ABAC students in the Stafford School of Business voiced their approval of the new Bachelor of Science degree in Business and Economic Development on the front steps of Lewis Hall on Tuesday.

ABAC Introduces New Bachelor’s Degree in Business

TIFTON—For the first time ever, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College will offer a Bachelor of Science degree in Business and Economic Development according to an announcement by ABAC President David Bridges at a news conference this morning in Lewis Hall.
“This is another history-making day for ABAC,” Bridges said. “Not only can students earn a business degree, but they can couple it with many of our other degrees like Agriculture or Communications to earn a degree in Ag Business or Business Communications. This provides new options for our bachelor’s degree students.”

Academic Affairs Vice President Niles Reddick echoed Bridges’ comments.

“One student may choose to focus entirely on the business aspect,” Reddick said. “Another might choose to concentrate on the economic development angle, particularly rural development. I think the degree captures a niche here because it could be all about preparing to take over a small family business.”

Dill and Susan Driscoll, Deans of the Stafford School of Business at ABAC, were almost ecstatic with the endless possibilities the new degree offers.

“Let’s say a student wants to focus on distribution,” Dill Driscoll said. “We can send him to Lake Placid, New York for an internship where he learns the business inside and out. We already have a couple of students going to London for an internship with a small family business. They will actually do the work from beginning to the end product.”

“We can truly focus on creating an educational track that fits the student’s needs versus a pre-set curriculum such as marketing, accounting, or finance,” Susan Driscoll said. “This degree is perfect for students who want to be managers of a business or create successful new businesses. Then we have the economic development courses for those who want to focus on building great communities through that avenue.”

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,” prior to coming to ABAC in July, 2012. When they sold the company, the timing could not have been more perfect for them to step into the world of academia.

“I had spent 35 years training over 400,000 young adults to do experiential marketing,” Dill Driscoll said. “I’ve always been a teacher and a coach.”

After almost two years at the helm of the Stafford School of Business, they see the new bachelor’s degree giving them the impetus they need to open the doors to the future for ABAC business majors.

“This degree makes the Stafford School of Business a legitimate resource for training future business leaders,” Susan Driscoll said. “This is a win for our students as well as for our local businesses in that we can prepare great business leaders for our area.”

The freshman class enrollment in the Stafford School of Business was up 55 per cent last fall and 13 per cent overall in business. The Driscolls believe the new degree could prove to be the launching pad to greater heights.

“We anticipate that this new degree will further increase our demand since we have so many students who want to pursue a bachelor’s degree in business and stay at the school of their choice,” Susan Driscoll said.

Bridges said that ABAC continues to build on its foundation of bachelor’s degrees with the B.S. degree in Business and Economic Development.

“We started with 40 students in our bachelor’s degree programs in January of 2008,” Bridges said. “Now we have over 1,000 students enrolled in bachelor’s degrees. When it comes
to attracting new students, we have obviously broadened our appeal even more with this new business degree.”

ABAC now offers bachelor’s degrees in Biology, Diversified Agriculture, Turfgrass and Golf Course Management, Natural Resource Management with majors in Forestry and Wildlife and Rural Studies which offers concentrations in Writing and Communications, Social and Community Development, and Politics and Modern Cultures.

Students can enroll in classes for the new business degree in the summer term, which begins June 2 or the fall semester, which begins Aug. 13.

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