Driscolls Leave Their Mark at ABAC

TIFTON—Three years ago Dill and and Susan Driscoll set a goal of using their worldwide marketing expertise to create a true business school at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College. Mission accomplished.

The Driscolls are leaving their positions as co-deans of the Stafford School of Business to return to the business world so they can reunite with their first love, creating sustainable brand experiences with a mission to make a positive impact in people’s lives.

Susan Driscoll ended her time at ABAC on June 30. Dill Driscoll will serve full time as dean through the 2015 fall semester and will then move downstairs to the Lewis Hall library where he will continue to work with ABAC students on a part time basis.

“We have achieved all the goals we set for ourselves and the school,” Dill Driscoll said. “We realize it’s time for new people to come in and share their ideas. It has been an absolute joy to work with these kids. We couldn’t be more proud of them.”

ABAC President David Bridges applauded the energetic effort the Driscolls exhibited from the first day they set foot on the campus.
“I have known Dill and Susan for a long time, and I knew their global business experience and progressive mentality would enhance the reputation of the School of Business,” Bridges said. “They brought new ideas and unbelievable energy to our campus. Two new full time faculty members have been hired in the Stafford School of Business this fall, and we’ll announce plans for new leadership soon.”

There were ABAC milestones aplenty during the Driscolls’ tenure.

On Nov. 7, 2012, Bridges announced that ABAC would honor its largest benefactor by naming the business school the Stafford School of Business. DeNean Stafford, III, gave remarks on behalf of the Stafford family, and the Driscolls presented their ideas for the future of the school.

On March 1, 2013, Lewis Hall officially re-opened as the home of the Stafford School of Business. The rehabilitation of the building was a part of the Historic Front Campus Project, which involved extensive work on all three original buildings, Lewis, Tift, and Herring.

On March 25, 2014, Bridges announced that ABAC was adding a bachelor’s degree in business and economic development in a press conference on the first floor of Lewis Hall. Enrollment in the Stafford School of Business immediately increased and in the 2015 spring commencement ceremony, ABAC awarded 24 bachelor’s degrees in business and economic development.

“The Stafford School of Business is really rolling now,” Dill Driscoll said. “I believe that number of graduates will go up significantly in the years to come.”
The Driscolls used their long list of worldwide contacts to set up internship opportunities for ABAC students in such far flung locales as Vietnam.

“We want these young people to interact with business people, with legislators, and whoever else,” Dill Driscoll said in December, 2013. “We have lots of contacts in 190 countries around the world. We’ll get the students ready, and then we’ll place them in internships. We’ll do everything possible to find them a job.”

Susan Driscoll said the bachelor’s degree in business and economic development was the perfect launching pad for ABAC students.

“The curriculum is now at a level where graduates can start their own businesses, continue with the second, third, or fourth generation of their family businesses or just be sound business managers,” she said. “Some of them will like living in rural communities, and others will prefer Atlanta or even London.”

The Driscolls created a new concept called Stafford Hall in the ABAC residence halls. They recruited 120 students from various majors across the campus, divided them into four teams of 30 students each and involved them in competitions including scavenger hunts, field days, talent shows, grade competitions, and business projects. Stafford Hall students developed humanitarian food collection programs which resulted in “manna drops” at Thanksgiving and Easter.

Thanks to the Driscolls, the business majors at ABAC heard from a variety of speakers including Navy SEAL team member Coleman Ruiz. Students were able to visit with Doug Ivester, former chairman of Coca-Cola at his plantation. The Stafford School of Business also launched a new ABAC club for entrepreneurs called Enactus ABAC.
Dill Driscoll introduced Carry The Load to the campus, a nationwide effort to restore the true meaning of Memorial Day and connect Americans to the sacrifices of the military, law enforcement, firefighters and rescue personnel. ABAC students accompanied Driscoll on the 2,000-mile relay from New York to Texas in 2014 and 2015.

The Stafford School of Business also partnered with State Farm Insurance to create the State Farm intern program. Internships became a byword of the Driscolls’ time at ABAC.

“We’re trying to prepare these students for life,” Dill Driscoll said. “Next year, we’re looking at a trip for ABAC students to London, Paris, Brussels, Berlin, Zurich, Milan, and Barcelona. I’ll still be around trying to help.”

Dill Driscoll also spent many hours as an assistant coach with the ABAC soccer team. He enjoyed his days working with Coach Jimmy Ballenger and the Fillies.

“That was one of the absolute highlights of my time here,” he said.

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