. Then they’ll fine tune it, and make it bigger and better in the future. And they believe the future of the Stafford School of Business is very bright indeed.

“We want these young people to interact with business people, with legislators, and whoever else,” Dill said. “We have lots of contacts in 190 countries around the world. We’ll get the students ready, and then we’ll place them in internships. We’ll do everything possible to find them a job.”

Running the Stafford School of Business is definitely a team effort for the Driscolls. But when it comes to decision-making, who’s the boss?

“We are a great team,” Susan said. “He is very creative and energetic and passionate. He also has a huge heart for the students. I’m more analytical and maybe a little bit quieter but I love the kids too.

“Even in our business, we complement each other with our skills. It’s just always worked.”

In their second year at ABAC, the Driscolls are counting on seeing some of that work pay big dividends for the students in the Stafford School of Business.

Save these Dates for Stallion Day
Nov. 9           Feb. 15       April 5
Students Learn About ABAC Study Abroad Opportunities

Over 35 students attended an information session to learn about Study Abroad opportunities in Belize. The trip will occur during Spring Break. Students can choose from many options including Nicaragua, India and Belize.

Join the Fight Against Alzheimer’s Sept. 28

The School of Human Science and the ABAC Softball team will host the Tifton Alzheimer’s Walk on the ABAC Campus Sept 28. If you would like to participate in the walk go to www.alz.org and register. You may register a team or individually to participate in the walk. Registration the morning of the walk begins at 9 a.m. with the walk starting at 10 a.m. The walk is a 3 mile course winding through campus.

Bhaskar Shares Experience With ABAC Students

DK Bhaskar, engineer by training and a photographer by vocation, visited over 12 ABAC classes last week to discuss topics ranging from elephant populations, forming nonprofit organizations and rural development in India. Bhaskar also arranged the ABAC study abroad trip last spring to India and co-hosted a study abroad session Wednesday with ABAC Alumnus Rodney McDonald.

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.

ABAC Birthdays

16 Nathan Mumm
19 Tom Grant
20 Susan Roe

Visit www.abac.edu from any smartphone to see the new mobile website!