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President David Bridges congratulates Samuel Peraza (l) and Allison Gordy (right) at the ABAC spring commencement ceremony on Thursday. Peraza received the George P. Donaldson Award, and Gordy received the ABAC Alumni Association Award.

ABAC Graduates Most Students in History

TIFTON—More students than at any point in the 107-year history of Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College completed their requirements for graduation in the annual spring commencement ceremony on Thursday in Gressette Gymnasium.
ABAC President David Bridges said a record-breaking 409 students completed the requirements for graduation at the end of the spring term. Over 300 of them participated in the ceremony.

A total of 117 graduates received bachelor’s degrees, shattering the previous high of 67. The Stafford School of Business also set a record by awarding 24 bachelor’s degrees in business and economic development.

“We’re rolling now,” said Dill Driscoll, who is Dean of the Stafford School of Business along with his wife, Susan. “I believe that number will go up significantly in years to come.”

Dr. Beverly Sparks, an ABAC alumnus from the Class of ’76, was the guest speaker. She offered a message of encouragement and hope for the newly minted ABAC degree recipients.

“Your ABAC education will open doors and provide countless opportunities for your careers,” Sparks, the winner of the Distinguished Alumnus Award at the 2015 Homecoming awards ceremony, said. “You have a lot of people to thank for all the success you have enjoyed so far. Be sure to thank them.”

Two of the graduates, Allison Faye Gordy from Sharpsburg, and Samuel Elberto Peraza from Loganville, were spotlighted for the top awards presented by the ABAC Alumni Association during the ceremony.

Gordy, a natural resource management major specializing in wildlife, was named the winner of the ABAC Alumni Association Award for the top bachelor’s degree graduate participating in the ceremony, and Peraza, a journalism major, received the George P. Donaldson Award for the top associate degree graduate participating in the ceremony.
Active in campus life, Gordy served as president of the student chapter of The Wildlife Society this year. During her time at ABAC, she also served as treasurer and historian for the Forestry Club, secretary and treasurer for the Forestry and Wildlife Club, and secretary of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

Elected as the 2013 ABAC Homecoming Queen, Gordy has also been a member of the Campus Activities Board, the Residence Hall Association, and the Baptist Collegiate Ministries. She has also been a Community Assistant in the residence halls.

With an overall grade point average of 3.50, Gordy has now completed three ABAC degrees include associate degrees in forest technology and wildlife technology as well as her bachelor’s degree in natural resource management. She has been named a Superior Honor Student, a Distinguished Honor Student, and has made the Dean’s List and the President’s List.

Gordy described her time at ABAC as “a top-notch college experience full of lessons and memories I will cherish from now on.”

In his two years at ABAC, Peraza was selected as a member of the ABAC Ambassadors leadership team and as a soloist with the ABAC Concert Choir and ABAC Chamber Singers. He has also been a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, Baptist Collegiate Ministries, and the Cultura Latina Club.

Peraza is a staff member for the college’s award-winning campus newspaper, “The Stallion,” and won the Outstanding Senator Award in 2014 for his work with the Student Government Association. He was also a member of the Constitutional Congress this year which rewrote the entire SGA Constitution.
While maintaining a 3.82 grade point average, Peraza has been selected for the Dean’s List and has been recognized as an Honor Student and a Superior Honor Student. He has been accepted to Columbia University to continue his studies.

Describing his ABAC career, Peraza said, “it has taught me so many lessons that I will use throughout my lifetime. I have made lifelong friendships that I will never forget, and ABAC has helped me find myself during the process.”

Summer term classes begin at ABAC on June 1, and fall semester classes begin Aug. 12.

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