We Are Wake Tech Podcast – Episode 21: Health Sciences Campus Expansion

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

SCOTT RALLS: Hello, and welcome to the We Are Wake Tech podcast. I'm your host, Scott Ralls, president of Wake Tech. And it is a beautiful October day today at Wake Tech. I'm on the campus of the Perry Health Sciences Campus during National Health Education Week. So, this is a big week at Wake Tech, a big week at our Perry Health Sciences Campus, and who should we talk to this month? It has to be our leader for health care programs, Dr. Angela Ballentine. Angela, welcome to the We Are Wake Tech podcast.

ANGELA BALLENTINE: Thank you very much. Thanks for having me.

RALLS: Absolutely. We're, we're excited having you on the podcast. We're excited you're here at Wake Tech, and, you know, before we get into, we're gonna talk about just the exciting things happening with health care and, and things. You just wouldn't imagine how big this campus is, how many programs there are. But first, we want to learn a little more about Dr. Angela Ballentine, who has quite a history in community colleges. I think we were probably 10 years old when we met, when we were, like, little community college people. But I've known Angela forever, and she's here at Wake Tech, leading our health care programs. Tell us that Angela Ballentine story coming to Wake Tech.

BALLENTINE: OK. Well, I started my career in health, in health care and, and health sciences as a radiographer. I started my career in higher education as a, an, an instructor …

RALLS: For radiography.

BALLENTINE: … for radiography programs and just kind of made my way through the rungs of the ladder. I've served as a department head for Health Sciences, a dean of Health Sciences. I have been a vice president of academic affairs and student services and even spent a little bit of time as an interim president. So, I've been in higher ed for over 25 years and have been really excited about the changes that we've seen in health care and in education as a whole. But what is near and dear to me is Health Sciences and developing those programs and creating opportunities for students who are ready to enter into the health, health care setting and into that industry. It's a rewarding time for practice, and, and we're meeting lots of the challenges through what we're offering here at Wake Tech, and I'm excited to be here.

RALLS: Well, we're excited you're here. It's, it's wonderful to have such an experienced educator and health professional leading the way at Wake Tech right now because this is exciting times at Wake Tech.

BALLENTINE: It really is.

RALLS: And a lot of our future, particularly in future growth of programs, is in the Health Sciences area because, you know, Wake County, we're such a fast-growing county.

BALLENTINE: We are.

RALLS: But we're also growing older at the same time. We're growing bigger, and many of the folks who are gonna be [working] at our hospitals, like next door here at WakeMed, or Duke or UNC Rex or any of the other areas, the, the home health aides and others, they're coming through Wake Tech, and they're gonna be the health care professionals in our community. So, let's talk a little bit about health education here at Wake Tech, and tell us a little bit about, what's something unique for Wake tech is we have a whole campus for Health Sciences.

BALLENTINE: We do.

RALLS: We have so much health science on our campus here. It's the Perry Health Sciences Campus, named for Jim and Becky Perry. Jim is a former board chair at Wake Tech who has contributed, he and Becky, to support all of our Health Sciences, which is why it's named the Perry Health Sciences Campus. But tell us something about this campus, where it's located. What makes it unique in that regard?

BALLENTINE: Yeah, this campus is a beautiful campus. We have beautiful resources and facilities your own this campus. We're located really, literally in the back door of WakeMed, one of our valued partners in this industry, and offer lots and lots of programming and opportunities for students. We offer over 50, as a matter of fact, different health education programs.

RALLS: Fifty.

BALLENTINE: Fifty, both degree and non-degree programs.

RALLS: Wow. That's a good even number, 50. It's a big number.

BALLENTINE: At least 50, if not more. We offer them both through the non-degree and the degree opportunities for students, and we serve nearly 6,000 students through these programs we're offering.

We, we have the Martha Mann School of Nursing, which is the largest nursing, ADN [Associate Degree of Nursing] nursing program in the state of North Carolina. We enroll over 300 students a year in that program, and then we have a host of other allied health programs, which is the largest industry in demand for health care workers at this point. But we offer programs like Medical Assisting and Medical Lab Technology and our Dental Hygiene and Dental Assisting programs. We have a huge imaging program, Pharmacy Technology, Medical Lab Tech, Electroneurodiagnostic Technology.

And then on the non-degree side, we offer things like sterile supply and looking at opportunities to grow in those areas. We're looking at, we are offering surgical technology and now nurse aide and all of those non-degree options that allow students a foothold in the door and then ways for them to matriculate into the degree programming. So, lots to offer.

RALLS: Wow, yeah.

BALLENTINE: A lot of students that we're serving and a lot of industry partners, really proud of that.

RALLS: Absolutely. Our, our, our employer partners, we mentioned our three hospitals …

BALLENTINE: Yeah.

RALLS: … and all the health care partners in this community. I mean, just to paraphrase what you said, it sounds like just about everything in health care for education, health care education, happens through Wake Tech, except for perhaps the doctors. Is that what I heard?

BALLENTINE: That's what you heard.

RALLS: Yeah, we have a few doctors that come through, too, as well. They come through our Associate in Science program. I guess one thing we also need to mention, too, is the early college that, the Early College for Health and Sciences, our partnership with Wake

County Public Schools is on this campus as well. And I know there's quite a few students who gained so much credit in high school that they're, they're in medical schools and other places right now.

BALLENTINE: Absolutely. Then we have 157 high school, ninth and 10th graders actually here on this campus right now.

RALLS: Yeah.

BALLENTINE: Who are experiencing opportunities to get certificate options for, for them as they decide which way they're gonna go in their, in their career, and which disciplines, you know, most appeal to them.

RALLS: Yeah.

BALLENTINE: So, really excited about that partnership as well.

RALLS: Yeah, it's amazing an, but, if you gonna celebrate National Health Education Week, this should be Ground Zero, certainly in Wake County, no doubt about that.

BALLENTINE: Absolutely, absolutely.

RALLS: So, let's break it down just a little bit because your division now – you're the provost for all of Health Sciences and then chief campus officer for this campus – and so, we break it down in terms of allied health and nursing. Nursing was a little more understandable; we'll come to nursing second. But let's kind of talk and break down a little bit more allied health, health sciences. You mentioned a few things that, imaging and dental, and there's different aspects of all the areas outside of nursing that take place on this campus and beyond at other places at Wake Tech.

BALLENTINE: That's right, and, as I mentioned, the allied health professions are the largest group of health care professionals in the industry, and they have, they have a great need right now. And so, I'm really proud of all of the Health Sciences programs, but particularly those allied health programs, because it takes all of those professionals to meet the wrap-around services that we provide to our patients. And so, this opportunity that we have to continue to grow those allied health professions is, will be valuable and vital to the, to the community that we serve and vital to the health care plan as we holistically treat and deal with patients in the, in the field.

RALLS: And, and allied health spans from dental to imaging. Are those the two primary, are there other areas?

BALLENTINE: Oh, every, everything other than nursing is considered …

RALLS: So, everybody but the doctors and nurses? Everything around them is allied health?

BALLENTINE: Everything else is considered allied health. It's it's an ancillary opportunity, like, say the students, say the, say the patient needs – well, you've been a patient, we've all been patients – we not only need that doctor to help us determine what is going on with us, but we need those nurses to support us. But how many times have you had in the, had to have an X-ray?

RALLS: Right.

BALLENTINE: Or how many times have you had to have blood, blood drawn?

RALLS: Right.

BALLENTINE: Or how many times, times have you needed an EKG?

RALLS: Right.

BALLENTINE: How many times have you needed a prescription drug?

RALLS: Right, pharmacy.

BALLENTINE: You know, pharmacy. How many times have you had an emergency situation where EMS has been called.

RALLS: EMS and paramedics.

BALLENTINE: Paramedics may need to be called in. So, there's a lot of opportunities for students to gain that experience in all of those disciplines right here on this campus, right behind WakeMed. And we're just excited about all that we have.

RALLS: Yeah. And that's where your roots are, too. Radiography.

BALLENTINEL Yeah, my roots are in radiography. I'm an imaging professional, still hold a license, and, yeah.

RALLS: And one of our newest programs this year, too, is what? Sonography?

BALLENTINE: Medical Sonography is a new program.

RALLS: Can you tell us a bit of the difference between, you know, or the nuance as part of an imaging program?

BALLENTINE: Sonography is an imaging program, and it, it, it does not use radiation to develop the images. Most people think of sonography as babies, you know, and how a mother, prospective mother tracks the, the, you know, the pregnancy. But there's so many more opportunities in sonography where we can see the internal workings of the patient and not expose them to ionizing radiation.

RALLS: There's so many parts of allied health and those areas. There's one I always trip up on, and I'll try to say it to impress the listeners today, which is electroneurodiagnostic …

BALLENTINE: Technology.

RALLS: Technology. Gosh, I got through electroneurodiagnostic and stumbled on technology.

BALLENTINE: Exactly.

RALLS: What is that?

BALLENTINE: Well, we're learning about brain function and, and nerve function, and it can be used in the, in sleep diagnosis and those kinds of things, brain activity.

RALLS: So, EKG. When we say EKG, is that what that is?

BALLENTINE: Yes. No, not EKG, EEG.

RALLS: EEG. EEG, OK.

BALLENTINE: Exactly.

RALLS: All right. this is why I'm not the leader of health care at Wake Tech. But I do remember the names and there's 50 programs. Wow. Well, let's flip it over a little bit because one of the things with health care and something that Wake Tech is certainly known for is our nursing program, one of the largest certainly in this region and in the state.

BALLENTINE: Yes.

RALLS: And our nursing program, I wanna make note this month, is named for a really unique person who recently passed away, Martha Mann Smith. It's the Martha Mann Smith School of Nursing at Wake Tech, and Martha Mann Smith was a nurse for many, many years in this community, and, through her generosity, she met her husband, Lewis, as a nurse, and they were, she, she became so supportive of this program, her generosity, her philanthropy, that's why her name is there. And today, this month, we wanna give her special recognition because we lost her this month. I can always remember her at the pinning ceremonies, right there on the front row. And I think, for many of our nursing faculty here, it's very gratifying to have the name of their school, a nurse's name there, is from Martha Mann Smith.

But tell us about nursing because it is the ADN program, registered nurses. But it is other programs as well now. We've kind of expanded that, and, and that's also leading us into our, our combinations with non-degree as well. So, talk a little bit about nursing, the ADN program first, but then how it's expanding, too.

BALLENTINE: Yeah, absolutely. And, and I, too, echo your sentiments about Martha Mann Smith. We are so fortunate to have had her, her support of our nursing programs, and she will be missed by all of us.

But yes, we do have our Associate Degree Nursing, one of the largest in the state. We also have our licensed practical nursing, or Practical Nursing program, which is a fairly new offering to us. We just started that program about a year or so ago. And then we have our Nurse Aide programs, and those programs are offered both through a curriculum offering as well as a non-degree offering. So, all things nursing are under this umbrella, and we are serving, you know, a lot of students who are trying to matriculate through those programs. Those programs are rigorous, and students come very well prepared to do well and to be successful. And they have jobs oftentimes before they graduate.

RALLS: Yeah, they often have multiple jobs talking to them.

BALLENTINE: Multiple job offerings, yes. And that's true for allied health programs as well. Most of these students, through their clinical experience, use, are subjected, really, to an interview when they go into those clinical settings and are often hired before they graduate.

RALLS: Break down nursing just a little bit because, so, the way many people would know nursing is through our, what we call our Associate Degree Nursing program, where students, when they finish, they sit for what's called the NCLEX.

BALLENTINE: The NCLEX, right.

RALLS: And that makes them registered nurses and highly in demand. I think our, what's unique about this program and something we hope for the future, is it uniquely, it needs to even be bigger, even though it's probably one of the biggest, certainly one of the biggest in the state, nursing programs. We have, it's so competitive that, unfortunately, we can't take probably more people who want to get into nursing than we have in the nursing program. Ad so, many of the people who, many of our students, they already have other degrees, four-year degrees and others that are coming into that program. It's highly competitive. What's unique about Associate Degree Nursing at Wake Tech?

BALLENTINE: The fact that we can serve so many students and have the capacity to serve even more, should we have the space and the resources to do so.

RALLS: We're going to talk about that later.

BALLENTINE: We're going to talk about that, good. And I think what is, what is really powerful about our nursing program and, and our other Health Sciences programs are the faculty who serve those students. They're very talented, they're innovative, they're passionate, and they are focused on the right thing, and that is taking students where they are and as far as they can go, where their gifts and their talents will, will allow them to. But they have spent and continue to spend endless hours trying to educate and think out of the box, especially during COVID.

RALLS: Yeah, oh, man, I remember that.

BALLENTINE: They had to just kind of pivot and do things.

RALLS: And they, they were right on the front lines, gosh.

BALLENTINE: And we were all right here on the front lines. They didn't really have a break. They were anxious to get back here to, to serve our students and to teach those students so that they'd be ready for the workforce.

RALLS: Yeah, there was only like a few weeks when …

BALLENTINE: That's right. That's right.

RALLS: And they were right back here.

BALLENTINE: And that's why I think, you know, as we celebrate this year, this, not this year, this, this month of, of all our various Health Sciences programs, celebrating the accomplishments and the work that each of these disciplines do. This week of National Health Education, we'd be remiss to not, you know, mention the valuable resource we have in our, in our educators.

RALLS: Yeah.

BALLENTINE: Our, our Nursing faculty and our allied health faculty. We have over 200, almost 300 faculty and staff who meet the needs of our students through educating them, through supporting them, through coaching them, guiding them, advising them. And so, those educators do need to be recognized, and we appreciate all that they do.

RALLS: Absolutely. And I'm so glad you brought that up because sometimes, now that we feel that COVID's a little bit more in our rearview mirror …

BALLENTINE: That's right.

RALLS: But it's amazing to think about those two years, and nobody was more on the front line than our health care educators and our health care students …

BALLENTINE: Exactly.

RALLS: … who were coming right out and filling, jumping right into the middle of that. And, gosh, I'm just, I'm thinking about some of those outdoor pinning ceremonies we had, and, you know, that sort of signifies the unique thing about health care educators. I'm thinking

about our Nursing pinning ceremonies, but our others as well as that. They really, they identify themselves as educators, but they also were so closely identified with their profession.

BALLENTINE: Absolutely.

RALLS: I mean, you know, and that's why it makes those pinning ceremonies so special because it is an educational milestone, but it is also a milestone that our faculty so much respect and, and instill in our students is this great crossway into service is health care and, man, have we seen that during COVID.

BALLENTINE: That's right. And we have to also mention our clinical partners.

RALLS: Yes.

BALLENTINE: Because, without the clinical component of these programs …

RALLS: Our hospitals, yeah.

BALLENTINE: Our hospitals, our outpatient facilities. We, we have clinical agreements with over 300 clinical facilities, Work-Based Learning sites and opportunities for apprenticeships where students can learn and earn on the job and while they're matriculating through these programs of study. And we could not have these programs be successful without those partnerships. They are, they help to educate our students because they're bringing, providing an atmosphere or an environment where the students can hone in on those skills, practice those skills in an environment that is safe and well monitored and evaluated. And so, we're, we're really great, grateful and fortunate to have so many sites that support our programs.

RALLS: Let's talk about that a little bit. I'm glad you brought that up because we need to emphasize that, and that's, that is something unique about all of health care education is that it is, it is very, there's a hands-on component when people think about that, a workplace-based component. That's a fundamental part. We'll, we, we quickly say "clinicals," but what clinicals mean are that, when you're a student here, you are a student on this campus or wherever, you may be taking our classes and our labs, like we are right now, but you're also a student on the front lines as well.

BALLENTINE: Absolutely.

RALLS: And that's where the clinicals come in. And that's where our partners are. Our three hospital partners, our outpatient and other facilities, are crucial to the success of health care education and our communities.

BALLENTINE: Absolutely. Absolutely.

RALLS: And so, clinicals means there's a certain part of my program that I'm a, and I keep pointing over there because the hospital's behind me, but yeah.

BALLENTINE: Well, there, there's a part of the program that's, that's built in for that clinical hands-on experience that the students are required to demonstrate proficiency in. And so, we, we do as much as we can in facilities like this, where the student can practice in the laboratory setting. But then they have to be able to transfer those skills into the workplace and into those clinical facilities, and our clinical partners have been pleased with how our students perform. And, as I said, many of them have employed our students before they have finished their programs of study.

RALLS: You mentioned this facility that we're in, and so, if you can see us on camera, you can see, you know, they're not people behind us. They're, they're, they're actually simulated people, and a big part of health care education is replicating those real-world environments. Our students spent time in those real-world environments, but they're also replicated through simulation. Why is simulation so important to health care?

BALLENTINE: It's important to health care and vital to health care because the, the whole goal is to improve quality and safety. And so, it allows the student to build on a skill, to learn a skill, to develop that skill, to practice that skill, and to assess it so that they're ready to meet the workforce demand. And they can do that in a safe environment. They can do it, do it repetitively until they become proficient, so that, when they transition into that workplace, they can do it seamlessly and, and with confidence.

RALLS: Yes, as soon as you become a nurse …

BALLENTINE: Yes.

RALLS: You, you're gonna experience some high-stress, high-stake decisions that you're gonna make, and it seems like, with simulation, the goal is to experience that in a safer environment, but to have that same, same adrenaline rush. Across the hall here, there's a

unique facility where the nursing educators are in one room and the, can you describe what happens in those two rooms?

BALLENTINE: Yeah. Well, in those rooms there, there's a, there's been a simulation scenario that has been created, and, and, or developed by our, our, our faculty, and, you know, it will allow for the student to enter into an environment where they are having to be the health care provider and treat a patient's condition based on what that simulation was designed to do. And they can repeatedly perform that skill until they become proficient at it. Meanwhile, the faculty are observing this interaction that the student has with the simulated patient and can provide feedback and assistance and reinforcement so that the student continues to gain that proficiency. So, this simulation, it is something that we embrace not only in nursing but in some of our other disciplines as well.

RALLS: Such as. Give us another example.

BALLENTINE: Well, imaging has, has some virtual reality types of opportunities. Dental has virtual reality opportunities. What's another one? Several, there's several other options for this. Medical Assisting, for example, where we can use task trainers, devices like task trainers, where students can practice using alternate reality to gauge a person's health condition and treat it.

RALLS: And the way I've kind of seen it, the thought, like with nursing, they, they can actually program a heart attack …

BALLENTINE: Right.

RALLS: … to happen with the simulated patient.

BALLENTINE: Absolutely.

RALLS: And then, boom, the student has to respond, and they're observed and given suggestions on what to do.

BALLENTINE: Right. And in some cases, we have some high-fidelity mannequins that can do anything but sweat.

RALLS: Yeah.

BALLENTINE: You know, we can program them.

RALLS: You can scare people with them. They're pretty realistic looking.

BALLENTINE: Exactly. And students can make mistakes in a safe environment, not with a real patient.

RALLS: Absolutely. Well, let's segue then a little bit, because part of our conversation, too, one of the reasons we're so excited about this week being National Health Education Week is there's a lot of excitement here at Wake Tech about our future. Our future growth is really, the core of that is gonna be health care, and a core part of that comes up next month. November 8th is Election Day, and Wake Tech is on the ballot. You actually have to turn the ballot over; we're the last, last thing you can vote on. But when you vote on Wake Tech bonds, the biggest component of that will go to health care education because it will support the, both the short-term and the planning and the development of the campus for the longer-term growth of this campus. So, the longer-term viability of health care opportunities in our community, and the facility that we will build with the bonds that, hopefully, will be voted positively on in November is a simulated hospital.

BALLENTINE: Yes.

RALLS: So, what, what, what is this? You know, in my mind, I can see it, but I'm not you. Tell me what you see when you see what is, what's a simulated hospital, and what does, what does that allow for us?

BALLENTINE: It, it allows for us to do what we just talked about: create environments, real-world environments where students …

RALLS: More of them.

BALLENTINE: More of them in a setting that resembles a real hospital, where, where there are hospital beds, there are virtual reality types of mannequins, high-fidelity mannequins. There are exam rooms. There are task trainers. There are observatories where we can watch things happen in real time. There will be opportunities for multidisciplinary experiences.

So again, as we described earlier, a patient comes in, they see the physician, they may see the nurse, they may have a radiographer come to the bedside to take their X-rays. They may have someone from pharmacy come up to assess their, their drugs and their intake. So,

multiple opportunities for multiple disciplines to come together for training options for our students, opportunities for our students so that they are ready for the workplace.

RALLS: And as I understand it, so if you take simulation that happens here, and we're strong in simulation, and something goes wrong, but here, you're coming into a, like this is our, one of our main two buildings here on, on the Perry Health Sciences Campus, and you walk in, and it is, you can tell you're in a, you're in a Wake Tech facility. It's a very nice Wake Tech facility, but it doesn't, you wouldn't think you're in the hospital.

BALLENTINE: Right.

RALLS: Now, you go into the rooms like we're in now, and it feels a little more like a hospital in the simulation rooms. But the simulated hospital kind of turns that on its head where it's like, you would think, "I'm in a hospital," unless you didn't know what you're actually in a Wake Tech education center.

BALLENTINE: That's right. That's right. One of the things that we're really excited about the, the bond for is, is the opportunity to kind of feature that simulation hospital and create that opportunity for us to continue to build upon what we currently have. There will be spaces for some of our other programs that will be displaced because the, this building will be built on this campus, and again, simulation really changes the game for us because it continues to build upon that innovation that we are so well known for. And as Health Sciences grows and continues to change and evolve and move so quickly with technology and our ability to keep up with it, I think providing an opportunity like this and a facility like that where we're, where our partners can engage with us.

RALLS: Yeah.

BALLENZTINE: And, and again, our, our students can, you know, work and learn in a state-of-the-art environment.

RALLS: And so, thinking about the future of health care education here at Wake Tech and, and the hopeful opportunity that this bond, hopefully it passes in November – please consider that, if you, listening to us – one, it allows for much further advancement for us for replication, simulation so students being more prepared through real-life scenarios, through the simulated hospital. It will allow for growth for the future. One of the things we've been able to do with WakeMed and the county is plan for the development of the land here, so it won't just be about the immediate facilities that this bond will support. It

would be the longer-term as well because we're, as our country grows and we grow older, we don't have to keep, down the road, not right now, but down the road, even building further facilities …

BALLENTINE: Absolutely.

RALLS: … to support that growth. I know there's some older buildings on this campus. We've, in fact, one of the older buildings we use, we inherited 60 years ago, when we became Holding Tech, was the old nursing dormitory, and we still have some nurse assisting and other classes like that in these buildings.

BALLENTINE: That's right. We do.

RALLS: There are buildings that are older than 60 years when, they were old when we inherited them.

BALLENTINE: Exactly. Exactly. And we're still making use of that building and those buildings, still training health care professionals every day in those buildings. We still have really, really good, strong facilities here, but this new facility will take it to the next level, for sure.

RALLS: Yeah. And one of the things that, I know this is where you are really leading the way for us, as we like to say at Wake Tech, is, so the future for us will also be growth opportunities.

BALLENTINE: Yes.

RALLS: The ability to grow program areas that we need more students. We may not need more programs, but like nursing and imaging, we need the capacity to take in more students.

BALLENTINE: Absolutely.

RALLS: Because of, I mean, we, we need that now, regardless of whether or not Wake County was growing or not, just given the scale.

BALLENTINE: Right.

RALLS: That's an opportunity. And then you, there are some programs, it's hard for me to imagine when we talk about 50 programs here and, and here we, through our new organization, we have degree and non-degree that you, you lead those programmatic evolutions for both degree programs as well as non-degree. So, you're, you're the, you're the one who's leading our way in terms of what we should have in addition to what we have right now. What, what are some of those areas that we can dream about?

BALLENTINE: Well, we're, right now, we're dreaming about respiratory therapy because, again, there's a really strong demand for that discipline in the workforce.

RALLS: COVID, I guess, kind of really proved that.

BALLENTINE: COVID did prove that. So, we're really exploring and doing our due diligence around that program. We're also looking at cardiovascular sonography, again, building on what we have already in the sonography realm, but getting a little more specialized because there is a need and a demand for cardiovascular techs. We're also looking at the mental health industry.

RALLS: Yeah.

BALLENTINE: Mental health care tech, technology is another one. Developmental disabilities. Those kinds of disciplines are, are really needed in our communities. Dialysis tech. So, those are, those are the programs that are on the horizon, within the next three years, and we hope to get an approval for and get implemented.

RALLS: So, even as big as we are, there is …

BALLENTINE: There's always growth.

RALLS: There's growth that we need, and as big as Wake County is now, it's growing bigger, it's growing older …

BALLENTINE: That's right.

RALLS: … and what's important is that Wake Tech grows with it.

BALLENTINE: That's right. It's very important that we continue to grow and, in health care, to meet the demand. There is going to be a need for health care professionals for years to

come, and, and those needs will shift and change and ebb and flow. But what we have to offer is top-notch, and I think we are well positioned to continue to meet the workforce needs of our community.

RALLS: Well, there's no better way to wrap it up than that statement.

BALLENTINE: Thank you.

RALLS: I think, as wonderful as facilities are that we have and the opportunities that we hope for in our future, what really make this place is the people.

BALLENTINE: Absolutely.

RALLS: You mention the faculty, but it's also the leadership: you, Dr. Ballentine, all the leadership here at Perry Health Sciences Campus. We're fortunate that you are charting our course because, so I've said a couple times, we all get bigger, but we're also getting older and that includes people like me. And so, you know, if you are, if you are ever, hopefully it won't happen to you, it's gonna happen to all of us, when you experience a health care incident.

BALLENTINE: Absolutely.

RALLS: Whether in a hospital, in an ambulance, or even if you're getting blood drawn in a lab, you know, ask where those folks were trained and educated. Good chance are, they'll say, Wake Tech.

BALLENTINE: Chances are they were right here.

RALLS: And we hope that we can make those opportunities even more so in the future for our community.

BALLENTINE: Absolutely.

RALLS: Thank you, Dr. Angela Ballentine, for joining us today on this episode during National Health Education Week.

BALLENTINE: You're welcome.

RALLS: We are so excited to play a role, play the key role of health education in our community, in Wake County, through Wake Tech. And so, this episode today of We Are Wake Tech has been focused on health care.

Thank you for joining us today. Please, if you are, if you enjoyed this episode, tune in next month, when you'll learn about what the next episode, the next development at Wake Tech will be. You can access our podcast through all the ways you would find podcasts: Apple, Spotify, look for We Are Wake Tech. And please rate our podcast and remember, join us next month as well for the next episode of the We Are Wake Tech podcast. I'm your host, Scott Ralls. Thank you for being with us.

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LAURIE CLOWERS: I'm Laurie Clowers. In this month's news update, nearly 500 prospective students and their families came to Wake Tech's Fall Open House on the Southern Wake Campus. There were campus tours and information about programs and resources. We also offered on-the-spot assistance with admissions applications.

Wake Tech has unveiled plans to expand the Perry Health Sciences Campus. A new 120,000-square-foot facility will enable the college to expand nursing and other high-demand Health Sciences programs. It will feature a simulation hospital for students in multiple disciplines to learn in a real-life setting. Construction of the new facility hinges on passage of the Wake Tech Workforce Forward Bond in November. The Wake Tech Board of Trustees unanimously approved a resolution in support of the bond at its October meeting.

Two university partnerships to tell you about. Wake Tech has signed an agreement with Shaw University that allows students in our IT programs to transfer into some bachelor degree programs at Shaw. And a new partnership at North Carolina A&T offers similar opportunities for Wake Tech IT and biotechnology graduates, with the added benefit of having A&T co-locate at our RTP Campus so that Wake Tech graduates can finish their bachelor's degree right on our campus.

Wake Tech Culinary and Baking students had a great showing at the annual American Culinary Federation competition at the Scott Northern Wake Campus. More than 40 medals were handed out to students, and Raisa Villarreal Rivas won Best in Show for her sugar showpiece, inspired by the flag of Venezuela.

This year's Scott Scholars have been announced. The Scott Scholars program is Wake Tech's most prestigious scholarship. This year's recipients are Taj Hewitt, who's originally from Jamaica and is involved in the STEM Academic Research program, and the other is Andrew Orlov, who's pursuing a radiography degree.

Wake Tech and Fujifilm Diosynth recently celebrated the Fujifilm Diosynth Early College Suite at the RTP Campus. The suite is home to the Wake Early College of Information and Biotechnologies, which opened this fall.

And finally, Wake Tech mourns the loss of benefactor and friend Martha Mann Smith. In 2018, Mrs. Smith, a retired nurse, donated $1 million to our nursing program. In recognition of her generosity, the program was renamed the Martha Mann Smith School of Nursing.

And that's the latest Wake Tech news.

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Korrie SMITH: Hi, I'm Korrie Blanchard Smith, the senior director of career professional development here at Wake Technical Community College. I wanted to join you today to give you a few tips that you might not have considered when you start to think about career exploration or professional development for yourself.

Sometimes we feel really uncertain about whether we should make a big career leap. We're not sure where we wanna go. We're not sure how to get there. But I wanna tell you about a tool that you may already know that you can use on your own time to create a career trajectory for yourself.

We all know LinkedIn is a great networking tool. We connect with our co-workers, past colleagues, industry professionals and stay up to date on news and trends in our industries. But did you know you can actually leverage LinkedIn to do some career exploration? If you take your time to use LinkedIn as a tool to look into people who have a job that interests you, you can search on LinkedIn, find people who are already doing a job that you like and take a look at their background. How did they get there? Where did they get their start? Maybe they have, they all have a degree in the same thing. Maybe they all are a part of the same organization. Perhaps they have an industry credential that you hadn't considered.

If you take your time to search people on LinkedIn and take a look at the companies that they work for, what was that first job that helped them get their start? What education or background do they have? You can start to see whether this is a career transition that feels accessible to you. Maybe they have all done the same credential, all from Wake tech, and you see, “Oh, OK, they were able to get their foot in the door just after create, just after completing this certification here at Wake Tech.”

So, there are many ways that you can do this exploration on your own time. You don’t have to make an appointment with someone or set aside dedicated time to do this kind of career and professional development. You can do it on your own on LinkedIn in your own home. So, next time you’re considering a career move, take some time to search it on LinkedIn and see what you can find.

Thanks for joining me for this pro tip.

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CONCLUSION: 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. Be sure to subscribe to your favorite podcast app to have each episode delivered right to your computer or mobile device. For more, find us at podcast.waketech.edu. To learn more about Wake Tech’s exceptional educational opportunities, visit waketech.edu.