High School Students Can Enroll in New Baldwin Academy at ABAC

TIFTON—The impact of high school students dually enrolled in classes at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College will receive a significant boost with the establishment of the Baldwin Academy, a new program designed for top academic students. The Academy provides an enhanced educational experience with perks that allow students a more seamless pathway within the University System of Georgia.

“ABAC has a long history of partnering with area high schools to provide higher educational opportunities for students in the ACCEL program,” said Dr. Niles Reddick, Vice President for Academic Affairs at ABAC. “Baldwin Academy is yet another way to coalesce those relationships with high schools and assist students in an even better collegiate experience.”

Dr. Gail Dillard, who serves as the Baldwin Academy advisor, said the number of area high school students participating in dual enrollment at ABAC has more than tripled in recent years. She said 53 students were enrolled in the 2010 fall semester, and that number grew to 183 by the 2013 fall term.
“As you can tell from that number, high school students make up a significant segment of the freshman class,” Dillard said. “We want to be sure we are helping these students develop an identity as college students rather than just accumulating credits.”

Many students take classes on the ABAC campus in Tifton, but students at Colquitt County High School, Fitzgerald High School, Tiftarea Academy, and Baconton Community Charter School have the opportunity to take ABAC classes at their individual high schools.

“Grouping all dual enrollment students together under one umbrella organization will allow us to better meet the needs of these high achieving students and help them make a smooth transition to college life,” Dillard said.

Extra opportunities for Baldwin Academy students on the ABAC campus in Tifton include enrolling in Honors Program classes, joining the Honors Club, gaining access to the Honors Lounge, and other activities.

Worth County High School senior Payton Brown said enrolling in honors classes has real benefits.

“Participating in the honors biology class at ABAC allows me to have a more individual learning experience because of the smaller class size and to have a closer relationship with my professor and classmates,” Brown said.

Reddick said ABAC faculty members who teach the Baldwin Academy classes maintain the same rigor in their dual enrollment classes as they do in their other college classes and also work with the high school students to further develop the critical thinking skills necessary for success in college.
“ABAC faculty who teach Baldwin Academy students at area high schools are credentialed with at least a master’s degree with an emphasis in their field of study,” Reddick said. “Many of them have doctorate degrees.”

Dillard said Baldwin Academy students place themselves in a position to be first in line for ABAC freshman academic scholarships when they graduate from high school and continue their ABAC curriculum.

“Baldwin Academy students will receive special consideration in the competition for these scholarships,” Dillard said. “Over $300,000 in scholarship money is available each year thanks to generous support from alumni and friends of the college.

“These students will also be able to transition seamlessly from dual enrollment to regular enrollment at ABAC. That includes being able to take advantage of priority registration for classes, a benefit which puts them ahead of regular freshmen in choosing classes.”

Students interested in participating in Baldwin Academy should contact their high school counselor to determine their eligibility for the program. For additional information, interested persons can contact Dillard at (229) 891-7235 or at gdillard@abac.edu.

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