We Are Wake Tech Podcast – Episode 22: Comprehensive Opportunity College

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

Hello and welcome to the We Are Wake Tech Podcast. I'm your host Scott Ralls President of Wake Tech.

In this episode we have an exciting conversation about the high school opportunities, the availability of college opportunities while in high school through Wake Tech, and uniquely through North Carolina's community colleges.

There's so much opportunity I frequently like to say that Wake Tech is America's most comprehensive opportunity college.

Meaning they're things here at Wake Tech that you can do that you don't find other places.

One of those opportunities is the ability, the opportunity to take college courses while in high school, free of charge, either through Career College Promise or our cooperative, innovative high schools.

Unique opportunity here in North Carolina, Wake Tech.

We're gonna talk about it with two of the Wake Tech experts in this area.

I'm really excited to have both Elvin James and Terri Allen just two great leaders here at our college who really lead these efforts and the intersection between public school K12, high school and Wake Tech Community College.

Elvin is our director of the career College Promise program.

Those are the dual enrollment programs for students can take college programs free of charge, and Terri Allen, our Dean of Pathways and Partnerships and the unique programs that have been created in partnership with the Wake County Public Schools.

And so, Terri, leading as Dean of that program, Elvin Director of Career College Promise.

Thanks to both of you for taking part in this episode of We are Wake Tech Podcast.

ELVIN JAMES: Yes, thank you.

TERRI ALLEN: Thank you, Doctor Ralls.

SCOTT RALLS: Well, let's get, you know, one of the things we always like to do to start with is

learn more about the Wake Tech people and you all are really at the intersection between Wake Tech and Wake County Public Schools.

But tell me a little bit about your journey to Wake Tech. What were you doing before you came to Wake Tech, and how did you get to Wake Tech?

We'll start Elvin with you.

ELVIN JAMES: Well, my journey actually starts in eastern North Carolina, where my hometown is Plymouth, NC so graduated from Plymouth High School in 2007 and made the transition over to North Carolina State University where I got my degree in public and interpersonal communication and six months out of college, I was hired at Fayetteville State University with the assistance of current chancellor Randy Woodson who wrote my recommendation here from my first job.

SCOTT RALLS: So that's great. That's a good recommendation. He's a good friend of Wake Tech.

ELVIN JAMES: Yes.

So, my first job coming out of college was actually serving as an administrator associate for the Center for Defense and Homeland Security, there at Fayetteville State University.

And then I made the transition over to the Admissions office and that's when I was able to have that one-on-one direct contact with students and assisting them getting into college.

So I spent roughly three years at Fayetteville State University, and then I was introduced to Current College Promise while making this transition to Central Carolina Community College in the Sanford.

So spent some time at CC to assist those high school students within the Harnett, Lee and Chatham Counties.

And then I made the leap of faith to come over to Wake Tech to serve as a recruit recruitment and outreach officer here at Wake Tech to assist our current Wake County public high school students.

And then decided to make the jump over back over to CCP to serve as the director of the program.

SCOTT RALLS: So, we're we're fortunate you made all those leaps and found this found a landing spot here at Wake Tech.

ELVIN JAMES: Yes.

SCOTT RALLS: Well great Elvin we'll come back to you in just a minute.

But Terri, you've had a I think your intersection came through the public schools.

You brought that experience with you?

TERRI ALLEN: It did. I moved to North Carolina in '96 and started working for the Wake County Public Schools System. Started out as an assistant principal and I had a shared role between being an assistant principal and a literacy teacher for K5 students and did that for a while.

And then I transitioned to be a principal and I was a principal…

SCOTT RALLS: Here in Wake County?

TERRI ALLEN: Yes, Wake County schools. Worked as an elementary principal and then I knew I wanted to do something else.

Umm, I just didn't think I could retire as a principal.

Umm. And so that I, a former parent, said, why don't you come to Wake Tech and at the time, I didn't know a lot about Wake Tech.

So I did a little research and found out some things about Wake Tech and I'd also worked a couple of years out in the industry and the real estate and construction industry.

And so, when I came to Wake Tech, I started working in the career office and worked in career services with employers.

And so it gave me the opportunity to really learn all the different career programs at Wake Tech and what they had to offer and what Wake Tech had to offer, and it was very impressive.

And then I started working for under VP Trick and she said, hey, we're talking about opening an early college… Can you go to these meetings?

And so just sort of flew, you know, sort of flowed naturally that I transitioned to work with early colleges and been able to open too early colleges.

There was two when I first started working with early colleges, and since we have opened North Wake College and Career and the Wake Early College Information and Biotechnologies.

SCOTT RALLS: Yeah, well, you've had a tremendous impact in the, you know, one thing I I think that's unique about you two, which I think is similar is it speaks to our partnership with Wake

County Public Schools is that while you're an employee of Wake Tech, probably Wake County Public Schools assume you're also an employee of Wake County.

I mean, and I think that's the way the partnership works so great is that, you know, with early colleges on our high schools, they're Wake County public school employees, but they are Wake Tech people, and you're a Wake Tech employee, but you're a Wake County public school person, if you will.

And I think that's why the the partnership is so unique.

And Elvin, you're you've developed that as well in terms of that as connections with, with counselors and everyone throughout our great partners at Wake County Public Schools.

Terri, before we move on and talk a little bit more about Career and College Promise, I know you were coming into North Carolina at the time when there was a lot of transition with opportunity in North Carolina.

I lived through some of that as well, and my previous roles within the community colleges in the the growth of the early college high schools.

One of things I like to to always talk about that makes us unique as our history in North Carolina.

And so we have a rich dual enrollment history in North Carolina going back to programs we used to call them Huskins programs.

And that was the legislation. And then it transitioned into what is now Career and College Promise.

That's dual enrollment, but the whole history too of what we used to call learning our our cooperative innovative high schools, is a unique North Carolina history, which we can get into a little bit more as we transition and talk about the early colleges.

But you've probably seen the rich environment that's here in North Carolina compared to other places where that intersection between public schools, particularly high school and and Community College, happens here.

More so, do you remember that history much because you lived through those times.

TERRI ALLEN: A little bit I remember it I think until I really got to Wake Tech I have now said I'd love to go back and be a principal because I know so much now about Career and College Promise, Cooperative, Innovative High Schools and just the opportunities available at Wake Tech and in the career programs area.

I feel like I would be a much better principal for helping students to select careers and know the various careers that are out there.

SCOTT RALLS: And that's a good reason for doing this podcast this month too, because there's so much opportunity that you don't find other places and we wanna make sure parents and students know about those opportunities so they can take advantage of them while they're while they're while students are in high school and having those opportunities.

Let's Elvin let's talk a little bit about Career College Promise.

So that is dual enrollment.

Tell us how Career College Promise works… That intersection between Wake Tech and Wake County Public Schools?

ELVIN JAMES: Yeah. So for those who don't know, and as you know as well, Career College Promise you know provides students with the opportunity to earn college credit while still in high school as long as you're here in the state.

So the connection between Wake County Public Schools and us here at Wake Tech comes with a lot of partnerships between the the deans the CDCs…

SCOTT RALLS: What is a CDC?

ELVIN JAMES: CDC current development coordinator so…

SCOTT RALLS: In high school?

ELVIN JAMES: Yes, at the high school.

So any student that is focused on anything that the school is trade related whether it's business, carpentry, cosmetology, those students have a resource within the high school or a person that they can go to to discuss potential opportunities that transitional flow between Wake Tech and Wake County Public Schools.

The same with the Dean of students, who oversee all of the guidance and academic information.

Those things can have those conversations to discuss college transfer opportunities if they're interested in four-year opportunities as well.

So we have a wonderful partnership with those entities within the high school to not only discuss enrollment processes, but also how to make that transitional, that navigation from Wake

County Public Schools to Wake Tech or if they want to make the transition to a four-year college or university.

SCOTT RALLS: Alright. OK, so let's, let's back up.

And if I'm a parent thinking about this with our… or student, I'm listening to podcast.

What that means, right is I can start college while I'm in high school and get a jump start.

Is that… Is that what we're saying?

SCOTT RALLS: That is correct.

ELVIN JAMES: So we have various eligibility requirements, but from a general standpoint, as long as it's the student has a 2.8 unweighted GPA, they have the opportunity to start this college career, whether they're a freshman, sophomore, junior or senior.

And even if you don't have a 2.8 unweighted GPA, we do have pathways and courses that offer those students in place of the that 2.8 GPA requirement.

SCOTT RALLS: I know the answer to this, but I'm asking just for how much does it cost?

ELVIN JAMES: The program is tuition free.

Now, we do tell students and parents that there are other related fees, such as textbooks…

SCOTT RALLS: Right.

ELVIN JAMES: Of course, related fees that they will have to cover.

But that's the great thing about Career College Promise being tuition free and that saves, you know, students, parents are a lot of money, especially when we gotta get into the dollar amount.

SCOTT RALLS: So let’s accentuate that a little bit because you know one of the issues out there right now is the cost of higher ed.

We're always, you know, we're where you go to college. Wake Tech, not so much.

But other places cost of higher ed has really gone up.

But if I'm in high school in Wake County and I wanna start a jump start and take college courses while in high school, I don't pay any tuition.

I just have the cost of textbooks like I would in any other college course, but so that's a huge opportunity.

ELVIN JAMES: Yes, definitely.

SCOTT RALLS: And you know, what does that mean for students in terms of getting that jumpstart? It does… How does that help them?

What does that mean for them to get… Take those courses while in high school?

ELVIN JAMES: There's a lot of different ways that you could look at it, of course the tuition piece, but also at the same time, if you're looking to transfer credit or make that articulation transition over.

As long as students make a C or better in the course, it will transfer over to Wake Tech or that four-year institution.

Now this is big because I know a lot of students in the high school… in high school tend to take AP courses if they wanna have that option.

SCOTT RALLS: right, there's there's AP and IB.

ELVIN JAMES: Yes.

SCOTT RALLS: Which are college level courses that students take in high school while at high school.

ELVIN JAMES: Correct. So you're Advanced Placement.

Your international baccalaureate-type courses, which will give you an extra credit point value added to your GPA.

SCOTT RALLS: If you take the test, right?

ELVIN JAMES: That's right.

If you think the test at the end and that's what differentiates us within CCP, because as long as you make a C or better in the course, there's no test at the end.

You just have to make the C or better and you automatically get that college credit as opposed to AP IB.

You take the class, have to make a certain score.

SCOTT RALLS: Really, the test that gives the credit, not the course, right?

ELVIN JAMES: Correct.

SCOTT RALLS: AP and IB, but with Career and College Promise, it's the taking the course.

Lisa, now I know the answer to this too… So, why is that the case?

Why… Why is it different?

Why do I… Why is it that I, you know, why is the course itself carry credit?

ELVIN JAMES: So, for CCP, these are actual Wake Tech college courses.

So, you're actually doing college coursework that are, you know, concrete in terms of what you need to do as far as taking college courses.

SCOTT RALLS: Right, so these… So that's the big distinction is when you're signed up for CCP course, you are in a Wake Tech course.

ELVIN JAMES: That is correct.

SCOTT RALLS: You're taking it just and it's the same requirements. Same… and it's got a lot of rigor to it.

I mean, it's that's why there's grade-point requirements.

But you're taking a college level course, so you are in college while you're in high school.

That's the dual enrollment, if you will.

ELVIN JAMES: Yes.

SCOTT RALLS: Now you were distinguishing there are the career and technical pathways for students who want to go into more of a a skill-based course.

Umm but you also talked about the transfer opportunities.

So for many of the students who are taking programs, I know their their intent is to perhaps keep coming to Wake Tech for… for some, they're they're taking courses in high school, but they may go to a different place, like a university.

Why would… Why would I do that?

ELVIN JAMES: Umm. Basically to again you know, save money on tuition.

So and it just depends on the path that you wanna take.

Again, career and technical education, if you're looking for anything that's more skilled or trade related, if you look into earning certification, you know that would potentially be the route for you as opposed to the the four-year side and which you would take those courses to earn your full bachelor's degree, master degree.

If you're trying to go that route.

SCOTT RALLS: And I was trying to set you up there a little bit because if you're intent is to get a bachelor's degree from it, one of the universities in North Carolina, Umm, our articulations mean when you take those courses with Wake Tech, as long as you're taking the appropriate courses and that's where your guidance and your teams guidance comes in.

You know, those courses are gonna count, not only at Wake Tech, but when you transfer to a university.

ELVIN JAMES: That's correct. And the way and what I love about Career and College Promise… We have the various articulation agreements that serve for both public and private institutions here in the state.

So all all of the UNC system institutions and most private.

SCOTT RALLS: Yeah, about 2/3 of the privates.

So so if you're going to go to a university in North Carolina for the vast majority of those universities, you can start in high school.

Get a jump start, save money and get a acceleration.

ELVIN JAMES: Yes.

SCOTT RALLS: So that sounds like a great deal, but I know we've grown a lot in recent years.

Your team has done a lot of work to make sure sometimes enrolling in something, being aware of something can be difficult.

Tell some about some of that work, because we've seen a huge increase in the number of students in just the past two or three years.

ELVIN JAMES: Yes umm, the college has done a phenomenal job advocating for the Career and College Promise team. A team that used to only be a team of three.

We now are a team of six which I serve as of course as the director and we have five phenomenal CCP enrollment and academic advisors that assist our students on a daily basis through virtual appointments, walk-in appointments and various events that we offer.

So our academic advisors walk students through their academic planning.

We offer open labs for students who need assistance with registration, and we also visit the high schools as well for on-site admissions and a host of other things to walk them through these processes.

And so assured that these students are making the necessary steps to get to where they want to get to.

So, you know, kudos to you and all those involved to help us or that have been helping us get through these processes.

SCOTT RALLS: Well and I appreciate the kudos, but that just shouldn't be directed me our strategic planning, what we call our Reach and Rally strategic plan has really emphasized this because in Wake County we have a statewide attainment goal for college completion and in Wake County through the organization called My Future NC and my Future NC identified increasing Career and College Promise enrollment among Wake County public school students as one of the three leading opportunity areas for us to increase college attainment here in Wake County.

So we've really put an emphasis on that in Wake County and that's your your efforts through your team to make that possible is really part of that growth.

We'll talk about Terri with the with the other high school partnerships in a second, but that's that's really been part of our strategic growth because of that identification that we can make a real impact.

But let me let me just say this to make that impact and you you know, you can start these courses many times, students start in 11th grade, but they can even start earlier in some areas.

You kind of know about it.

ELVIN JAMES: Yes.

SCOTT RALLS: So, you got and that's the thing always concerns is how do we make sure students and parents know about it?

You know that it is such an opportunity, but if you get to 12th grade and you know about it, you're you're you're it's it's a missed opportunity.

ELVIN JAMES: Yes.

So what we've done is we've utilized our new CRM communications and release.

SCOTT RALLS: CR, meaning…

ELVIN JAMES: Communications, relations management system.

So this is something brand new for the… historically CCP used to be an entire paper process.

And so we worked with our IT team to develop a systems in place that would make our applications and enrollment forms online as well as COVID planning to factor to making those transitions over to making a lot of our resources and platforms online as well for student accessibility and working through these processes to apply and do at least to be done to get the students enrolled.

But you're correct, definitely spreading by word of mouth, getting into the high schools to make students and parents aware of this opportunity here in Wake County.

That's what surprised me most when I first got to Wake Tech. That many students and parents didn't know about Career College Promise because of the lack of resources and what we didn't have at the time, but because of the CRM and because of the changes that we've made going into the high schools, working with the career development coordinators and the and the Deans and all of the stakeholders that are involved, you know we've made a very a very successful jump in terms of our enrollment over the course of three or four years and there's been phenomenal.

SCOTT RALLS: Well kudos to you and your team, Enrollment and Student Services, and the IT team because it was, we were, we were a little bit clunky in terms of enrollment.

We had to do the whole paper days and we really been striving to work that out and I keep hearing just great things from parents and others who are that process.

So let me ask one last question before I turn to Terri.

I mean, right now it's registration time for spring semester. You know, so if I'm a high school student and I, or if I'm a parent of a high school student, and I want that opportunity.

I have… There's a student in Wake County Public Schools right now… 11th grade… has appropriate grade point average and I wanna take college courses.

What should I do?

ELVIN JAMES: Yes. So definitely visit ccp.waketech.edu. We have a new… perspective CCP students pays that outlines everything that students need to know.

We have a 24/7 accessible information session that students and parents can view.

We have the list of pathways that students can review in terms of the courses and pathways that we offer.

We also have the links to our virtual appointment, so if they want to meet with any of our Enrollment and Academic Advisors, we have those links available in the website.

Umm, also… Definitely have the discussions with your Career Development Coordinator and your Deans.

They have the access as well and the information needed to help guide them through, but definitely reach out to us.

They can definitely reach out to us.

SCOTT RALLS: Great. You've made it easy.

I'm gonna reemphasize that ccp.waketech.edu.

ELVIN JAMES: That's correct.

SCOTT RALLS: Go there and it'll open up the world of that opportunity.

ELVIN JAMES: Yes.

SCOTT RALLS: Thank you, Elvin.

Let's start real quick to Terri.

Terri, we talked a little bit and early on about history.

I just want to geek out on the history a little.

I love the history aspects of what makes educational opportunity through Wake Tech, so unique and in this case through our great partnership of Wake County Public Schools.

We have so many partners at Wake Tech, but I always say our best partner in our leading

partner is Wake County Public Schools and a few years ago it goes back to the 90s.

North Carolina did something really unique in terms of educational opportunity and that was create high schools, primarily on Community College campuses.

Most some university campuses, some placed where there's the cooperation that's tied together between the public schools and the and the Community College or the university.

And we called those cooperative, innovative, innovative high schools or sometimes early colleges learn and earn there was at that time a real catalyst.

There was a lot of… There was a real push in terms of policy.

At that time Mike Easley. This was a major emphasis for him at the time, but there was also a philanthropist… pretty well known philanthropist Bill Gates and his wife, Bill and Melinda Gates, who catalyzed the opportunities for these high schools in North Carolina and today there are more cooperative innovative high schools or early colleges in North Carolina than any state in the country and umm… And that's that's a big, that's a big accomplishment in that.. now, almost 20-year period.

So sometimes when I describe what these high schools are, people say, well, is it like a year and year there? No, it's a high school… well don't let me describe it, you describe it. It is something that you gotta sometimes you gotta see it to understand it.

TERRI ALLEN: You do have to see it to understand it.

A cooperative, innovative high school and we are fortunate to have four of them at Wake Tech in partnership with Wake County Public School System and our first one was wake Early College of Health Sciences that opened in 2006.

In early college, students apply to come to an early College in 8th grade.

There's an application process through Wake County Public Schools that they apply through the magnet office and then they get selected to come.

They start as ninth graders. They stay 9th through 12th grade and they also have the option to stay for something we call either a Grade 13 or a super senior year. And students had the opportunity to complete the full degree while they are at these early colleges.

SCOTT RALLS: Full community college Associates degree?

TERRI ALLEN: Yes.

In some instances like at Wake Early College of Health Science, a student can finish their

Associate of Science or Associate of Arts degree along with interest in a pathway like a health pathway.

We really put a big emphasis at that high school on Health Sciences pathways and have a lot of students that will graduate with their full degree in addition to a nurse aide certificate or phlebotomy certificate.

Once in a while we'll get medical assisting.

We have some students this year that are doing a couple students are doing the full medical assisting degree diploma actually are staying.

They have finished their associate of science and have stayed for year 13, to do the Medical Assisting diploma.

Umm, so yeah, students are the opportunity to finish the whole degree.

They're textbooks are paid for… their fees. There's no additional cost to students when they're enrolled in an early college.

SCOTT RALLS: Well, I'm gonna ask you in just a second to kind of walk through each of the four and say what's unique.

But before you, one of the things to try to make sure everybody understands what is unique about these four early colleges and there's a couple of others in Wake County, we need to give a shout out to that are tied with some of our other higher ed partners.

I think the there's a STEM early college tied with NC State and there's also the young men and young women leadership academies and one of them tied with Saint Augs.

TERRI ALLEN: They're both tied with Saint Augustine.

SCOTT RALLS: So those seven collectively fall within cooperative, innovative high schools and then four are uniquely connected to Wake Tech.

But what that means is these are these are your high school.

That's just… in most cases they're smaller right they're….

TERRI ALLEN: They are.

There's a limit the high schools have a limit on them that they can take 100 students per grade level.

So total of 400 students from 9 through 12th grade and then the students that stay for the grade 13 whoever may decide to say stay so the largest you're gonna find is probably about 400 450 students in one of these high schools.

They have an opportunity, students do, to participate in sports. Each one of our early colleges is aligned with a different high school in Wake County that they can play sports, which is a nice opportunity that students don't miss out on that as well.

SCOTT RALLS: Yeah, I know some of the students played, I think at the New Early College, they are Green Hope.

Terri Allen: Yes.

SCOTT RALLS: I know one of my sons played football at Broughton and he had the kids from the Young Men's Leadership Academy have played at Broughton and so I know that gives them that opportunity.

But let's you know… but this is their high school.

And they are there all day and and they are… that.. it's a small high school… either connected with us or on our campuses, and you said, you know well, may have 450 because in the case of about half the students will finish and associates degree while they're in high school.

And then the other half take an extra super senior year free of charge.

TERRI ALLEN: Correct. That's right.

SCOTT RALLS: So, huge opportunity and before we go forward and talk about each of those four that are connected to Wake Tech, let's do a shout out too because now it's an important time.

If you're interested in one of these, high school opportunities, can you talk some of that?

TERRI ALLEN: If students are interested in this opportunity, it's important for them to go to the Wake County Public School website and submit a magnet application for one of the early colleges they have from now until December 14th to take advantage of this opportunity.

And then students will find out in January or February of they've been selected to come to an early college, and there's a whole application process through Wake County schools that students have to get a couple recommendations from a high school counselor or high school assistant principal or a math teacher… an English teacher.

And we they have to write an essay about why they're passionate about this early college and specifically which one they want to come to.

SCOTT RALLS: Well, in the few minutes we have left, let's walk through our four early colleges and tell us what's unique about each one.

Let's start with Wake Early College of Health and Sciences.

TERRI ALLEN: OK.

SCOTT RALLS: Because that was the first.

TERRI ALLEN: Yeah.

SCOTT RALLS: Tell us about that.

TERRI ALLEN: That was the 1st in 2006 and students at that early college had the opportunity to do an Associate in Science, Associate of Arts degree or Health Science pathway.

They are located on the Wake Tech Perry Health Science Campus as 9th and 10th graders, and then when they're 11th and 12th graders, they take their classes at the North Campus.

So they're split between the two and both on a Wake Tech Campus, which is really nice.

The students and they also take all of their classes and with our traditional population.

SCOTT RALLS: Yeah, it's in and the 9th and 10th… they're actually on our Health Science campus, Perry Health Science Campus, which is contiguous to Wake Med as part of our big expansions for the future.

But you know, the early colleges is uniquely part of our healthcare programs and I've had to correct myself recently, I used to… in describing what happens in our Perry Health Science campus… I'd say, well, we we educate everyone in healthcare except for the doctors except for now, I keep running into students who are graduates of Wake Early College, High School who were in Med school in certain cases.

So a lot of the, a lot of students are starting as doctors and going to Med school are having that starting point at Wake Early. So I have to kind of correct myself.

Even doctors are getting trained and educated through programs at Wake Tech.

TERRI ALLEN: And I think the interesting thing about that early college is that being on the Perry Health Science campus connected to Wake Med, the 9th and 10th graders, we really put a focus on with the CDC that Elvin mentioned, like the Career Development Coordinator that's assigned to that school, really works with the Wake Tech faculty that are in the Health Science program, such as dental assisting, dental hygiene, phlebotomy, nursing.

And so students are really getting a lot of career development in the 9th and 10th graders, and they're learning about just the abundance of careers that are available in the Health Sciences.

And I think that's why we do find students that go on…

SCOTT RALLS: and from the medical system…

TERRI ALLEN: Absolutely.

SCOTT RALLS: MDs to dental… to whatever. It's the whole gamut of healthcare, and so each of the early colleges has affinities.

I mean, health, science, early college or the wake early college for health and life health and sciences is the affinity is all healthcare.

Now our two career and college academies… Did I say that right?

TERRI ALLEN: Yeah.

SCOTT RALLS: CA. College and career academies.

I got them… So it's Career College Promise, but college and career academies?

TERRI ALLEN: Yes.

SCOTT RALLS: So college career Academy. We have two and they're remarkable.

But they have more than one… they're not just a single sector affinity and which came first?

TERRI ALLEN: Vernon Malone College Academy.

SCOTT RALLS: That is a unique place.

TERRI ALLEN: It is.

It is a partnership between Wake Tech, Wake County schools and Wake County government.

When that school was established, it is in downtown Raleigh at the old Coca Cola bottling plant,

SCOTT RALLS: Which it turned into great facility.

TERRI ALLEN: It is a beautiful facility. Students that choose to go to Vernon Malone have the opportunity to take a welding, simulation and game development, nurse aid, cosmetology,

biopharmaceutical technology or facility maintenance technology, and if they do, facility maintenance students are getting courses in electrical systems technology as well as HVAC.

SCOTT RALLS: And they still have collision…

TERRI ALLEN: At the high school, we are doing collision out there, so the high school CTE classes are in collision, but we also are putting an emphasis on getting those students over to our new Hendrick Automotive Center so that they can see what else is available in collision.

We find that a lot of students will do collision and then they're doing the Wake Tech welding program or something because those obviously tie together and then that's a good fit if they decide to come into automotive at Wake Tech.

SCOTT RALLS: That was fresh on my mind as I was, they had an event last week at Hendrick Center.

Our Hendrickson Center for Automotive Excellence with Kyle Larson, the NASCAR where they gave money to Vernon Malone.

You know, that's the thing. There's so many employers really support the Vernon Malone College and Career Academy because, umm, the student gets such remarkable skills in that program.

I've heard so many great stories of…

TERRI ALLEN: Yeah.

SCOTT RALLS: … students who are in those programs and they're in such demand when they get out.

TERRI ALLEN: They do. They have job opportunities waiting for them.

Some decide to come to Wake Tech and finish their degree.

Some go to work and then the employer and they also look at the apprenticeship model.

Sometimes students do where they can continue to come at Wake Tech, come to Wake Tech through the apprenticeship model, but get paid while they're doing what they started at Vernon Malone.

SCOTT RALLS: It’s a unique place.

TERRI ALLEN: It’s a great place.

SCOTT RALLS: From biopharma to welding to, you mentioned it… to game development.

To HVAC, I mean just the opportunities and that tremendous place, Vernon Malone, and what a what a great facility they've created there.

We're we're proud to be a partner there and have our instructors there working hand in glove.

TERRI ALLEN: We do and I think the other unique thing about the early college, Dr. Ralls, is that we do have a director that's on site at each one and that director, there's 4 directors in the early colleges and they are on site.

So they work with students from 9th grade and through grade 13, and that one point of contact and that's I think helps our model to be successful.

SCOTT RALLS: So Vernon Malone, it's not on our campus. We are direct… We are so directly with the directors and with the instructors that are there.

So, let's flip up to go a little bit north to North Wake.

TERRI ALLEN: So in 2017, we opened North Wake College and Career Academy and we have five different programs of study up there.

We have culinary arts, early childhood education, IT with a focus on service and support, emergency medical science and business administration.

And so students can do everything, you know… Again, very much like Vernon Malone, where students focus and can finish the full AAS degree while you know while in an early college, they can also do certifications like our 11th graders just received their ServeSafe that are in the culinary arts and then our IT students also have the opportunity to earn industry certifications while they're there as well as the EMS students have the ability to earn their EMT Level 1 certification.

SCOTT RALLS: That's while in high school.

TERRI ALLEN: While in high school.

SCOTT RALLS: And and it's in Wake Forest, correct?

TERRI ALLEN: Yes, Wake Forest.

It's an old it was a former Wake…. It's Wake County school building that they rent, and it was a former grocery store that they turned into a 9th grade center that now is on North Wake College and Career.

And it was upfitted so that we could have these five programs out there.

SCOTT RALLS: Another great location and just great team.

One question about that. So, you have different places, different programs.

So, like Health Science is on our our campus, our Health Science campus Vernons Malone is downtown Wilmington… North Wake, but if it isn't there, transportation opportunity.

So I don't have to necessarily live while it is in Wake Forest… I could live in another part of Wake County and attend that.

TERRI ALLEN: So there are certain transportation patterns that dictate, I think the thing about the early colleges is Wake Tech and Wake County schools have been strategic about their placement of the programs and the placement of not only from a location standpoint, but what we offer.

You'll notice… So far, we don't offer any of the programs the same.

It's really college has unique programs to them, but a student can live in other areas and bus transportation is provided to students.

Sometimes students have to go to a transportation hub, for example, Southeast Raleigh High School is a transportation hub for the students at Vernon Malone.

SCOTT RALLS: Gotcha.

TERRI ALLEN: So different transportation hubs are designated for each of these high schools.

SCOTT RALLS: But it makes it possible that I don't have to live in Wake Forest to go to North Wake, right?

TERRI ALLEN: Correct. That's that's my correct.

SCOTT RALLS: And before we transition to our last and our newest early college high school, one of the things I wanna give a shout out to is you know you were former principal and principals are just I mean gosh, what important work principals do and and our early college principals and all the the staff and the team.

I know I have a close relationship with the principal at North Wake because she was principal when the middle school when my my boys were in middle school, so Elizabeth Battle, I knew before she was principal there.

But I've got to know Abby, who's been involved at Vernon Malone and now and just, you know, the leadership of the early college high schools and the College and Career Academy.

They're special. They're special people and they've they've really they have a foot in, you know, clearly with public schools, but also with Wake Tech and move and with the career world and and pretty special people involved in these programs.

TERRI ALLEN: Yeah. That's true.

Yeah, it's… It's nice to have my experience as a principal and to be able to work with these principals again and have that opportunity because they come to these early colleges with great leadership skills and ready to lead.

But then when they start working with Wake Tech, they're like help… Help… Tell us about Wake Tech.

Who do we navigate through and can you tell us what in associate degree is… What's an AAS degree? What does it mean?

And so it's a learning curve for them as well, coming to a new environment and partnering with Wake Tech.

SCOTT RALLS: Now our newest opportunity started this fall and that's the Wake Early College of Information and Biotechnologies at our RTP campus and Morrisville, right outside Research Triangle Park.

Tell us about that program.

TERRI ALLEN: What a unique opportunity that is for students.

Morrisville is very excited about this opportunity.

It is their first high school in the town of Morrisville.

We have four programs at that school for students, biotechnology, cyber security, network management and computer programming.

And students, the way this curriculum has been designed, it's the students in 9th and 10th grade are taking a focus in their CTE classes with a lot of career development in the IT fields.

And so we're, you know, they're not just selecting a program without having some knowledge.

SCOTT RALLS: Right.

TERRI ALLEN: There's a lot of career development happening so students know.

I mean, there's so many employers over in that area that are really interested in coming to speak to the students and the students recently did tours of our RT1 building just to look at our networking labs just to learn more about what it is in our instructors that teach out at RTP.

Wake Tech instructors have been willing to come into their classrooms to talk to them to help them have a better understanding before they select what program it is they want to get engaged with.

SCOTT RALLS: I love seeing some of the social media coming from there.

You can see the opportunity I've I've seen them with the visiting biotech companies.

I also saw I think many of the students were taking Python programming in their freshman and their first year, so they're they're doing some pretty unique things that at that, that high school, which we were so proud is on our RTP campus.

TERRI ALLEN: And the curriculum setup.

So that students will be able to get some industry certifications in 9th and 10th grade that can translate into a couple of the Wake Tech classes so they will not have to take a Wake Tech class that they earn that this certification through their high school CTE classes which is a unique opportunity as well.

SCOTT RALLS: The way IT and biotech is growing in this area, I think also there's a goal really to focus on first generation students, isn't it?

TERRI ALLEN: Yes, we have a goal of 70% first generation students for all of the early colleges.

SCOTT RALLS: All four of our early colleges.

TERRI ALLEN: All four early colleges.

SCOTT RALLS: Does that mean you get preference or what does that mean, If you… how does that work?

TERRI ALLEN: That does mean they look at early college or excuse me, first generation students first and based on the application that they submit, they try to take as many first generation students as we can.

SCOTT RALLS: So if you were the first in your family to go to college, that might be a great option… and you want to go in the biotech or the IT world is so that what a great opportunity.

TERRI ALLEN: What a great opportunity to be able to come out of high school… um, with a degree.

SCOTT RALLS: One thing I want to emphasize too about that institution or the new early colleges, we've it's also where you see our university partnerships come together because we have now North Carolina A&T.

We just did a partnership which is located in the same facility now at the what's called the Lilly Center for Science and Technology.

But you will be able to finish on site through A&T the same degrees you could actually start in high school, so I don't know if there's another place in the country where you can start in really advanced IT… BIOTECH in 9th grade. Go through a Community College, but even finish up at a university at the same site.

If you go to multiple different types of universities, we have so many partnerships, but if you want to stay home and stay on that campus, you got an opportunity.

So, and it's a world of opportunity there and that high school it… How will that grow?

I know it started smaller. How will it grow over time?

TERRI ALLEN: Yes, this year we have 9th and 10th graders.

Next year we will be taking in a new group of 9th graders, so we'll 9th, 10th and 11th graders next year, and then finally the following year we'll have a full 9 through 12th grade.

We'll have, but every year we're taking in a new grade level.

So we started with just 9th and 10th graders.

We've got 100 and about 45 students, 9th and 10th graders out there right now.

SCOTT RALLS: And again, I wanna thank our corporate partners who also provide those opportunities in that facility.

I'll just note that some of the students, if they're in the network management, they'll probably take their courses in the Cisco Network Management room there.

There's a remarkable training facility if they're biotech or any of them, they're at the Fujifilm Diosynth Biotechnologies early college suite, which is where they hang out, and the building is the Lilly Center for Science and Technology because Eli Lilly gives such support.

So everybody's interested in evolving opportunities for students starting in high school through

Wake Tech and then through university partners for those who choose to move forward but stay at home with opportunity.

Growing opportunity laddering up here in Wake County and that and that's made possible through our partners.

So just amazing work and amazing opportunity that is uniquely here in Wake County and at Wake Tech thanks to our great partnerships with Wake County Public Schools and the programs we have here.

As we end, I wanna end by you telling us again these dates because again, our emphasis today is how much opportunities here.

But to grab it, you gotta grab it.

And so tell us again if I'm interested… If I'm a high school student or parent of a student, I want I'm at a high school and I wanna do Career and College Promise programs… dual enrollment while in high school. What do I do?

ELVIN JAMES: Yes. So again, visit CCP.waketake.edu.

Our application deadline is December 15th, and we can continue course registration until mid-January, so definitely still plenty of time for students to apply, but we highly encourage that they apply as early as possible because courses do come quick.

SCOTT RALLS: The time is now.

So yes, soon as you finish this podcast, go to that website ccp.waketech.edu and you can find everything you need to do that.

ELVIN JAMES: Yes.

SCOTT RALLS: And if you're interested in one of these really unique high schools, the early colleges or our career college and career academies again, Terri, tell us, what do I do right now?

TERRI ALLEN: Students should go to www.wcpss.net, which is Wake County Public Schools website and click on the magnet application and they have until December 14th complete that magnet application.

SCOTT RALLS: Okay, so these fall under the magnet opportunities with Wake County Public Schools.

Look for those opportunities through Wake County Public Schools and you'll find your way to our great partnerships.

Well, these partnerships happen because of the partners at the wonderful, amazing partners we have with Wake County Public School and the amazing leadership there as well as here at Wake Tech.

And we've been so fortunate today to have two of our very best leaders at Wake Tech.

Those who lead these connections and partnerships with our great public schools.

So thank you, Elvin James, for joining us and thank you Terri Allen.

TERRI ALLEN: Thank you.

SCOTT RALLS: You you guys are doing remarkable work.

Keep it up and keep providing more and more opportunities for the people and the students of Wake County.

TERRI ALLEN: Thank you, DR. Ralls.

ELVIN JAMES: Thank you.

SCOTT RALLS: Thank you too for joining us on this episode of the We are Wake Tech Podcast and listen to we are Wake Tech every month.

We are Wake Tech is available through all the places you might find podcasts, Apple, Spotify.

So look for we are Wake Tech and rate our podcast and join us next month for the newest episode of the We are Wake Tech Podcast.

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I'm Laurie Clowers with a Wake Tech news update. Wake County voters have affirmed their support for Wake Tech by approving a $353 million bond for a major strategic expansion.

It means that Wake Tech will be able to build innovative new training facilities on the Perry Health Sciences and RTP campuses.

The college will also build a permanent Western Wake campus to meet the tremendous job growth in Holly Springs, Apex and Cary.

Wake Tech's future Eastern Wake campuses taking shape a topping out ceremony was held to celebrate the placement of the final beam on the public safety simulation complex.

The complex will be the first facility of the site expected to open next fall.

Wake Tech Health Sciences students got a hands-on training in responding to a large-scale emergency.

The scenario simulated a tornado that resulted in mock injuries. Students from Wake Tech, nursing and EMS programs participated.

Wake Tech student staff and faculty participated in a special observance in honor of Veteran's Day, the Wake Tech Honor Guard presented the colors, while career coach Johnette Smith sang the national anthem. Wake Tech is proud to be a military friendly gold award institution.

Wake Tech's John Deere Agricultural Tech Systems program has been recognized as one of the best in the world.

The program has earned the distinction of platinum status from the Deer and Company.

It's one of only three such programs in North America to achieve platinum status, and that program had special visitors recently.

Governor Roy Cooper joined United States Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and White House infrastructure officials for an announcement about funding to bring broadband Internet access to rural areas.

The Hendrick Center for Automotive Excellence is being recognized for setting a new standard in automotive repair instruction.

The center received a 2022 Sir Walter Raleigh Award from the City of Raleigh appearance Commission.

The Commission called the Hendrick Center a beautiful project and said it sets a great tone for the importance of Community College education.

Defending NASCAR champion Kyle Larson came to the Hendrick Center recently.

The driver of Hendricks #5 car was on hand to help present a $25,000 grant to students at the Vernon Malone College and Career Academy.

Students got their picture taken and got a tour of the award winning facility.

As we approach the holidays, the Care Center at Wake Tech organized Awake and Thankful a Thanksgiving meal distribution for students in need.

Some Wake Tech students joined employees in packing meals made possible by the support of Food Lion, Publix and Wegmans.

And finally, the winner of this year's Wake Tech idol is Mary Ann Valino.

The medical assisting student defeated nine other finalists to win the vocal competition and she walks away with a $2,000 scholarship courtesy of the Wake Tech Foundation.

Congratulations, Mary Ann.

And that's the latest Wake Tech news.

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JIM FREEMAN: I'm Jim Freman.

I'm program director for the heating and air conditioning program.

We're gonna go over a few pointers to get ready for the winter with the heating season coming on.

So the first thing we want to talk about is safety.

We wanna make sure if you have gas, heat or any gas appliances in your house, you have a carbon monoxide detector that's the safe way to make sure that we are protecting ourselves.

Gas appliances can malfunction and it can put out poisonous gas.

The other thing we want to do is make sure our smoke detectors are… they have batteries and they're ready to go for the winter.

Winter we see more fires than summer because obviously we got a lot of heat generating appliances.

The next thing for homeowners is make sure your air filter is replaced.

Often this the system's gotta breathe, and if you look at the air filter, there's actually an arrow on it.

It is directional, so the air would typically flow through the filter to the air handler.

So you want the arrow pointing towards your unit, which is most of the time… these would be like they're the thermostat. So you wanna point it in toward the wall, not out toward the room?

A good way to test that or check in their filter to see if it needs replaced or not is to hold it up to the light.

If you hold it air filter up to the light and you can see the light through it pretty easy.

It's probably OK if you're having any trouble at all… Replace the air filter.

Keep the unit clear of all obstructions. This is called a package unit. This would set outside.

We also have another type of unit which would be the split systems over here, where one unit is in your house, one is outside.

You wanna keep both of these clear of obstructions whether you got gas heat or heat pump, these things do not need anything up next to ‘em.

If you got a unit in the attic, keep all your boxes… any storage away from it.

Let the unit have room to breathe… Have access and if someone comes to work on it.

Had they have access, it also keeps anything from falling over, damaging your piece of equipment.

The last thing is these equipment, this all these types of systems are complicated.

I would not recommend a homeowner DYI trying to prepare these things for winter.

Besides what I said, you need to call in a professional to have your system inspected and make sure you're ready for winter.

They can find things ahead of time to make sure you're prepared to have a nice warm winter season.

So I'm Jim with Wake Tech and that pretty much covers our DYI on the heating system.

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

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