

ABBREVIATED HISTORY OF ABAC

The Second District Agricultural and Mechanical School opened in 1908 as an area high school for 27 students in Tifton, Georgia. In 1924, the South Georgia Agricultural and Mechanical College (SGAMC) was organized, and the physical property of the high school was adapted for college use. Change occurred again in 1929 when the institution's name was changed to the Georgia State College for Men (GSCM). Both SGAMC and GSCM offered bachelor's degrees.

The University System of Georgia (USG) was formed in 1933, and the College joined the USG with a new name and a new mission. GSCM became Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC), a two-year college offering associate degree programs only. It was named for Abraham Baldwin, one of two Georgia signers of the U.S. Constitution.

The USG granted ABAC status as a State College in 2006, allowing the College to expand its curriculum to include bachelor's degrees. ABAC began offering junior and senior level classes in 2008 and awarded its first bachelor's degrees in 2009. In 2010, the Georgia Agrirama, which opened as an historical site in 1976, became a part of the ABAC campus, and it was renamed the Georgia Museum of Agriculture. On January 1, 2018, all students at Bainbridge State College became ABAC students after a consolidation process was approved by the USG Board of Regents.

During the 2023 fall semester, ABAC enrolled 3,774 students from 26 countries, 14 states, 151 of Georgia's 159 counties, and 53 of Florida's 67 counties. Those students pursued bachelor's degrees in Agribusiness, Agriculture, Agricultural Communication, Agricultural Education, Agricultural Technology Management, Biology, Business, Criminal Justice, Environmental Horticulture, History and Government, Natural Resource Management, Nursing, Rural Community Development, and Writing and Communication. ABAC also continues to offer four associate degree programs. Nearly 1,400 students live on campus.

ABAC's eight intercollegiate sports include men's baseball, golf, tennis, and cross country and women's soccer, tennis, softball, and cross country. ABAC teams have won five national championships, three in women's softball and two in men's tennis. ABAC also operates its own nine-hole golf course, the Forest Lakes Golf Club. Men's and women's basketball will be added to the intercollegiate sports lineup in 2024 when ABAC begins an affiliation with the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA).

Music program performing groups include the Concert Band, Jazz Band, Jazz Choir, Concert Choir, and Chamber Singers. The student newspaper, *The Stallion*, and the literary magazine, *Pegasus*, enjoy a rich history of literary excellence. Students also enjoy the Baldwin Players Theatre Troupe, the on-campus radio station, WPLH, and over 50 clubs and organizations.

ABAC alumni include George T. Smith, the only person in history to win contested elections to all three branches of Georgia state government. Smith served as Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, and as a Georgia Supreme Court Justice. Other alumni include Medal of Honor recipient Harold Bascom Durham, Jr., former Georgia Governor George Busbee, Georgia's first female Secretary of State Cathy Cox, Georgia Supreme Court Justice John Ellington, PGA Tour member Boo Weekley; and Major League baseball player Tom Cheney. **10-25-2023**

