

# Collaborative Conversations with Carlos Transcript

## Workforce Continuing Education (Part 2)

### **Carlos McCormick**

Hi, I'm Dr. Carlos McCormick and this is Collaborative Conversations with Carlos, a podcast where we discuss various aspects of Wake Technical Community College and the community college movement. If you want to find out more about the magnificent work Wake Tech is engaged in and also learn about the many facets of the community college movement. Keep listening, as we will have a diverse collection of guests, from students to community college presidents. Let's get started. This is part two of the conversation with VP Anthony Caison about Workforce Continuing Education at Wake Technical Community College

### **Carlos McCormick**

Throughout our conversation thus far I've heard you talk about free and affordable. How does tuition, work with Workforce Continuing Education? And are there grants or scholarships in Workforce Continuing Education available to students?

### **Anthony Caison**

So, tuition is is we get some set rates for tuition. It depends on what the program is. But some programs you know may have additional costs outside of the tuition just depending on what program it is. So our basic rates for registration fees is that if a course is let's say 24 hours or less, there's a base fee and these fees are set by the state. Let's see \$70 per class that is 24 hours or less, that class is between 25 and 50 hours that class is \$125. If that class has over 50 hours of instruction, that base registration fee is going to be \$180 which is very affordable, most rates are set by the state. Once again, some programs will be strictly on that scale. But if you were in another program for example, you know, cosmetology cosmetology, comes with a lot of additional materials and supplies and it's going to increase the amount of that core, same with bartering, same with a Nurse Aide course. Some courses have supplies material that students have to buy in addition to the base registration fee. So there's not a hard and fast rate. It all depends on on what the discipline is that you want to be taking.

### **Anthony Caison**

But in terms of financial aid or scholarships, so we have a program division called Career Pathways and Student Resources. And this program they have a strategy which is designed to help develop a student's academic and technical and employability skills. So we offer services in this program, and resources to assist students in overcoming challenges that may impede their successful completion of a course or challenges for credential attainment and transition back into the workforce. This program is designed to serve any student registered or interested in registering for a course, that is linked to an industry issue or industry recognized credential. And we help students choose a career path. We provide intensive course to credential coaching and support including assessments, referrals, and employer engagement. So, we also offer job market skills training and practice, employer engagement, as I mentioned, and we get into individualized support services, referrals to people in addressing challenges, but we also offer scholarships for qualifying participants. So if you are taking a program,

and that program or that course or program leads to an industry recognized a third party credential, then that's one of the first requirements to get that financial assistance because unfortunately, we have limited dollars. So we want to put them to the best use possible. So we want to put those dollars towards individuals who are going to get some type of credential that's going to be the fastest way to then get an employee. So we have a scoring system. If you're interested in that, you can you know, go to our website, I'd give that information later about applying for scholarships and becoming a participant in our Career Pathways and Student Resources program. And regardless if you qualify for a scholarship or not, we still provide these services to you. So those services are still there that we will provide to you with our career coaches. And if you meet the qualifications, then there are scholarship monies available. Now what we typically do in awarding scholarships, we typically don't award the full amount for a course. We award a percentage of that. And you know, we want to keep the students engaged and let them know that we want you to have some skin in the game of working towards your third party credential. So but to answer your question, the scholarship monies are there, and the Career Pathways and the Student Resources Department, is the way to go to seek those resources.

### **Anthony Caison**

You talked about a credentials and certification. What type of collaborations does Wake Tech and Workforce Continuing Education have with the curriculum programs? Say if I got a certification? Is any of that able to transfer at any time if I decide I want to take some of the curriculum courses?

### **Anthony Caison**

Yeah, that's a that's a great question. So we do work with reside and we collaborate with them to expand our programs that are recognized for the Greek credit. We see this as a great opportunity for students to to take classes and have them articulate over for degree credit in the event that they choose to, pursue their degree in that field. We currently have opportunities for these in some of our healthcare courses, biotechnology, criminal justice, and information technology, we think is a great, a great opportunity for students for a couple of reasons. One, sometimes a student may have not been in an academic environment in a while and they may have some hesitancy about coming back to school. Well, you know, let's say for example, they want to get into information technology, but you know, I want to ease my way back into it, you know, yeah, courses identified and if you successfully pass those programs and get your certification that is recognized on our degree side for credit. And that said, you take the class in service of all man, no problem, that'd be great. I did great in the cyber security program didn't think I would, you know, I'm back into the flow now. Maybe I should pursue my degree. Well, this will help you get a head start on getting that degree because those courses will articulate over if they are the appropriate courses and say I'm just using information technology, for example. So that can give you a head start to actually get your associates degree. So we think it's a good avenue and it will shorten your time to get that degree because those are classes you don't have to retake if they've been recognized by our degree side and gets you closer to that associate's degree. And, you know, for our non degree programs, they tend to be more formal than our degree classes, even though they are very affordable as well. But there's a good avenue for you to get that degree, so that's one of our strongest collaborative operations, if you will, between us and our curriculum programs.

### **Carlos McCormick**

Thank you. And that kind of leads me to my my next question. And you've alluded to it earlier. We are in a health pandemic, and we're actually doing this podcast remotely now. How has this current pandemic impacted Workforce Continuing Education? And maybe it's specifically if you want to talk about, are there online programming these days, as it relates to Workforce Continuing Education?

**Anthony Caison**

Yeah, so yes, so we do have online programming, we offered some online programming, pre-pandemic. But you know, as a result of that, many of our classes are now being offered in an online format. And then if we went to our website, you'd see that. And we're also currently expanding our offerings and working to make the online learning experience more satisfying for our students. So while we were doing it before, I think many people have been forced to refine their online learning program. Because this is going to be part of what we do going forward. I don't think there's any any doubt in that fact. So, like I said, we're going to make that online learning experience more satisfying, not only for our students, but for our instructors because this is this is gonna be new for a lot of people. It is new for a lot of people. So we need to ensure that our instructors are comfortable, make sure our students are comfortable so that that their whole experience is more robust to get the best learning environment and yes, another parts of that in terms of online the best. So yes, we do offer online programming and it is growing to answer your question.

**Carlos McCormick**

All right, such an expansive program, Workforce Continuing Education at Wake Technical Community College, and you've been at the helm for a number of years now. Do you have any success stories that you'd like to share?

**Anthony Caison**

Well, yeah, actually, good time for that question. Because let's see, we're in 2020. So back in 2016, we applied for a Department of Labor grant, and it was a tech hire grant. And we focused on the area of cyber security, for this tech, our grant, and at the time, it was, well, the grant was a total of 3.9 million and we were awarded that grant and at the time, and because it was the largest grant ever received at the college, so we were proud of that. And the purpose of this program was to get individuals trained in the area of cyber security so that they could get employment in that field upon successful completion. Because as I said earlier, the need for Information Technology is huge and it continues to grow. So we were attempting to at least put a dent in that in that need by by having this grant program and having students come through successfully. So and I say it was a success story because we have without grants you have goals and objectives you have to achieve so our primary goals that we had, as part of this program, where we had to serve a total of 350 individuals in this program, which means you know, we gave them some type of service, you know, To help them on a journey to get employed. We actually surpassed that goal. And you know, we actually serve over 500 students over the course of four years, and it was a four-year grant. And and the reason I said it was a timely question is because we were awarded the grant in 2016. And grant just ended June 30 of 2020. So, we served over 500 students, 519, I believe, to be exact. And we had another goal that we had to have 336 students actually enrolled in training. And over the course of that time period, we surpassed that goal, and we actually had 375 students who enrolled in training. We had another goal of individuals actually completing training. So two separate goals that I'm proud of but you know, you say, well, why are those two separate goals?

Well, first of all, we do recognize that everyone who enrolls in training does not necessarily complete and the the area of cyber security is not necessarily an easy area to pursue so it can be challenging. You have to be dedicated to successfully complete. So we had a completed training goal that we would have 269 of those original 350 students to, to complete. Well, we exceeded that goal as well. And we actually had 301 students who actually completed training.

### **Anthony Caison**

Another goal that we had was we wanted so many students to actually obtain a credential. So you can complete training. But, you know, you can complete the training, but after that, you actually have to get your credential. So getting that cyber security program completed. There are several credentials along the way. You got your A plus certification, security plus certification, you know, also may get your comp T certification or Cisco certification. So how many students were we going to say to actually obtain the credential? Because as you obtain a credential that is also in essence and off ramp for students. So if a student gets that first credential of an A plus credential, then they theoretically can off ramp out of the program. Say well I have my A plus credential, I can go be a you know, help desk specialist somewhere because now I have that A plus credential. They also had they had the opportunities to come back and jump back on the ramp and get another credential. So it all depends on what a student or where a student is in their journey and what they're trying to do. But those students who completed their credential, we want to have a goal of 148 actually getting that credential, we surpassed that goal. And we had over 200, about 208 students who obtained a credential. And then our ultimate goal, which is the crème de la. And we'll have hot effectiveness this program really is who actually enter employment as a result of this program. So we've targeted 235 students to actually get employment. Now, this is the only metric that we did not surpass. And we just came shy of hitting that 235 and employment goal. But I can tell you now the reason we did not meet that goal, we actually had 229 students out of that 235 going into the employment, we do feel very strongly that we would have surpassed that had it not been for the pandemic that affected all of us in March. So we effectively got hit for the month of March, April, May, and June, which ended out the grant period. But with all of that, it's undoubtedly a very successful program one of our greatest success stories. There are multiple Tech Hire programs across the country. And our Tech Hire program has been repeatedly acknowledged by the Department of Labor who provided the funds for this grant has been repeatedly acknowledged as one of the best programs in the country because of the metrics that we were able to achieve. So we are very, very proud of that Tech Hire program.

### **Carlos McCormick**

And you should be and we were discussing this before the recording, and I actually got an opportunity to chat with one of the students that was in the Tech Hire program now works for Wake Tech in Help Desk and this young lady did a phenomenal job working with me, helping me with two issues, one with my laptop computer and one with my work desktop computer, and she said, a lot of that experience came from the Tech Hire. So you and your team should be well commended and be really grateful and thankful for this program.

### **Anthony Caison**

Yeah, that's right. We did talk about that before we went live. And I actually, that same student helped me out a couple of weeks ago. But the issue in my opinion, a pretty significant issue that I was having. I

had several emails that were going to my spam folder, and for the life of me, I could not figure out why I go in and I see emails I've missed from 2, 3, 4 weeks ago, and I didn't realize why my spam folder so it made me start checking my spam folder every day because I realized I was missing emails. So I made a call to our help desk and I did not know I was speaking to a former Tech Hire student, but I was singing her praises because of the great job that she did to help me out. I wish I had known I definitely have to give her a call back. But I wish I had known because that is a testament to, I think, the effectiveness of that program because she did an outstanding job with me so so I appreciate that.

**Carlos McCormick**

Yeah, we'll give Malaysia a shout out cuz she's a star already, but I know she is. So as we wrap things up, are there any final thoughts or takeaways that you would like the Wake Tech Community to know about? The Wake Tech faculty and staff here at the college you know about, what are some final thoughts that you would like, for for individuals to know about Workforce Continuing Education?

**Anthony Caison**

Well we're, you know, a vital part of the community, a vital part of workforce development. You know, which is why several years ago, we changed our name to Workforce Continuing Education. Just used to be Continuing Education, but we want to place the emphasis on what our true goal and mission is that we want to provide training and education so that individuals can enter into the workforce or go back into the workforce and be successful in their chosen career path. So just for everyone out there, you know, always keep us in mind. We have programs that we offer on a regular basis, but we're always looking for new opportunities for those programs that make sense for the community and our citizens. And please keep us in mind we have a fantastic staff of individuals who are dedicated and care very much for our students and seeing them successful. So just wanted to let you know that, you know, some people are not aware of the full breadth of what we do, but always keep us in mind because not only do we serve that route, but we can also assist individuals making that transition from non degree to a degree programs as well. So keep that in mind. We're an ecosystem of opportunities here at Wake Tech. And just want everyone to know that Workforce Continuing Education is a large part of the ecosystem.

**Carlos McCormick**

Thank you and understand why some people say Workforce Continuing Education at the various community colleges is the heartbeat. And what makes a college move from time to time, but you've done a wonderful job of articulating the expansive programs. If I want to find out more, individuals want to in the community want to find out more, where should they go to the website, you have social media? Talk to us.

**Anthony Caison**

Yeah, so individuals are going to go to [workforce.waketech.edu](http://workforce.waketech.edu), you can also go to [waketech.edu](http://waketech.edu), but the [workforce.waketech.edu](http://workforce.waketech.edu) will take you right to our page for more information on all of our programs, we have a digital course digest that you can open up and get a view of all of the programs that we offer and get course descriptions on what we're offering. And we're also on Twitter. That's [@waketechwce](https://twitter.com/waketechwce), [@waketechwce](https://twitter.com/waketechwce). And our social media plays a huge role in getting information out about our programs and events and our marketing department, communications and marketing. They rely heavily on social

media for getting out this information and promoting our program so highly suggest that you go to our website or hashtag and hey, go ahead and check us out on Twitter or our web page.

**Carlos McCormick**

VP Caison thank you again for joining us. And for our listeners, thank you for tuning in and being a part of this collaborative conversation with VP Caison, Workforce Continuing Education at Wake Technical Community College, and be on the lookout for the next Collaborative Conversations with Carlos episode.

**Carlos McCormick**

Thanks for listening to Collaborative Conversations with Carlos. If you like the show and you want to know more, be sure to visit us at [waketech.edu](http://waketech.edu). See you next time!