For IMMEDIATE Release

Dr. Jerry Baker and Troy Spicer

ABAC Deans to Present at 2015 World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates

TIFTON – Two deans from Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, Dr. Jerry Baker of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources and Troy Spicer of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences, will present a paper at the 2015 World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates to be held for the first time in Atlanta on Nov. 15-19.

In its 15th year, the event serves as the annual meeting for Nobel Peace Prize winners. It is a global event involving government agencies and non-profit organizations and draws over 2,000 leaders, activists and celebrities from across the globe. The purpose of the Summit is to draw attention to democratic values and to promote global freedom and peace.
The Summit will consist of three and a half days of mini-summits, debates, meetings, workshops, and other activities to address the challenges of global civilization. The paper, titled “The Human Right to the Benefits of Science: Bringing Telehealth to a Rural Community in Nicaragua,” describes an ongoing project among ABAC and five partners.

“It is a distinct honor to be selected to present our project to the highly acclaimed audience,” said Baker. “However, it is really more exciting to me to share such a wonderful example of how the benefits of science and technology can contribute to better healthcare for the citizens of Nicaragua. Access to the benefits of science is a human right, and we are learning how to deliver those benefits more effectively and efficiently.”

“This effort brings credit and recognition to all of our partners in the endeavor: Tift Regional Medical Center, Georgia Partnership for Telehealth, the Nicaragua Community Health Connection, the Nicaraguan Ministry of Health, and the University of Nicaragua in Matagalpa,” Spicer said. “This is a once in a lifetime opportunity. I was delighted that our paper was accepted.”

The paper will be presented with Jon Thompson, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Nicaragua Community Health Connection. Thompson is also the Director of Nicaragua Programs at Emory University through the Social Enterprise @ Goizueta program.

“Telehealth is the delivery of health-related services using telecommunications and related technologies in the support of patient care, health education, and administrative activities,” Spicer said.

The telehealth proposal involves six entities which include two academic institutions, a regional healthcare provider in the U.S., a non-profit telehealth provider, a non-governmental
organization working in a rural community in Nicaragua, and the Nicaraguan national health ministry. Together they will bring the benefits of science and technology to an isolated community as a demonstration of science as a human right.

The United Nations recognizes the right to benefit from scientific advances and technology as a human right. Regrettably, these benefits are not shared equally across the world. This project describes a way to easily bring technology to isolated communities.

With the telehealth capability, patients in Nicaragua can be examined and treated with the help of an attending nurse by a physician located miles away using high resolution video cameras, camera probes and other high-tech gadgets such as a Bluetooth enabled stethoscopes. Just as it does in the U.S., telehealth brings cost-effective health technology to rural and underserved areas that are in need of medical services. In Nicaragua, the benefits will be most helpful to pregnant women, children, and the elderly. Spicer said the proposal is also reproducible, meaning the same plan could be used for other remote areas across the world in need of better healthcare.

Spicer and ABAC’s rural studies and nursing students have made summer trips to Nicaragua for a number of years. In January, ABAC became the first institution in the University System of Georgia (USG) to use telehealth to teach its nursing students.

“Next year, all of our rural studies and nursing students will be able to participate in ‘virtual’ study abroad experiences thanks to this technology and the help of our partners,” said Spicer.

###