For 75 years ABAC offered only associate degrees. Students completed their course work in two or three years. Since 2008, ABAC has offered bachelor’s degrees. Students now complete their course work in four or five years.

Those extra years on the ABAC campus pay huge dividends for the South Georgia economy. A recent study commissioned by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (USG) shows ABAC had a total economic impact of $329,844,725 on Tift and surrounding counties during the 2014 fiscal year.

ABAC President David Bridges said the economic impact figure represents an all-time high in the 108-year history of the college.

“It’s an amazing number, and a variety of factors played a role in producing that number,” Bridges said. “We were fortunate to have four consecutive semesters of enrollment increases, and we are filling up every available residence hall space on the campus every fall semester.

“Students are staying at ABAC longer because of the bachelor’s degrees. They are eating in the restaurants, buying from the stores and contributing to the local economy. And some of them will find jobs here, settle down in the community, and contribute even more to the economy long term.”

Dr. Jeff Gibbs, professor emeritus of economics and the former dean of the ABAC business school, analyzed the data from the Selig Center for Economic Growth in the University of Georgia’s Terry College of Business.

“ABAC creates substantial economic impact in terms of output, value-added (gross regional product), labor income, and employment,” Gibbs said. “The economic impact of ABAC on its host community includes $112 million in output, $70 million in value added, $35 million in labor income, and 1,344 full and part-time jobs.”

Gibbs also included ABAC’s initial spending of $111,838,713 which covers personal services, operating expenses, student spending, and capital outlays in the economic impact figure.

“These projections are from identifiable direct expenditures by ABAC,” Gibbs said. “There are other tangible economic benefits to the community from ABAC but not included in these calculations.”

Gibbs said those other benefits include but are not limited to spending by 132 ABAC retirees residing mostly in this service area, spending by visitors and short term housing in the residence halls by students from other institutions, income generated by vendors at the various activities at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village, the benefit that local businesses get from easy access to

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Carry The Load Step-Off Event at ABAC April 28

For the third consecutive year, the Stafford School of Business at ABAC will host a Carry The Load Step-Off event on the campus beginning at 1 p.m. on April 28. Members of the community are invited to participate. This event involves a continuous two-mile relay through the campus that culminates with a send-off for the National Carry The Load Relay participants in a ceremony in front of Lewis Hall at 5 p.m.

The goal of Carry The Load is to restore the true meaning of Memorial Day by connecting Americans to the sacrifices of our military, law enforcement, firefighters, and rescue personnel. Carry The Load was established in 2011 by former Navy SEALS Clint Bruce and Stephen Holley.

The Step-Off will begin at Lewis Hall at 1 p.m. with a route through the campus and conclude at 5 p.m. with a short ceremony. After one loop is made through campus, participants will have the option of walking two different routes—the front circle of the campus or a specified 2-mile route within the college. The walk serves as a prelude to the National Carry The Load Relay which begins in West Point, N.Y., on May 1 and ends in Dallas, Texas, on Memorial Day.

In 2015, ABAC had 700 participants in the step-off event on campus. Seven ABAC students then walked or pedaled a bicycle the 2,000-mile trek from West Point to Dallas for the National Relay.

ABAC students participating in the National Relay this year are Rakeem Alexander, a business and economic development major from Moultrie; Ainsley Cash, a rural studies–writing and communication major from Gillsvile; John Hall, a business and economic development major from Moultrie; Lane Riley, a business and economic development major from Adel; Russ Simpson, a biology major from Sparks; Rilea Stapf, a business and economic development major from Jackson; Rodney Troupe, a business and economic development major from Moultrie; Matt Turner, a business and economic development major from Omega; Jalen Williams, a business and economic development major from Jesup; and Chevy Young, a business and economic development major from Brunswick.

For more information on ABAC’s Carry the Load Step-Off event, interested persons can contact the event coordinator via e-mail at tifton@carrytheload.org. To register to participate, go to www.carrytheload.org/tifton.

ABAC Hosts First Ever Tift County AP Day

On Wednesday, April 13, the Office of Admissions and ABAC Honors Program hosted Tift County High School’s first ever AP Day where 150 students spent the day on campus living as college students. A big highlight for the students was experiencing classes held by Dr. Hans Schmeisser and Dr. James Galt-Brown. The students also relished in eating lunch at ABAC’s dining hall and touring Lakeside dorms. Great job to everyone that was involved in making this day a success.

Saxophonist Gregory Tardy to Highlight Jazz Festival Thursday

Internationally acclaimed saxophonist Gregory Tardy will perform with the ABAC Jazz Ensemble at the ABAC Jazz Festival on Thursday on the campus of ABAC. Prior to the concert, the festival will feature high school jazz bands from across Georgia performing all day on the ABAC campus. The 7 p.m. concert in Howard Auditorium also represents the final segment of the ABAC Presents! performing arts series for the 2015-16 year. This performance is now sold out. All ticket holders are encouraged to be seated by 6:45 for the ABAC Presents! performance.

Sponsored by the ABAC School of Liberal Arts and the ABAC Arts Connection, the Jazz Festival promotes jazz and jazz education in South Georgia. Activities begin at 10 a.m. at The Meadows with free performances from 12 high school jazz bands.

A Jazz Clinic for the high school students will be held at 4 p.m. in Howard Auditorium following the performances. Visitors can bring their own lunch or just come and listen to the music. In the event of rain, the Jazz Festival will take place in Howard Auditorium.
ABAC Forestry Club Places First in Three Events at 2016 Conclave

Students from the Forestry Club and the Society of American Foresters Student Chapter at ABAC placed first in three different events at the recent Forestry Conclave sponsored by the Society of American Foresters at Clemson University.

Competing against major universities from across the nation, ABAC finished ninth overall. Jason Townley placed first in wood identification, Ben Rampy finished first in knife throwing and axe throwing, and Austin Morris wound up second in pole classification.

ABAC competed against Clemson, the University of Georgia, LSU, Auburn, Louisiana Tech, Alabama A&M, University of Florida, North Carolina State, University of Tennessee, University of Kentucky, Stephen F. Austin University, University of Arkansas Monticello, and Virginia Tech in the forestry competition which involved both physical and technical events.

Other events included traditional archery, crosscut sawing, pole felling, chain throw, log rolling, bow saw, pole climbing, log chopping, log burling, dendrology, wildlife identification, timber estimation, compass and pacing, Diameter at Breast Height estimation, and photogrammetry.

ABAC Forestry Club Places First in Three Events at 2016 Conclave

Advisors for the Forestry Club are Dr. Chris Kiser, assistant professor of forest resources, and Kip Hall, assistant professor of forest resources and head of the forestry technology program in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

The ABAC Forestry Club was founded by forestry students in 2012. It is an official Society of American Foresters Student Chapter. The purpose of the club is to foster fellowship and personal and professional development. Major activities include management of the Nature Study Area, attending Society of American Foresters meetings and Quizbowl, and participation in the Association of Southern Forestry Clubs Forestry Conclave.

ABAC Ambassador Interest Meeting Wednesday at 7 p.m.

Are you looking for more information about becoming an ABAC Ambassador? Attend an Interest Meeting that will describe the role of an Ambassador, provide important dates regarding the interview process, and other vital information. The meeting will take place in Herring Hall on Wednesday at 7 p.m. For more information, contact Lindsey Roberts at lroberts@abac.edu

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a pool of full time and part-time workers, spouses and other family members of faculty and staff who are employed locally, and non-scholarships gifts to the ABAC Foundation.

Bridges and Gibbs both agreed that there are many non-tangible benefits to the community provided by ABAC that include cultural and educational programs as well as facilities available to the general public.

“There is also a large inventory of human resource volunteers available for public service activities in the community and a larger and more diverse variety of businesses and other organizations due to a larger market generated by the presence of ABAC,” Gibbs said.

Bridges believes the economic impact figure will continue to climb.

“We just announced a brand new bachelor’s degree in nursing, and we’re getting a lot of interest from prospective students, existing students, and alumni about enrolling in that program,” Bridges said. “That degree alone will grow our figure of over 1,400 ABAC students who are already enrolled in bachelor’s degrees.”

ABAC contributed to the USG economic impact on the state which was estimated at $14.2 billion in output in fiscal year 2014. The study found that the USG generated 142,982 full and part-time jobs and directly employs more than 47,000 faculty and staff.
Central Intelligence Agency to Host Session at ABAC April 27

The Central Intelligence Agency is offering a special learning opportunity for students at ABAC. This opportunity is based around demystifying what it actually like to work for the CIA. The event will take place on Wednesday, April 27 at 3 p.m. in Bowen Hall Room 100.

You are invited to participate in this question and answer dialogue where the presenter will share insight pertaining to work-life balance, security process, company culture, and much more. During this event you will learn about careers in Clandestine Operations, Analysis, Science and Technology and Business operations.

This session will bring a variety of opportunities such as scholarships, internships, and careers. For more information, contact Andrell Durden at adurden@abac.edu.

ABAC Alumni Association Hosts Baseball Reunion on Saturday

Join the Alumni Association for a Stallion Baseball Reunion for former players and their families at the Stallion Baseball Field on Saturday. Alumni are welcomed to watch the Stallions play and participate in a dedication of the new score board. A tailgate with free food will begin at noon, and at 1 p.m. Baseball Alumni will be recognized before the game. There is no cost to attend, but registration is encouraged by Wednesday. For more information or to register, email alumni@abac.edu or call 229.391.4900.

Graduation Celebration Dinner April 27 at Museum

Congratulations to the May 2016 Graduates! The Alumni Association is hosting a Graduation Celebration dinner on Wednesday, April 27 at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture. All two-year and four-year graduates are invited to attend. The graduates will enjoy dinner and fellowship with successful ABAC alumni who have returned to spend the evening answering questions about career goals, future plans, and reminiscing on good times at ABAC. This event will also conclude the Graduation Gift Challenge that is happening now. The Alumni Association is offering a special discount to 2016 graduates – they are invited to join the Association for $16 instead of the usual $35. We hope that this opportunity will foster a spirit of giving back to ABAC throughout the rest of their lives. Please encourage any graduates that you interact with to RSVP for the Graduation Celebration and participate in the Graduation Gift Challenge! Graduates can use the online form at www.abac.edu/alumni or call 229.391.4900 to register.

Alumni Regional Roundup at Gin Creek April 28

As President Bridges often says, there are two types of people in this world: those who went to ABAC, and those two wish they had! ABAC Alumni can be found in almost every state and all over the world, but thousands of alumni in our own backyard! The ABAC Alumni Association invites current and retired faculty and staff to join over 2,000 alumni that live in Colquitt County to attend a Regional Roundup at Gin Creek Plantation. This event will take place Thursday, April 28 beginning at 6:30 p.m. with dinner at 7 p.m. The cost for alumni is $10 for adults, $5 for children ages 5-11, children under 5 are free, and there is a maximum cost per family of $30. Register at www.abac.edu/alumni or call 229.391.4900.
Nursing Students Participate in First Receiver Decontamination Training

Five senior nursing students participated in the hospital First Receiver Decontamination Train the Trainer course hosted by the Georgia Department of Public Health’s Healthcare Community Preparedness Program on March 23 in Tifton. According to disaster preparedness leaders the assistance of ABAC Nursing students as volunteers was an invaluable resource to the training of 13 hospital decontamination instructors. During each situation the students’ role played as one of the 20 patients requiring decontamination. Their efforts contributed realism to the full scale scenario which allowed for the class participants to fully practice the skills learned in the course. Those who participated were: Monica Alford, Scott Clanton, Karen Jackson, Lacey Lewis and Latoya Richardson.

Museum Now Taking Applications for Youth Apprentice Program

Young persons between the ages of 14 to 18 years old can apply for the Summer Apprentice Program at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at ABAC. The deadline to apply for this program has been extended to April 26. The Apprentice Program is designed to offer youth an opportunity to learn about history, gain experience and understanding of a professional work environment, and prepare them to be an active volunteer in their community. This experience will offer apprentices a variety of new skills and opportunities to make new friends.

To be selected as a youth volunteer, applicants must turn in a written application with two letters of recommendation and participate in a short interview. Interviews will be scheduled as applications are submitted.

Youth Apprentices fulfill a minimum of 60 volunteer hours throughout the year. The majority of those hours will be during the months of June and July. They also volunteer one Saturday out of every month during the year and during special events. Time spent in the program counts toward community service hours for school clubs and at Tift County High School for the community service chord at graduation.

“We do require hard work and excellent behavior from our youth,” Lynn McDonald, Volunteer Coordinator for the Museum, said. “In return, we aim to make great young people even better through the GMA’s unique and enriching cultural environment. The program benefits both the youth who participate and the Georgia Museum of Agriculture & Historic Village.”

During the summer, apprentices will work side-by-side with the Museum’s historical interpreters learning details about each of the buildings in the Village and life in South Georgia during the late 1800s. During their time at the Museum, apprentices also enjoy field trips, group research on selected topics, a communications workshop, and guest speakers.

“In recapping their year, apprentices have commented about an appreciation for the conveniences of today’s world versus 1880s farm life, the friendships that they made among the group, learning to communicate with guests and developing skills such as crocheting and blacksmithing,” said McDonald.

For more information or to obtain an application, interested persons can contact McDonald at (229) 391-5223 or lmcdonald@abac.edu.

ABAC Birthdays

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