



FOCUS

ABRAHAM BALDWIN AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

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Bridges Receives Outstanding Customer Service Leadership Award

Dr. David C. Bridges, president of ABAC, was presented the annual Gold Outstanding Customer Service Leadership Award by Chancellor Erroll B. Davis of the University System of Georgia (USG) on Sept. 15.

The award recognizes a leader in the USG who, through his or her leadership in customer service, has made a significant, positive impact on customer service to the citizens and customers of the state of Georgia over the last year. Nominee's actions must reflect all five of the customer service attributes: Courteous and Honest, Forward-looking, Inspiring, Responsive, and Awareness.

ABAC Begins Operating 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Today

Beginning today, ABAC will begin operating on an 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. basis Monday through Thursday and 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. on Fridays. The college will close at 3 p.m. on Fridays beginning September 25 because the two hours from 3 to 5 p.m. for the 12 Fridays ABAC is open during the remainder of the 2009 calendar year will be considered furlough hours. That time constitutes three of the ABAC furlough days. The College will also close on Wednesday, November 25 and Thursday, December 24 as two more furlough days. The sixth furlough day will be taken at some point during the 2010 spring semester.

All employees of the College whose salary will be reduced because of the furlough days will be notified via letter as to the amount of the reduction from their paychecks and in what pay period those reductions will take place. Personnel who are paid monthly will see the first furlough-related pay reduction in their September paychecks (reduction for Sept. 25). Personnel who are paid bi-weekly will see the first furlough-related reduction in their Oct. 9 paycheck (reduction for Sept. 25 and Oct. 2).

"I am honored to win the award, but I could not have done it without the help of Diane Kilgore, ABAC Customer Service Champion, Dr. Chrystle Ross, Rapid Process Improvement Leader, all the RPI participants, and the customer service team," Bridges said.

Kilgore is the director of the ABAC Public Service and Business Outreach Center, and Ross is the Chief Information Officer for the College.

After graduating from high school in 1976, Bridges attended ABAC and earned an Associate of Science Degree in Agriculture in 1978. He then earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Agronomy and Soils and a Master's Degree in Weed Science from Auburn University. He then served as a graduate teaching and research fellow at Texas A&M University, where he earned his Ph.D. in Weed Science.

Bridges began serving as ABAC's 10th president on July 1, 2006. The Parrott native is the first ABAC alumnus ever to serve as president.

Kilgore and Ross nominated Bridges for the award due to "his commitment to and support of faster, friendlier, easier and quality service at ABAC." Under his leadership, ABAC has provided customer service training to all administrators, faculty, staff, and student workers. That training was followed with "secret shopper" surveys to measure its success. Two ABAC employees were awarded Governor's commendations for quality customer service this year, Kilgore and Dr. Eddie Seagle.

The University System of Georgia gave all institutions the opportunity to apply for special initiative funding to focus on financial aid enhancements. Because of Bridges' leadership, vision,



USG Chancellor Erroll B. Davis presented the Gold Outstanding Customer Service Leadership Award to President David Bridges last Tuesday in Atlanta.

and commitment to customer service, the USG Office of Customer Service and the USG Strategic Planning Office in partnership with the Governor's Office of Customer Service chose ABAC as the only USG institution to participate in its LEAN Rapid Process Improvement Initiative to improve student financial aid services.

As a result, ABAC developed a new model for student services to serve students from their initial contact with a recruiter until they graduate and includes financial, enrollment, and registration services. As the result of the RPI process, ABAC has reduced the average financial aid application cycle time by 65 per cent - reducing the verification time from 20 minutes to seven minutes.

"Without a doubt, Dr. David Bridges 'gets it' as far as customer service," Kilgore said. "Because he does, ABAC is a better place. His leadership and commitment to quality service at all levels is the driving force in ABAC's endeavor to become 'Georgia's State College of Choice.'"

'Pegasus' Food Drive Through October 24

The Pegasus, the literary magazine at ABAC, is sponsoring a food drive to help benefit Brother Charlie's Rescue Mission. Donations can be dropped off at three locations across campus by Oct. 24.

Donations will be received at the *Pegasus* office on the third floor of the student center, Room 313; the King Hall Liberal Arts office; and the office of Dr. Jeff Newberry, Conger Hall, Room 305.

The *Pegasus* staff will be collecting the nonperishable items until Oct. 24, the night of the annual Writers' Harvest Poetry Reading. The event will be held at the Chapel of All Faiths at 6:30 p.m. The reading will have featured poets, as well as an open-microphone portion of the program.

For information on either of these events, contact Newberry at 391-4972 or go to *The Pegasus* website at www.abac.edu/pegasus.

Ag Classic Golf Tournament October 5

The 9th Annual Ag Classic Golf Tournament will be held on Oct. 5 at ABAC's Forest Lakes Golf Club. There will be an 8 a.m. morning flight and a 1 p.m. afternoon flight with complimentary lunch served between the flights.

The event is sponsored by the ABAC Ag Alumni Council, the ABAC School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the ABAC School of Human Sciences to provide scholarships for students in those two schools of study.

The tournament is open to the first 100 golfers who register. The event is a four-man scramble. The \$125 fee per golfer includes lunch, cart and greens fees, a premium golf shirt embroidered with the tournament logo, and a sleeve of golf balls.

Prizes will be awarded to the first, second, and third place teams in each flight. Prizes will also be awarded for the longest drive, hole-in-one, and closest shot to the pin on designated holes.

A silent auction will take place throughout the day. Items available for bid include outings to prestigious courses throughout the state, golf clubs and other merchandise.

For more information, contact tournament coordinator Nate Carney at (229) 391-4908 or via e-mail at narney@abac.edu.

Technology Wins Best Picture

The Technology Living/Learning Community won the Best Picture award at the third annual ABAC Film Festival on Sept. 16. The title of the film was "Freshman Experience, On Our Own." The winning team consisted of Courtney Benton, Marks Barrett, Alyssa Hurst, and Carolee Henderson. The coach is JoAnn Brannen assisted by Mary Willis and Joy Godin. The group also won the Best Acting award.

The Leadership Living Learning Community won the Best Editing award for "ABAC Cribs." Members of the team included Raymond Williams, Chad Ruppericher, Justin Little, Lauren Craswell, and Olivia Norman. Wasdon Graydon is the coach, assisted by Avi Kar and Angie Willis.

Dr. Don Parks and Kim Ascani coordinated the event. Mike Chason was the emcee.

Sixth Annual Hispanic Heritage Celebration Friday

The annual Hispanic Heritage Celebration will take place Friday from noon-2:30 p.m. at Howard Auditorium.

The keynote speaker will be Simon Silva, an artist, author, and progressive thinker from California who spends his time traveling around the country speaking about his experiences and the importance of art, literature and education.

Tifton Mayor Jamie Cater will present the proclamation, and Javier Gonzalez, Director of the HEP and CAMP programs, will give the historical perspective of the event.

Performers include Energia Latina and the Cultura Latina Dance Crew. This year a Flag Cultural Fashion Show will be added to the program. The presentation of the flags will include students dressed in that countries' cultural attire. Traditional Hispanic dishes will be available for your tasting pleasure. The entire campus community is invited to attend the celebration.

Hispanic Heritage Month begins on September 15, the anniversary of independence for five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico declared its independence on September 16 and Chile on September 18. The national celebration ends on October 12 with the observation of the date that Christopher Columbus discovered America.

Olympic Gymnast to Speak at ABAC

Olympic gymnast Dominique Dawes will be on the campus of ABAC on Oct. 10 for a Journey on a Leadership Safari campus conference from 8:45 a.m. – 3:45 p.m. There is no cost to attend the conference.

Dawes, a gold medal winner from the 1996 summer games in Atlanta, will be the keynote speaker for this event. Topics will include interviewing tips for internships, adjusting from school to work, resume/portfolio building, and more.

Registration forms are available in the Student Government Association (SGA) office and the Office of Student Support Services. All forms must be returned by Sept. 25 to the Office of Student Support Services.

For more information, contact Melissa Willis at (229) 391-5156 or via e-mail at mckillis@abac.edu.



ABAC Birthdays

- 22 Wasdon Graydon, Jr.
- 24 Cathy Rogers
- 27 Jane Thompson

Fillies At Home Friday

The ABAC soccer team will take on conference foe Georgia Perimeter at 4 p.m. Friday at the ABAC Soccer Field. At press time, Coach Jimmy Ballenger's team had a record of 6-1-1. Come out and support the Fillies!

ABAC Family,
Thank you for the many cards, flowers, food, contributions, phone calls, emails, and visits. All of your prayers, love and support is deeply appreciated. Our hearts are broken but your caring has made a difference.
Robert and Inez Thompson Family

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