

*News from*



**ABAC**

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**ABAC Employee Receives Top Award from University System**

**TIFTON**—Jessica Swords, Director of Student Accounts and Veterans Certifying Official at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, received one of the highest honors bestowed by the University System of Georgia on Wednesday when she was named the Gold Level recipient of the Chancellor’s Service Excellence Award for an Outstanding Individual.

“I was stunned,” Swords said after the ceremony when she received the award from University System Chancellor Hank Huckaby. “I was just doing my job.”

ABAC Comptroller Deidra Jackson described Swords as “one in a million.” In her nomination letter for Swords, Jackson extolled the virtues of an employee always willing to go the extra mile.

“Higher education needs more employees like Jessica Swords,” Jackson said. “Jessica is always willing to take care of any task presented to her. I can always depend on Jessica, who never ceases to amaze me at how she goes above and beyond to make sure that any task she is given is completed successfully.”

Swords has been especially attentive to the needs of the 87 veterans who are students on the ABAC campus. She was instrumental in the establishment of the Veteran Success Center which opened in Branch Hall on Aug. 21.

“My grandfather is a veteran,” Swords said. “I try to make sure we take care of all their campus needs. As civilians, we should show our respect to the veterans. It’s the least we can do. I think of the veterans on the ABAC campus as my students.”

Swords serves as the advisor to a new organization on campus devoted to the veterans among the student body.

“We have veterans coming to the Veteran Success Center every day,” Swords said. “Since we opened the Center, we have had more students on campus identify themselves as veterans. They need to have someone they can trust.”

Jackson said Swords worked extra hours to make certain the opening of the Veteran Success Center went off without a hitch.

“She worked many late nights and weekends to ensure that all arrangements were made in a timely manner so the Center had all the resources needed for veterans and those currently in service,” Jackson said.

Swords is a 2008 ABAC graduate with an associate degree in business. She received her bachelor’s degree in business from Georgia Southwestern in 2010 and will complete her MBA from Southwestern in May, 2016.

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