We Are Wake Tech Podcast – Episode 16: Nicole Reaves

INTRODUCTION
Welcome to the We are Wake Tech podcast with your host, Wake Tech President, Dr. Scott Ralls.

SCOTT RALLS: Hello, I'm Scott Ralls, and this is the We Are Wake Tech podcast.

If you're viewing this on YouTube, you notice a little difference this month because we're side-by-side with my guest Dr. Nicole Reeves, the Executive Vice President and Chief Program Officer here at Wake Tech.

And we're excited to hear about all that this happening at Wake Tech and a lot of it falls within Nicole's purview.

So she's got a lot to talk about in the next minutes.

But before we begin, let's start as we normally do by hearing a little bit about Dr. Nicole Reeves and your journey to Wake Tech.

Well, that isn't your first time to Wake Tech, and you have a unique journey.

So welcome, Nicole. Thank you for being at Wake Tech. Thank you for being on this month podcast.

Tell us a little bit… How did you get to Wake Tech the first time and then… Now the second time in our in the role as our Executive Vice President .

NICOLE REAVES: So, thank you for the invitation, Dr. Ralls looks, it's great to be with you here today.

So you're right, I am not new to Wake Tech. New to my role here as the Executive Vice President of programs.

I got my start right here at Wake Tech 14 years ago. I worked in what was then called the Adult Basic Skills program for 9 years. I think they now call it College and Career Readiness.

And so worked as an adjunct instructor there for 9 years and got my start right here, so that in the 14 years since I've been gone from Wake Tech and at the the college… I I did leave the state of North Carolina completely.

And so in the the 14 years I I tell everyone that I was in a deep freeze for ten of those those years. I was in a Western Pennsylvania for six years in Chicago for four years.

And so I served in various administrative positions in, in those places, but and Western Pennsylvania, I

served in a very rural, very small Community College in a rural setting there I was the Associate Vice President of Programs there.

My primary role was institutional research and effectiveness. And then I was promoted to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

And so then I left there and went to Chicago for for four years.

Yeah, So I've seen more snow in both those places than I've seen in my lifetime coming from North Carolina.

So moved there worked at a very large Community College in an urban setting and was the Vice President for Academic Affairs there.

I left there, moved to Northern Virginia, worked at NOVA is the Provost of the Medical Education Campus, and now I am back home.

Back home here at Wake Tech and when I I left the the college, that was one campus, Southern. One Wake Take campus.

Yeah.

And Southern and Adult Basic… Uh, I think it's Adult Education Center is what we called it off of Capital Blvd.

So Fast forward… lots of growth that's happened here. The college… 10 locations and and counting and so a lot of amazing things going on here and growth so glad to be back home.

So that's been my journey.

SCOTT RALLS: Well we're glad to have you. You've had a unique journey. One thing I always like to note about you and your journey back to Wake Tech is I often say that Wake Tech is America's most comprehensive opportunity college because we do a lot of things that other community colleges don't do with you've been in the kinds of roles at other community colleges too.

Vice President of Academic Affairs so institutional effectiveness in terms of all the research in the planning but you've also been on the workforce side because with the medical campus you've also very uniquely been involved in that aspect for us which is so big it's those but we call Career College Promise now… Career College Readiness, excuse me, and the the Basic Skills and the Literacy program.

So you had a chance to see all aspects of Wake Tech in different roles and it's coming back and you could probably uniquely grasp how comprehensive we are.

NICOLE REAVES: Absolutely. Um, I'm not sure if I've been in any other place that's that is as comprehensive as as Wake Tech.

Uh, we start with adult basic skills and then we could we go into, you know, I always say wherever the

students are coming and going is where you should support them and also form partnerships.

So we start from high school and you always say it through college and then you come through Wake Tech and then we have the partnerships and that's our strength and we we take the students as far as they wanna go after completion to jobs.

And I think that's what's the most important after completion and getting students to family sustaining careers.

SCOTT RALLS: You said that's snippet of our all-time mission… take students where they are carrying them as far as they can go and it's it's a unique place which I know you understand so well having started here and now coming home here.

So we're excited to have you here at home.

I want to mention one thing too. You you were one of two Executive Vice Presidents.

So for the the folks out there who wouldn't know or have a reason to care how we're structured, but we have an executive leadership team made up of our vice presidents, but there's two executive vice presidents, you're Executive Vice President and Chief Program Officer.

So we're kind of walk through all those different programs, but you also share the Executive Vice President role with Doctor Gayle Greene, who's been here for a long time, and she she oversees all our operations, she's our Chief Operations Officer.

But one thing that makes you both unique but in in, in addition to your love for Wake Tech and Community College students… Is you both have uniquely been a part of the Aspen Series, the leadership series, which is probably the most significant national leadership preparation program for Community College executives and it's rather unique to have two executive VP's who have been through that program.

Can you tell folks a little bit about that because you and Gayle have been kind of a part of the original groups with the well, you were the more recent group. Gayle was in the original group with the Aspen.

So, tell us what that is, because I think that's unique.

NICOLE REAVES: So I just finished the Aspen Institute Institute for Aspired Presidents.

And really, it's just a those individuals that are interested in moving into and and I have to decide whether I wanna move into the Presidency, or not.

But supporting and equipping us with the tools that you know we need and the information to be transformative leaders, you know, that's so important in higher education, is being a transformative leader.

Transformation is important to any institution and it's not easy. Change is not easy for institutions or transformation, but but we understand that if we don't transform ourselves or reinvent ourselves, that will be left behind.

And so Aspen has got to sit at the feet of a lot of former presidents that were transformative leaders and to just kind of you pick their brains, find out, just kind of what they did to transfer their institutions.

How they managed change, which is not easy. We just got a lot of great tools to, you know, if I don't decide to move into leadership, just how to manage change and how to manage transformation, which is so important.

So.

SCOTT RALLS: Yeah, that's that was not around when I came along.

I'm a little older than most others out there now at least have been around a long time, but I feel fortunate that to work with two executive vice presidents who have been part of that Aspen cohort series. Because it's not easy to be a part of that.

And that's where a lot of our national leaders and community colleges are coming from these days.

So congratulations to you as well as to Dr. Green.

Um, you know… before we kind of dig in a little bit to the areas that you work with specifically and there's four areas. I kind of want to talk a little bit about this month because we're in May and May is… for community colleges… And I guess for most colleges, that's the biggest month because of this is graduation month.

And can you talk a little bit about what graduation means in a place like Wake Tech.

NICOLE REAVES: So graduation, best day of the year, I think. It's a culmination of all of the the sacrifice, the time and effort, the work that students have put into to get to where they are with graduation and and so for our students and many of our students, you know, this Dr. Ralls are what we call minoritized students.

They come from backgrounds, such as first-generation college students, students of color, adult learners… Low-income students.

SCOTT RALLS: Sometimes called non-traditional students.

NICOLE REAVES: Non-traditional students… Post-traditional students. And so a lot of our students are juggling work, family and school and so they've made quite a sacrifice to get to, to graduation and so graduation is pretty significant for our students.

And then I always say after graduation, how can we support? Because completion is not enough, but how do we get students if we want to transform their lives to family sustaining and living careers?

But graduation is a start. But like I said, best day of the year and they definitely made a sacrifice… Many of our students to get there.

SCOTT RALLS: And it is… It's a wonderful day.

I tell you, the thing at graduation that always catches me and I think it's a little unique to Community College graduations because we have so many non-traditional students, many students who are parents, and every once in a while at graduation… You now, it's almost every graduation someone walks across the stage, you know, here a little voice from the audience and goes “way to go, Mom, way to go dad.” And that’s the part that kind of catches me still.

NICOLE REAVES: Yeah.

I've been through a lot of graduations, but it does those moments of inspiration just give you some, you know, you're proud to be a part of something where people can achieve and find their voice and find their empowerment and move forward and take on things they never imagined. And that's why this month so special.

NICOLE REAVES: Absolutely. I always say best day of the year. Yeah.

SCOTT RALLS: Yeah, absolutely.

Alright, let’s dig in a little bit more… because you have quite a portfolio here at Wake Tech, so there's four big areas.

Why don’t we go through those and maybe you tell us a little bit about you know what, what is what happens to that.

But what's also happening in there that that you're kind of, you know excited about right now then we're going to talk a little bit at the end about some of our our strategies for the future… What's happening?

Because you're you're a huge part of that. But let's talk about, you know, where we are now.

So one of the big areas, you know, we talked about graduation, many of our students who we have lots of graduations here, but a lot of our students are graduating from degrees and they're part of our academic services, our curriculum services area.

And so that's that's a lot of our students. Talk a little bit, if you will tell us what that's about and stuff that's going on there that you're excited about.

NICOLE REAVES: Alright. So we have… So I have a huge… you just shared, Dr. Ralls, portfolio that includes Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Institutional Effectiveness and Innovation, and Workforce and Continuing Education. And many of those areas are directly involved in the success of our students.

And so, um, starting with academic side of the house and I'm, I'm sure you're gonna get into the Reach 'N Rally strategic plan…

SCOTT RALLS: We'll get there. We'll get there.

NICOLE REAVES: Because that's a huge part of my responsibility there. But that includes all of our degree programs here, both credit and you know, associates degrees and certificates.

And one of the, I guess, most salient things that I could share that it's going on on that side of the house are, you know, you're always called ladder economics and career ladders.

And so we are working to ensure that our students have a a path that they understand when they come through the door from the time they get here to the time they're ready to graduate and beyond, to to careers… what that path is.

A lot of our students don't have time to waste and we wanna make sure that they know clearly where they're going when they come through the door.

So what we are doing is we are integrating, we're have this one college approach with career ladders where we're integrating the non-degree side of the house and the degree side the house. Students don't know the difference.

We make the difference. So, we had this whole one-college approach with the career ladders where when students come through… many of our students, especially in this pandemic, are looking for short short-term training and they just wanna go to work.

But if they decide they wanna come back, they don't lose any credit. They can continue.

We can articulate those credits to the degree side of the house and they can continue on to pursue an associate's degree and again move on to family sustaining careers.

We also in this ladder economics, we wanna make sure that students understand what they're getting into as far as their their paths, the the ROI, what is the return on investment.

We understand this is it also important, because if they're spending the time and effort and sometimes

the money, you know, what is the return? What can they earn once they graduate from Wake Tech?

So career ladders… ladder economics is kind of what we're up to on the academic side of the house.

SCOTT RALLS: Yeah, well, I know to… we're still working towards it, but.

NICOLE REAVES: Yes.

SCOTT RALLS: Work going on in terms of called career mapping where you could actually tie… I get to this place… Here's what it means in this region…

NICOLE REAVES: Right, absolutely.

SCOTT RALLS: In terms of what you can make. So that that's kind of new for here.

NICOLE REAVES: Yeah, part of that a part of the ROI and the return on investment that and that's gonna be a part of of this whole ladder economics and that's gonna be ongoing because that's something that's gonna continuously change.

And we're gonna make sure that we update and that we keep, you know, students informed about where they're going and they can make.

SCOTT RALLS: One thing about that, too... I wanted to ask you about that I think is very unique for Wake Tech.

Uh, and and a lot of great work in this area is the…. So as I will sometimes say we're through college.

GPS students come through after go directly to work or go to a university, and our degrees are kind of set up that way.

About half of them are designed around straight transfer, so you know… into our universities.

Others are designed more around work. but here at Wake Tech there's an approach that's… doesn't have to be an either or… that so many of our… what are called our applied degrees… those that are kind of driven more by the employers in the universities in terms of how they're structured.

Wake Tech has kind of taken some unique approaches and linking them to next steps with universities.

Can you talk a little bit about what that’s about?

NICOLE REAVES: So, we have a very strong transfer… um pathway.

We have articulation agreements with four-year partners here. The UNC system, private institutions, independent colleges.

And this is with our AAS degrees. Our AA degrees, AFA degrees, AE degrees and we also will do it that we have those articulation agreements with our applied degrees.

SCOTT RALLS: That weren't really meant to transfer.

NICOLE REAVES: Right. Absolutely.

So we have a very, I guess we'll say… ECU I I comes to mind is a strong example of of a partnership where our students can get a bachelor's degree in industrial, uh, technology, uh. And they don't even have to set foot on the campus in Greenville.

And we talked about the students that we serve here and many of them don't have the luxury of sitting on a pristine college campus and getting a degree because they are juggling work and school and family so they can get… There's a Co-location right here, with ECU and Wake Tech and our program and students can get the Associates degree.

It will articulate the degree at ECU, and they will have a bachelor's degree upon finishing the requirements for that program.

SCOTT RALLS: So you mentioned, so the other another area and we'll get to all four here, just a little bit… is the workforce part.

And so that fills with a place where you see coming together and we talk about one college where well, I don't, I don't know if anybody have any non-degree offerings as Wake Tech Community College ever seen so many?

NICOLE REAVES: I have not. And I asked do we sleep here at Wake Tech?

Because I've been here about 10 months and I'm still learning about the new programs and something new every day, right?

So a lot of amazing things. And you're exactly right about the programs and the offerings.

SCOTT RALLS: Yeah, that's… if you want to… study it or not really study it. If you want to learn how to do it, get a job in it and it's here and it's here and then connected to the next thing.

But there are other parts of workforce beyond just the short-term course as well.

What else is happening in the the workforce area that is led by uh Anthony Cason and the theme over there?

NICOLE REAVES: So, in workforce right now, I think the the biggest thing is also working.

They are also working with the going back to the career ladders and the one-college approach and

making sure that those programs articulate to our associates degree programs.

So I I really do think that that's huge.

I would also say apprenticeships… that's huge… right now.

And for our students, that's so important because. If I don't know where my next meal is coming from or where I'm gonna lay my head, then I am probably not gonna come back to school.

So even if you pay for my tuition and it was free, if if I don't have a job, I don't know where my next meal is coming from… I'm experience of food insecurity, housing insecurity… I can't call the school.

So, I think apprenticeships are, you know, removes those barriers because students can earn while they learn here.

And so we are working to increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities for our students and not just the ones they do you think of in the trades, but in IT and healthcare.

So, I think that's huge right now for workforce.

SCOTT RALLS: The one thing I I'd love to see in the is that career services area where, you know, what they're doing to connect our students to internships, to job opportunities to, you know, apprenticeship and other workforce opportunities. Great team, right there.

NICOLE REAVES: Absolutely, they're a great team. They help with, you know, which is so important coming through the door from the time they get here with career exploration and making sure it's the right path because with many of our students, they really don't know.

They haven't been exposed to many of the pathways here, and so it's really what they're exposed to on their block or this is what my Mama says is the right thing to do.

And maybe that's not the best pathway as far as the ROI or maybe it's just not a good fit period.

So they do a great job with the correct exploration piece and also beyond connecting, as you said

This should fit our students who live, internship opportunities and job opportunities.

SCOTT RALLS: Yeah. It’s an important work, and they're doing great work.

So now we've only covered half of your areas… but big half because those were really all the the courses.

But it's not just about the courses that are here, so attainment, enrollment and student services.

So tell us, what is enrollment and student services and what are they up to?

NICOLE REAVES: So, uh, they're huge and I they really play an important part in student success as well in offering services to retain our students and to get them through to completion.

So, so many things going on over there, but the two most salient, I would say, are the advising redesign that's part of our strategic plan and we're we're moving as a college...

SCOTT RALLS: So, for someone just tuning in, what is advising? What is that?

NICOLE REAVES: So advising… You know in different places it can mean different things, but really it's about… um making sure that students are on the right path for one number one and the onboarding and coming through the door and making sure that they have the resources that they need to to get a good leg up and to to complete.

So they don't have mandatory orientations and making sure that students are onboarded and then they sit down and help them with academic planning and they making sure they're on the right path.

And then schedule it. Scheduling those courses around their academic plan, so they're they're just their mentors and we've got what we call also success coaches that are there.

That's also are they're not advisors, but they're a part of this student affairs student services side of the house.

And they're also there to help students navigate college in and referring them to resources and doing outreach, proactive outreach to make sure that students are on the right track.

So advising, um is just so important to to the the retention. Non-academic barriers.

If there are some non-academic barriers which can also derail our students faster than the academic side of the house, they are there to refer them to in the Care Center… That's what I was gonna share.

But I'm gonna share that… Wait..

SCOTT RALLS: Oaky, save it for later.

NICOLE REAVES: But but the academic redesign… so that just giving you an idea of what advising, uh…

What is involved in it? Advising here.

But what the redesign here we're looking at how to reimagine this and better serve our students.

And so that's really what we're up to right now with on the student services side of the house.

And so, with this reimagining of the advising redesign, we are looking at a what I always call, um… almost like in healthcare.

SCOTT RALLS: You know healthcare pretty well.

NICOLE REAVES: I know healthcare, so I I can use that analogy almost because when you go into the hospital now, it's always a team that that is working with you.

It's not just the doctor, it's the nurses. It's the… If there's a respiratory therapist that you need to even down to social worker, so it's a team approach, a holistic approach when, um… Trying to to serve the patients in, in the health care setting.

So that's what we're doing here at the college. It's more of a team approach.

What we call care team, case management or management approach, I don't think they want us to call that, call it that. But it's a case management light. I will call it that, then.

But you have a team, you have an advisor, you have the faculty, you have… If it's veterans affairs or disability services, they are all working together and a holistic way to to service you.

So this is the part of the the redesign.

SCOTT RALLS: So in other words, don't let me put words in your mouth… but it sounds like… if you look at… the design difference is… rather than knowing where to go… if I am a student I'll know that I have a team, right?

NICOLE REAVES: And this team will be with you from the time you come through the door until you graduate.

This is not a handoff, which is what we're doing right now with… to faculty. So this team will be with you from beginning to end.

SCOTT RALLS: Now, that's pretty complicated.

NICOLE REAVES: Yeah, it is. That's… so that's that's what they're up to.

So we are just an update their… we have this just this past semester where piloting this approach with

engineering and so we're going to start with them first and see what works and what we might need to to tweak and and move forward.

And then we're going to roll this out and scale this to a few other programs in, in the fall, so…

SCOTT RALLS: All right, and still, we've got a whole nother area, which is that's a that's a big name to it.

So it doesn't. You know, it's hard to know exactly what everybody's doing, but doing a lot of great work, innovation and effectiveness.

NICOLE REAVES: So yeah, they've got quite a bit with effectiveness period. We know that's about continuous quality improvement… and research and data.

And sharing data to inform the strategies… our practices.

I I think the largest part of what they're doing is leading the Reach and Rally strategic plan.

They've been working closely with me on that and they've got a few initiatives that they are are leading like Finish First, which is an initiative where we've got a few students that got credits here, but they either have stopped out and we're trying to get them back.

We're doing outreach to try to get them to finish or either they have enough credits to finish and so we are informing them that you have credits come in and and you know complete.

And so Finish First, they have been extremely busy and, you know, we started Finish First right here at Wake Tech and we are leading the way and so we are supporting the other 58 community colleges in Finish First and so that's that's a huge part of what they're up to here at the college and institutional effectiveness

SCOTT RALLS: It's example of innovation 'cause it was a Wake Tech innovation

NICOLE REAVES: Right.

SCOTT RALLS: Here.

NICOLE REAVES: Right.

SCOTT RALLS: Using data science. And I'll have to speak up, the ice machines going over there. So we'll keep

NICOLE REAVES: Yeah, okay. Exactly.

SCOTT RALLS: So it would start here, as a kernel of a Wake Tech innovation. Became a statewide implementation, and now it's becoming a national model.

I was just a interviewed recently about what colleges are doing and they were focused on Finish First and that team's led our online education, which has been so huge recently and grants as well.

We've had a lot of great grants.

NICOLE REAVES: Lots of grants coming out of there.

SCOTT RALLS: National Science Foundation.

NICOLE REAVES: That's one of the stars gonna say start. Ohh the STEM where we're getting more students into undergraduate research in STEM and the largest NSF grant ever for the college and institutional effectiveness and innovation supported that, yeah, so they're busy busy.

SCOTT RALLS: Yeah, and it getting a lot of great… excuse me, a lot of great accomplishments here at Wake Tech.

NICOLE REAVES: Right.

SCOTT RALLS: Well that's a great thing.

I know you must feel… You know when you're new, it's nice to know that you've got a lot of…

NICOLE REAVES: Yeah.

SCOTT RALLS: Strong folks who were been doing great things here at Wake Tech.

NICOLE REAVES: A lot of strong people and and your team matters.

SCOTT RALLS: Yeah.

NICOLE REAVES: And so I've got a great team.

SCOTT RALLS: Well, the people make the plays, for sure

NICOLE REAVES: That's right, absolutely.

SCOTT RALLS: Well, you know, so we got a lot of great things going on, but we're strategizing.

We're planning for the future.

We've gone through a process… actually most of the the planning part took place before you got here, but now you're the one that helped us make sure we don't just have paper that said, what we hope to do… that we're doing what we said to make even greater difference than that's what we call, we call Reach and Rally.

Now that you're, I guess the Chief Rally-er for Reach and Rally.

What does… What do you think Reach and Rally means for the future at Wake Tech?

NICOLE REAVES: Right. So the Reach and Rally strategic plan that you shared was already developed before I got here.

I think that you might have that waiting for me to get here because we began implementation in July.

That was when I…

SCOTT RALLS: It was good timing.

NICOLE REAVES: Yeah, good timing.

So I kind of hit the ground running with the team on that and I just have to say kudos to Carrie Bartek and her team for assisting me.

Because a large part of my role is leading assisting leading the implementation of the Reach and Rally plan and that's where we are right now.

We are in the we started officially in July, so we're in the implementation fees and so about a year now into this plan.

And so we've got six goals of that plan and you know it's aligns with Aspen Institute goals of you know, student completion, labor market, equity, transfer.

And so think, I really think that this plan is one. I read it before I got here. It was sent to me. It's one that is student centered.

It meets the students where they are, especially with the whole focus on equitable assets and equitable outcomes.

And so, you know, we are, as I shared in the midst of, I think transforming the institution so that it better serves the students here.

So I've shared some of the high level initiatives that we are up to with, you know, going through the different programs.

But right now, just going back, advising redesign is is huge.

That's a part of our strategic plan and what we're up to and moving the needle.

SCOTT RALLS: You said something about Care Centers earlier.

NICOLE REAVES: The Care Center. That's also part of Reach and Rally, and that's been set up and this is going back to supporting students in their non-academic, you know, the barriers that they face here.

And so the Care Center is, like I said, a part of the plan to support students in, you know, getting them the resources if it's… in this climate, I can't afford gas right now.

We just supported a student in the Health Sciences program, for example, who couldn't get to afford gas to get their clinical sites.

So we were able to, through the Emergency Aid Fund, that's through the Care Center to get them gas cards so that they can continue on in their degree… laptops if they need laptops.

And the Success Coaches are all part of the Care Center.

Just anything that we could do to remove those barriers, pathways, scholars and that's the new name.

But Minority Male Mentoring it's there and creating we know this… this whole, yeah, culture of caring, that sense of belonging, that's that's half of the battle.

So we can connect students… engage students. That's what's happening. That's what's going on through the Care Center.

Another and example of what's going on with strategic plan is CETL.

SCOTT RALLS: Oh yeah. Yeah.

NICOLE REAVES: CETL is is Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

And so those individuals that are leading CETL… Jimmy Smith, LeTonya Green and Marcia Toms, they have hit the ground running with CETL.

SCOTT RALLS: And that's providing these forces for our faculty so they can share with each other the best ways to teach our students, right?

NICOLE REAVES: Absolutely.

And so they have come up with what they call a CORE framework to professional development for faculty. With so many acronyms let's see if I can give this right… Caring. Organized. Equitable… PD.

So all of the PD will come from

SCOTT RALLS: Professional Development.

NICOLE REAVES: This framework that they've set up and so they had just… maybe a month ago… really great PD day and so they are, uh, working to make sure that faculty are equipped with the training and the tools that they need to support teaching and learning here at the College.

SCOTT RALLS: A lot going on.

NICOLE REAVES: A lot going on.

SCOTT RALLS: I like to say to, with the strategic plan. This is not about a different Wake Tech, it's just Wake Tech being even more Wake Tech than ever before.

NICOLE REAVES: Right.

SCOTT RALLS: How can we maximize our impact for our students in our community?

NICOLE REAVES: Right.

SCOTT RALLS: That's really what Reach and Rally is about.

NICOLE REAVES: That's what Reach and Rally is about, meeting the students where they are and taking them as far as they wanna go.

SCOTT RALLS: Part of Reach and Rally too, and you're leading this effort, has been our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council, and I know they've been doing a lot of work which… share with us a little bit about the work that you're doing with that team.

NICOLE REAVES: So that was one of the most salient strategies under equitable outcomes or access. I'm not sure if I got that one right, but one of the most salient strategies in the plan it was to establish a DEI a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council.

And so we've done that just that and we have 20 committed faculty, staff and students that will be leading the DEI efforts for the college.

And they have hit the ground running and listening… I say that and they have five priorities that have come out of their work with Reach and Rally and developing that plan.

And so just some of the two, two things that that most salient priorities right now is a campus climate survey that will be administered in the fall.

And this will be administered to faculty, staff and students.

And just better understanding how faculty, staff and students interact with the campus. Ensuring that the environment in which they experience is one that is welcoming and inclusive.

And where everyone feels valued and respected, and so we'll use a lot of this data to inform the DEI strategic direction for the college.

So that will be rolled out in the Fall. So that's gonna be huge in informing where we're going.

And then, uh, I would share another initiative that's going to be rolled out in the Fall, is diversifying our faculty and staff here.

And so when we look at our, our, our data, uh, and disaggregated as far as our faculty is concerned by race and ethnicity, faculty of color are significantly underrepresented.

So we'll be working with HR.

SCOTT RALLS: And it's not across the college, but in certain parts of the college.

NICOLE REAVES: In certain parts of the college, right.

So we'll be working with HR on this initiative and we'll start with STEM first… faculty.

So any existing faculty member or staff member that wants to go into STEM teaching, we will pay for their tuition and support them, getting a degree.

SCOTT RALLS: Well, you've got a lot going on and in a short amount of time.

So what do you like to do when you're not working all the time? Because you work all the time.

NICOLE REAVES: I do. I work often.

So what do I like to do? I like working out. I like camping and no one… people look at me and say you don't like camping, so I've gotta find…

SCOTT RALLS; Well you just don't give the camping vibe.

NICOLE REAVES: I don't. I know I don't. I've gotta find some some good camping sites.

SCOTT RALLS: It's not that campers aren't professional, you don't come in with your flannels or anything.

NICOLE REAVES: No, I don't do that.

So, but if you have any suggestions for good site.

SCOTT RALLS: I'm not the guy to ask about camping, but I know some of my friends that do.

NICOLE REAVES: So I like to do that and traveling.

So I had a trip scheduled for Italy right before the pandemic hit. And, you know, Italy was a hot spot early on, so I couldn't make that.

So I have my Italy trip rescheduled for...

SCOTT RALLS: Knocking on wood.

NICOLE REAVES: Yeah, hopefully I'll get the there for this this summer.

SCOTT RALLS: Yeah. Alright. Well, we have… yeah, that'll… that'll be great, uh… actually that was a family trip for me right before the pandemic, and now I I loved it.

NICOLE REAVES: Yeah, I am looking forward to it.

SCOTT RALLS: And… eat the pizza in Florence.

NICOLE REAVES: Okay, I will.

SCOTT RALLS: If you get to Florence.

Gosh, have fun and you know, again, this is, uh, that time of the year when we wrapped up one year, we have our summer school.

So if you haven't signed up for summer yet, sign up for the second session of summer school and we're looking forward to a big Fall. Lots of exciting things happening this fall.

Nicole's kind of run through all the areas that work with her to make sure that our students succeed.

And when our students succeed, our community succeeds.

NICOLE REAVES: Absolutely.

SCOTT RALLS: Nicole, where we're so glad that you're here… To help us make sure that everybody

succeeds, and everybody has opportunity in Wake County through Wake Tech. Wake Tech is a through college.

Have your… find your opportunities through Wake Tech and thank you for leading us in those areas… efforts.

So again, this has been a a great podcast and I am Scott Rolls and this has been the We are Wake Tech podcast with our guest here in the month of May., Dr Nicole Reeves, Executive vice president of programs.

Thank you.

And we'll talk to you next month.

Laurie Clowers with the latest Wake Tech news.

Congratulations are in order for more than 1700 hardworking Wake Tech graduates.

The college held its first in-person graduation ceremony earlier this month.

About half the graduates will transfer to a university to pursue a bachelor's degree, while others will go straight into the job market and high demand technical fields. Among the graduates are 63 nurses joining the health care workforce.

One IT graduate, was just elected for a prestigious US State Department Fellowship.

Chad Peterson earned an associate degree in computer programming and will receive up to $75,000, to pursue a bachelor's degree at North Carolina A&T University.

Wake Tech has signed a new partnership agreement with Gardner Webb University.

This will allow graduates to transfer in 10 technical programs to pursue a bachelors degree.

Wake Tech Bakers Row was a hit recently. This is a popular end of semester project where students in baking and pastry arts sell their original desserts, pastries and other goodies at the Scott Northern Wake Campus.

Two Wake Tech students from Ukraine are collecting humanitarian aid for families in their homeland, Anastasia Lukecha and Anna Lehaieva are pursuing degrees in architectural technology and are leading the service project on behalf of the Wake Tech chapter of the American Institute of Architecture Students.

Congressman David Price joined Wake Tech president Dr.Scott Ralls and Durham Tech President JB Buxton and celebrating $102,000,000 in funding to support RTP Bio.

The program is a collaborative partnership between the two colleges to help prepare a skilled workforce for the growing biotech industry in the triangle.

Global financial firm Credit Suisse has announced a $100,000 gift to support scholarships, equipment and technology for IT and other STEM programs.

The company also announced the development of IT Apprenticeships for Wake Tech students. In recognition of its support, the auditorium in Building 1 on the RTP campus will be called the Credit Suisse Auditorium.

And finally, in honor of national Small Business Week, local entrepreneurs were awarded valuable seed money to help get their businesses off the ground.

The Main Street Accelerated pitch competition was made possible by Wake Tech Foundation Board member Mike Conlin, the grand prize winner Raven Edwards, took home $20,000 for her business, Craven Juice… sounds good.

And that's your Wake Tech News update.

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Hi, I'm Olivia, and this is Allie, and we're students with the Wake Tech dental hygiene clinic.

And we're just here today to talk to you a few minutes about some ways that you can improve your oral health at home.

We first wanted to start out by saying we think most people know it's very important to brush and floss every day regularly, but a little bit about why it's important to brush and floss.

When food and sugars get stuck in your teeth… That's not actually what decays your teeth, it's really the bacteria in your mouth that use those foods and sugars to produce acid, which actually decay your teeth.

So that's why it's really important to get all the food and sugars off of your teeth.

So it's not always practical or possible to brush and flush your teeth after every meal, but the best thing that you can do in those instances is to at least rinse your mouth out with water, because that will remove a lot of those sugars and foods that the bacteria is used for decay.

And when we want to show you a couple of tips about actually brushing and flossing the correct way.

So my friend Ali is going to do a quick little demo and I'm going to describe what she's doing.

So when you brush your teeth, what you really would like to do is aim the toothbrush bristles into the gum line of your tooth and give it a good scrub back and forth.

Kind of wiggle it around and then sweep it down to the bottom of your teeth. That way you're brushing the bacteria off of your teeth.

And we're going to go to each section of the mouth, and it's really good if you can establish a pattern of brushing.

So that way you ensure reaching all areas of your mouth.

OK, Allie and now we're going to move to flossing.

Flossing is very important to get the food and the bacteria out from between your teeth.

So we want to get a nice long piece of floss. Wrap it around your fingers and then you wanna slide it gently between your teeth and kind of hug your tooth… Make a C-shape up and down the tooth and that's going to dislodge all this bacteria and food from between your teeth.

And then as you move from tooth-to-tooth from section-to-section, you want to get a clean piece of floss each time, so you're not introducing those bacteria into new spaces?

Great. Thanks, Allie. And another important thing that a lot of people may not think about is how important fluoride is for our teeth.

When those bacteria eat the foods and the sugars on our teeth, they produce acid and acid is what actually causes the decay.

So what we want to do is combat that decay and fluoride is the best way to do that.

So, through toothpaste, mouthwashes, and particularly when you go get your teeth cleaned with your dentist or here at the Wake Tech dental hygiene clinic, your hygienist can apply fluoride to your teeth that will help rebuilt those areas where decay could happen.

And you can always come to the Wake Tech dental hygiene clinic if you're interested in a dental cleaning.

You can find information on the Wake Tech website.

Just search for dental hygiene clinic.

You can also call our clinic at 919-747-0126 for more information.

And we see patients… It takes around 3 or 4 appointments for a full cleaning, but the cost is quite low compared to a private dental practice, so it's a little trade off, but it's well worth it because you get a wonderful cleaning by very, very well prepared students.

So I hope that helps everyone have a little bit better idea of how to take care of their teeth at home.

Thank you for listening to the We are Wake Tech podcast.

Join us next month for more insightful conversations about the programs and people of Wake Tech and how the college changes lives every day.

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