



FOCUS

ABRAHAM BALDWIN AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

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ABAC Enrollment Climbs for Spring Semester

Students from across the globe including 28 countries, 21 states, and 154 of Georgia's 159 counties began spring semester classes this week as ABAC experienced yet another increase in enrollment.

Director of Enrollment Management Donna Webb said the number of students attending ABAC was slightly higher than the 3,122 students who enrolled for the spring term in 2016.

"On the first day of classes on Monday, we had around 3,158 students, which would give us another enrollment increase," Webb said.

ABAC has increased its enrollment in three of the past four years. The spring term will continue through May 2 with final exams set to begin May 3. The spring commencement ceremony will be held at 10 a.m. on May 11. Faculty

and students will be away for spring break on March 13-17.

A wide variety of entertainment opportunities during the semester are available to the community through ABAC's music and theatre programs, as well as annual and special events. Activities on the campus this spring include the annual Evening for ABAC scholarship fundraiser featuring Mark Randisi and The Motor City Horns on March 3, Stallion Days for prospective students on Feb. 4 and April 8, the regional science fair on Feb. 10, Honors Day on April 12, and the annual jazz band concert on April 20.

Homecoming Week on April 4-8 will feature the Alumni Awards Dinner, the ABAC Athletics Hall of Fame induction ceremony, the Gee Haw Whoa

Back Rodeo and the Run for the Nurses 5K and half-mile marathon.

First Tuesday Concert Series performances for the spring term include "A Night of Wonderful Singing" on Feb. 7, "A Night of Choral Music" on March 7, and "A Night of Broadway Music" on April 4. All First Tuesday performances will be held at the Chapel of All Faiths on the ABAC campus at 7 p.m. The concerts are open to the public at no charge.

Other performances during the spring term include the Spring Choral Concert on April 6, the Spring Band Concert on April 10-11, and the Spring Music Recitals on April 27 and May 1-2. These events are also open to the public at no charge.

The ABAC Presents! Performing Arts Series will offer a wide variety of entertainment beginning with The National Players production "The

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Board of Regents Approves ABAC, Bainbridge Consolidation

In an effort to better serve students, broaden academic programs available for students in South Georgia and to reinvest savings into academics to improve student success, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia approved a recommendation from Chancellor Steve Wrigley to consolidate ABAC and Bainbridge State College on Wednesday.

ABAC President David Bridges will be the president for the consolidated institution, which will carry the name of Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.

"I believe this is a real vote of confidence in ABAC, and we will

Bainbridge State College Interim President Stuart Rayfield and ABAC President David Bridges spoke to the media at a press conference on Thursday in Tift Hall on the ABAC campus.

make it work for all our students, whether they are in Bainbridge or Tifton or points in between," Bridges said. "This expands our base, makes us a larger institution and will give us access to more resources."

Interim Bainbridge State President Stuart Rayfield pledged her cooperation to make the transition as smooth as possible.

"Enhanced opportunities for



students will be the ultimate goal of this consolidation," Rayfield said. "I look forward to working with everyone at ABAC to make this a very successful venture."

When Wrigley made the recommendation to combine the two

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"Grapes of Wrath" by John Steinbeck on Feb. 2 at 7 p.m. in Howard Auditorium, followed by pianist Read Gainsford on Feb. 23 at 7 p.m. in Howard Auditorium, the Albany Symphony Orchestra on March 26 at 3 p.m. in the Tift County High School Performing Arts Center; and trumpeter Terell Stafford with the ABAC Jazz Band on April 20. Tickets are required for each of these arts series events and can be

purchased by phone at (229) 391-4895.

The Baldwin Players will present a series of one-act plays Feb. 16-17 at 7 p.m. in the Chapel of All Faiths. Their spring production of "Little Foxes" will take place on March 9-11 at 7 p.m. at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture. Tickets are \$7 and can be purchased online at www.purplepass.com/abac.

Athletic events include softball

and baseball games, tennis matches, and golf tournaments as five of the six intercollegiate sports teams at ABAC swing into action. Dates and times for all events are subject to change. For more information about ABAC events, visit the web site at www.abac.edu.

Update From the Center for Teaching and Learning at ABAC

Upcoming Events Hosted by the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

- Wednesday - Teaching Controversial Topics in the Classroom - Dr. Mark Johnson will give a workshop on how to deal with controversy in the classroom. Location, Carlton 217 at 2 p.m.
- Friday - Faculty Fellow Interest Meeting - Faculty Fellows is a small, interdisciplinary teaching group that is self-directed. Each group is lead by a Fellow, who works with the CTL to coordinate meeting times, readings, discussions, etc. Location, Carlton 217 at 2 p.m.



CENTER FOR
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LEARNING

Notes from CTL

- Kuddos to Dr. Leslie Pryor on her recent publication The Biomechanics of Bony Facial "Buttresses" in South African Australopiths: An Experimental Study Using Finite Element Analysis. *Anat. Rec.*, 300: 171–195. Last semester, Dr. Pryor also had two publications in the *Anatomical Record*.
- If you are interested in the CTL Book Club, but were unable to make the last meeting, email Dr. Jordan Cofer at jcofer@abac.edu
- If you have any news or announcements, send them to ctl@abac.edu or jcofer@abac.edu

For more information or questions about CTL Spring events, visit the CTL Webpage.



Academic Achievement Center Continues to Prosper

The Academic Achievement Center (AAC) at ABAC is staffed by nearly 40 certified student tutors. These tutors are all trained and certified through the College Reading and Learning Association's tutor training program. Tutoring is offered in nearly all subjects. The AAC has tutors in the Veterans Success Center and at ABAC on the Square. The tutors have an average GPA of 3.64 with many that have an overall GPA of 4.0. For more information about the AAC, contact Rebecca Cofer at rcofer@abac.edu. Pictured: the spring 2017 tutors.

Save the Date and Register Now - Run for the Nurses

The School of Nursing and Health Sciences will host the 6th Annual Run for the Nurses on April 8, 2017. Proceeds from the race go towards nursing scholarships at ABAC. Go to www.abac.edu/nursing and click Run for the Nurses for more info. The first fee increase will happen on February 9. You can either send in your registration form or visit www.active.com to register online. Contact Becky Arnold at rarnold@abac.edu for more information.



Back Roads of Georgia Photo Contest Exhibit Opens Saturday

The Georgia Museum of Agriculture (GMA) will host an opening event for the Second Annual Back Roads of Georgia photo contest and exhibit. The opening will be held on Saturday from 5 to 6 p.m. in the GMA Gallery. The opening is free and open to the public. The Wiregrass Farmers Market will host a light reception featuring locally grown foods, with the talented Dr. Jeff Newberry strumming “backroads” tunes for your enjoyment. Awards presentations to the winning artists and gallery tours of the new exhibit will round out the evening. There are over 80 fantastic pieces in this exhibit- each one is available for purchase, and each purchase supports an independent local artist. For more information, contact Polly Huff at phuff@abac.edu



ABAC, USDA Partner with Area Hospitals to Grow Health Care Services

ABAC and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently announced the implementation plan for a \$567,200 Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant. With funds provided by the USDA Rural Development program, the project tackles the urgent need for Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree trained nurses and the increase of accessible health care services in the more rural areas of South Georgia.

ABAC Vice President for Technology and Chief Information Officer Robert Gerhart said the endeavor will establish a distance learning network between ABAC’s School of Nursing and Health Sciences and six area hospitals to deliver the Registered Nurse to BSN Completion Program.

“ABAC recognizes that technology is a powerful enabler to both teaching and learning,” Gerhart said. “Consequently, the College is making strategic investments in its technological

capabilities, and telehealth will be the newest addition to our academic portfolio. The addition of cutting-edge communications, videoconferencing and content distribution services will expand ABAC’s influence beyond the physical campus. Not only will we be able to engage the local and regional communities, we will extend our presence to global audiences.”

Gerhart said the funds will be used for infrastructure and equipment to place mobile videoconferencing units at ABAC hub sites in Tifton and Moultrie that connect with the Brooks County Hospital in Quitman, the Miller County Hospital in Colquitt, the Phoebe Worth Medical Center in Sylvester, the Southwest Georgia Regional Medical Center in Cuthbert, Grady General Hospital in Cairo and the Mitchell County Hospital in Camilla. The Quitman, Cairo, and Camilla locations are part of

the Archbold Medical Center’s four hospital and three nursing home health system.

“This grant provides us the means to extend educational opportunities to nurses all over South Georgia and begins the latest chapter in our 50-year history of nursing education at ABAC,” Dr. Tami Dennis, coordinator of the RN to BSN Completion Program, said.

ABAC added the BSN program to its curriculum in 2016 to complement the associate degree program which has produced thousands of nursing graduates since it began in 1966. The associate degree program prepares graduates to take the RN certification exam. Registered Nurses who add the bachelor’s degree in nursing to their academic backgrounds position themselves for career advancement and management roles with the potential for higher salaries.

“Distance learning can ensure quality educational programming reaches beyond the campus to the

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colleges on Jan. 6, he said, “We are committed to serving South Georgia in public higher education and our partnership with the Tifton and Bainbridge communities. This consolidation is a long-term investment of the University System in South Georgia.”

Campus and community listening sessions will be held in the coming months to seek and hear input on ways to best design

the new institution so that it can provide the best service for the region and the state. An implementation team with representatives from both the Bainbridge campus and the Tifton campus will be charged with the responsibility of working out the many details associated with the consolidation. A consolidation website will also be established to provide information and updates.

ABAC enrolled 3,475 students

for the 2016 fall semester, and Bainbridge State enrolled 2,468 students. Under the proposed timeline, the new institution will submit a proposal for consolidation to the board of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges for approval in December. Once approved, the consolidated institution will be presented to the Board of Regents for approval.

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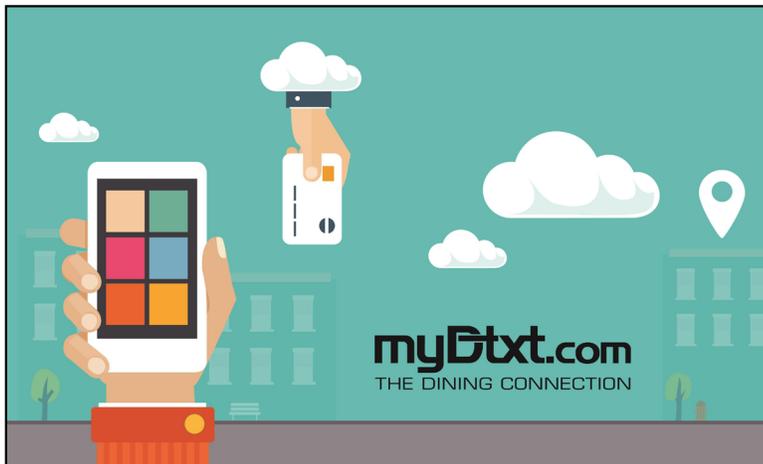
rural communities of the region,” said Jill Stuckey, USDA Rural Development Georgia State Director. “This project creates professional development opportunities that can create a highly educated and qualified nursing workforce to help meet the needs of the region’s Medically Underserved Areas.”

The distance learning network will be used to strengthen community health education and outreach programs. The project will also provide remote access to ABAC academic programs for citizens within the area to take college classes, earn degrees and develop skills to gain entry into the local workforce.

Practicing nurses will use the network to access online courses delivered via interactive videoconferencing in conjunction with ABAC’s human patient simulation laboratory. With the advanced technology, nurses will experience real life medical scenarios without leaving their jobs or communities.

Gerhart has had experience working on a similar grant in the past. He assisted with the evaluation and management needed for the technologies being used in the new distance learning project. Gerhart believes doors could be opened to other areas of study for the college to explore.

“The USDA grant will enable ABAC to enhance our academic programs,” said Gerhart. “With this emerging and innovative technology, we will not only directly support the health care community in South Georgia, we will also augment our on-campus instruction, develop new outreach programs and provide collaborative opportunities for our faculty and students by establishing connections with industry partners, government agencies and other academic and research institutions.”



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*Spring Stallion Days
February 4 and April 8*

**ABAC Birthdays 18 Kaycee Jones 19 Lisa Seibert
20 JoAnn Brannen 20 Paul Willis 21 Mark Johnson**