

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Good morning. Welcome again to another edition of Let's Talk Ed with Professor Chris. I'm always excited when I do this. I have the opportunity to interview people to kind of help students with more information they could get to kind of go through college.

Today, we're gonna be talking about Work-Based Learning. You'll be seeing an interview we did on apprenticeships, entrepreneurship and this is Work-Based Learning. Any opportunity we get, we'll provide to you. So, please, if you haven't subscribed, please do so. Help me in welcoming Miss Kathy [Frederick].

FREDERICK: Good morning, Chris. Thank you for having me here today.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: It is my pleasure. How are you doing?

FREDERICK: Doing really well.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: That's good. So, let's start. This is a question that I, I always kind of want to surprise my guests with, but it's not a trick question, but it's always just kind of an ice breaker. So, tell us a little bit about how your whole career perhaps started, but, most importantly, now that you're in Work-Based Learning, is that what you've always envisioned doing.

FREDERICK: OK, great question to start off. Believe it or not, after I graduated from college a few years ago, I was actually a high school teacher and decided that my passion was really helping people find their career pathways. And I wasn't able to devote as much time as I wanted to just being a classroom teacher. So, I went back, got a master's degree at wonderful East Carolina University, did a practicum in a community college in Wilmington and said, "Wow, this is phenomenal. I'm helping people see where they can be in the future with a career path."

So, after that, finished that degree, I actually worked in South Carolina for a few years at Coastal Carolina University, University of South Carolina's Honors College and a technical community college. And throughout that whole time, got to work with young adults and adults in kind of finding their career pathways and then wound up back in North Carolina here at Wake Tech. I started off as an advisor and Student Services and then transition to the role that I have now as director of Work-Based Learning, which is definitely my passion, helping people see where they can envision a future career and helping them to get there.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Great. Would you say this is the best opportunity you've had so far? And it's not because you're Work-Based Learning, but I want you to be honest. Great journey that you've taken, right now Work-Based Learning, which of all those journeys was your favorite?

FREDERICK: I would have to say this one probably is now because there is just such a clear correlation between students getting out, going to work, being able to see where they're going to be when they graduate from Wake Tech, and the excitement for those students who get those jobs. And then, at the

end of the semester, getting that feedback that says, “Wow, this was so important to help me affirm my career choice, get experience and see that I will be able to be successful in my career field.”

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: OK, that's great. So, I don't know anything about Work-Based Learning, and I intentionally didn't want to research anything about Work-Based Learning so I, I will be on the same level just like my students who need information about Work-Based Learning. So, let's start with that. What is Work-Based Learning?

FREDERICK: Work-Based Learning at Wake Tech is a way for students in our associate in applied science degree programs to get out, get real-world work experience while they can earn elective credit toward their graduation requirements. And in a majority of the cases, they are being paid by an employer, so that gives them extra income to apply toward their college expenses.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: OK, very well said – nice and brief. That's good. So, from what you just told me, getting paid, working, I'm looking at this as more of an internship. How different is it?

FREDERICK: Correct. Work-Based Learning, you could think of as cooperative education because there is eligibility criteria that our students must meet in order to go out and participate. That's not always the case in an internship. So, they meet our eligibility criteria, find employment. They are able to work with an employer, and I mentioned getting that elective credit toward their graduation requirements, which you don't always get in an internship experience and getting paid, and not all internships are paid. So, it's more truly a cooperative education experience.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: So, I'm smiling because I just remembered when I, I reached out to you to see if we could do this interview, and when you responded, you're like, “Chris, I just want you to know Work-Based Learning is not for your transfer students.

FREDERICK: Correct.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: And I think that's very interesting and was like, “Yeah, I think I knew that.” So, why isn't it for transfer students?

FREDERICK: Good question. Good question. One simple and basic answer is because it's not in their program of study. It's not a transferable credit to our four-year partners. But more importantly, I think any student who is in our university transfer program would want to get to that four-year institution, take some of their upper-level courses and then work with the Career Services office at that four-year institution to get an internship, to do a coop program because they're gonna find that they can really help them connect sometimes with alumni of the college to get them really great experiences that are relevant to their four-year degree program. And unfortunately, when they're here at Wake Tech, they're taking those Gen Ed classes, or general education classes, and they haven't really delved into the courses in their degree.