



# ABRAHAM BALDWIN AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

## INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC) is a residential institution that has long been the higher education destination for students in the southeast 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. With its array of quality programs, an abundance of student organizations, a renowned music program, and a variety of intercollegiate and intramural athletic teams, ABAC provides students with ample opportunities to learn and grow as individuals. 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.

ABAC's goals and strategies developed for Complete College Georgia continue to have a positive impact on college success and completion. This positive impact is seen in our continued growth in baccalaureate enrollment. In 2012, the start of Complete College Georgia, ABAC enrolled 701 bachelor's degree-seeking students, which accounted for 21% of the student body. At the start of Fall 2018, ABAC enrolled 2235 bachelor's degree-seeking students – 52% of the student body. Other accolades include a rise in retention from 53% to 63% during the duration of Complete College Georgia and a continued decrease in suspension rates for first-time students on probation who complete their second term. These data indicate that ABAC's goals and strategies for Complete College Georgia continue to have a positive impact on college success and completion. During the past academic year, ABAC fully implemented the Momentum Year strategies that further help students stay on track to degree completion. Future goals will focus on improving the strategies implemented for the Momentum Year by centering on student engagement.

2018 ABAC Demographics	
<b>Total Fall Enrollment</b>	4,292
<b>Full-Time</b>	62%
<b>Part-Time</b>	38%
<b>Underserved Minority Population</b>	20%
<b>Pell Eligible</b>	39%
<b>First Generation</b>	38%
<b>Adult Learner (age 25+)</b>	11%

## MOMENTUM YEAR UPDATE

During the 2018 – 2019 academic year, ABAC charged the Momentum Committee to fully implement the three elements that create a Momentum Year for students – Purposeful Choice, Productive Mindset, and clear Program Maps. By the end of Spring 2019, the committee successfully completed the implementation, thus providing our entering students additional momentum during their first year of college. Below is an update for each element of the initiative.

**Academic Focus Areas** group programs together to better help students who are floundering with their degree path choose coursework that contributes to college completion and provide exposure to potential majors and careers. By the end of Fall 2018, ABAC implemented the following Academic Focus Areas based on our degree offerings:

- Liberal Arts
- Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Business

- Arts
- Communications
- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics)
- Health Professions

The Academic Focus Areas went into effect for new students starting Spring 2019. Students who have decided on a major are automatically placed into the corresponding focus area. Enrollment Management and Academic Support call those students who indicate they are undeclared. The Enrollment Counselor or Academic Support Counselor asks probing questions to determine a student's subject interest, career outlook, and hobbies. Based on this information, students are assigned to an appropriate focus area. During orientation, students are separated by focus areas and given relevant information about their pathway, expectations, and career outlook.

**Program Maps** give incoming students a clear picture of what is required to graduate in four years with a bachelor's degree. A well-designed program map properly sequences courses based on prerequisites, has students completing at least 30 hours each year, and requires the student to complete their English and math requirements within the first year. ABAC's Momentum Committee worked with each school and program maps were completed by the 2019 Summer term for use with all incoming students for Fall 2019. Program maps are housed on the online catalog, which can be found here <https://catalog.abac.edu/>. Each program map contains the following:

- English and math requirement during the first term
- At least 30 hours per academic year
- Properly sequenced classes to include those only offered during specific terms
- Degree appropriate milestones

One feature that strengthens ABAC's program maps is the research or internship requirement, which stems from our mission to provide students with relevant experiences that prepare the graduate for life. Each program map provides the course requirement and the milestones to indicate when the student needs to see their respective faculty advisor to begin planning for the internship or research requirement.

**Academic Mindset** - ABAC administered the Academic Mindset Survey to 683 new students during the Fall 2018 semester. The Mindset Survey gives the institution a view of a student's growth mindset around academics and their resilience in the face of setbacks. Data gathered from the survey was presented at the 2019 Fall Faculty Conference and is being used in conjunction with the Gateway to Completion (G2C) initiative. The mindset data combined with the G2C work is helping ABAC to develop small interventions to help students be successful in courses with historically high enrollments and low success rates. For ABAC, these courses include English 1101 (Composition I), Biology 2011 (Anatomy & Physiology), Math 1111 (College Algebra), and Sociology 1101 (Introduction to Sociology).

## **MOMENTUM YEAR HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGIES**

### **15 TO FINISH**

ABAC continues to pre-register first-year students before their scheduled orientation session. Ideally, 100% of incoming students would take 15 hours each term to complete a total of 30 hours by the end of each academic year; however, this is not a realistic expectation. ABAC's student body changed when consolidated with Bainbridge State College in the Fall of 2018; thereby, increasing our population of part-time working students. Despite the increase in part-time students, ABAC strives to have 50% of all first-year students registered for 15 credit hours during their first term or complete 30 hours within their first year.

Currently, Academic Support pre-registers all full-time new students for 15 hours; however, a number of these students choose to take less than 15 hours. 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, advising review sessions each fall and spring. Financial aid counselors encourage students to take 15 hours a semester to graduate on time. Also, the program maps implemented with the Momentum Year incorporate the 15-to-Finish initiative. Below is a chart showing ABAC's progress toward this goal:

Academic Year (AY)	Total FYS*	FYS registered for 15+	Percentage of FYS 15+	% FYS completed 30+ in AY	Total Student Body in 15+
2014 – 2015	863	389	45%	20%	30%
2015 – 2016	849	410	48%	24%	32%
2016 – 2017	815	340	42%	29%	31%
2017 – 2018	661	286	43%	27%	31%
2018 – 2019	717	321	45%	31%	26%

\*FYS = First-year students

ABAC officially consolidated with Bainbridge State College (BSC) in August of 2018. The Bainbridge site location caters to commuter students and has a higher number of working adults as students; thus, explaining the decrease in the percentage of the entire student body taking 15+ hours. The percentage of incoming first-year students taking 15 or more hours increased slightly, due to pre-registration efforts being incorporated at our site locations.

### *Measures of Success*

- Increased number of first-year students enrolled in 15+ hours to 45%
- Completion of Program Maps that incorporate the completion of 30 hours the first year

### *Lessons Learned*

Changing campus culture takes time and consistency. ABAC has been consistent in delivering the message 15 hours a semester to graduate on-time. This message is delivered during the pre-registration of students at Orientation, during advisor training, as part of the first-year seminar series, and through published materials (e.g., Program Maps). Currently, about 61% of our student body is considered full-time, and 43% of these students took 15+ hours their first term. ABAC continues to make strides in getting this population to register for 15 hours a term through communication blitzes, annual advisor training, and preregistering new incoming students.

## **CO-REQUISITE LEARNING SUPPORT**

To increase the likelihood of degree completion for students who require developmental studies, ABAC has fully implemented co-requisite learning support. This high-impact strategy seeks to improve progression and retention by pre-registering all students with a learning support requirement in English or Math for the appropriate co-requisite course. ABAC engaged in the following activities to support its attainment goal of 100%:

- Continued implementation of USG placement guidelines
- Co-requisite only options for English and math
- New students who require learning support for English or math were pre-registered for the required co-requisite

Below is a chart showing ABAC's progress for new students starting ABAC for the 2018-19 academic year:

Co-Req. Course	Number	Students Required	Number registered for Co-req	Percentage
<b>English</b>	<b>ENGL 1101</b>	38	33	87%
<b>Quant. Reasoning or College Algebra</b>	<b>MATH 1001 or MATH 1111</b>	125	115	92%

Compared to fall 2017, the percentage of students registered to take co-requisite learning support English remained unchanged. The percentage of students registered to take learning support math increased by 37.5% compared to fall 2017, which was only at 67%. This increase is attributed to more informed faculty advisors and additional placements checking of students during the drop/add period by the Learning Support Coordinator.

**Measures of Success**

- Overall increase of students being registered for their appropriate learning support courses
- \*Percentage of passing collegiate part\*

**Lessons Learned**

ABAC strives to have 100% of students placed into their required learning support requirements; however, some challenges prevent us from obtaining this goal. While the majority of our students are full-time, 38% of our population is considered part-time. Several working students choose to focus on one or two classes per term, which meets their work-life balance. At least four of the students who did not take their required co-requisite English course opted to focus on their co-requisite Math course. Three of these students completed their English requirements in the following term. The same concern also applies to the co-requisite math course. Additionally, a few students managed to drop their co-requisite requirements or were verified out for non-attendance. ABAC’s Learning Support Coordinator has increased the monitoring of learning support students to help prevent students from dropping the learning support requirement.

**ADDITIONAL HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGIES**

**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. ABAC 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. Below are the updated results for the 90-hour checks:

	Off Track	Graduated within 1 year	Percentage graduated
<b>Spring 2015</b>	62	41	66%
<b>Fall 2015</b>	92	57	62%
<b>Spring 2016</b>	39	20	51%
<b>Fall 2016</b>	106	81	76%
<b>Spring 2017</b>	75	46	61%
<b>Fall 2017</b>	212	192	91%
<b>Spring 2018</b>	180	154	86%
<b>Fall 2018</b>	252	-	-
<b>Spring 2019</b>	136	-	-

The table above shows the number of students who were identified as being off-track for the term given, the number that graduated within one year of being off-track, followed by the percentage. Results for fall 2018 and spring 2019 will be reported fall 2020. This high impact strategy continues to be a success for the students and the institution. From fall 2017 to fall 2018, the percentage of students who graduated increased by 41%. Similarly, students who graduated after being identified as being off-track spring 2018, increased by 54%.

In previous Complete College Georgia reports, 30-hour checks were also included as part of this high-impact strategy. This process continues to be an automated check for students who have completed 30-hours. Those who have not completed Area A of the USG core curriculum are contacted and registered for the appropriate courses. The 30-hour check continues each term and is considered a best practice strategy.

**Measures of Success**

- Increase in third- and fourth-year retention rates
- Increase in the number of students graduating within one year after being identified as being off-track
- An overall increase in the conferment of bachelor’s degrees

**Lessons Learned**

During the 2014-15 academic year, the number of baccalaureate students who reached 90-hours without completing high school requirements or the core curriculum was alarming. Due to these deficiencies, Academic Support implemented 90-hour checks to keep students on-track for graduation. The effects of the 90-hour checks can be seen in the number of

students graduating within one academic year after being identified. Academic Support, Department Heads, and faculty advisors continue to work with students who are determined to be off-track and get them registered for the required courses the following semester.

### **ACADEMIC INTERVENTION MANAGEMENT (AIM)**

In addition to the 90-hour checks described above, ABAC targets students who are placed on academic probation after their first semester of enrollment. To help get first-time students on probation back on track to graduate, ABAC requires these students to participate in AIM (Academic Intervention Management). This program engages the student in academic interventions, offered both face-to-face and online, with the express purpose of helping students improve their grade point average (GPA) to avoid suspension after their second semester. Below are the results from the past five academic years:

Academic Year	Participants	Completed AIM	Percentage Not Suspended	Percentage Returned to 'Good' Standing
<b>2015-16</b>	39	20	51%	18%
<b>2016-17</b>	164	123	46%	24%
<b>2017 -18</b>	160	132	51%	25%
<b>2018-19</b>	130	91	49%	19%

The result of the AIM program for the 2018-19 academic year reveals some positive trends. The number of first-year students who go on suspension appears to be trending down according to our data. Part of this downward trend is attributed to increased faculty use of ABAC's Early Alert System. The number of students not suspended has remained consistent and well above the average (25%) before the implementation of the AIM program. While the percentage of students returning to 'Good' academic standing (an overall grade point average of 2.0) declined, the percentage of students continuing on academic probation remained consistent with the previous academic year.

#### ***Measures of Success***

- Decreased number of first-year students placed on academic probation after their first term
- Number of students continuing on probation or returning to 'Good' academic standing after completing the program with ABAC

#### ***Lessons Learned***

Losing students due to poor academic performance affects the college both academically and financially. While the AIM program has been successful in helping students rebound from poor academic performance, the approach is still reactive. To better aid students who are not performing to their full potential, ABAC has increased its efforts in utilizing an early alert system. The early alert system, combined with the AIM program, further aids the college in increasing retention and helping students progress toward graduation.

### **GATEWAY TO COMPLETION**

ABAC is participating in the University System of Georgia's Gateway to Completion project with the John Gardner Institute. The Gateway to Completion project hones in on small changes that have a significant impact on student success in gateway courses (e.g., English, Math, History) that historically have high failure rates (DFWI). Using the Gardner Institute's evidence-based process to improve student learning and success, ABAC has identified the following four gateway courses to redesign: Composition I (ENGL 1101), College Algebra (MATH 1111), Anatomy & Physiology I (BIOL 2011), and Introduction to Sociology (SOC1 1101). The below table shows the DFWI rate for each course for the 2017-18 academic year, which will be the baseline measure used to gauge success:

Course	DFWI Rate	Course	DFWI Rate
<b>ENGL 1101</b>	30%	<b>BIOL 2011</b>	32%
<b>MATH 1111</b>	47%	<b>SOCI 1101</b>	17%

#### ***Summary of Work***

Working with the Gardner Institute, the ABAC Gateway to Completion committee has analyzed the data and identified the various subgroup of students (e.g., race, socioeconomic status) who are not as successful in the above gateway

courses. Each course committee has completed the six principles and key performance indicators, and the steering committee has completed the three initial synthesis reports. Students in each gateway course were given a survey during spring 2019 as part of the baseline measure. Course committees have identified the appropriate course and pedagogical enhancement to implement for the following term.

### ***Measures of Success***

- Decreased DFWI rates in the four gateway courses identified above
- Improved student retention

### ***Lessons Learned***

ABAC is still in the beginning stages of this project; however, the institution has gained valuable information on course success rates from the data provided by the Gardner Institute. From the data, ABAC has noticed that male students of color tend to have the highest DFWI rates for the four gateway courses. This data has allowed ABAC to have open discussions on how to best serve this population of students both inside and outside of the classroom.

## **OBSERVATIONS AND NEXT STEPS**

The high-impact strategies listed above have proven to be successful for ABAC and tie into our institutional mission, “To engage, teach, coach, mentor, and provide relevant experiences that prepare the graduate for life.” Our success comes from faculty and staff collaboration and administrative support to increase student persistence and retention. Comparison of the 2019 campus plan update to the previous AY update shows that ABAC continues to make significant gains in helping students progress toward on-time graduation.

Participation in the Momentum Year and the implementation of the program maps were ABAC’s most successful initiatives for the 2018-19 academic year. Faculty, staff, and students have responded positively to the interactive program maps included in the catalog. Also, ABAC has found success in the combined efforts of the early alert system and the AIM program. In addition to the continuation of the above initiatives, the next steps ABAC will take are as follows:

- Enhancement of program maps to include a related career map
- Participation in the Momentum Approach
  - Deepen purposeful choices
  - Cultivate productive Academic Mindsets
  - Maintain full momentum along a Clear Pathway
  - Heighten academic engagement
  - Complete critical milestones

## **STUDENT SUCCESS AND COMPLETION TEAM**

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