



WAKE TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2025



The strategic direction for Wake Technical Community College was set on a cold, sunny day in January, 1964, at the dedication of the W.W. Holding Industrial Education Center, the unique educational institution that eventually became Wake Tech. The keynote speaker, Chairman of the State Board of Education Dallas Herring, charged us with a mission to take people where they are and carry them as far as they can go.

Today, the dynamic and fast growing community our college serves has been recognized as a national model of economic growth, but still, the data indicates we significantly struggle in providing a ladder to those economic opportunities for many of our residents. Consequently, this strategic plan represents no change in focus to our original mission, but a call to think strategically about how we can further our college's unique role as our community's "through college," providing a ladder of opportunity for so many in our region, and particularly those who need access to our ladder the most.



The culture of caring and commitment to reach and rally around our students and our community is unquestioned at Wake Tech, and in fact, it is and has always been our greatest strength. Wake Tech people have always proven themselves to be people who collectively do difficult, meaningful things. The ideas and contributions you have brought and are bringing to this strategic planning process are the key to our success, not only in strategic planning, but most importantly, in further developing our role as the ladder of opportunity that our students and community need at this time.

Thank you for your innovation and your commitment.

Reach and Rally,
Scott Ralls

MISSION

Wake Technical Community College provides equitable access to education that transforms lives through economic mobility and personal fulfillment.

VISION

We will reach students in every part of Wake County and rally around them to go as far as their dreams, talents, and resilience take them.

GOALS

1

Equitable Access

Students from underrepresented groups, including minority and low-income students, are able to enter Wake Tech programs and access the support services they need to be successful.

3

Learning

Students gain the knowledge, skills, and abilities they need for the labor market and transfer.

5

Transfer

Students transfer more and faster than in the past, do well when they transfer, and earn bachelor's degrees.

Equitable Outcomes

Students are successful regardless of their race, gender, or socioeconomic status.

2

4

Completion

Students complete vastly more degrees and other meaningful credentials at faster rates than in the past.

6

Jobs

Students find sustainable employment after completing a credential where they earn a living wage.

REACH AND RALLY ROADMAP

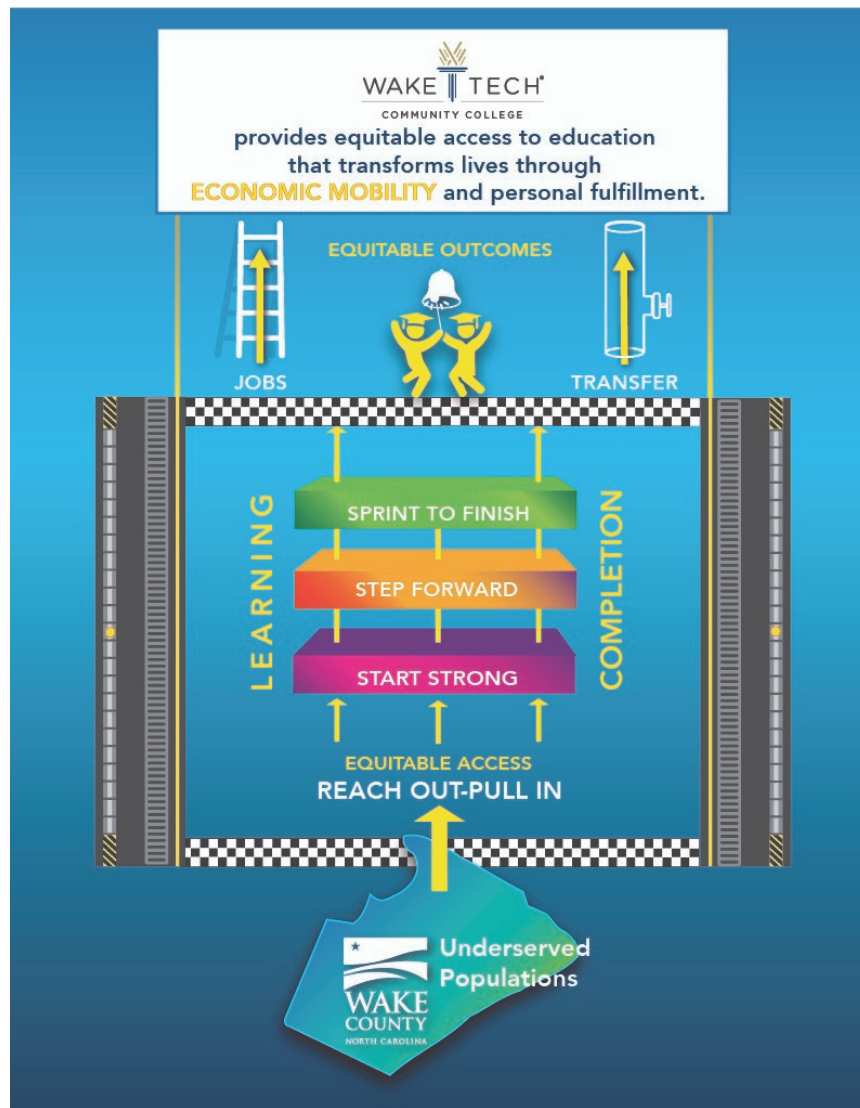
Wake Tech’s Strategic Plan is organized around a theory of change that conceptualizes Wake Tech as a **“through college.”**

In the through college concept, students from across Wake County are pulled into Wake Tech and provided the resources they need to succeed.

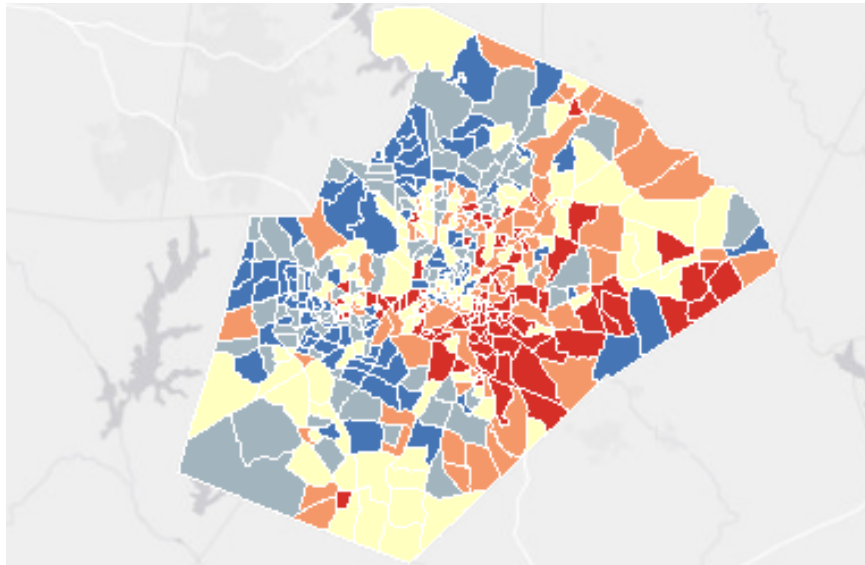
- They **“start strong”** by deciding on a career area and entering and enrolling in their first classes.
- They achieve early momentum in their academic journey by **“stepping forward”** - completing their first college courses and entering a program of study.
- They efficiently move through their programs of study and **“sprint to the finish”** to “ring the bell” when they are near striking distance of a credential, then graduate and quickly move on to their ultimate goals - directly to jobs with a living wage or to transfer to universities.

When “life happens” and students struggle to keep going, alert systems act as “rumble strips” to ensure “guardrails” of care are deployed to help them stay on their paths.

This framework is visualized as a road map depicting the college’s goals and categories of strategic objectives that represent the key levers of change under which each strategy, action, and desired outcome has been developed.



WHAT ARE OUR STRATEGIC ISSUES?



Wake County Economic Health Index Map showing low (red) to high (blue) Economic Health areas. The map shows an east-west divide: Higher concentrations of red and orange (lower health) in the eastern part of the county, and higher percentage of blue and gray (higher health) in the western part of the county. Retrieved from <http://www.wakegov.com/planning/maps/socialequity/Pages/Economic-Health.aspx>

REACH

Too few Wake County residents who are born in poverty are able to move out of poverty.

Educational attainment and economic health are not equal across all regions of the county.

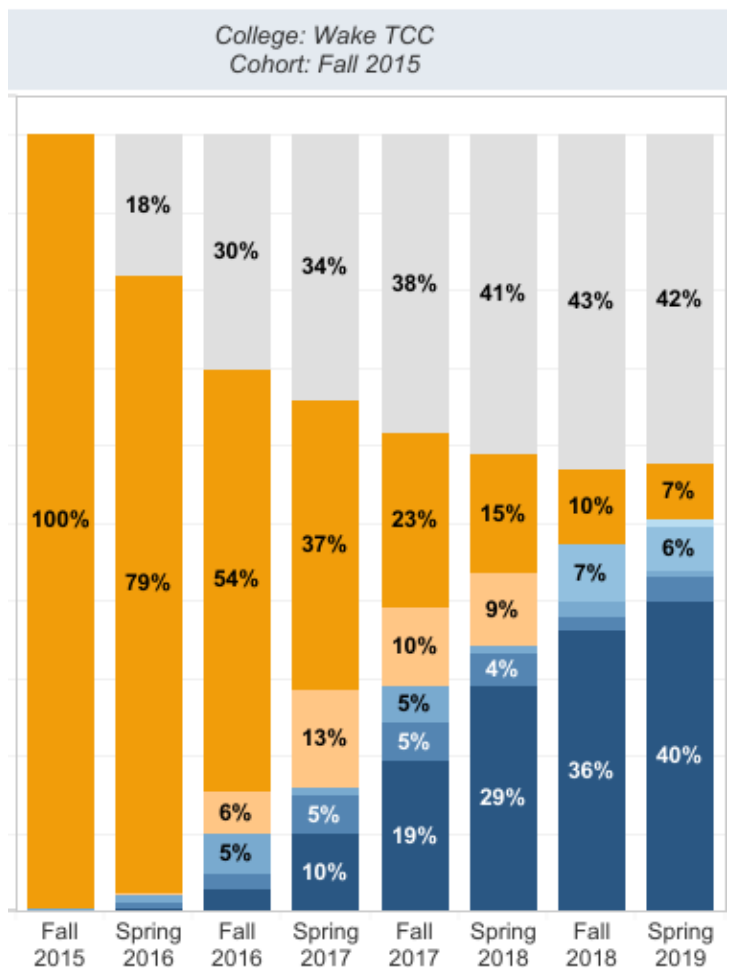
Our opportunity: Reach more citizens, particularly those in the eastern part of the county.

RALLY

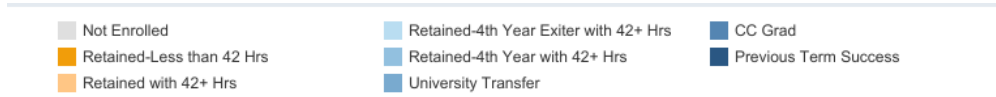
Too few Wake Tech students (less than half) are achieving their goals by their 4th year at Wake Tech. In addition, there are gaps between demographic groups in success and retention rates.

North Carolina Community College System dashboards show that many students are not passing gateway courses and are not accumulating the credits they need in the first semester. A majority of first-time in-college students did not successfully complete English and math courses in their first year at Wake Tech. Research shows that these students are less likely to graduate on time.

Our opportunity: Find ways to rally around our students to help them achieve their goals.



Source: <https://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/analytics/dashboards/>



What results do we want to achieve? (Objectives)

- Increase the number of Wake Tech students residing in areas identified as low on the Wake County Community Economic Health Index.
- Increase the number and proportion of Wake Tech students receiving Pell grants.



What will we do to accomplish our objectives? (Strategies)

- **Target outreach** in economically vulnerable areas of Wake County as identified by the Wake County Community Economic Health Index, including middle and high schools, community centers and places of worship.
- **Support MyFutureNC** by partnering with Wake County Public Schools to increase the percentage of Wake County high school students participating in Career & College Promise programs.
- **Provide dual enrollment programs** on-site at Title I Wake County high schools and **create a scholarship program** for graduates of those high schools successfully completing six or more hours of dual enrollment credit.
- **Partner with programs associated with Wake County Public Schools** designed to reach and support students from underserved populations (i.e., Communities in Schools, Juntos, NC Society of Hispanic Professionals).

What result do we want to achieve? (Objective)

- Close equity gaps in student learning and completion as identified by race/ethnicity, gender, and Pell status.

What will we do to accomplish our objective? (Strategies)

- **Develop, disseminate, and regularly update a Wake Tech Equity Scorecard** that shows performance gaps among student demographic groups at the college.
- **Create a DEI Committee** to be a cross-functional team that monitors and champions equitable outcomes for students and promotes a culture of care.
- **Develop and deploy a Summer Bridge Program** that supports Black/African American and low-income students so they can gain early momentum at Wake Tech through early engagement and the completion of transitional (gateway) courses needed to enter college-level English and Math.
- **Ensure each student is empowered to attain what they need to be successful** through the intentional design of the college experience and the availability of necessary support services and resources.
- **Ensure the diversity of faculty, staff, and administration at Wake Tech reflects the diversity of the student body.** Evaluate policies and procedures regarding recruitment, hiring, retention, and advancement through an inclusive, equity-minded lens.



What results do we want achieve? (Objectives)

- Increase the proportion of students completing college-level math and English within 12 months of enrollment.
- Increase course success and retention rates to be greater than the NCCCS averages.



What will we do to accomplish our objectives? (Strategies)

Learning

- Implement and **expand strategies, systems, and resources** that enhance online and hybrid class instruction and learning, reduce equity gaps in virtual course environments, and supplement all instruction, including in-person instruction, with virtual resources that positively impact student learning.
- Through a faculty-led process, **define an area of learning** in which Wake Tech wants all students to improve.
- Through a faculty-led process, **define what excellence in teaching and learning means at Wake Tech** and organize and invest in the systems and human capital policies to foster, develop, and sustain excellence for the future.
- **Create a Center of Excellence in Teaching and Learning** that brings together the wide variety of Wake Tech faculty professional development initiatives under a holistic umbrella and aligns with the Wake Tech definitions of teaching excellence.

What results do we want achieve? (Objectives)

- Increase retention from Semester 1 to Semester 2.
- Increase the average number of college credits earned by students within their first 12 months of enrollment.
- Increase 4-year completion rates.

What will we do to accomplish our objectives? (Strategies)

- **Revamp the advising process** including systems to connect, onboard, advance, and graduate students with the necessary staffing, technology, and training required. Design an advising system that proactively encourages students to keep their momentum and cross the finish line, especially our most vulnerable and underperforming students.
- **Seek for every student to know their advisor and to chart a plan** for their Wake Tech education that is customized to their needs and focuses on their transfer/career goals after they leave. Take steps to ensure that credits earned by students in their first year are aligned with their career goals and academic pathways.
- **Develop 2-year, 3-year and 4-year recommended road maps** for every degree (as applicable), organized under easily accessible and understandable meta-major/affinity groupings.
- **Change policies** that inadvertently, but clearly, impede student success (i.e., absence policy, late registration policy, registration holds).
- **Expand student services offices**, including advising, financial aid, library, and the ILC, beyond traditional business hours and in-person modalities.
- **Package/bundle student support services in a coordinated, “one stop” way** that is integrated with courses, connects students to support services before they stop-out, and ensures these services are targeted and accessed by historically low performing students.
- **Conduct a communications audit** to examine and revise how policies are communicated in terms of modality, language, and timing, and change communications that may confuse and/or impede student success.
- **Expand the systems and resources available to students** to overcome life challenges that threaten their academic and goal aspirations.



What results do we want to achieve? (Objectives)

- Increase the proportion of Wake Tech students who graduate and transfer with university transfer degrees. (Such as AA, AS, AE, AFA degrees)
- Increase the proportion of Wake Tech AAS graduates who transfer under bilateral transfer agreements.



What will we do to accomplish our objectives? (Strategies)

- **Maximize the WTCC pre-transfer experience** to prepare graduates to perform competitively and excel upon transfer. Capitalize on first-semester experiences to help students set their course and make program choices informed by career, academic, and financial goals.
- **Improve long-term economic outcomes for career programs graduates** through “Graduate-Work-Graduate-Grow” initiatives.
- **Increase** the number of students in **existing joint admissions programs** with UNC institutions.
- **Expand joint admissions programs** to new UNC institutions and strategically connect efforts with student (ACA, advising) and program advising (transfer advisory committees).
- **Create a culture of collective institutional support and ownership of transfer student success** outcomes with leadership from our primary transfer partners through joint engagement in transfer advisory committees, faculty-to-faculty collaboration opportunities, and initiatives to create seamless pathways for students such as intra-institutional advising and targeted ACA programs.

What results do we want to achieve? (Objective)

- Increase the proportion of students 1) enrolled in and 2) graduating from AAS and Diploma programs connected to living wages in the labor market.
- Increase the proportion of students entering AAS and Diploma programs with prior learning credit.

What will we do to accomplish our objectives? (Strategies)

- **Foster dynamic career ladders** around stackable AAS and diploma degree paths that include robust and data-informed career development.
- **Expand the WakeWorks program** to provide increased pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, and short-term training opportunities leading to prior learning credit.
- **Expand** offerings and capacities in **high demand/high cost programs**.
- **Encourage and inform** new students about programs that lead to **living wage jobs** in Wake County, and inform existing students and recent graduates on ways they can “**skill up**” into **short term certifications** that enhance job opportunities.



Share your thoughts about Wake Tech's strategic plan and be a part of Wake Tech's future! Here are some ways you can get involved:



- Review the complete plan posted at my.waketech.edu.
- Review the discussion questions below.
- Participate in a Summit event, if possible:
 - Student Summit, October 30, Contact mrschneider@waketech.edu
 - Faculty Teaching and Learning Summit, November 10, Contact jrsmith3@waketech.edu; rlberry@waketech.edu
 - Staff Summit, November 17, Contact slbell@waketech.edu
- Complete the feedback form found at reachandrally.waketech.edu

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION



STUDENTS

- If you had to choose one priority area to focus on, what would you select? (Equitable Access, Equitable Outcomes, Learning, etc.)
- What is it that drew you to the priority area that you selected?
- In your time at Wake Tech, have you experienced any challenges in the priority area that you selected?
- In your own opinion, what would your perfect community college experience look like?



FACULTY

- How well do you think the plan helps to meet the needs of our community demographics?
- What does the data state about the success of students taking courses at Wake Tech?
- What is one thing you can do in your classroom to improve outcomes for our most vulnerable students?
- Are there additional resources, data, or training you would need to improve outcomes?



STAFF

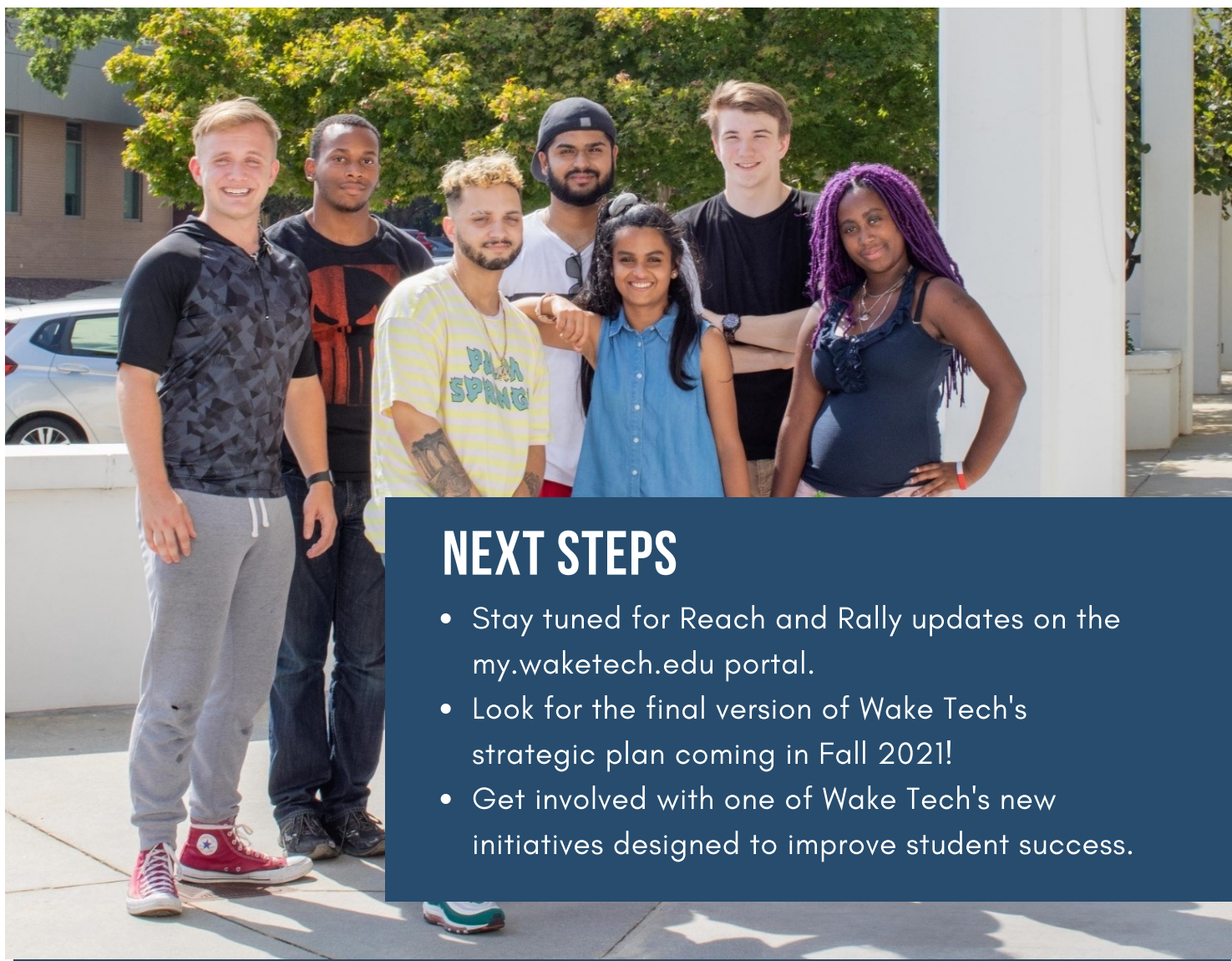
- What do you think will be different for staff when this plan is implemented?
- What are your thoughts about the objectives established in the plan?
- How do you see yourself being involved in this plan?
- How do you see yourself making a difference in terms of student success?
- What is one change you can make to encourage success for our most vulnerable populations?

These questions will be used for discussion at the Summit events. General feedback can be submitted on the feedback form at reachandrally.waketech.edu

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Attending a Summit? Follow these Rules of Engagement:

- Respect everyone's time
 - Be prompt to your meeting and ready to start on time
 - Be focused on the meeting and the opportunity to listen and share, avoid multi-tasking
- Listen with an open mind
 - Give everyone a chance to speak
 - Value everyone's ideas, and remember that others may have had different experiences
- Contribute to the conversation
 - You were invited to participate because your ideas are valued
 - Focus on solutions, not problems



NEXT STEPS

- Stay tuned for Reach and Rally updates on the my.waketech.edu portal.
- Look for the final version of Wake Tech's strategic plan coming in Fall 2021!
- Get involved with one of Wake Tech's new initiatives designed to improve student success.