



January 21, 2025

Dana Nichols
Office of the Provost
Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College
Tift Hall, 2nd Floor
2802 Moore Highway
Tifton, Georgia 31793-2601

Sent via U.S. Mail and Electronic Mail (dana.nichols@abac.edu)

Dear Interim Provost Nichols:

FIRE, a nonpartisan nonprofit that defends free speech,¹ is concerned by Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College's reprimand of Associate Professor of Communication Jay Baldwin for his protected classroom speech. The reprimand violates both ABAC and University System of Georgia policies as well as the First Amendment. We wrote President Brundage to express our concerns in July and October 2024.²

Due to ABAC's continued failure to seriously grapple with our concerns, we planned to publicize this matter. But in light of your recent appointment as provost, we wanted to make sure you and USG were fully aware of the incident and had an opportunity to resolve it before we act. We request a substantive response to this letter no later than February 4, confirming ABAC will remove the written reprimand from Baldwin's personnel file and will no longer investigate or threaten faculty with discipline for their protected classroom speech. Please note, we intend to publicize this matter if this letter—our third—does not result in timely resolution.

Sincerely,

Jessie Appleby
Program Officer, Campus Rights Advocacy

Cc: Sonny Perdue, Chancellor, University of Georgia System
Board of Regents, University of Georgia System

Encl.

¹ For more than 20 years, FIRE has defended freedom of expression and other individual rights on America's university campuses. You can learn more about our mission and activities at thefire.org.

² See enclosed letters from FIRE and President Brundage's responses.