



**Important Dates**

Thursday, April 24:  
Reading Day

Friday, April 25 –  
Wednesday, April 30:  
Exams

Thursday, May 1:  
Residence Halls Close  
(except for graduating seniors)

Saturday, May 3:  
Commencement

Sunday, May 4:  
Residence Halls close  
for graduating seniors

Monday, May 12:  
Summer Session I  
begins

Monday, May 26:  
University Closed

Monday, June 9:  
Summer Session II  
begins

APRIL 2008

## AVERETT UNIVERSITY PARENT NEWSLETTER

### FROM THE FIELD TO THE BIG SCREEN: AU ALUMNUS LANDS ROLE IN FILM

BY JOHN GARCIA, CHANTICLEER REPORTER

Film and sport often collide on the silver screen, but actors usually play the athletes in those films. This trend changed in the recently released football film, *Leatherheads*. Directing and starring in the film, George Clooney wanted actual football players to depict the formation of American football in the 1920's. Former Averett football player Blake Abernathy took advantage of the opportunity and landed a role in the film doing what he does best.

"The fact that I played four years at Averett was a big deal, without that I wouldn't have been able to do it," said Abernathy.



Abernathy played linebacker on Averett's defense from 2001-2004, earning all-conference honors as a senior in 2004.

The journey from casting calls to on-location filming is a long one. Hearing of the casting calls for the movie was even a long shot because Abernathy was not the one who heard. His mother did, she read about it. Abernathy was skeptical because it was held in Greenville, South Carolina and nearly turned around after he began the trip.

Once Abernathy arrived, a line of several hundred people was in front of him. Once he reached the front, all they asked for was his information and a picture, he had to go back home to Salisbury, North Carolina, and wait for a call-back. The call finally came and it was off to Greenville again for a tryout.

Abernathy appears in the scene wearing jersey number 22 during the first college football game between Princeton and Penn, with the score tied. He chases the hero of the film, Carter Rutherford

(played by John Krasinski), throughout the game.

"I spoke with John (Krasinski) all day long, he was real down to earth and answered everyone's questions," said Abernathy.

Clooney had the men film for fifteen hours straight on a production day that started at 4:20 a.m. Abernathy and the football players were in make-up getting grass and dirt stains, along with vintage 1920's slicked-back haircuts. The already tough day was made even tougher by the cameras because they were on a cart that made dirt tracks. Those tracks had to be raked after every take, extending the grueling day.

Abernathy does not plan to pursue acting as a career, but would participate in a similar role if given the opportunity. The film was released on April 4.

### AU CHAMPIONS

The Averett University Intercollegiate Dressage Team (IDA) has been named Reserve Champion for Region I and will be competing in the national competition at Mt. Holyoke (MA) in April.

For the second year in a row, the Averett University Men's Basketball team won in the USA South Conference tournament.



## EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM



In response to changing times and changing methods of communication, Averett University has partnered with E2Campus to create our new emergency alert system. This system allows students, parents, faculty and staff to receive campus-wide alerts on their email or through text messaging on their cell phones. To sign up, visit <http://www.averett.edu/safety/index.html>.

## MARINE FIRST TO GRADUATE FROM AEROSPACE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

As the first graduate of the Graduate and Professional Studies' (GPS) aerospace management program, Adam Oblack, '07, is pleased with his degree and believes "Averett offers the best program for others like me."

Oblack attended college full time after high school, but "ran out of money within a couple of years." He joined the United States Marine Corps in May of 1999 with the goal of continuing his education through the benefits of tuition assistance and the Montgomery GI Bill.

"Once stationed at Quantico, Virginia, I was afforded the opportunity to dedicate the time needed to finish my degree," Oblack said. "I have lived and worked around the aviation industry most of my life, and I felt that the aerospace management program at Averett would give me the best opportunity to advance my career in aviation.

"I have a greater understanding of the aerospace industry and both its history and future. My research and writing skills have also greatly improved. The completion of my degree has broadened the scope of my marketability within the aviation industry and I am positive that it will benefit me as I transition from the military to the civilian workforce." Oblack will leave the Marines in June and plans to pursue his MBA through Averett.

When Oblack joined the Marines in 1999 he was an avionics technician. He is now the assistant production control chief at the Presidential Helicopter Squadron at Quantico. As assistant production control chief he oversees the maintenance and repair of helicopter parts and ground equipment.

Oblack tried other methods of higher education before enrolling in Averett's GPS Program.

"There are many benefits to the GPS Program at Averett University. Classes are small, which provides an interaction between students and instructors not found at other institutions. The class calendar system provides students with a roadmap to completion, showing the student that there is a definitive goal to be reached, not just a list of classes required for completion. Instructors are sensitive to the students' needs and understand that 'life happens.' Most of the students are in the military and the instructors also understand that sometimes work must come first."



## STUDENTS HONORED FOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Averett held an Honors Banquet to recognize students for their academic achievements April 8 at the North Campus. During the banquet, students heard from alumna Dr. Martha Walker, '74.

Walker is a community viability specialist with the Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE). She joined VCE in October 2005 after serving for 28 years with the Virginia Community College System at Danville Community College (DCC). She taught at DCC for 20 years and held the position of director of institutional advancement for eight years.

During her address, Walker challenged the students to "turn around and build a bridge to the next group of students that will also cross through these doors, and that you turn and support them and that you always hold Averett near and dear to your hearts."

A complete list of the award recipients can be found by visiting [www.averett.edu/news/display\\_story.php?storyid=561](http://www.averett.edu/news/display_story.php?storyid=561)