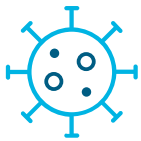


## CASE STUDY: RE-ENROLLMENT

# North Carolina community college sees 15.6% rise in spring 2021 re-enrollment

### The Challenge



Impact of  
COVID-19

Following national trends, community colleges in North Carolina have struggled with enrollment during the COVID-19 pandemic. Declines not only strain the institution, but they're also a red flag for local and regional employers that depend on highly skilled community college graduates to provide a pipeline of ready employees with in-demand skills.

Based in Raleigh, North Carolina, Wake Tech serves over 70,000 adults annually. In partnership with SHEEO (State Higher Education Executive Officers Association), the UNC System and the NC Community College System received Lumina grant funding for programs focused on engaging and supporting adult learners. Wake Tech used some of this funding to partner with InsideTrack. The goal was to create a re-enrollment program aimed at re-engaging students who were close to completing a degree or credential, but stopped-out before finishing. Wake Tech developed a degree-auditing tool called Finish First NC that used their own data to identify students who met this criteria.

### The Partnership



Connected via  
phone, Zoom,  
email and text

Using Finish First NC, Wake Tech identified 1,288 students who were not currently enrolled but were close to completing a credential, then worked with InsideTrack to develop a targeted re-enrollment program. To reach and engage with these students, InsideTrack's Completion Coaches used phone, email, and text messaging.



**INSTITUTION**  
Wake Technical  
Community College

**TYPE**  
Largest community college  
in North Carolina

**STUDENT BASE**  
Mostly adult learners

# 383%



**Return on  
investment  
in under  
four months**



continued

# 201



Stopped-out students returned for the Spring 2021 term — a rate of 15.6%

Specifically, our coaches worked with Wake Tech students identified through Finish First NC to:

- Reconnect to their purpose for pursuing a credential
- Define and execute a plan for re-enrolling in their desired program
- Develop the skills needed to effectively balance work, family, and financial obligations, along with academic demands
- Seek out a special state-funded Completion Scholarship, when applicable
- Provide them the opportunity to finish what they started

Once students were engaged, coaches connected them to designated campus enrollment staff to discuss their re-enrollment and degree completion options. Through this short-term, targeted partnership, a total of 201 stopped-out students returned for the Spring 2021 term — a rate of 15.6%.



## UNDERSTANDING THE REASONS FOR STOPPING OUT

The most common reasons for stopping-out all related to the pandemic. Challenges such as a preference for in-person learning, financial strain, increased responsibilities at home, and health or caregiver issues all loomed large. InsideTrack coaching was able to make a profound difference. By bringing student challenges out in the open, it normalizes the process of asking for help and connects students to the wrap-around support services at their college and in their community.



Income and financial issues



One-on-one coaching

In a short amount of time, InsideTrack made a significant impact on student re-enrollment – setting up returning students for success while helping Wake Tech identify the challenges that caused students to stop-out. Many students reported gratitude for Wake Tech’s support and for the InsideTrack coaches who reached out to assist them.


“

**I really want to finish. I’ve been working on this degree since 2010 and only need one more class. It’s just a money situation at this point. When I dropped the class because of COVID in the spring, I still owed Wake Tech some tuition. Thanks so much for reaching out. I’ll contact support tomorrow and email them about the Completion Scholarship.**

*Wake Tech student*

continued



1.5x 

More likely for students to re-enroll after coaching

### The Impact

During a time when nationwide trends show declining enrollment at community and technical colleges, targeted and carefully executed re-enrollment programs offer benefits that go beyond the numbers — helping to close the attainment gap and advance equity. Re-enrollment coaches also provide valuable insights about students' enrollment decisions and their experiences with Wake Tech.

Supporting these colleges helps more than just the students and the institutions. Community colleges are a pillar of regional economies — and Wake Tech is a feeder school for the renowned North Carolina research triangle. InsideTrack believes that when outcomes for community college students improve, society as a whole improves.

“One of the students I worked with was very anxious about how to proceed when COVID-19 hit,” recalls Nico Hall, InsideTrack Re-Enrollment Coach. “I did my best to assuage some of her fears and keep her on track. Helping someone move closer to their goals is incredibly rewarding.”

According to Dr. Scott Ralls, Wake Tech president, “the students who needed us most were the students most impacted by the pandemic. Using data science, we let stopped-out students know exactly how close they were to completing their degree or certificate. We then used InsideTrack coaching as a way to help us connect and re-enroll those students.”

“

**This re-enrollment program yielded a 383% return on investment for the institution in just over a three-month period — from launch through census.**

*Kai Wang, Senior Dean, Strategic Innovations and Chief Campus Officer, Wake Tech Online*

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