

# EDUCATION

# A-B Tech

# Journal

SPRING 2021



**A-B Tech Plans Return to Campus This Fall**

**Craft Beverage Institute of the Southeast Evolves**

**New Programs Reflect Changing Industries**

**ABTech**  
Community College

# A-B Tech EDUCATION Journal

SPRING 2021

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**CRAFT BEVERAGE INSTITUTE  
EVOLVES, PAGE 5**



**NEW PROGRAMS SLATED FOR FALL,  
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**A-B TECH PLANS NORMAL OPERATIONS  
FOR FALL 2021, PAGE 8**

# A Message from the President



Dr. John Gossett

With my first-year anniversary at A-B Tech approaching on July 1, I am delighted to be able to say, “welcome back”! We recently lifted the mask mandate and are planning to return to normal operations for the Fall Semester. Because I arrived at A-B Tech in the middle of a pandemic, I’m especially looking forward to meeting people in person and seeing smiling faces back on campus.

One of the positive outcomes of the pandemic is that we have received considerable funding from federal and state sources to assist students who have been impacted by COVID-19. Students who qualify may be able to attend tuition-free for two years and have all of their expenses covered. Ask about our Longleaf, A-B Tech Works, and GEER scholarships. The Longleaf program also includes high school dual enrollment students, who already receive tuition-free classes, but are now eligible for assistance with expenses.

Looking ahead, North Carolina undoubtedly will turn to its 58 community colleges to train and retrain our workforce to meet the increasing demands of a recovering economy and changing business world. We are engaged in visionary and strategic planning with our state and community partners, including MyFutureNC and an A-B Tech strategic planning process that will identify key goals and opportunities for the next five years. We’re also building an innovative new workforce training facility with Buncombe County and Biltmore Farms, where A-B Tech will train employees for Pratt & Whitney and other companies.

As we emerge from a global pandemic, I am increasingly optimistic that community colleges have a golden opportunity to improve our students’ lives and help rebuild our local and state economies.

Sincerely,

John Gossett  
President

We implemented teleworking for employees and taught most classes online last year to keep people safe, but we know that most students and employees prefer being on campus and are ready to return. Fortunately, the conservative approach we took paid off. We’ve consistently followed the lead of the CDC, state and local public health officials, so we trust that it’s safe to return if COVID-19 impacts remain low. You can read more about our fall plans in the following pages.

The past year has been life-altering and stressful for everyone, but we did our best to navigate it with grace, compassion, and empathy. Throughout the year, we surveyed our students and employees to keep close tabs on how they were feeling and what they needed. Not surprisingly, we learned that most people worried about their health, families, job loss, reduced income, homeschooling their children, childcare, and the mental health impacts that seeped into every facet of our lives. On a more sobering note, we learned that 54% of our students are financially insecure, and a concerning number said they were worried about affording housing and food. We have reached out consistently to offer emergency funding and support services, and we’ll stay in touch to help them finish college – because there’s no better way to change a student’s life and provide their families with a better future.

## RISE Culture of Service Statement

A-B Tech commits to demonstrating an inclusive and welcoming culture of respect, integrity and support for everyone.

# ENROLLING IN COLLEGE WHILE STILL IN HIGH SCHOOL OPENS DOORS, SAVES MONEY



A-B Tech's Career and College Promise Program offers structured opportunities for qualified high school juniors and seniors to accelerate their completion of college certificates, diplomas, and associate degrees that lead to college transfer or provide entry-level job skills.

Dual enrollment classes are tuition-free and offered online or face-to-face on an A-B Tech campus. This year, there also are scholarships funds, such as Longleaf and A-B Tech Works, available to cover expenses for students whose families may have been negatively impacted by COVID-19.

Academic credits earned through Career and College Promise enables students who continue into postsecondary education, after graduating from high school, to complete a postsecondary credential in less time than would normally be required. A-B Tech offers three types of Career and College Promise programs: College Transfer Pathways, Career Technical Education Pathways, and the Cooperative Innovative High School Programs.

College Transfer Pathways can lead to the completion of at least thirty semester hours of transfer courses, including English and mathematics, for qualified junior and senior high school students. These courses transfer to all 16 campuses of the University of North Carolina system, as well as many private colleges in the state. There are six transfer CCP pathways:

- Associate of Arts
- Associate of Engineering
- Associate of Fine Arts
- Associate of Science
- Associate of Science in Teacher Prep
- Associate of Arts in Teacher Prep

Career Technical Education Pathways (CTE) lead to a certificate or diploma aligned with a high school Career Cluster. There are currently 30 CTE pathways at A-B Tech including Accounting, Aviation Technology, Computer-Integrated Machining, Information Technology, Nurse Aide, and Pharmacy Technology.

Cooperative Innovative High Schools, also known as early colleges, allow rising ninth graders the opportunity to earn their high school diplomas and two years of college credit within five years. Cooperative innovative schools are founded on the premise of rigor of academic programming, the relevance of the curriculum for real-world and global applications, and fostering strong relationships with faculty, staff, and peers.

Learn more about the Career and College Promise (CCP)/dual enrollment program at [abtech.edu/CCP](https://abtech.edu/CCP) or attend a virtual information session from 6-7 p.m. on June 24, July 8 or July 22. The event is free and open to the public. Email [cgp@abtech.edu](mailto:cgp@abtech.edu) to register.

## A-B TECH PHI BETA LAMBDA STUDENTS SCORE WINS



A-B Tech's Phi Beta Lambda chapter won several awards at the North Carolina State Leadership Conference. Students David Peck and Bethany Duke qualified for Nationals, which will be held at the end of June. Peck placed first in Macroeconomics and second in Financial Concepts. Duke won second in Organizational Behavior and Leadership and third in Retail Management. According to PBL Advisor Veronica Dooly, they were the only two to compete and qualify for nationals in both of their events.

The chapter also was awarded fifth place for its Annual Business Report. It received a Legacy Leadership Award for excelling in programs and was recognized as a Gold Seal chapter for being in the top 5-percent in the state. Dooly and Advisor Marlene Frisbee also were recognized for their 10 years of service to the organization.

# Craft Beverage Institute of the Southeast Evolves to Serve Region



When A-B Tech launched The Craft Beverage Institute of the Southeast in 2013, it was billed as a premier education destination to meet the needs of the rapidly growing craft beverage industry in the region. It also was the Nation's first to offer a two-year Brewing, Distillation and Fermentation degree.

"When the program launched in 2013, it was definitely more beer-focused at first," said Jeff "Puff" Irvin, Director of the Craft Beverage Institute of the Southeast and its first Brewmaster. "As the industry has expanded its offerings, we have diversified our training to match the innovation that is currently happening. We have added a commercial-sized still and recently more winery equipment."

The program also works with cider and seltzers, where students perform experiments and vet their production output via sensory evaluations.

The Craft Beverage Institute is part of A-B Tech's nationally renowned Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management department. The Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management programs were established more than 50 years ago to train and support the region's thriving tourism, hospitality and culinary industries.

"Our degree not only expands your knowledge, but will give you great networking opportunities in the industry,

hands-on experience, and cooperative learning with a successful cohort model," Irvin said. "The more you know, the further you will go!"

The growth of the beverage industry in Western North Carolina was led by the Biltmore Estate Winery, the world's most visited winery. Now the region has the production facilities of New Belgium, Sierra Nevada and Oskar Blues breweries, joining Asheville's own Highland Brewery and multiple other microbreweries in the area.

"We work with local beverage business helping when technical questions arise," Irvin said. "We offer educational opportunities and are willing to stop by and taste their offerings."

Irvin, who also hosts the Consuming the Craft Podcast, is joined by Instructor John Lyda and Lab Manager Jim Schram at A-B Tech Enka, where the program is housed.

The Craft Beverage Institute of the Southeast's "Brewing Application Day" is set for June 22, beginning at 10 a.m. The program has a limited number of spots available and the first qualified applicants will be admitted to the Fall 2021 cohort. If you have questions or cannot attend in person, email CBI Director Irvin at [jeffreymirvin@abtech.edu](mailto:jeffreymirvin@abtech.edu). Learn more at [abtech.edu/CBI](http://abtech.edu/CBI).



# New Programs Slated for Fall 2021

A-B Tech will offer two exciting new programs this fall. Mechatronics Engineering Technology and Therapeutic Culinary have been added to the curriculum to help meet evolving needs for students and employers.

## **Mechatronics Engineering Technology**

The decision to offer Mechatronic Engineering Technology has been in the works for some time as A-B Tech faculty explored whether it would be a better fit for the evolving advanced manufacturing industry than the previous Industrial Systems Technology program.

“Our primary interest in this change was to make sure the identity of the program is one that resonates with the needs of employers, while also effective and interesting to potential students as we continue moving deeper into the 21st century,” said Kevin Kiser, Chair of Computer Integrated Machining, Mechatronics Engineering Technology and Mechanical Engineering Technology.

Mechatronics Engineering Technology includes instruction in prototype testing, manufacturing and operational testing, systems analysis and maintenance procedures. It provides training across a variety of skill areas including basic welding, basic machine shop operations, blueprint reading, CAD, industrial safety, AC/DC electricity, motor

controls, PLCs, robotics, basic HVACR maintenance, hydraulics and pneumatics, mechanical maintenance, instrumentation, basic management, and industrial wiring.

Students have the opportunity to earn either a degree, diploma, or certificate. Internships, apprenticeships, and work-based learning opportunities are available to students in the program.

“New this fall, we also are offering a Spanish-only machining applications course taught by a machining instructor who is fluent in Spanish and an expert in machining operations,” said Kiser. “It was established to help fill job vacancies in the machining field.”

The class is scheduled for Monday and Wednesday evenings to meet the needs of working students and scholarships are available to students taking the class. Learn more at [abtech.edu/mechatronics](https://abtech.edu/mechatronics).



## Therapeutic Culinary

A-B Tech's Therapeutic Culinary certificate can be earned in three semesters and is designed to offer students an in-depth overview and training in specialized dietary needs through therapeutic cuisine. Students will also learn basic culinary skills, an understanding of food safety and sanitation, nutrition and food science.

"One very attractive aspect of food service in a healthcare setting is its constancy," said A-B Tech Culinary graduate Jonathan Eller, an Executive Sous Chef for Novant Healthcare. "In the COVID-19 outbreak, when many kitchens were being shut down, cooks working in healthcare were essential employees. No matter what, people in hospitals and assisted living facilities have to eat."

Eller also said working conditions in healthcare food service are often much better than in traditional restaurants. "Benefits are the norm rather than the exception. Pay is often higher than average, and growth opportunities abound for talented, hard-working individuals," he said.

"We are all extremely excited about this new culinary certificate," said Cathy Horton, Director of Hospitality Management and Culinary Arts. "Not only will it provide current students with an opportunity to widen their depth of culinary knowledge, it will open doors to new students who are interested in the culinary healthcare industry."

According to Horton, jobs in healthcare are plentiful with opportunities for culinarians in hospitals, assisted living facilities, schools, and contract food service operations. These companies are hiring at strong wages, and most offer benefits. "Early feedback from students has been very strong, and we believe this certificate will provide those with an interest in specialized dietary needs a way to move into this field," she said.

The certificate will provide a range of skillsets that employers value in healthcare fields as well as traditional restaurant venues. The course work can be of particular value to individuals already employed in the fields of healthcare foodservice. The classes can increase understanding of specialized and restrictive diets.

"When being considered for a position in healthcare food service, someone with the credentials and training would have a distinct advantage over candidates merely coming from a restaurant background," Eller said. "The combination of basic culinary training, food science, food safety, and diet education is appealing to employers."

The certificate is available now and registration for fall classes opens June 21. For more information, visit [abtech.edu/therapeutic-culinary](https://abtech.edu/therapeutic-culinary).



## A-B Tech Plans a Return to Normal Operations for Fall 2021 Semester After Historic Year

In January 2020, A-B Tech was wrapping up the celebration of its 60th anniversary, saying goodbye to a longtime president, and beginning the search for his successor. The college was headed into a busy year marked by change – even before a global pandemic was declared less than two months later.

By mid-March, faculty and staff were teleworking, converting to online classes wherever possible, and setting up strict safety protocols for classes that had to be taught in person. The college's leadership, faculty and staff had to rethink almost everything about running a community college.

In March 2020, A-B Tech's Board of Trustees selected Dr. John D. Gossett as A-B Tech's seventh president, with a start date of July 1, 2020. By the time he arrived last summer, few people were working on campus and everyone was wearing a mask, prompting him to joke that employees would have to reintroduce

themselves once the campus reopened and masks were no longer required. Nearly a year later, Gossett recently was able to announce that the mask mandate was lifted on June 1 and the college would return to normal operations for the Fall Semester, which begins August 23.

"We continue to follow guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the state of North Carolina, and Buncombe and Madison counties, which have all recommended lifting mask mandates for vaccinated individuals," Gossett said. "Thanks to vaccinations and the continued decline of COVID-19 impacts, I'm also





pleased to announce that we are planning to return to normal operations when our fall classes begin in August."

Gossett said regular surveys of A-B Tech's employees and students also informed the college's decisions.

"We know our students are ready to return to campus and in-person instruction," he said. "The conservative, cautious approach we took this year paid off and we are hopeful that most people are now vaccinated. We'll continue to put the safety of students and employees first, but it's time for us to return to campus."

During the 2020-21 academic year, A-B Tech enforced strict COVID-19 protocols for in-person classes, including requirements for masks, symptom checks, and six-feet of distance indoors and on campuses. The return to normal operations includes academic, workforce training, continuing education, and Small Business Center classes.



Dr. Gossett receives COVID vaccine

"We also strongly encourage everyone to get vaccinated," he said. "And it's okay for anyone to continue wearing a mask. We want our students and employees to feel safe under any circumstances."

Citing a positive outcome of the pandemic, Gossett said A-B Tech will offer more online and hybrid options this year for people who may want to continue online learning. Last spring, the college converted most of its academic classes to online instruction, trained all faculty in best practices for online instruction, and offered more than 75 percent of classes online during the 2020-21 academic year. Approximately 25 percent of academic courses and most continuing education and workforce training classes had to be taught in person to accommodate clinical, hands-on and laboratory training requirements.

Registration for A-B Tech's Fall Semester which begins August 23, is now open. Continuing education and workforce training classes are always available. For more information, visit [abtech.edu](http://abtech.edu) or call 828.398.7900.



Students and employees who are on campus for the Summer Semester may remove their masks if vaccinated, but anyone who is unvaccinated is encouraged to continue wearing masks. Social distancing requirements will remain in place for in-person summer classes.

Gossett said A-B Tech also will continue the deep cleaning and disinfection protocols put in place during the pandemic, evaluate where social distancing requirements may still be needed, and continue monitoring COVID-19 symptoms, exposures, and cases.





# THE NEW NORMAL

For the last six months or so, we've heard a new phrase tossed around: "the new normal".

What does that mean? Like our students, I Googled the term and was not surprised to find this phrase used in reference to post-pandemic health precautions, mental health, conducting business, and, of course, education. But what does the new normal mean at A-B Tech?

Here's what we know. We are bringing students, faculty, and staff back to campus this fall. This is both exciting and daunting. It is exciting because there will be a plethora of new initiatives that have come about because of the pandemic. They include, but are not limited to, the following:

**Employing new technology:** This goes beyond laptops and Zoom. For example, our Radiography program will implement simulation software that enables students to image virtual patients. Our Biology department will use a Real Time – Polymerase Chain Reaction device to study bacteria and viruses. Our Paramedic department will outfit our ambulances with ventilators to provide the latest in emergency medicine.

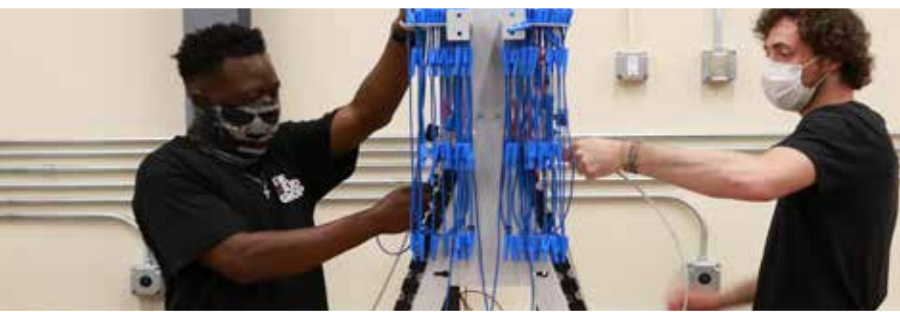
**Improving support:** We've learned that students find virtual office hours far more convenient than face-to-face so our faculty will continue to hold office hours via Zoom. We are expanding tutoring, both virtual and face-to-face to accommodate learning loss from the pandemic. To help reduce cost, high school students in our welding program at Madison will be provided with goggles and other equipment.

**Providing flexibility:** Flexibility was key to keeping A-B Tech operational during the pandemic. We will continue to be flexible in a variety of ways that will benefit our students and our employees. This includes lecture capture and flexible course offerings that will allow students to build convenient schedules for their busy lives. It also includes teleworking options for faculty and staff that should help the College retain and recruit top talent.

Returning in the fall is also daunting. It is daunting because we do not know entirely what to expect. What if students are paralyzed with pandemic fatigue and decide not to come back to college? What unforeseen challenges will our new reliance on technology pose? What if the pandemic gets worse instead of better?

Here is something I know for sure: Our faculty and staff continue to amaze me with their creativity, resilience, and dedication to student success. As I said before, the effort of teaching during a pandemic was and continues to be mighty. Beginning this fall, we will see the payoff. We will see a better version of A-B Tech that is stronger, more flexible, and that will help students succeed in new ways.

We may not know what the New Normal will be, but I guarantee this. The New Normal at A-B Tech is going to be exciting. I'm thrilled to see where we go next!



# New A-B Tech Training Center TO PROVIDE CUSTOMIZED TRAINING FOR PRATT & WHITNEY AND OTHER INDUSTRIES AT BILTMORE PARK WEST

A-B Tech has several short-term training offerings in the advanced manufacturing sector that lead directly to good-paying, full-time jobs with benefits. Many local manufacturers are now hiring and offering incentives to qualified employees.

Completers of these classes also are guaranteed an interview with Pratt & Whitney, which plans to open a turbine airfoil production facility in Asheville in early 2022. They also will be eligible to skip pre-employment assessment training required by the company.

A-B Tech's Advanced Manufacturing Center, newly revamped with more than \$3 million in high-tech training equipment, is offering the following classes:

- **New Machining Fundamentals**, which starts this month and can be completed in 15 weeks, with both day and evening classes available.
- **CNC 101**, which goes deeper into computer-integrated machining, is a 5-week class that begins in June.
- **Certified Production Technician** is a flexibly scheduled self-paced class that can be completed mostly online in 8 weeks or less. This class is designed to accommodate people who need flexible scheduling, such as people who are currently working, taking care of children, or have limited transportation availability.

Interviews with local employers are guaranteed for completers of all these classes. A-B Tech also has

scholarship money available, potentially making the training free.

"With employers putting forth a huge push to hire, major business expansions into our area, wages increasing, technology advancements, the popularity of A-B Tech's short-term training programs, and the availability of tons of scholarship money for those programs, it is evident that the economy is bouncing back – booming back, and the timing is perfect for people to re-tool to achieve long range, perhaps life changing, career opportunities," said Kevin Kimrey, Economic and Workforce Development Director.

A-B Tech is working with Buncombe County and Biltmore Farms to build a new state-of-the-art advanced manufacturing training facility in Biltmore Park West, where it will provide direct connections to possible employment, pre-employment training, and post-hire training for Pratt & Whitney, and other companies in the future.

As is the case for many local employers such as GE Aviation, Thermo Fisher Scientific, Borg Warner, New Belgium Brewing, Eaton, Linamar, Avadim Health, No Evil Foods, Wicked Weed Brewing, and many others, Pratt & Whitney will be the beneficiary of a state-funded Customized Training Program project that will be administered locally by A-B Tech. The program provides resources to conduct training and other workforce development activities in Buncombe and Madison counties. For more information, visit [abtech.edu/amc](http://abtech.edu/amc) or call 828-398-7760.

# News Briefs

## A-B TECH WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Welcome to recent A-B Tech Board of Trustees appointees! The college is grateful for the service of these talented individuals.

**Nian Avery** was appointed by the Buncombe County Commissioners. A native of Asheville, Avery founded and operates Avery's Memorial Chapel.



**Himanshu Karvir** was appointed by the Buncombe County Commissioners. He is President and CEO of Virtelle Hospitality in Asheville and was General Manager of Holiday Inn Asheville -- Biltmore West for more than 16 years.

**David R. King** was appointed by the Governor. A native of Asheville, he is a graduate of A-B Tech and Western Carolina University and is retired from a career in manufacturing, small business owner and real estate.



**Libby Kyles** was appointed by the Governor. She is an educator and facilitator who also was the CEO of the YWCA of Asheville and the Executive Director of the Youth Transformed for Life Training Programs.

# News Briefs

**Judy Lewis** was appointed by the Boards of Education. She is a retired educator who taught English for more than 20 years and served as Assistant Principal at Enka High.



**Max Queen** was appointed by the Buncombe County Commissioners. He retired as A-B Tech's COO, but also was an A-B Tech student, faculty member, Dean of Allied Health and Public Service, and Vice President of Continuing Education and Workforce Development.

See the full Board of Trustees at [abtech.edu/about/board-trustees](https://abtech.edu/about/board-trustees).

## CULINARY TEAM COMPETES IN ACF NATIONALS

A-B Tech's student culinary team is headed to the American Culinary Federation's national competition in Orlando from August 2-5. A-B Tech teams have been to national finals more than any culinary school in the nation. The 2021 team includes: Jacob Norconk, Emmer Moraza Rodriguez, Patricia Santibanez, Michael Welsh, and team captain Joshua Waters.



## 2021 EMPLOYEE AWARDS

Congratulations to A-B Tech's 2021 employees of the year! The Faculty and Staff winners will be entered in statewide competition later in the year.

- **Faculty Member of the Year:** Starr Silvis, Chair, Transfer Engineering
- **Staff Member of the Year:** Barb Browning, Director, Professional Development
- **Advisor:** Lindsey Carpenter, Humanities
- **Part Time Staff Member:** Kendra Joyner, IT Computer Lab
- **Adjunct Curriculum Faculty:** Michael Brunton, Culinary Arts
- **Continuing Education Instructor:** Chris Campbell, Emergency Services
- **RISE (Respect, Integrity and Support for Everyone) Awards:** Kara Walker, Police Chief; Carolyn Rice, President's Office (tied for first place)

# Campus **Events**

## 2021 COMMENCEMENT

A-B Tech Community College awarded nearly 1,000 degrees and diplomas to 2021 graduates during its Commencement ceremony on Saturday, May 15. For the first time in the college's 62-year history, the ceremony was held online due to continued COVID-19 limitations on large events. Last year's commencement was cancelled as pandemic protocols prohibited all public gatherings.



This year's Commencement also marks the first for A-B Tech President John D. Gossett, who became the college's 7th president on July 1 of last year.

"Commencement is always the highlight of our academic year and represents the hard-earned success of our graduates – that has never been more true than it is this year," Gossett said. "We have worked hard to put together a virtual ceremony to celebrate them, but we all look forward to returning to an in-person event next year."

## Calendar of Events

June 21 **Fall Registration opens**

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June 22 **Brewing Application Day**

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July 2 **Independence Day, College Holiday**

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August 23 **Fall Semester begins**

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# Campus Events

Approximately 325 graduates who registered for the online ceremony were recognized by Dr. Gossett, Dr. Beth Stewart, Vice President of Instructional Services, Board of Trustees Chair Dr. John Parham, Commencement Poet Laura Dame, and name readers Culinary and Hospitality Arts Chair Cathy Horton and Allied Health Dean Jon Wiener.



The ceremony can be viewed at [www.YouTube.com/ABTechCC](https://www.YouTube.com/ABTechCC).



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**YOUR DREAMS.  
OUR MISSION.**

**Fall registration  
opens June 21!**

[abtech.edu/welcome](http://abtech.edu/welcome)