2022 Complete College Georgia Campus Update

SECTION I
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 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.

ABAC's mission is to provide excellent education by engaging, teaching, coaching, mentoring, and providing relevant experiences that prepare the graduate for life.

Fall 2021 Student Demographics	Total
Fall Enrollment	3,810
Full-Time	63%
Bachelor's Degree-Seeking	62%
Females	60%
Underserved Minority Population	19%
Pell Eligible	43%
First Generation	26%
Adult Learner (age 25+)	10%
On-Campus Resident	34%
Intercollegiate Student Athlete	3%
New Students Admitted	27%
Freshmen (< 30 hours)	35%
First-Year Retention Rate	65%
Six-Year Graduation Rate	34%

A central tenet of ABAC's mission is to "provide excellent education by engaging, teaching, coaching, mentoring, and providing relevant experiences that prepare the graduate for life." To that end, ABAC's Complete College Georgia (CCG) plan provides the framework to allow the College to commit to student achievement and to implement academic and student support services that support student achievement and prepare the student for life beyond graduation. ABAC's involvement with CCG has allowed the College to expand successful initiatives beyond a student's first year to increase graduation rates and prepare ABAC graduates for a career.

ABAC's CCG team is a collaboration and partnership between Academic Affairs, Student Support Services, Financial Aid, Student Affairs, Housing & Residence Life, faculty, and students. The core objectives of CCG are to support and implement strategies and policies so more students can reach their goal of attaining a college degree while preparing to join the workforce or continue their educational journey. Our most successful CCG strategies, which have positively impacted ABAC's retention and graduation rates, include fully implementing the Momentum Year (15-to-Finish, Pathway Maps, and Learning Support Transformation) and transitioning to a more holistic approach with the Momentum Approach.

A review of the University System of Georgia's (USG) Complete College data reveals how the CCG process has improved student success, retention, and graduation. 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, saw a return to 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.

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, it has been implementing various supportive *Momentum Year* 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 1. 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 1. 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 2 (four-year graduation rates) and Table 3 (six-year graduation rates) show that ABAC has continually achieved its threshold of acceptability goals with respect to the peer group average. 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 ABAC's CCG strategies that have contributed to its rise in graduation rates include 15-to-Finish and 90-hour checks.

Table 2. 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 3. 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.

The above data show ABAC's commitment to helping students attain a college degree on a global level. Further dissection of the information reveals that further attention is needed toward incorporating career-focus elements within ABAC's CCG plan. Incorporating career initiatives with the current Momentum Approach will move ABAC toward a more holistic approach to serving students and aid in creating a more educated workforce in Georgia (a tenet of CCG).

SECTION II
STUDENT SUCCESS INVENTORY

Activity/Project Name	Data Collection, Analysis, and Management (Data CAM)
Momentum Area (select all that apply)	☐ Purpose ☐ Pathways ☐ Mindset ☐ Change Management X Data & Communications
Activity/Project Overview or Description (what this is?)	In the absence of a centralized institutional research unit, ABAC has not thoroughly analyzed its results for revising the Momentum plan and projecting growth opportunities. Ideally, all other priorities and activities related to Momentum should be informed based on the Data CAM. The Data CAM: Provide analysis of data to make informed decisions related to academic advising and programs and career planning for students.
Activity/Project Activity Status (where is this in process? E.g., studying, initiating, piloting, scaling, maintaining, retiring, etc.)	1. Identify existing data/data sets related to Momentum efforts. 2. Develop questions and research methods based on analysis of existing data. Questions to Consider: What more do we want to know about Momentum from the data analysis? What is the best way to obtain the information we seek? 3. Identify data gaps regarding Momentum efforts and develop data-gathering strategies to address these gaps. Questions to Consider: What data do we have to inform the Center for Teaching and Learning

		Faculty Development needs? What information is required to inform improvements in advising?
Evaluation/Assessment plan (Key Performance Indicators, assessment plan, anticipated time period, reporting and review)		Evaluation Plan and measures: Data Collection: Post-graduation data collection results through Qualtrics. Develop and systematically implement an institutional graduation survey to accompany the graduation application; include program and school-specific information. Compile all data (management) in a meaningful way - data from the Qualtrics post-graduation survey, QEP, Mindset, Internship participation, & Career Connections Analytics.
		Baseline measure: Currently not in place
		Goal or targets: A shared file or internal webpage that brings together the results of all data measurements.
		Time period/duration: Summer 2022 – Spring 2023
Update these sections for 2022	**Progress and Adjustments** (what has been accomplished and what changes do you feel you need to make)	Identifying existing data was completed. The Committee Identified Existing Data Sets: Analyze Student Engagement Programs (QEP) data, Mindset Survey data, Complete College GA data, Internship participation numbers, 2021 Virtual Career Connections Fair analytics, and School/Dept. Graduation Surveys. Concerns for some of the datasets include inconsistent collection and missing data. In an effort to improve data collection around advising, the advisor survey was placed into Qualtrics, and a campaign was initiated to encourage students to rate their advising experience. Currently, survey responses are trending up. ABAC has reliable data on its Momentum initiatives and retention and graduation rates (internal tracking, USG Qlik, and IPEDS). The top data gaps for ABAC include the ability to capture what our graduates are doing after graduation and workforce-related data. USG's recent initiative on career development and workforce will aid ABAC in filling in our data gaps. In addition, ABAC's administration made the decision to secure Handshake to aid students in career development and to assist the college in implementing a First Destination Survey
	Plan for the year ahead (What steps will you be taking in 2022)	The top priority is to fill in the data gaps. ABAC is working with USG to implement two solutions from Steppingblocks. Steppingblocks is a cloud-based data analytics company that specializes in providing workforce and education analytics to higher education institutions. Below are the two phases: 1. Digital Career Counselor (DCC) is a robust, online set of skill-building and career exploration tools for students. It includes Career Paths, Personality Assessments, Institutional Outcomes, Trending Skills, and Curated Content. 2. Graduate Insights is a cloud-based administrative dashboard that provides insights on alumni

outcomes, employer trends, skills gaps, and engagement strategies. Digital Insights includes two solutions: Graduate Outcomes (which provides aggregated data only) and Graduate Explorer (which provides aggregated or person-level data).

In addition to implementing the Steppingblocks solutions, ABAC is in the planning and securing phase for acquiring Handshake. This platform will serve as a means to connect students to career opportunities, jobs, internships, etc. Additionally, Handshake will allow the College to implement a first destination survey. A First Destination Survey captures information regarding how new college graduates fare in their careers (or further education, military, etc.) within six months of graduation.

Once these gaps are filled, the project leads will work with upper administration to determine the best platform to share all collected data.

	What challenges will affect your ability to do this activity? **What support do you need from outside your institution** (e.g., the System Office or other institutions) to be successful?	Challenges include limited resources with staffing. Given the many varied responsibilities of those leading the project, extra time may be needed due to competing priorities. Currently, the system is assisting with the implementation of Steppingblocks, which includes one year of service. Continued support to offset the costs may be needed.
Project Lead/point of contact		Amy Warren, Mark Johnson, Amy Willis, Nicholas Urquhart

Activity/Project Name	FLEX (Freshman Learning Experience)
Momentum Area (select all that apply)	☐ Purpose ☐ Pathways X Mindset ☐ Change Management ☐ Data & Communications
Activity/Project Overview or Description (what this is?)	Academic Support decided to re-envision the AIM program, which was implemented in 2012 to work with first-year students on academic probation after their first semester. The AIM program is considered reactive and doesn't provide the "just in time" support many of our students need. The idea: Incoming first-year students, who fall within a particular high school GPA (HSGPA) range, will be invited to participate in the FLEX program. The program will be proactive and focus on a productive academic mindset. In short, students who participate will work one-on-one with an Academic Support Counselor – essentially, a personalized FYE.
Activity/Project Activity Status (where is this in process? E.g., studying, initiating, piloting, scaling, maintaining, retiring, etc.)	Currently, data from the last five incoming first-year students and results from the AIM program are being analyzed. A HSGPA range will be determined by cross-referencing the average HSGPA of first-year students who are placed on probation after their first term and

		the average HSGPA of students who have been successful in the AIM program. Plan to pilot the program in Fall 2022. The cap is set at 100 students.
	Evaluation/Assessment plan (Key Performance Indicators, assessment plan, anticipated time period, reporting and review)	Evaluation Plan and Measures: Develop a post-program survey that will focus on the strengths and weaknesses of the program (process improvement). Evaluate student learning outcomes (SLOs) for programs tied to Academic Mindset: • Connect Career goal to degree path • Create Degree Plan • Identify the value of each course • Differentiate Support Resources • Reflect on personal/academic growth Data measures: Number of students selected for the program, their average HSGPA, the percentage that completed the program, percentage placed on academic probation, and first-term GPA. Eventually, longer-term goal: first, second, and third-year retention. Graduation rate.
		Baseline measure: Currently not in place
		Goal or targets: For the pilot, identify 100 students to participate. Expect 70% to complete the program. Goal of 65% - 75% to be in good academic standing (i.e., overall GPA >= 2.0). Goal 60% - 70% to be in good academic standing after their second semester and retained.
		Time period/duration: Summer 2022 – Spring 2023
Update these sections for 2022	**Progress and Adjustments** (what has been accomplished and what changes do you feel you need to make)	The high school GPA range determined through analysis of past cohorts was 2.0 – 2.5. The Academic Support Counselors developed the pilot program, which included a class through Georgia View in addition to the in-person meetings. 100 invitations were emailed, and follow-up occurred through text messages and phone calls. 21 students accepted the invitation for Fall 2022. The program is currently being piloted and will be analyzed in December 2022.
	Plan for the year ahead (What steps will you be taking in 2022)	Review the pilot program and determine what worked well and the weaknesses. Begin data collection and analysis for the number of students selected for the program, their average HSGPA, the percentage that completed the program, the percentage placed on academic probation, and their first-term GPA. Continue longitudinal tracking for retention.
	What challenges will affect your ability to do this activity? **What support do you need from**	As the program develops and grows, having the needed staffing will be a challenge due to the time necessary to successfully run the FLEX program, in addition to other

outside your institution (e.g., the System Office or other institutions) to be successful?	programs run by Academic Support that focus on student achievement.
Project Lead/point of contact	Lisa Pryor

SECTION 2.2
ABAC'S BIG IDEA

ABAC's big idea during the 2021 Momentum Summit was to "close the loop." The phrase "close the loop" pertains to effective use of institutional data to inform academic and career planning decisions. To achieve this big idea of closing the loop, the committee focused on three priorities—Data Collection, Analysis, and Management; Communication; and Career Exploration via Expanded Program Maps. ABAC's CCG committee has accomplished the following towards "closing the loop":

- Diverse data sources, including student and community inputs, related to ABAC's Momentum efforts were identified— Analyze Student Engagement Programs (Quality Enhancement Programs) data, Mindset Survey data, Complete College GA data (Qlik), Internship participation numbers, 2021 Virtual Career Connections Fair analytics, and School/Dept Graduation Surveys

- The framework for a responsive institutional-wide online graduation application, including a graduation survey, has been created. Based on a student's degree program, school-specific and institutional questions have been developed for the graduation survey.

- A new template for program maps that includes career and student-life-focused milestones was developed.

During the 2022 Momentum Summit, ABAC's CCG committee reviewed the progress toward our Big Idea and determined that sufficient and reliable data exist around the Momentum Year and Momentum Approach initiatives (e.g., USG Qlik, IPEDS, department collection); however, gaps still existed around career exploration and development for students. Additionally, the committee noted a lack of data on our graduates' plans upon graduating (employment, location, salary, future education, etc.). Based on these observations, the CCG committee decided to revamp the College's Big Idea, which is an ongoing process. Currently, ABAC's next steps toward our Big Idea plan include the following:

- Implement and go live with the Digital Career Counselor tools and Graduate Insight dashboard from Steppingblocks. The digital career counselor provides students with an online set of skill-building and career exploration tools, while the graduate insight dashboard provides aggregated data on graduate outcomes.

- Acquire and implement Handshake. This platform will serve as a means to connect students to career opportunities, jobs, internships, etc. Additionally, Handshake will allow the College to implement a first destination survey.

Incorporating a career development and exploration component into our CCG plan fits with the College's mission of "preparing the graduate for life" and USG's current initiative of creating a more educated Georgia to meet the educational demands of the workforce.

SECTION 3
OPTIONAL SUPPLEMENTAL UPDATES

15-TO-FINISH

ABAC continues to preregister first-year students before their scheduled orientation session. Academic Support preregisters all full-time first-year students for 15 hours; however, several 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 and advising review sessions each fall and spring. Financial aid counselors also encourage students to take 15 hours a semester to graduate on time. Plus, the program maps incorporate the 15-to-Finish initiative. Below is a chart showing ABAC's progress toward this goal:

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%

Note. FYS = First-year students

Measures of Success

- 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 three fall cohorts.

- The percentage of Fall 2021 students completing 30 hours within their first academic year decreased slightly from the Fall 2020 cohort; however, it remains close to the 30% goal.

Lessons Learned

ABAC has been consistent in delivering the message 15 hours a semester to graduate on time. The 15-to-Finish initiative began in 2012 and has become part of the ABAC culture and a norm for full-time first-year students. ABAC would like to see 60% of full-time first-year students enrolled in 15 hours during their first semester, with 30% completing 30 hours within their first academic year. An increase is expected in this initiative due to the implementation of the FLEX program described under section two as part of the College's student success inventory programs and projects.

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

Semester	Off Track	Graduated within one year	Percentage graduated
Spring 2022	309	*Pending*	*Pending*
Fall 2021	372	*Pending*	*Pending*
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%

The table above shows 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

Measures of Success

- Increase in third-year retention rates.

Institutional Third-Year Retention Rates for ABAC and Peer Institutions
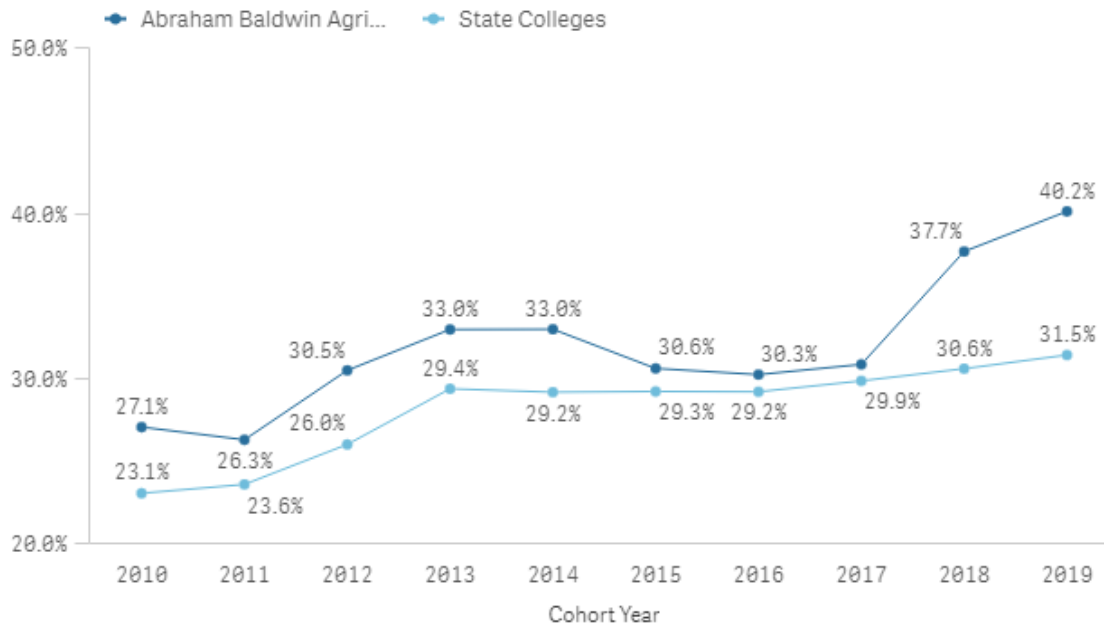
The graph above indicates that ABAC's third-year retention rates continue to exceed the average of its peers per each cohort year since 2010. Data were pulled from USG Qlik.

- Another measure of success is the growth in the number of students graduating within one year after being identified as off-track. The table above indicates an overall increase in students who graduate within one year after being identified as off-track.

- An overall increase in the conferment of bachelor's degrees is also a measure of success.

Number of ABAC Degree Conferred in the Past Five Fiscal Years

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

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.

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. Additionally, the results of this high-impact practice can be seen in the College's third-year retention rates and the number of bachelor's degrees conferred. Academic Support, Department Heads, and faculty advisors continue to work with students who are determined to be off-track to help remove or solve the identified barriers to allow for on-time graduation.

OBSERVATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

In addition to the Momentum Year and Momentum Approach implemented initiatives, the high-impact strategies listed above have aided ABAC in increasing student success for students, which is 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." Our success comes from 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 through the student success initiatives and projects listed in section two and by implementing the measures listed under ABAC's Big Idea.

STUDENT SUCCESS AND COMPLETION TEAM

Dr. Nicholas Urquhart
Director, Academic Support
nurquhart@abac.edu

Lisa Pryor
Assistant Director, Academic Support
Lisa.pryor@abac.edu

Dr. Amy Willis
Acting Provost & VPAA
apwillis@abac.edu

Dr. Matt Anderson
Dean, School of Arts and Sciences
Matthew.anderson@abac.edu

Dr. Marcus Johnson
Associate Professor
Director, Faculty Development &
The Center for Teaching and Learning
mjohnson@abac.edu

Dr. Amy Warren
Associate Professor
Director of Assessment
awarren@abac.edu

Dr. Renata Elad
Dean, Stafford School of Business
relad@abac.edu

Dr. Katheryn Cerny
Assistant Professor
School of Agriculture and Natural Resources
kcerny@abac.edu

Dr. Buddhi Pantha
Assistant Professor
School of Arts and Sciences
bpantha@abac.edu