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Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

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December 1, 2022

To Whom It May Concern,

Please accept this letter of endorsement for Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College's (ABAC) Academic Support team to receive the Regents' Momentum Award for Excellence in Advising and Student Success. This team's contributions to ABAC extend far beyond advising and student success into accommodation and disability services, mental health counseling, tutoring, and testing. The team members work with passion and dedication to support our students professionally and personally through the many services. Their holistic approach to student support impacts all the students' stages of progression from the point of recruitment to application, acceptance, orientation, registration, enrollment, immersion, inclusion, persistence, and graduation and beyond.

The team's education, life experiences, and teaching backgrounds have prepared them to engage and mentor students with ease and poise. They prepare our students to excel academically and professionally through the resources and experiences available at ABAC. Their experience and skills have proven beneficial to our college and its goals to engage, teach, coach, and mentor students. Each member of the team is a self-directed individual who possesses the intrinsic motivation to complete goals. Each member has proven to be a dependable, productive, and friendly employee and co-worker during the time at ABAC. Each member completes all tasks with eagerness and enthusiasm. In comparison to its peers, this team excels in dependability, honesty, integrity, maturity, and academics. Further, the team has strong moral values and work ethics. Specific team activities are accentuated in the annual Complete College Georgia Report as part of the Momentum initiatives. The team members exude creativity in continuously engaging and challenging our students to learn, have unique memorable experiences, and combine the soft skills and technical skills necessary to be successful in employment and life.

Each team member has demonstrated the ability to work well as part of a team or alone, depending on the requirements of the project or work situation. Specifically, each team member continues to demonstrate commitment, patience, and endurance to get students completely immersed in campus experiences. This team works tirelessly and cooperatively with our students to ensure that they have a wonderful and memorable experience learning, researching, and being mentored to become fully engaged in their educational environment.

Based on the performance and reputation of this team, I advocate for Academic Support's nomination to receive the Regents' Momentum Award for Excellence in Advising and Student Success without reservation. If you need any additional information, please contact me at apwillis@abac.edu or 229-391-4861.

Sincerely,

Amy P. Willis
Acting Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

REGENTS' MOMENTUM AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN ADVISING AND STUDENT SUCCESS

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC or the College) is nominating its Academic Support department for the Momentum Award for Excellence in Advising and Student Success. Academic Support has been the College's driving force behind the Complete College Georgia (CCG) initiatives since its start in 2012. The tenets of Momentum Year and Momentum Approach, in addition to the University System of Georgia's (USG) Momentum Summits, continue to provide a clear framework for student achievement, which has allowed the Academic Support team to develop targeted initiatives and programs that have positively impacted ABAC graduation and retention rates. This report highlights the high-impact practices developed and implemented by Academic Support that have significantly benefited ABAC's students over the past ten years.

Institutional Profile

ABAC is a residential institution that has long been the higher education destination for students who want to study agriculture and natural resources. Today, ABAC has grown to become a destination for students seeking a wide variety of baccalaureate programs from a broad range of academic disciplines. ABAC is a unique, intimate learning environment where students are given the tools to embrace their full potential and pursue their aspirations through a hands-on education. In addition to delivering relevant experiences that prepare the graduate for life, ABAC is a strategic partner within the University System of Georgia to help create a more educated Georgia.

Academic Support Profile

The College recognizes that there is a great need for academic support services outside the classroom that focus on the whole student. Academic Support is the go-to department for students and houses the Academic Support Counselors, Accommodation & Disability Services, the Counseling Center (mental health), the Tutoring Center, and the Testing Center. These robust services offered on the Tifton Campus and Bainbridge Site Location support students' academic and personal well-being from orientation to graduation through engagement, coaching, and mentoring. Academic Support is essential to student achievement in terms of retention and graduation. The department's holistic approach to student success is appropriate for students, faculty, and staff, with services available to Tifton and Bainbridge students in person and virtually.

MOMENTUM GOALS AND STRATEGIES

ABAC's colleges, departments, and administrative units share the responsibility of fostering student development, performance, and well-being. Although all college-wide units work together in supporting student achievement, Academic Support has the primary responsibility for providing Momentum-specific academic and student support programs, services, and activities for ABAC students regardless of location. The College's CCG plan is reviewed in detail below and is split into the Momentum Year and the Momentum Approach components. Additionally, a section is included on ABAC's primary measures of its CCG plan, which focus on retention and graduation rates.

Momentum Year

In 2012, when ABAC joined the CCG initiative, Academic Support assisted the College in swiftly implementing the three metrics of the Momentum Year:

- Students attempt initial math and English requirements in the first year,
- Students attempt 9 hours in an academic focus area in the first year, and
- Students attempt 30 hours of a clear pathway in the first year.

These three metrics can be seen on the program maps for each of ABAC's degree programs. Appendix A shows an example of a program map, which includes milestones, used to provide students with a clear pathway for degree attainment. Program maps are updated annually, can be found in ABAC's catalog (catalog.abac.edu), are used as an advising tool, and are included in new advisor training. Additionally, three of ABAC's most successful Momentum Year initiatives (e.g., 15-to-Finish, the Academic Intervention Management (AIM) program, and the First-Year Learning Experience (FLEX) program) to date were started by Academic Support, incorporate the metrics of Momentum Year, and support student achievement.

15-to-Finish

In 2012, Academic Support began the 15-to-Finish initiative, which incorporates the three tenets of Momentum Year. Traditional first-year incoming students are preregistered by the Academic Support team for their first semester for 15 hours, which includes the appropriate math and English courses, and a course in the student's focus area. Students are then able to review their schedule and program map during orientation with their faculty advisor. The importance of 15-to-Finish begins with the information given to interested students before admission and is incorporated into new faculty advisor training each fall and advising review sessions each fall and spring. Financial aid counselors also encourage students to enroll in 15 hours a semester to graduate on time.

A review of ABAC's 15-to-Finish data reveals how this Momentum Year process has improved student success and progression. For the 2012 fall semester, only 27% of first-year

students were enrolled in 15 or more hours. The fall of 2021, a year after the COVID-19 pandemic, returned on-campus visitations and orientations. These student interactions aided in boosting the first-year percentage of students in 15 hours from 51% in fall 2020 to 58% in fall 2021. Similarly, the percentage of full-time first-year students who earned 30 or more credits in their first academic year increased from 16.75% in 2012 to 27% in 2021. Table 1 shows ABAC's progress with the 15-to-Finish initiative for the previous five years.

Table 1. First-Year Students Registered and Completing 15 Hours

Fall Cohort	Total FYS*	FYS registered for 15+	Percentage of FYS 15+	% FYS completed 30+
2021	532	306	58%	27%
2020	562	286	51%	28%
2019	614	320	52%	25%
2018	717	321	45%	31%
2017	661	286	43%	27%

Note. FYS = First-year students

The number of first-year students taking 15 or more hours their first semester remained above the 50% mark, which was the original goal for the 15-to-Finish initiative. Additionally, the percentage of first-year students enrolled in 15 hours during their first semester for Fall 2021 is higher than the previous four fall cohorts. Given the steady increase in the number of first-year students enrolling in 15 hours their first semester, Academic Support has set a new goal of 60% of first-year students enrolling in 15 hours.

Whereas the Momentum Year metric indicates students should attempt 30 hours in their first year, ABAC uses earned or completed hours as a measure of success. The percentage of Fall 2021 students completing 30 hours within their first academic year decreased slightly from the Fall 2020 cohort; however, the statistic remains close to the 30% goal. To reach this goal of 30%, Academic Support has increased notification to first-year students registering for their second term, in addition to incorporating the 15 hours per semester in faculty advisor training.

Academic Intervention Management (AIM) Program

To help support momentum for first-year students who are off-track after their first semester, Academic Support requires all students placed on academic probation after their first semester of enrollment to participate in the AIM program. This student population works one-on-one with an Academic Support Counselor (ASC) with the express purpose of helping them improve their overall GPA to avoid suspension after their second semester. Students in the AIM program begin by meeting weekly with an ASC to discuss their past performance by recognizing academic/personal challenges. After these challenges are identified, the student works with the ASC to identify and take advantage of the appropriate academic and student resources. The goal of the AIM program is to provide the students with knowledge and resources to allow them to return and maintain good academic standing (overall GPA of 2.0 or higher).

The AIM program is appropriate for students who go on probation for the first time to allow for intervention services to improve student achievement. AIM is available to students on the Tifton Campus and Bainbridge Site. Students are able to participate by meeting with an academic counselor in person or virtually. Table 2 shows the AIM data for the past five cohorts:

Table 2. AIM Program Completion and Success Data

Fall Cohort	Participants	Completed AIM	% Not Suspended	% Returned to Good Standing
2021	110	91	57%	30%
2020	115	98	57%	29%
2019	130	91	49%	19%
2018	160	132	51%	25%
2017	164	123	46%	24%

Measures of success include decreased number of first-year students placed on academic probation after their first semester and the number of students continuing or returning to good academic standing after completing the AIM program. Results of the AIM program for the 2021 cohort reveal continued positive trends. According to the data, the number of first-year students

who go on suspension appears to be trending down. The number of students not suspended has remained consistent and well above the average (25%) before implementing the AIM program.

First-Year Learning Experience (FLEX)

Despite the success of the AIM program in supporting the Momentum Year initiative by helping students rebound, the approach is reactive. The FLEX program was developed by Academic Support, as part of the College's Momentum Summit Plan, to identify and provide support services to students who may need additional momentum before beginning their first semester. An invitation-only proactive program, the FLEX program is for incoming first-year students with a high school grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or below. Students who meet this requirement are sent an invitation to participate and with general information about FLEX before classes begin. The FLEX program acts as a personalized First-Year Experience program, in which students meet weekly with an ASC and have access to the online FLEX classroom environment through GeorgiaView. This early intervention technique allows an ASC, who has specific knowledge of ABAC's support services, to provide individualized support and engage a vulnerable student group that focuses on adjusting to the college classroom, study habits, time management, degree and career planning, campus involvement, motivation, and mental well-being. FLEX is being piloted on the Tifton Campus for Fall 2022 and has approximately 40 students. Depending on the success of the program, FLEX will be expanded to the Bainbridge Site.

Momentum Approach

The Momentum Approach extends the metrics of the Momentum Year beyond a student's first year and widens the scope beyond Academic Affairs to include the entire institution from a student lens. To aid in the implementation of the Momentum Approach,

Academic Support put together a CCG Team comprised of various faculty and members from different departments within Academic, Fiscal, and Student Affairs. This ABAC CCG committee oversees the Mindset Survey given to first-year students and distributes the find to key administrators. Additionally, the team aided ABAC's schools in creating milestones for the program maps that extended beyond academics to include student organizations and career/graduate school exploration. Early Alerts and 90-Hour Checks are two student support programs, which Academic Support oversees, that were developed through the implementation of the Momentum Approach.

Early Alerts

The Early Alert program, implemented in 2015, was developed to support students who show signs of academic distress within the first several weeks of the semester. Academic Support receives submissions from faculty and staff, and an ASC reaches out to intervene to help students get back on track. Table 3 shows the tracking data for the Early Alert program. The data show a rapid rise in the utilization of the Early Alert program from 2015 to 2020. A downward trend was expected after the 2020 COVID pandemic.

Table 3. Early Alert Tracking Data

Year	Early Alert Referrals	Growth/Utilization	CARE Team Referrals
2022	794	-7%	37
2021	853	-32%	-
2020	1259	19%	-
2019	1057	8%	-
2018	982	135%	-
2017	418	186%	-
2016	146	161%	-
2015	56	-	-

In conjunction with Student Affairs, Academic Support recently led the initiative to create a CARE (Communication, Awareness, Referral, Education) Team referral platform to help

address behavioral concerns that may not be related to academics. The CARE Team referral was launched in the Summer of 2022 and aids in providing a more holistic approach to helping students maintain their momentum throughout their college careers. In addition to the Early Alert Program, Academic Support conducts 90-hour checks to help keeps students close to graduation on track and moving toward their degree goals.

90-Hour Checks

ABAC realizes that the path to graduation should be easy for students to navigate; however, changes in policies and programs can occasionally throw a student off track. Academic Support has helped remove barriers to graduation by implementing 90-hour checks for all students who have earned 90 or more credit hours. These 90-hour checkpoints are performed each fall and spring semester for baccalaureate degree-seeking students. The checks ensure that each student is on track to graduate within one academic year. In addition to the 90-hour reviews, ABAC enacted a policy for students to apply for graduation the semester before they graduate. An additional check of requirements is done by both the student's advisor and an Academic Support Counselor, thus, further easing the graduation process and reducing potential barriers to graduation. Table 4 shows the most recent data for the 90-hour checks.

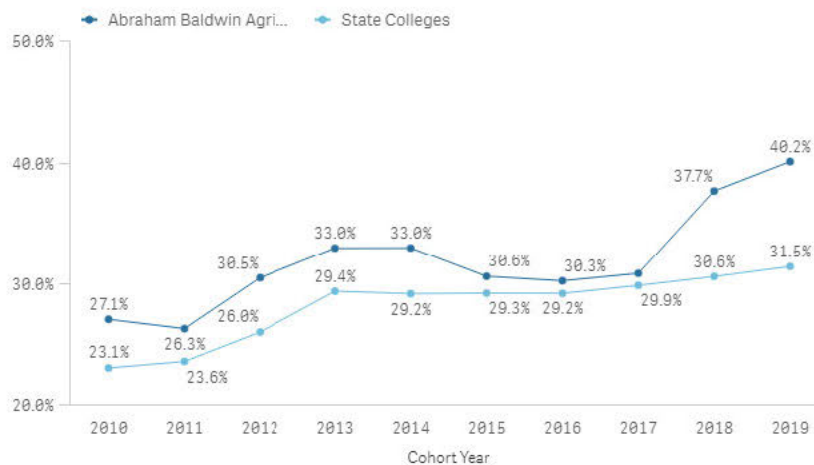
The data show the number of students identified as being off-track for the term given, the number that graduated within one year of being off-track, followed by the percentage. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 90-hour checks were not completed for spring 2020 due to the campus closure and other high-priority needs upon reopening. For fall 2021 and spring 2022, the data will be reported after one year, the end of fall 2022 and spring 2023, respectively. This high-impact strategy continues to be a success for the students and the institution by keeping students on track to graduate.

Table 4. 90-Hour Checks Data

Semester	Off Track	Graduated within one year	Percentage graduated
Spring 2021	189	177	94%
Fall 2020	171	122	71%
Spring 2020	*	*	*
Fall 2019	230	197	86%
Spring 2019	105	86	82%
Fall 2018	213	192	88%
Spring 2018	180	154	86%
Fall 2017	212	192	91%
Spring 2017	75	46	61%
Fall 2016	106	81	76%
Spring 2016	39	20	51%

Note. * = 90-hour checks not completed due to COVID

Measures of success include growth in the number of students graduating within one year after being identified as off-track. Table 4 above indicates an overall increase in students who graduate within one year after being identified as off-track. Another measure of success is an increase in third-year retention rates. Figure 1 shows ABAC's third-year retention rate compared to its peer state institutions. The graph indicates that ABAC's third-year retention rates continue to exceed the average of its peers per each cohort year since 2010. Data were pulled from USG Qlik.

Figure 1. Institutional Third-Year Retention Rates for ABAC and Peer Institutions

An overall increase in the conferment of bachelor's degrees is also a measure of success. Table 5 shows the number of bachelor's degrees conferred in the past fiscal years. For FY 2022, in the table above, an aggressive rise in bachelor's degrees conferred can be seen. The annual number of bachelor's degrees awarded dropped only in FY 2021 and by a small amount. Data were pulled from USG by the Numbers.

Table 5. ABAC Bachelor's Degrees Conferred in the Past Five Fiscal Years

Fiscal Year	Conferred Bachelor's Degrees
2022	414
2021	314
2020	334
2019	331
2018	273

Primary Data and Evidence of Momentum

ABAC's evaluation of its CCG plan focuses primarily on retention and graduation rates. One means of assessment that ABAC utilizes when determining the level of success with student achievement is by comparing its retention and graduation rates to other state colleges within the USG. The list of peer institutions consists of the following:

- Atlanta Metropolitan State College
- College of Coastal Georgia
- Dalton State College
- Georgia Gwinnett College
- Gordon State College
- East Georgia State College
- Georgia Highlands College
- South Georgia State College

ABAC monitors the range of retention and graduation rates from the peer cohorts as well as the average for the cohort for both measures. The College determines an acceptable threshold for achieving student success for retention and graduation rates from these ranges and averages.

ABAC's minimum threshold of acceptability or goal for its first-year retention rate is to exceed the average retention rate of ABAC's comparison peer institutions. ABAC aspires to have a first-year retention rate that is at least comparable to or better than the average of its peer institutions. And because ABAC is heavily committed to improving its first-year retention, its Academic Support team has been implementing various supportive *Momentum Year and Momentum Approach* initiatives, as described in this document, to do so.

Pertinent outcomes data on the first-year retention rates at ABAC and its peer institutions are shown in Table 6. For Fall 2021, ABAC's first-year retention rate was 62% and did not exceed the peer group averages. The same is true for the Fall 2018 and Fall 2017 cohorts (both 63%); however, ABAC's Fall 2021, Fall 2018, and Fall 2018 retention rates were typically very close to the peer group average. For Fall 2020 and Fall 2019, ABAC's student achievement outcomes in terms of first-year retention were higher than the average retention rate for its peers, indicating successful goal attainment.

Table 6. Institutional First-Year Retentions for ABAC and Peer Institutions

Cohort Semester	Retention Semester	Cohort Size	ABAC's Retention Rate	Peer Group Average Retention Rate
Fall 2021	Fall 2022	532	62%	64%
Fall 2020	Fall 2021	548	65%	61%
Fall 2019	Fall 2020	531	73%	64%
Fall 2018	Fall 2019	517	63%	64%
Fall 2017	Fall 2018	474	63%	64%

Note. Data are from USG Qlik and include First-Year, Full-Time bachelor's degree-seeking students.

ABAC's goal or threshold for acceptable performance for its four- and six-year graduation rates is to exceed the average graduation rate of ABAC's comparison peer institutions. Improving the institution's four and six-year graduation rate has been part of ABAC's and USG's Retention, Progression, and Graduation (RPG) and CCG initiatives for many years. The data in Table 7 (four-year graduation rates) and Table 8 (six-year graduation rates) show that ABAC has continually achieved its threshold of acceptability goals with respect to the peer group average.

Table 7. Four-Year (on-time) Graduation Rates for ABAC and Peer Group

Cohort Semester	Graduation Year	Cohort Size	ABAC's Graduation Rate	Peer Group Average Graduation Rate (and Range)
Fall 2018	2021-22	146	28%	13% (3% - 28%)
Fall 2017	2020-21	109	23%	13% (0% - 23%)
Fall 2016	2019-20	134	28%	11% (0% - 28%)
Fall 2015	2018-19	80	23%	11% (0% - 23%)

Note. Data are from USG Qlik and include First-Year, Full-Time bachelor's degree-seeking students.

Table 8. Six-Year Graduation Rates for ABAC and Peer Group

Cohort Semester	Graduation Year	Cohort Size	ABAC's Graduation Rate	Peer Group Average Graduation Rate (and Range)
Fall 2016	2021-22	242	51%	33% (14% - 51%)
Fall 2015	2020-21	153	45%	34% (21% - 50%)
Fall 2014	2019-20	102	42%	33% (0% - 42%)
Fall 2013	2018-19	85	39%	36% (25% - 39%)

Note. Data are from USG Qlik and include First-Year, Full-Time bachelor's degree-seeking students.

ABAC continues to be on the upper end of the graduation rate range for USG State Colleges and exceeds the peer group average for the fall cohorts presented below. A few of Academic Support's Momentum strategies that have contributed to its rise in graduation rates

include 15-to-Finish and 90-hour checks. The data below show ABAC's commitment to helping students attain a college degree on a global level.

Conclusion

The Academic Support team has successfully implemented the metrics for ABAC's Momentum Year and Momentum Approach initiatives and programs. Many of the programs, such as 15-to-Finish, Early Alerts, and 90-hour checks, have become standard institutional best practices for student achievement. The selected Momentum programs described above, which are part of the College's CCG plan, have aided ABAC in increasing student success, as seen through our institutional retention and graduation rates. Also, these strategies and initiatives tie into our institutional mission "to engage, teach, coach, mentor, and provide relevant experiences that prepare the graduate for life." Academic Support has also been successful in championing Momentum initiatives through faculty and staff collaboration and administrative support to increase student achievement and the College's retention and graduation rates. ABAC's next steps include further strengthening student success by applying the Momentum model to career development and exploration, which fits with the College's mission of "preparing the graduate for life" and the USG's current initiative of creating a more educated Georgia to meet the educational demands of the workforce.

APPENDIX A

Program Map Example – Front/Back

		Program Map				Student _____	
		Bachelor of Science in Business				Advisor _____	
Freshman	Fall	Sem	Grade	Hrs	Milestones	Spring	Milestones
	* ENGL 1101 Composition I * MATH 1111 College Algebra * CISM 2100 Spreadsheet Applications PHED 1100 Health & Wellness HIST 2111 United State History or HIST 2112				3	Complete ENGL 1101 Complete MATH 1111 Explore campus activities and organizations	ENGL 1102 Composition II * ECON 2016 Principles of Microeconomics COMM 1100 Human Communication * BUSA 2106 The Environment of Business MATH 1401 Elementary Statistics * BUSA 1101 Business Seminar
		Total		14	Tips: Learn to use a personal calendar for time management. Attend ASK series. Work with your advisor on study skills, email etiquette, business professionalism.		
				Total	Total credit hours earned 30		
Sophomore	Fall	Sem	Grade	Hrs	Milestones	Spring	Milestones
	POLS 1101 American Government AREA D Science + Lab * ECON 2105 Principles of Macroeconomics * ACCT 2101 Principles of Accounting I * MGMT 3130 Principles of Management				3	Complete MGMT 3130 Student Organizations Attend BSS workshops	Area E Social Science Area D Science + Lab * ACCT 2102 Principles of Accounting II * BUSA 3050 Business Statistics * MKTG 3131 Principles of Marketing PHED Physical Activity
		Total		16	Tips: Discuss internship interests and potential options with your advisor. Plan for non-Business Minor/ Grad school (if interested).		
				Total	Total credit hours earned 63		
Junior	Fall	Sem	Grade	Hrs	Milestones	Spring	Milestones
	Area C Humanities, Fine Arts, & Ethics Area D Science * FINA 3150 Principles of Finance * MGMT 3650 Business Logistics * MGMT 3670 Human Resource Management				3	Attend career events Identify internship site Active in Student Clubs	Area C Humanities, Fine Arts, & Ethics Area E Social Science * CISM 3100 Data Analytics * MGMT 3610 Operations Management * Business Major Elective
		Total		15	Tips: Finalize plan for a Summer internship and attend the orientation session. Look into study abroad options, mentored research, and other experiential learning opportunities.		
				Total	Total credit hours earned 96		
Senior	Fall	Sem	Grade	Hrs	Milestones	Spring	Milestones
	* MKTG 4100 Social Media Marketing * MGMT 4190 Strategic Management * BUSA 3071 Business Law * Business Major Elective * Business Major Elective				3	Job-Ready Resume Initiate Job search	* BUSA 4980 Capstone: Senior Seminar * MKTG 4800 Marketing Management * Business Major Elective * Business Major Elective
		Total		15	Tips: Begin the job search process early and utilize your professional network.		
				Total	Total credit hours earned 123		

* A grade of 'C' or better is required. Students must consult with their advisor, not all courses are available every semester.
 A student's program is his or her responsibility. Some core classes not completed in Fall or Spring can be taken over Summer to stay on track.
 2020-2021 Catalog

Important Policies

All Academic Policies and Procedures can be found in the ABAC Catalog. Refer to the ABAC Academic Calendar for all term schedules and deadlines.

Roster Verification / Class Attendance

- Any student who has never attended class will be removed from the roster during Roster Verification.
- Absence from class does not excuse students from full responsibility for class work or missed assignments.

Withdrawal Policy

- Drop/Add: Drop/Add is the only time during which students may drop a course without either academic or financial penalties.
- Withdraw (W): If students withdraw prior to the withdrawal deadline, they receive a grade of W on their transcript. A grade of W has no effect on a student's GPA.
- Withdraw-fail (WF): If the students withdraw after the withdrawal deadline, they will receive a grade of WF.
- W-After-Midterm: Students who experience a medical, psychological, or other personal hardship that prevented them from completing their course requirements may petition for a W-After-Midterm, through the Director of Academic Support. The assignment of a grade of W after midterm will be awarded if the student was passing the course(s) at the last date of attendance.

Academic Advising

- You are required to meet with your advisor at least once each semester before you can register for classes.
- Check your BANNER account to find your advisor and their contact information. Email your advisor to request an appointment.
- Your ABAC email is an official means of communication from the college. It is your responsibility to check your Stallions email regularly and respond in a professional and respectful manner.
- Any coursework that does not fit within the chose program of study may impact a student's financial aid and graduation date.

Graduation Requirements

- Students must meet the graduation requirements as listed in a single ABAC Catalog which is not more than five years old at the time of their graduation and which is in effect for a term during which they earned academic credit at ABAC.
- Students must submit a graduation application for each degree one semester prior to completion.

ABAC Honor Code

ABAC Stallions conduct themselves with honor and integrity at all times and expect their fellow Stallions to do so as well. A Stallion does not lie, steal, or cheat.

Campus Resources

Stafford School of Business Lewis Hall 229.391.4830	School of Ag. & Natural Resources Agricultural Sciences Building 229.391.4790	School of Arts & Sciences King Hall 229.391.5260	School of Nursing and Health Sci. Health Science Building 229.391.5020
Student Accounts 229.391.4924 StudentAccounts@abac.edu	Financial Aid 229.391.4910 FinAid@abac.edu	Residence Life & Housing 229.391.5140 Housing@abac.edu	Police Department 229.391.5060 Police@abac.edu
Health Center 229.391.5030 HealthCenter@abac.edu	Dean of Students 229.391.5130 DeanOfStu@abac.edu	Baldwin Library 229.391.4990 BaldwinLibrary@abac.edu	Stallion Shop 229.391.4825 TheStallionShop@abac.edu
Academic Support 229.391.4995 ASC@abac.edu	Tutoring Center 229.391.4785 Tutoring@abac.edu	Counseling Center 229.391.5135 counseling@abac.edu	Accommodation & Disability 229.391.5132 ads@abac.edu
			Technology Services 229.391.5400 TechSupport@abac.edu
			Athletics / Intramurals 229.391.4930 Athletics@abac.edu
			Testing Center 229.391.4817 Ttesting@abac.edu

APPENDIX B**Letter of Support from Colleague****Abraham Baldwin
Agricultural College****School of Agriculture & Natural Resources**

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28 November 2022

Regents' Momentum Award for Excellence in Advising and Student Success
Award Committee

Dear Award Committee Members,

It is my pleasure to write a letter of support for ABAC's Academic Support unit regarding the Regents' Momentum Award for Excellence in Advising and Student Success. During my nearly twelve years at ABAC, the professionals within the Academic Support unit have consistently strived to meet the advising and student success needs of our institution's students. Whether that be through direct contact with students, training faculty to be excellent advisors, or developing programs and tools for students and advisors to use, they have been one of the few consistent champions of student success on our campus.

ABAC's Academic Support unit continually encourages students to make purposeful choices regarding their education. Their implementation, management and assessment of the 15 to Finish campaign has resulted in a 24% increase (27% in 2012 to 51% in 2021) in the number of students enrolled in 15 credit hours their first semester. Their efforts in encouraging students to complete 30 credit hours during their first year led to an 11% increase (17% in 2012 to 27 % in 2021) in the number of students completing 30 credit hours in their freshmen year. Their promotion of the concept of having students complete nine hours in Area F during the first year of college has transformed how students and advisors think about the first year of college and has assisted students in determining if they are in the correct major for their interests and career objectives. Their checking of student's academic records at the 90 earned credit hour mark helped ensure 94% of off-track students graduated within a year.

ABAC's Academic Support unit fosters the development of a productive mindset among students in several ways. They have transformed learning support by implementing the co-requisite model for both introductory English and Math courses. The supporting courses for these subjects are now taken in the same semester as the for-credit courses, greatly improving the

students' chances of success. They also conduct a Mindset survey at the beginning and mid-way through each fall semester and share their findings with instructors in the hopes that changes can be made in teaching strategies that will benefit student success. They have also held encouraging events during critical times of the semester to help students cope with the stress associated with college.

Creating a clear path to graduation from the first time a student steps on campus is evident in everything ABAC's Academic Support unit engages in. Promoting the completion of nine hours in Area F during the first year, developing Program Maps outlining not only correct course sequencing but also milestones that students should strive toward as they progress through their degree, checking on student progress at the 90 earned credit hour mark and assisting students in developing career objectives all come together to assist our students in being successful during their time at ABAC.

A student's initial experiences in college are critical to their success. Our Academic Support unit's embracing of the Momentum Year program has fostered the development of a new mindset on campus when it comes to the encouragement of first-year students. Their direct communication to students and training of advisors to promote, the completion of the core Math and English requirements during the student's first year, taking nine credit hours in an academic focus area during the first year and attempting 30 credit hours during the first year have gone a long way towards increasing retention among first-year students.

ABAC's Academic Support unit has been the most engaged unit on our campus regarding systematically examining the issues associated with student success and engagement. It is clear that they consider the entire student body in their consistent and thoughtful evaluation of issues associated with student success and engagement. The evidence of their success is clear. ABAC's third year retention rate is 8.7% higher than our peer institutions in the USG (40.2% versus 31.5%).

In conclusion, ABAC's Academic Support unit is fully committed to student success and very deserving of this award. They provide the inspiration and training for the rest of campus in this area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ray L. Smith".

Ray Smith, Ph.D.
Professor and Head
Department of Agriculture

APPENDIX C

Letter of Support from Colleague



Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

School of Arts and Sciences

ABAC 15, 2802 Moore Highway Tifton, Georgia 31793-2601

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www.abac.edu

November 30, 2022

To the members of the Regents' Momentum Award for Excellence in Advising and Student Success Committee:

This is not the kind of recommendation letter that I usually write. This is because ABAC's Academic Support Center is unlike any other organization on campus. Maybe even the state. I am going to keep this short and direct...

There is one word that describes ABAC's Academic Support Center: Every.

Every student. Every orientation. Every graduation. Every student early alert. Every student tutor. Every student tutored. Every GRE, GACE, and HESI exam. Every accommodation letter. Every disability service. Every student "90hr. graduation track" check. Every graduation application. Every learning support class. Every learning support student. Every faculty advising training session. Every annoying faculty member question. Every fix for faculty mistakes. Every solution for administration errors.

At some point on its journey, every academic plan, issue, policy, implementation, *every-dang-thing* lands on the desk of someone at the ASC. It is not an understatement to say that our ASC is the most integral branch at our college. We simply could not operate without them.

Everything academic – and I mean *everything* – is flawlessly managed by the amazing people that run ABAC's Academic Support Center.

And the amazing part? Every individual in that department greets you with a smile, a kind word, and a helping hand (even if they secretly want to smack you because you are calling them for the 10th time about the same question they have already answered for you). Oh, and they can answer just about *any* question you have. Their detailed knowledge of curriculum, policy, and procedure is without compare on campus. If I need to know something, they are always my first stop.

Speaking of helping... I can personally attest that at any moment, they are just a phone call away – even if *I'm* the one asking for the 10th time. Their faculty advising training is robust, and most importantly – useful. Without them, I would not have become a successful advisor, let alone have been recognized as the top faculty advisor at ABAC in 2021.

Beyond my direct interactions, I have witnessed their efforts change the lives of students – in the classroom, and beyond. From the Academic Intervention Management program (in which Academic Support Councilors serve as coaches for freshman put on academic probation in their first semester) to the “Don’t Cancel that Class” initiative (where faculty can have tutoring coordinators teach a class on study skills, critical thinking, or time management), their work... well, it just plain-old works.

Their energy is without fail, and their commitment to student success is unwavering.

They ought to be a model for *every* department on my campus, if not the state.

Thank you for your consideration of ABAC’s Academic Support Center, and their successful efforts in supporting ABAC, my fellow faculty, and most importantly – my students.



Hans E. Schmeisser

Professor of Political Science

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

James T. LaPlant Award winner for Outstanding Mentorship, GA Political Science Assoc. 2022

Donaldson Award winner for Excellence in Advising, ABAC 2021

Donaldson Award winner for Excellence in Teaching, ABAC 2015

APPENDIX D

Letter of Support from Student

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is [REDACTED] I am a junior here at ABAC pursuing a degree in History & Government. I would like to recommend ABAC's department of Academic Support for the Regents' Momentum Award for Excellence in Advising and Student Success. Individuals within Accommodations, Tutoring, and Academic Counseling, have assisted me in my journey to becoming the student I am today.

I was first introduced to the department of Academic Support on a tour of ABAC in 2020. I met with Amanda Walker, the Accommodations Coordinator for the department, to discuss different services allowed for me at ABAC. Accommodations allows me extra time for assignments and tests and a space of my own to work without distractions. I often visit the department office to use the computer lab as a study space, which I jokingly call "my kingdom." Ms. Walker introduced me to Jana Malone and Joshua Clements in Tutoring.

I would say that these two staff members (Jana and Josh) are beyond good helpers. While Josh assists in finding tutors to help with my assignments, Jana assists with tutoring and as an Academic Support Counselor, a role that she transitioned to from tutoring since we met. Jana helps me prepare for History and Government tests and assignments such as research papers and annotated bibliographies. She also assists with general academic skills counseling. More recently, I have bought a planner and write in the days which assignments are due and what to do to keep up with them. This planner is what keeps me from getting too stressed out, especially when I have many assignments due at once. Overall, she also motivates me to keep going with my schoolwork when it gets hard.

I think my greatest accomplishment in school so far has been my internship. Jana Malone assisted with preparing my resume, writing my cover letter, and sending the initial email to my internship advisor, Ms. Polly Huff. I interned at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture as a curatorial intern. As an intern, I prepared an event called "The Art of Autism," which showcased pieces of art from pottery creations to paintings made by people who are autistic. The objective of this event is to make people rethink how they see people with autism. As a student with autism, this internship was ideal as I was able to utilize my creativity to create art for the showcase in addition to inventorying catalogs. I earned an A for my internship class and learned how to apply my skills in the real world. I am pleased to say that ABAC's Tutoring Center, Accommodations Center, and Academic Support Counselors have helped me a long way here at ABAC.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
History & Government Student
Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

APPENDIX E

Letter of Support from Student

To whom it may concern,

The Academic Support team has helped me in many ways, including professionally, academically, and as a department. Through my time working at the Tutoring Center alongside Academic Support, I've developed a set of professional skills I never thought I could possess. From my time as a tutor, I learned how to work with students of different backgrounds, to conduct interviews, and even how to train others to do the same job I do. These skills are not something I would have gained in the classroom. When I interned with Academic Support over the summer, I also learned how to develop employee handbooks and even how to create new programs from the ground up. I also received some insight on how departments are run.

From an academic perspective, when I started my ABAC journey, I was lost on what major to choose. It was only because of an Academic Support counselor that I was able to find the major that was right for me and gain a sense of belonging. Without that guidance, I probably wouldn't have found my place at ABAC. Also, during my time at ABAC, I've had to use Accommodations. During the spring semester of 2022, I had a bad reaction to my OCD medication. If it weren't for the staff in accommodations, I wouldn't have been able to complete my semester as smoothly as I did. It honestly made my life a lot easier even though I only needed my accommodations for a little while. Working at the Tutoring Center and alongside Academic Support drives me to be a better student. Not just for the grades but also for the knowledge and experience my classes can provide me. In a way, it's given me a deeper appreciation for ABAC and all it has to offer. It also allows me to better help classmates and point out campus resources

Lastly, Academic Support as a department has given me a sense of belonging time and time again. First by finding my major and then once again by giving me a sense of community at the Tutoring Center. I feel like I've grown as a person through my time working here and getting to know everyone involved. It's helped me develop new skills that will aid me in grad school. It's also made me more personable with my fellow classmates and students around campus. Because of my time working with Academic Support, I'm no longer scared to get involved with campus activities and I even initiate them. Before sophomore year, I didn't even know this department existed, and now as a senior I'm sad I have to leave it.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

BS, Senior
Rural Community Development