

News from



ABAC

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Enrollment at ABAC Increases Again

TIFTON—Official statistics from the University System of Georgia (USG) show that enrollment at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College has increased for the third time in the last four years.

Recently released USG figures show that ABAC recorded an enrollment of 3,475 students this fall, representing a 2.4 per cent increase from the 2015 number of 3,393. Fall 2016 enrollment in the 29 colleges and universities in the USG totaled 321,551 students, an increase of 1.1 percent over fall 2015.

“It looks as if the enrollment from Florida, South Carolina, and Alabama has pushed us past last year,” ABAC President David Bridges said. “ABAC is a destination college for most of those students since the majority of them are enrolled in bachelor’s degree programs in agriculture. I think our neighbor waivers certainly played a role in those students’ decisions to attend ABAC.”

The USG instituted a policy in 2015 that allowed certain colleges to waive out-of-state tuition for students from bordering states. ABAC used its neighbor waivers as an incentive,

resulting in 259 out-of-state students, up from 203 in 2015. The college attracted students from 21 states, 26 countries and 154 of Georgia's 159 counties during the fall term.

The ABAC out-of-state enrollment is second highest among the 11 state colleges in the USG, topped only by the 281 out-of-state students at Coastal Georgia. The number of students from other countries also increased at ABAC from 33 to 49 this semester. That represents the fourth highest total among state colleges in the USG.

Bridges is most pleased with the fact that the number of ABAC students enrolled in bachelor's degree programs is at an all-time high.

"There's a phenomenal jump in students pursuing a bachelor's degree," Bridges said. "The numbers paint a very positive picture that reflects ABAC's status as genuine baccalaureate degree-granting institution."

ABAC introduced bachelor's degrees to its curriculum in 2008 when 41 students enrolled in junior and senior level classes. Today, the number of students enrolled in bachelor's degrees stands at 1,828, over half the enrollment for the first time ever.

The number of students in bachelor's degrees should continue to rise since ABAC added two new bachelor's degrees in the past eight months, one in nursing and the other in agricultural education.

"We currently have 107 students at ABAC who have expressed an interest in pursuing the Ag Ed degree," Dr. Jerry Baker, Dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, said. "We have seen growth in our bachelor's degree programs because our graduates have good skills, and they are prepared for the work force."

Bridges believes the number of bachelor's degree graduates is the key to a successful future for ABAC.

“Whether we like it or not, change is the way to prosper,” Bridges said. “Prosperity for ABAC is defined by producing more graduates who have experienced the life-changing potential that goes along with the ABAC experience.

“The ABAC graduation rate is 200 per cent of the state college average across the University System. The ultimate mark of success for ABAC is the quality of those graduates.”

ABAC is the leader among the state colleges in the USG in fulltime enrollment with 72.3 per cent of the student population enrolled on a fulltime basis. That places ABAC 10th among all colleges and universities in the USG.

The USG report shows that the ABAC enrollment is 53.1 per cent female. At 46.9 per cent, ABAC has the highest male population of any of the state colleges. The average age of ABAC students is 21.1 years of age.

“Making the lives of young people better was the mission in 1908, and we're still doing that today,” Bridges said. “We offer only one product but it is a very valuable product. The value of the ABAC experience is absolutely priceless. Life is better at ABAC.”

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