

EDUCATION

A-B Tech
Journal

FALL 2021



**The Future of Industry
Training is Here**

**A-B Tech Online Offers
Work-Life Balance**

**Cromwell Leads Work-Based
Learning**

ABTech
Community College

A-B Tech EDUCATION Journal

FALL 2021

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A Message from the President



Dr. John Gossett

Since I arrived at A-B Tech last July, many have asked “How do you like A-B Tech?” That has been a great question, because I have not had the pleasure of seeing the same college since becoming president as the college I used to visit. Throughout my career, I visited A-B Tech often and remember a college filled with people. Our employees have been wonderful to invite me to their gatherings online in the first year and now face-to-

face as we have brought everyone back to campus. They have demonstrated an extraordinary devotion to the college, our students, and each other.

Obviously, the pandemic has dominated every conversation of my tenure at A-B Tech. To keep our students and employees safe this year, our leadership team created a system by which PPE was plentiful, distance was maintained, and messaging was constant. When we could, instruction transitioned to a virtual environment. When hands-on learning was paramount, we took precautions to keep students and faculty in labs, clinicals, and shops as safe as possible. As a result, our exposures on campus were far less than exposures in the community.

I am also proud that we partnered with the Buncombe and Madison County’s Departments of Health and Human Services to provide testing and vaccination sites on our campuses. Knowing that we were doing our part to fight the virus seemed to bolster everyone’s spirits.

For the first twelve months, “grace” was the word we used to describe how our team and college would approach our work in the face of COVID-19. Our leadership team embraced grace for our campus. We worked hard to demonstrate grace with each other, and more importantly, with ourselves. I would like to think that ultimately it was this sense of grace that helped our team better navigate the unknown.

This year, as we have transitioned back to a more traditional teaching modality, “connection” will be the word our A-B Tech family will hear. People tend to stay in organizations where they feel connected. Whether at work or with civil or social clubs, building strong connections is essential.

We are working to get better connected with our students this year. We have made organizational changes and are putting new advising and counseling models into place, which we believe will help us connect with our students both inside and outside the classroom. The ultimate aim: more credentials and higher graduation rates now and into the future.

Connection also means with our community. It means we need to serve everyone. Everyone! Every citizen in Buncombe and Madison Counties should feel they have a place at A-B Tech. Whether that is taking a class to earn a high school equivalency, preparing for university transfer, earning skills to get a better job, or learning something new just for fun, we want to be the community’s college.

I am excited about the future of A-B Tech and am blessed to be a small part of it. I look forward to our team building even stronger connections with our students, faculty and staff, and community as we blaze a trail towards our future.

This message was adapted from an EducationNC.org article published in October 2021.

Sincerely,

John Gossett
President

Mission

Dedicated to the success of students and communities, Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College provides meaningful teaching and learning in a curriculum, continuing education, and workforce development environment committed to Respect, Integrity, Support, and Equity (RISE). We welcome everyone to join us.

Vision

Changing Lives • Strengthening Communities

ALLIED HEALTH PROGRAMS SHOWCASE SUCCESSES AND OPPORTUNITIES

A-B Tech has trained our region's health care professionals since shortly after the college was founded in 1959. With more than a dozen curriculum programs and three in continuing education, the college's students and instructors have excelled during the past year.

Nurse Aide students had a 98 percent passing rate on the state exam to earn Nurse Aide certification. A part of the Health Occupation continuing education workforce training programs, the course graduated 227 students from June 2020 to July 2021.

"This is a stellar achievement for our students, staff, and instructors," said Deborah Wright, Vice President of Continuing Education and Economic & Workforce Development. "They earned it through their hard work under challenging conditions."

Nurse Aide is a short-term training that prepares individuals to work as caregivers in a health care setting, such as in a nursing home, hospital, or home health care. It also provides the background needed to go into a nursing program.



A-B Tech's highly touted Nursing programs also graduate approximately 100 students who become registered nurses each year. Degree programs include Associate Degree Nursing and the WNC Regionally Increasing Baccalaureate Nurses (RIBN) with Western Carolina University.

Surgical Technology students achieved a 100 percent pass rate on their national credentialing exam for the fourth year in a row. "Graduates of the A-B Tech program have also had a 100 percent job placement rate, graduate and employer satisfaction rate since the inception of the program," said Surgical Technology Chair Robin Keith.

Surgical technologists work under the direct supervision of a surgeon assuming specific responsibilities before, during, and after surgery. They are the only formally educated perioperative health care provider with primary responsibility for maintaining sterile conditions and assuring that all members of the surgical team adhere to aseptic techniques to assure surgical patient safety.

The Radiography program posted a 100 percent pass rate for the certification exam for the 17th year in a row.



Several A-B Tech Allied Health programs also received top national and state rankings for 2021 from Nursingprocess.org. The college's Phlebotomy program was ranked second in the nation among more than 363 phlebotomy schools across the country. The Dental Assisting Program at A-B Tech was ranked first in the state, while Dental Hygiene and Medical Sonography were both ranked third.

Rankings were determined based on criteria of academic quality, student success and affordability, total number of students enrolled in the program, and editorial team ratings. To gauge the reputation of a school, Nursingprocess.org also considered internet reviews and ratings from popular web publishers such as niche.com and Google and evaluated schools for the student friendly services offered.

"These rankings validate the quality of A-B Tech's health programs," said President John D. Gossett. "Our programs are feeders to almost every healthcare program in the region and our graduates are consistently recognized for their exceptional training and qualifications."

Admissions to Allied Health programs for Fall 2022 will begin in February. Learn more at abtech.edu/programs.



Balance School and Life with A-B Tech Online

Earn an Associate's Degree or Certificate 100% Online

As more people struggle to balance the demands of work, family and school, A-B Tech is expanding opportunities to earn fully online degrees and certificates under the A-B Tech Online banner.

A-B Tech Online Director Dr. Jason Fair said the college has recognized an increasing demand for online education, particularly during the pandemic.

"We have a lot of students dealing with many life issues, and we're living in an economy that is increasingly on-demand and flexible where you can get almost anything you want packaged when you want and how you want it," he said. "A-B Tech has had a more traditional educational model where we schedule classes and you have to come and take them when we offer them, but we're now making it a priority to offer more flexible alternatives."

While the college offers most academic classes through online or hybrid models, Fair said A-B Tech Online currently delivers fully online degrees, diplomas and certificates in areas such as business, medical and office administration, medical coding, computer technologies, human services technology, and a variety of associate in arts transfer degrees.

"We have multiple pathways for transferring to four-year colleges and a variety of degrees, diplomas and certificates that are available this spring," Fair said. "In the future, we're looking to expand access to online education wherever possible. We don't want students to have to choose between work, childcare, and going to school. You can work full-time, raise a family and still get an education."



The online degree and certificate programs have the same curriculum and requirements as traditional on-campus degree programs. All courses are taught by the college's expert faculty, who have been trained to deliver quality online education. Some students may be required to come to campus for proctored exams. Students also have access to the college's support systems and can come to campus for the physical academic support centers, libraries, advising services, and more.

Learn more at abtech.edu/abtech-online.

Fully Online Opportunities

Associate in Arts Transfer Degrees

- AA General Pathway
- Accelerated Pathway
- Business & Accounting (WNC Track)
- History
- Philosophy
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Social Work

Online AAS Degrees

- Business Administration
- Human Services Technology
- Medical Office Administration
- Office Administration Finance
- Office Administration General

Diplomas

- Business Administration
- Medical Office Administration
- Office Administration

Certificates

- Digital Media: Design Level I Certificate
- Front End Developer Certificate
- Back End Developer Certificate
- GIS Fundamentals
- Human Services & Substance Abuse Studies
- Medical Coding
- Office Management
- Word Processing & Desktop Publishing



Early Childhood Education class



Caitlyn Wright, Kenneth Jensen, and Debbie Cromwell

Cromwell Leads Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeships

Debbie Cromwell has been named director of Work-Based Learning at A-B Tech, which is an academic course blending classroom learning with practical work experience related to the field of study.

“Components of Work-Based learning (WBL) include internships, special projects, job shadowing, transition activities, service learning, mentoring, pre-apprenticeship, hybrid, and registered apprenticeships,” Cromwell said. “In addition, we help industry partners and students connect for that ‘direct hire’ need.”

Work-based learning components help to ensure a well-skilled pipeline for growing industries. Outside of contributing to local and regional economies, these components provide students and graduates with a lifelong ability to support themselves and their families.

Apprenticeships offer students a great advantage in the job market. “Apprenticeships are built to fit the exact hiring needs of employers. A registered apprenticeship means training that combines instruction at a worksite during paid employment with related classroom education that culminates in an industry-recognized credential,” Cromwell said.

A-B Tech collaborates with ApprenticeshipNC and the local industry to expand WBL opportunities for its students, business, and industry partners. “With the apprenticeship you are in a training program that meets the needs of the employer with three basic components,” Cromwell said.

This includes structured on the job learning, related educational courses through A-B Tech, and a progressive wage scale that gives the apprentice the opportunity to get a raise with every new skill learned.

Cromwell said A-B Tech became the first college in the state to offer comprehensive culinary and early childhood education apprenticeships this year. Caitlyn Wright is the culinary apprentice based at Givens Estates. “It took several majors and 30 years to realize how much I wanted to do this, but I couldn’t go to school and work full-time, so this apprenticeship was too good to be true. I would absolutely recommend the apprenticeship program to anyone. It changed my life,” Wright said.

Connecting students to potential employers and investing in Work-Based Learning (WBL) opportunities are critical to strengthening the state’s workforce, according to Cromwell. “The number one requirement for businesses in NC right now, is skilled, educated talent. In a time when we have suffered setbacks due to the pandemic, companies are having difficulty finding employees with the necessary skills or desired level of competency-specific knowledge,” she said.

Learn more at abtech.edu/WBL.



A Partnership Opens Doors in Education

A-B Tech has partnered with Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry (ABCCM) to provide educational opportunities at Transformation Village, a transitional housing facility for women.

A-B Tech provides onsite training opportunities for the women who live in the facility and members of the community. Short-term courses in health care, internet technology, construction trade skills, and other areas result in certifications and wage increases.

According to a 2019 study by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, women with a certification or license can earn between \$8,000 and \$13,000 more annually than women who are not credentialed.

"A-B Tech is honored to partner with ABCCM at their new Transformation Village," said Deborah Wright, Vice President of Continuing Education and Economic & Workforce Development. "As their educational partner, we are proud to join them by providing onsite training opportunities for the women residents and others in the community."

Transformation Village currently provides up to 100 beds of transitional housing in stage one. About 200 more are planned for additional stages of construction. Both A-B Tech and ABCCM leaders call this a win-win situation for everyone.

"ABCCM is a tremendous community partner that really focuses on serving our vulnerable population and helping them get into a life sustaining career. A-B Tech on our end partners with ABCCM to help make it easier to reach that population," said A-B Tech Director of Workforce Programs Maria Spadaro.

"This partnership can serve as a model to other communities who are seeking ways to help women," said Rev. Jim Brewer, ABCCM Altruism Officer. "With so many employers looking for people to work, it makes great sense that ABCCM and A-B Tech partner to bring continuing education skills together to the community.

For available classes, visit abtech.edu/ce-registration. For more information, email workforceprograms@abtech.edu or call 828-398-7934 or contact ABCCM's Beverly Buckner at 828-398-6988 or beverly.buckner@abccm.org.



Kevin Kimrey

A-B Tech and Industry Training: The Future is Here

Since becoming director of A-B Tech's Economic and Workforce Development department in 2013, Kevin Kimrey has seen a massive shift in the types of education and training requested by the college's local industry partners.

"The future is here – we're doing more and more technology, automation, Industry 4.0, mechatronics and robots," Kimrey said. "We're seeing a shift in the kinds of work people will be doing – not fewer jobs, but different jobs requiring new types of education and training."

When Kimrey was hired, his department was based with the college's Continuing Education division at A-B Tech Enka in the Haynes Building and initial plans were to add more advanced equipment at that location. When the county unexpectedly decided to close the building in 2015, the college had to pivot, ultimately leading to the creation of its Advanced Manufacturing Center on the main campus.

"When I got here in 2013, we were behind a lot of colleges so early on focused on getting grants for advanced manufacturing labs, then found the new location," Kimrey said. "We started with the basics in where we do the most training – machining and industrial maintenance, but kept building on it. We're finding that lot of what the Advanced Manufacturing Center and our Engineering and Applied Technology curriculum programs are doing for companies has to be more flexible, nimble and faster."

Two recent grants from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) have enabled the Advanced Manufacturing Center to purchase new equipment for its current location and a new education and training facility that will be constructed at Biltmore Park West to provide training for Pratt & Whitney and other companies.

"The first ARC Grant we received about a year ago for \$1.5 million focused on Pratt & Whitney because we need to equip a machining shop in that training center," Kimrey said. "We got a second ARC

grant for \$1.5 million this fall that will help us look farther ahead – we have a lot of great things, but needed this grant to move forward. We're looking at what else we need in the mechatronics world, equipment for manufacturing production systems that include programmable logic controls, variable frequency drives, robots, sensors, and advanced electronics. We're looking at how the equipment and training marry up to what we're seeing in real world based on a combination of requests and seeing the evolution with our customers."

Renovations completed on the Advanced Manufacturing Center in the spring of 2020 include state-of-the-art equipment for advanced manufacturing training, the Composites Center of Excellence where GE Aviation and others are trained, and a Workforce Readiness Resource Lab where the public can connect to industries, get help with resumes and best interview practices, and learn about skills and training needed for today's advanced manufacturing technologies.

Customized Training leads to new programs

The Advanced Manufacturing Center was developed in the location initially used as a customized training center for GE Aviation and its composites training. The center was established through A-B Tech's Customized Training program with state customized training funding and several grants for new equipment and training, Kimrey said.

"Customized Training touches about 30 companies a year and is often the catalyst for new open enrollment classes," he said. "A great example is when we began composites training with GE Aviation, then built on it by developing composites classes for open enrollment. Customized Training is real time – it's the stuff going on right now in industry and everything follows that.

"Another Customized Training project that Kimrey spearheaded was for New Belgium Brewing in partnership with Jeff Irvin, director of A-B Tech's Craft Beverage Institute of the Southeast. The project was so successful that it has been tapped by the state's Customized Training program as a success story for an upcoming video that will be featured at state conferences.

"I did an outline based on what New Belgium needed for a Brewing 101 class – they basically wanted every employee to understand what making craft beer entails – and Jeff developed it and delivered the training though a four-hour class," he said.

Industry 4.0

Industry 4.0, or the Fourth Industrial Revolution, is defined as the ongoing automation of traditional manufacturing and industrial practices, using modern smart technology. At A-B Tech, the most recent addition of high-tech training technology related to Industry 4.0 is Virtual Reality (VR) headsets.

"The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board has funded our first year with 20 headsets," Kimrey said. "We're buying the complete manufacturing library, which is broken into high level categories like safety and other trainings. We have built VR into the Pratt & Whitney project and envision using them everywhere."

Kimrey said the modules include almost any type of training that might be needed, from precision measurement of parts to plant safety. The first use of VR headsets will be Fire Extinguisher Safety Training for several local companies, he said. Next will be Variable Speed Motor Wiring for new maintenance staff of a local manufacturer.

Continued on next page



VR Headset



Mechatronics AAS class

A-B Tech and Industry Training: Continued

Pratt & Whitney

A-B Tech has been tapped to help recruit and train employees for Pratt & Whitney when the jet engine manufacturer opens at Biltmore Park West next year. “The Pratt & Whitney expansion into western North Carolina is transformative for many reasons,” Kimrey said. “It is bringing a Global 50 employer to our region that is providing hundreds of high-paying jobs and advanced technology. And it means that A-B Tech has an opportunity to be on the cusp of helping our region economically by training people in high-tech skills. It means a lot of opportunities for our residents that can have favorable economic impacts for generations.”

A-B Tech’s facility will be a regional workforce education and training center with an emphasis on Industry 4.0 technologies, Kimrey said. “It will house Pratt & Whitney-specific equipment that will emulate their manufacturing processes, and will also include a state-of-the-art machine shop, mechatronics lab, welding lab, and classroom space. This training center will be unique for the region, and frankly right now, the state.”

In addition to providing customized training for Pratt & Whitney, GE Aviation, Borg Warner, Eaton, and others, the training center will offer open enrollment programs in advanced manufacturing categories such as systems integration, industrial maintenance and mechatronics, automation and controls, and cyber security related to networked systems. The Industry 4.0 focus will be on how machines interact using modern smart technologies, training in systems integration, networking, and cyber security.

MyFutureNC and P-20 Council

As A-B Tech looks to the future in workforce training, President John Gossett said the college’s involvement in the MyFutureNC and P-20 Council initiatives will be critical.

“Land of Sky was the first Council of Government agency in the state to help MyFutureNC tackle its goal of 2 million credentials for North Carolinians by 2030.” Gossett said.

“As a result of over a year’s work with leaders from across the four-county Land of Sky region, our first P-20 Council meeting was last month. The P-20 Council is a collaboration among state agencies, education institutions, local schools, community groups, employers, taxpayers, and families, and to collectively identify needed reforms to develop a seamless and sustainable system of quality education and support.”

Learn more at abtech.edu/AMC.

Current Customized Training Customers

- GE Aviation
- Pratt & Whitney
- Eaton Corporation
- New Belgium Brewing
- Borg Warner Turbo Systems
- Buchi Kombucha
- Thermo Fisher Scientific
- Wicked Weed Brewing

Previous Customers

- Linamar
- White Labs
- Jacob Holm Industries
- AvL Technologies
- Tutco
- TE Connectivity
- MB Haynes
- Spicewalla
- Nexus Technologies

Small Business Center Client Finds Support to Get Through Pandemic

Mark Sundara is a graduate of A-B Tech's Air Conditioning, Heating & Refrigeration Technology program. He founded Asheville Ice, a local ice machine sales, rental, and repair company located at the Small Business Incubator, after being let go from a manufacturing job.

"We provide ice machine sales, rentals, and repair to many different distribution channels, including local independently owned co-op supermarkets, local businesses, restaurants/bars, and others in the Asheville area," Sundara said. "Our commitment to ensuring the highest standards for equipment and service is above any other. Asheville Ice accommodates all needs from the renting and servicing of ice machines."

After the pandemic hit in March 2020, the company lost a large amount of revenue that put its growth on pause since most of its clientele own bars and restaurants. When they were closed, Asheville Ice was closed.

Sundara had to quickly pivot to stay afloat. He participated in the R3 Program for Small Business, funded by the COVID-19 Recovery Act. The Three Rs were Reboot, Recover, and Rebuild, and that's what he did.

"Sometimes you have to let things go that are not working," Sundara said. "We had a refrigerated trailer rental side of the business that was halted due to the pandemic. No one was having events or festivals. So, we sold our trailers and reinvested them into better equipment, tools, and ways to continue to make our jobs easier."



Mark Sundara



The business now has wireless gauges to check refrigerant pressures and other digital gear and instruments. Sundara and his team looked at things they knew they needed that would make life easier and found a way to get it.

"If it wasn't for the A-B Tech Small Business Center, the NC Carolina Small Business Center Network and Jill Sparks (Executive Director for the Small Business and Incubation at A-B Tech) giving me a chance and allowing me to be a

part of the Small Business Center, there would be no Asheville Ice today," Sundara said. "The workshops on social media marketing, tax advice, and counseling have helped tremendously. Sometimes it's faster to sit down with an expert who would have been through what I'm going through now and help me not to make the same mistakes as they were starting."

Learn more about our Small Business Center at abtech.edu/sbc.

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.

Tommy Justus was appointed by the Madison County Board of Education in 2021. He has served as the pastor of Mars Hill Baptist since 1995. He graduated from Southern Seminary in 1990 and completed a doctorate at Drew University.



Michael Garrison was appointed by the Madison County Board of Commissioners in August. He has more than 20 years of service in law enforcement and recently retired as Mars Hill's Chief of Police. He was elected to and currently serves on the Madison County Board of Commissioners.

CULINARY TEAM COMPETES IN ACF NATIONALS

A-B Tech's Student Culinary Team earned a Silver Medal at the American Culinary Federation National Finals on August 5. This was the 12th trip to the nationals for an A-B Tech team, which is the most of any culinary school in the United States.

Led by captain Josh Waters, the team consisted of Michael Welsh, Emmer Moraza, Patricia Santibanez, and Roman Nourse. They were awarded Best in Show Appetizer for a sunflower seed crusted mullet with creamy grits, tasso cream sauce, seafood sausage and a tomato, watermelon relish, which was prepared by Welsh.



New SGA Officers

MEET OUR 2021-22 SGA OFFICERS

President Bethany Duke has lived throughout most of WNC, from Marion to Bryson City and in between. She has experience in accounting, sales, clerical and more than 15 years in customer service. She has an associate in Business Administration – HR Management from A-B Tech and is pursuing a bachelor's in Business Administration – HR Management at Montreat College, while completing an associate in Accounting at A-B Tech. She plans to complete a master's degree at Western Carolina University.



Vice President Jason Gray is currently in the Culinary Arts program. He moved to Asheville from Hillsborough in January to start his formal culinary education, while making a career change after spending almost 17 years in Information Technology in higher education at Duke University. His career change was the result of the first chocolate cake he made around Valentine's Day in 2019. He has an associate's and bachelor's degrees in Information Technology. He hopes to open his own food-based business.

Secretary Betsy Tankersley has completed two culinary certificate programs and is pursuing an associate degree at A-B Tech so that she can better serve the WNC community as a cooperative extension agent. Through her courses at A-B Tech, she served as an intern for the Henderson, Transylvania, Madison and Mitchell county cooperative extension offices, which included hosting a cooking competition judged by our chef instructors. She is also a seasoned administrator, having served 10 years as a stage and production manager around the world.



Campus Events

NEW STUDENT WELCOME DAY

A-B Tech's New Student Welcome Day drew a crowd on a beautiful summer day in August. Students came to register, apply for the Trailblazer Promise to get free tuition, tour the campus, pick up \$150 gift cards to the Bookstore for being fully vaccinated, and get free vaccines from Buncombe County DHHS. We appreciate students, employees, 99.9 Kiss Country, Star 104.3 and Buncombe County Health & Human Services for their interest and support.



UNIVERSITY TRANSFER FAIR

Colleges and universities across the region attended A-B Tech's College Transfer Fair in October. Students were able to speak with representatives from Western Carolina, Appalachian State, East Tennessee State, Mars Hill, and many more, to learn about opportunities in continuing their higher education.

2021 K. RAY BAILEY GOLF TOURNAMENT

The 17th annual K. Ray Bailey Invitational Golf Classic raised more than \$35,000 this year, to fund scholarships for A-B Tech students. The tournament was held at Mt. Mitchell Golf Club on June 9. Last year, 14 students were awarded nearly \$17,000.



AUTUMN IN ASHEVILLE

The annual fundraiser to support the A-B Tech Foundation and the Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management departments was held as a gourmet drive-thru on October 7 and 14 this year. President John Gossett and the Foundation's Amanda Edwards greeted guests as they picked up meals to go. For the first time, each meal included a recipe booklet so participants could recreate their favorite dishes.

Campus Events

WORKFORCE CAREER FAIR BLOCK PARTY

A-B Tech celebrated the grand opening of the Workforce Readiness Resource Lab on the main campus during the Career Fair/Block Party in September. The lab is available for resume assistance and interview preparation, work skills tutorials, a computer lab, and much more. At the current time, the lab is open from 1 to 5 p.m. by appointment only. Find more information at abtech.edu/WRRL.



HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY GRADUATION



More than 80 students received diplomas during A-B Tech's High School Equivalency graduation on August 12, including a mother, Anita Rochelle Rhodes and her daughters, Shymirar Kateara Rhodes and Synia Breonna Porshae Rhodes. Philip Cooper, Director of Workforce Development at the YMI Cultural Center, was the keynote speaker. Student speakers were Skylar Rogers, Martha Platt, Amber Boudrieau, and Jeremy Woody.

Calendar of Events

November 15 **Registration opens for Spring Semester**

November 25-26 **College closed for Thanksgiving holiday**

December 18 **Last day of Fall Semester**

December 24-31 **College closed for Winter Break**

January 10 **Spring Semester begins**



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OUR MISSION.**

**Spring registration
opens November 15!**

abtech.edu/welcome

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