Wake Technical Community College
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CareerFocus

DEFENDING THE CYBER UNIVERSE

CYBER SECURITY EXPERTS ARE HIGH-TECH SUPERHEROES!

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Women's Soccer Aiming for Lofty Goals

A buzz is building for the Lady Eagles! Head coach Kristopher Hanks can sense it and he's excited to see the women's soccer team take the field in August. "We've had great success on the recruiting trail." he says. "From talented club team players to high school state champions, we have a great balance of skill and experience."

When Coach Hanks took the helm in May of 2018, he was enthusiastic about the potential for women's soccer at Wake Tech. "I'm thrilled to be part of a cultural revolution in the women's soccer program," he continues. "I'm proud to have the chance to work with our student athletes to change how Region X and the NJCAA perceives us."

Performance on and off the field is important to Coach Hanks. For him, having players ready for the real world is a top priority. "It's important to be in class. You come to school for one reason, to graduate," he says, "Being able to use your diploma to guarantee a better life for yourself and your family is critical."

Both the women's and men's soccer teams play their home games at Ting Park in Holly Springs.

Know someone who would like to play sports at Wake Tech? Visit waketechsports.com for more information and game schedules. And follow all the action on Twitter @waketechsports!

Career Focus is published by Wake Technical Community College to encourage Wake County residents to enrich their lives through lifelong learning, to provide information about careers and Wake Tech's programs of study, and to promote workforce training and economic development. Questions about the Wake Tech programs and services described in this publication should be directed to 919-866-5000. For questions or comments about this publication, call 919-866-5929.

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CareerFocus

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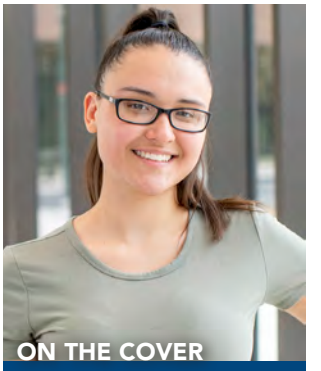


ON THE COVER

Ariel King will graduate with an AAS in Cyber Security. She plans to continue at Wake Tech to earn another associate's degree – in criminal justice or networking. Her goal is to become an ethical hacker.

On the go?

Read CareerFocus anytime on your mobile device, computer or tablet at

waketech.mycareerfocus.org

From the President

Welcome to Career Focus!

It's an honor to be Wake Tech's fourth president and to lead North Carolina's largest community college.

Since I arrived in April, my schedule has been nonstop and I love it! Wake Tech is everything I knew it would be. With the latest training technologies, multiple locations, and vast array of courses, Wake Tech puts opportunity into the hands of every student.

Please take a look at this CareerFocus and the great course offerings at Wake Tech. We're looking forward to working with you to meet your educational goals.

Dr. Scott Ralls
Wake Technical Community College

Defending the Cyber Universe

Cyber security experts are high-tech superheroes!

We live in an increasingly digital universe – and as our everyday lives depend more and more on computer technology, our need for cyber security grows. That's why cyber security professionals are in such high demand. These skilled technicians protect our most valuable data, from personal information to bank accounts and medical records.

"Cyber security touches all industries – from IT and communications to healthcare, finance, and retail commerce," says Keith Babuszczak, dean of Wake Tech's Computer Technologies division. "We want all our transactions to be safe and secure, whether we're making a purchase with a credit card or simply checking out at the grocery store."

There is reason for concern: According to *Tripwire*, the FBI received more than 2,600 complaints about the malicious software known as ransomware in 2016. In 2015, there were more than 112 million healthcare data breaches. The challenge of protecting critical information and infrastructure has made cyber security one of the world's fastest-growing fields. *Cyber Seek* data shows that North Carolina companies posted 13,000 cyber security positions between September 2017 and August 2018. There's just one problem: **There aren't enough qualified cyber security technicians for the jobs!**

Wake Tech is trying to change that. The Associate in **Applied Science (AAS) degree in Cyber Security** covers a wide range of technology concepts, including defense in depth, ethical hacking, network vulnerabilities, secure communications, system and security administration, data recovery, routing and switching, computer investigations, industry best practices, and digital forensics. Courses are taught by certified and credentialed instructors who are industry experts in information security and networking.

"The cyber security curriculum provides students with practical

technical skills," says Carolyn DeSimone, director of Wake Tech's Network and Computer Technology program, "and really helps them stand out in the field."

Students learn how to handle sensitive data situations – for individual and corporate users – through the program's hands-on labs and virtual infrastructure. They learn how cyberattacks are staged against networks and how to address them and diminish their impact. They also gain the skills to develop and integrate security strategies that can prevent and defend against future attacks.

Robert Smith

In instructor Barbara Warner's Advanced Forensics class, students learn how to be cyber detectives. They examine crime scenes for digital evidence and learn how to collect and examine it legally. They analyze cell phone data with the equipment used by police and government agencies. They practice testifying about evidence in court on the classroom's mock witness stand. Warner, who came to Wake Tech five years ago after a 36-year career at IBM, is passionate about her students: "One of my students was offered a job at the National Security Administration (NSA). Local tech companies, including Lenovo, IBM, Red Hat, and Cisco also hire them – they are in high demand!"

Cyber Security Program Options

- Southern Wake Campus or RTP Campus
- Daytime or evening classes
- On campus or hybrid (seated/online)

Robert Smith is one of those students – he landed a full-time job providing high-tech support at Cisco before graduating from the program! "Wake Tech has prepared me well for this job," he says. "I have the skills I need to be successful – I'm very excited!"

Student Ariel King says she's ready to break the glass ceiling in cyberspace. "My instructors have given me lots of encouragement, telling me that being female, bilingual, and making that extra effort will give me a foot in the door in either a business or public sector job."

Cyber security students can also take advantage of Wake Tech's work-based learning program, which offers students the opportunity to earn academic credit while working in their field of study. "These students are highly sought after," says DeSimone, "It's a great opportunity to apply what they learn in an actual workplace."

According to Chmura JobsEQ, the entry-level salary for an information security analyst in the Triangle is $71,900; the median salary is $95,800.

Graduates of the program have a variety of options with both regional and national tech companies. They're prepared for IT careers in network security services, systems administration, ethical hacking, and digital forensics; and they're ready for industry certifications that include Certified Ethical Hacker, Certified Enterprise Defender, CCNA Security, and Security+.

Wake Tech also offers a short-term, non-credit cyber security training program through Workforce Continuing Education. The program condenses material into a shorter span of time and focuses on preparation for certification exams, such as those for CompTIA and Cisco certifications. If students decide to enroll in the AAS degree program, these certifications can count for course credit.

Once armed with the skills they need for a career in cyber security, students can look forward to excellent pay. **According to Chmura JobsEQ, the entry-level salary for an information security analyst in the Triangle is $71,900; the median salary is $95,800**. Not a bad reward for saving the cyber universe – and no cape required!

You can learn more about Wake Tech's Cyber Security degree program at **ct.waketech.edu**. For information on short-term training and certification prep programs visit **workforce.waketech.edu**.

The Road to a Rewarding Career

New Convenient Options for Civil Engineering, Geomatics Classes

Tommy Powers had 10 years of experience in surveying, but never had a degree or the credentials to move ahead. Now he's back at college to obtain both. This busy husband and father of four has been able to continue working in the field by attending classes online. "Online classes made this program a reality for me," Tommy says. "The schoolwork can be done in the comfort of your home. The classes are set up great and communication with instructors is easy through email, phone, or in person."

Surveyors gather precise measurements of the earth's surface for engineering and construction projects. Civil engineers use that data to design, build, and maintain infrastructure projects such as roads, bridges, buildings, and water systems. Due to booming growth in the Triangle, skilled Civil Engineering and Geomatics (surveying) professionals are in high demand. Fortunately, students in these two associate degree programs now have more convenient class options than ever before. Responding to input from students and counselors, many Wake Tech civil engineering and geomatics courses are now offered online, in the evenings, and on Saturdays.

Sample Courses

Civil Engineering

- Soils and Foundations
- Surveying/CAD
- Highway Technology
- Project Management

Geomatics

- Surveying
- Surveying Law
- Topo/Site Surveying
- Field and Office Practices

"Wake Tech is all about student success and meeting our students where they are," says Dean Lora Eddington. "We recognize that many of our students are working adults. We think adding more convenient class options will be a great benefit." Students in online classes have the opportunity for hands-on learning though open labs and on Saturdays.

The goal is to make classes more accessible to help increase the number of students who complete degrees and industry credentials. It's all about preparing students for jobs and career advancement. "The classes and certificates at Wake Tech are propelling me to the next level in my career and personal life," says Tommy Powers.

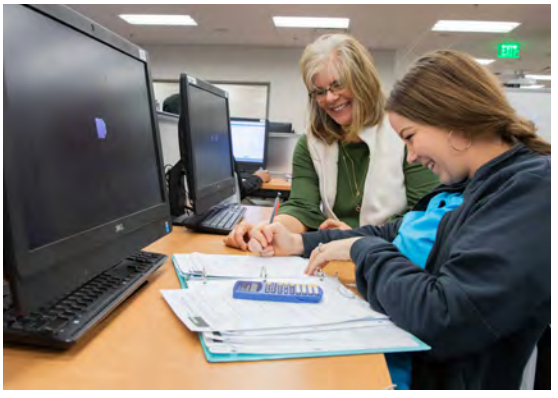
"For our Geomatics and Civil Engineering graduates, the job market is great right now," says Beth Ihnatolya, Instructional Program Director. "Local companies want our students."

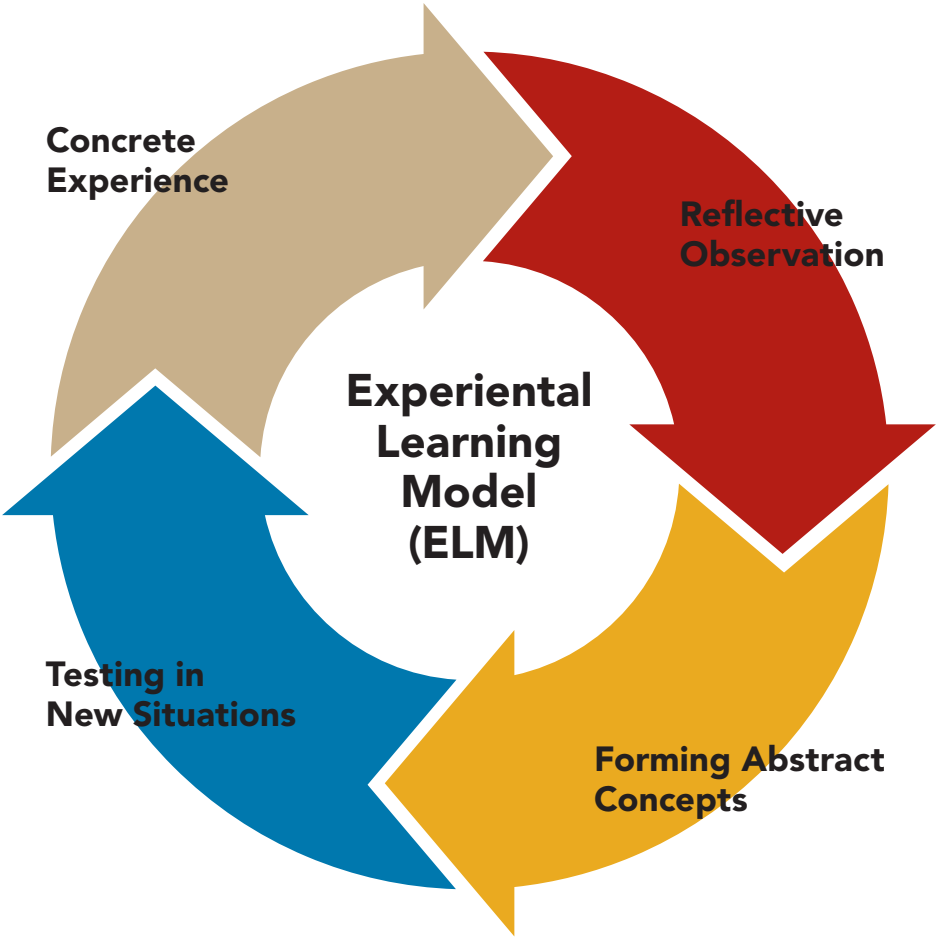
If you love the outdoors, like to solve puzzles, or have a passion for project management, a civil engineering or geomatics career may be for you! Learn more at **waketech.edu/programs-courses/credit** or call **919-866-5334**.

Learning Is All Around You

By Anna Clay McAdams, *Manager of Employment Resources*

As the world continues to advance technologically, the workforce will have a constant need for evolving skills. Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times* said several years ago, "This is not your parents' job market."





The good news is, you're never too old to learn. The question is, *how* will you learn?

Community colleges have focused on **experiential learning** since their inception. Experiential learning is a hands-on approach to learning through experience and reflection. Students participate in job shadowing days, panel discussions, business etiquette luncheons, capstone projects, networking nights, employer site visits, and Work-Based Learning to complement the classroom environment.

The benefits of this type of hands-on learning, according to Rob Franek, Editor in Chief of *The Princeton Review*, allow you to:

- **Discover what you love** by going out into the world to see and be enmeshed in the environment you think you would like to work in.
- **Take a risk** by participating in an unpredictable environment where you can experience success and failure.
- **Learn how to talk about your skills** by reflecting on your experience and having a clear understanding of what your role would be on the team.

Start learning today. It's simple. Aristotle wrote in *Nichomachean Ethics*, "for the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them."

- **Volunteer at a local non-profit.**
- **Ask your kids to show you how to use an app on their electronics.**
- **Watch the *Great British Bake Off* and try a new recipe.**
- **Spend a day shadowing a friend at work.**
- **Take an online class.**

If you're an employer and interested in your organization taking part in experiential learning at Wake Tech, please email Ian Gibbons, Coordinator of Employer Relations at ijgibbons@waketech.edu.

Working with Robots

The Future is Now!

If you think working with robots is a job for the future, think again. Wake Tech now has three collaborative robots, or "co-bots," which are light, industrial robots designed to work alongside humans. They must be programmed and operated by technicians with specialized skills – and Wake Tech's Collaborative Robotics program, developed with industry partners, provides those skills.

The program is funded by a generous Robotics Awake grant from the National Science Foundation and includes three stackable certificates: Collaborative Robotics Technician I, II, and Programmer.

"Students coming out of the Collaborative Robotics program have a range of valuable skills that are transferrable to any manufacturing job," says Jerry Pedley, whose company, Mertek Solutions, Inc., utilizes co-bots. Pedley serves on an advisory board of local employers that helps to keep the training program in line with local workforce needs.


Adeline Surface

By 2026, North Carolina is projected to add more than 389,000 manufacturing jobs, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics – and manufacturing plants rely increasingly on co-bots. Skilled workers are needed to repair and program these machines.

"I like that the Collaborative Robotics program is hands on – and not always in front of a computer," says Adeline Surface, who is working to complete the Technician II Certificate. She has an Associate in Science degree from Wake Tech and a bachelor's degree in psychology from Appalachian State University. Surface volunteered at an event where school-age kids interacted with Wake Tech's YuMi, a co-bot built by ABB. Now she wants to find a job introducing co-bots to the public. "I love how easy they are to manipulate," she says, "and that they give you immediate feedback."

Ready to learn skills for the jobs that employers are eager to fill? Visit **robotics.waketech.edu** for more information about Wake Tech's non-credit Collaborative Robotics program.

Facts and Finds

How to Perk up a Windowless Office

If you've ever spent a lot of time in a cubicle, chances are you have a greater appreciation for nature. It's no joke! Studies show that people who work in natural light-deprived spaces are much less satisfied and suffer more stress.

While you probably can't move into an executive office, you can improve your mood with a stop at the greenhouse. Researchers found that students performed better on cognitive tests when surrounded by plants than at plain desks and they experienced less fatigue. Here are several foolproof, classic plants for offices and darker homes.

- Snake plant, or mother-in-law's tongue, with stiff leaves bearing green and gold markings.
- Cast iron plant, tolerant of low light, dampness, and dust.
- Peace lily prefers moist soil and average interior temperatures, producing a large flower.
- Dracaena and philodendrons have variegated leaves, splashes of alternate color and can thrive in artificial light areas.

Source: www.gardeningknowhow.com/houseplants/hpgen/windowless-houseplants.htm

The Myth of Multitasking

In today's business world, many employees spend time bouncing back and forth between tasks, believing multitasking makes them more efficient. New studies, however, have found that multitasking is not a skill to brag about, but to worry about. These studies suggest that multitasking actually causes us to make more mistakes, retain less information, and change the way our brain works.

Working on a single task means both sides of the prefrontal cortex are working together in harmony. Adding another task forces the left and right sides of the brain to work independently.

Scientists at the Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche Médicale (INSERM) in Paris discovered this when they asked study participants to complete two tasks at the same time while undergoing functional magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). The results showed that the brain splits in half, causing us to forget details and make three times more mistakes when given two simultaneous goals.

Source: www.inc.com/scott-mautz/psychology-and-neuroscience-blow-up-the-myth-of-effective-multitasking.html

Need Help Choosing a College? Take a Tour!

Many students report campus visits as the most influential factor in deciding where to go to college. Potential students who visit campus by attending an open house find this critical in making a decision to enroll or not to enroll. Open house events at community colleges like Wake Tech are usually offered in the spring and the fall.

Many colleges also offer individual tours. You can schedule a walking tour often led by a student representative. This is a great opportunity to get an honest perspective on campus life. Ask your guide about public transportation, their favorite places to study at school, the best nearby coffee shop, or any other questions you might have.

Source: www.bncollege.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Gen-Z-Report.pdf

An Education to Make a Difference

Angela Stancil
Class of 2018, Early Childhood Education
NC Teaching Fellow

Growing up in Greenville, North Carolina, Angela Stancil felt blessed to have a support system that encouraged her in her educational pursuits. However, she recognized that not all children were as fortunate, and many had no one to take an interest in their education. Angela knew then that she wanted to one day help children in need.

Angela's first career was a certified nursing assistant (CNA) at a local nursing facility, but years later she stayed true to her dream, and enrolled at Wake Tech to pursue a degree in Early Childhood Education.

"Stepping back into the classroom after 20+ years made me nervous," says Angela. "But a friend who's a retired professor told me that my life experience would add value to the younger students in the program, confirming that I was right where I needed to be."

At Wake Tech, Angela would encourage incoming students to take advantage of the ILC (Individualized Learning Center) on campus and establish great communication with professors, as both were critical to her success in the Early Childhood Education program.

Angela Stancil

Before she graduated with her associate's degree, she learned about the NC Teaching Fellows, a highly coveted program designed to encourage educators to teach in North Carolina by offering loan forgiveness and awards. Knowing she wanted to further her education beyond her AA degree, she began researching the program. She applied, submitted several essays, and was chosen as a semi-finalist. Then she had an in-person interview with the selection committee.

"When I got the email that I was chosen as a NC Teaching Fellow, I cried. I was in complete shock," says Angela. "Things like that don't happen to me!"

The transition from Wake Tech to the NC Teaching Fellows program was a tough time for Angela. She's grateful for professors like Florianna Thompson who recognized her struggle, and guided her through to completion. She believes the dedicated faculty is one of the many things that make Wake Tech so special.

Today, Angela is a NC Teaching Fellow at Meredith College pursuing her bachelor's degree. Her ultimate goal is to earn a master's degree in Special Education and help children with special needs.

Steps to Enroll at Wake Tech

1 Visit apply.waketech.edu

- ★ Complete the NC Residency Determination
- ★ Submit online application

Next Steps

2 Visit admissions.waketech.edu

- ★ Request financial aid and veterans benefits
- ★ Send transcript(s)
- ★ Meet with an advisor
- ★ Attend New Student Orientation

NOW YOU'RE READY TO REGISTER FOR CLASSES!

Browse class offerings and plan your schedule at **register.waketech.edu**.

If you're new to online learning, please take the eLearning Intro readiness assessment before registering for an online course. Visit **eli.waketech.edu**.

WAKE TECH NOW OFFERS A TUITION PAYMENT PLAN!

Questions?

Admissions
Phone: **919-866-5500**
Email: **admissions@waketech.edu**
Website: **admissions.waketech.edu**

Advising
Phone: **919-866-5500**
Email: **advising@waketech.edu**
Website: **advising.waketech.edu**

Registration
Phone: **919-866-5700**
Email: **registrar@waketech.edu**
Website: **registrar.waketech.edu**

Experiment with New Ideas!

Explore possibilities! Discover education and career options you may not have dreamed of yet – at Wake Tech! Take a look at this comprehensive guide. You can build a foundation for a future of discovery, or enhance your knowledge and skills to keep learning, growing, and finding new wonders!

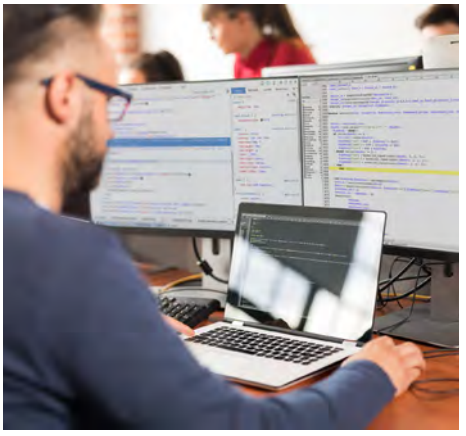
College Transfer
Associate in Arts (AA)
Associate in Science (AS)
Associate in Engineering (AE)
Associate in Fine Arts (AFA)

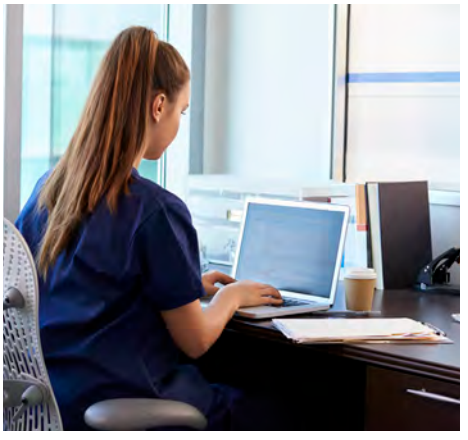
Career Programs		
Credentials Key:		
AAS = Associate in Applied Science	D = Diploma	C = Certificate

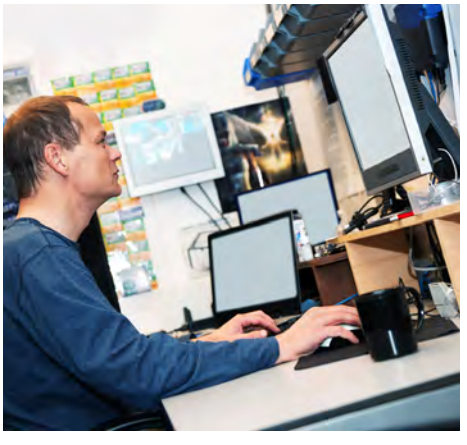
APPLIED ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGIES

Career Path	National Median Salary
Agricultural Systems Technology (AAS, D)	$24,645-$47,598
Air Conditioning, Heating & Refrigeration Technology (AAS, D, C)	$29,472-$46,964
Architectural Technology (AAS, C)	$26,434-$47,319
Automotive Systems Technology (AAS)	$27,740-$50,980
Biopharmaceutical Technology (AAS, C)	$24,568-$45,082
Civil Engineering Technology (AAS, C)	$26,892-$59,321
Collision Repair and Refinishing Technology (AAS, C)	$32,020-$54,660
Construction Equipment Systems Technology (AAS, D, C)	$25,000-$45,000
Construction Management Technology (AAS, C)	$34,253-$43,210
Diesel and Heavy Equipment Technology (AAS, D, C)	$29,261-$54,105
Electrical Systems Technology (AAS, D, C)	$28,000-$49,282
Electronics Engineering Technology (AAS, C)	$32,500-$66,470
Facility Maintenance Technology (AAS,C)	$30,427-$41,854
Geomatics Technology (AAS, C)	$33,483-$48,913
Heavy Equipment Operator, Management, and Service (AAS, D, C)	$34,750-$48,480
Interior Design (AAS)	$23,691-$44,862
Mechanical Engineering Technology (AAS, C)	$34,155-$47,036
Mission Critical Operations (AAS, C)	$36,700-$51,000
Plumbing (D,C)	$29,076-$48,682
Welding Technology (AAS, D, C)	$30,447-$80,050

Sources: U.S. Department of Labor www.bls.gov, www.salary.com, www.naceweb.org, and employer surveys. Salaries may vary based on experience, education, and location.

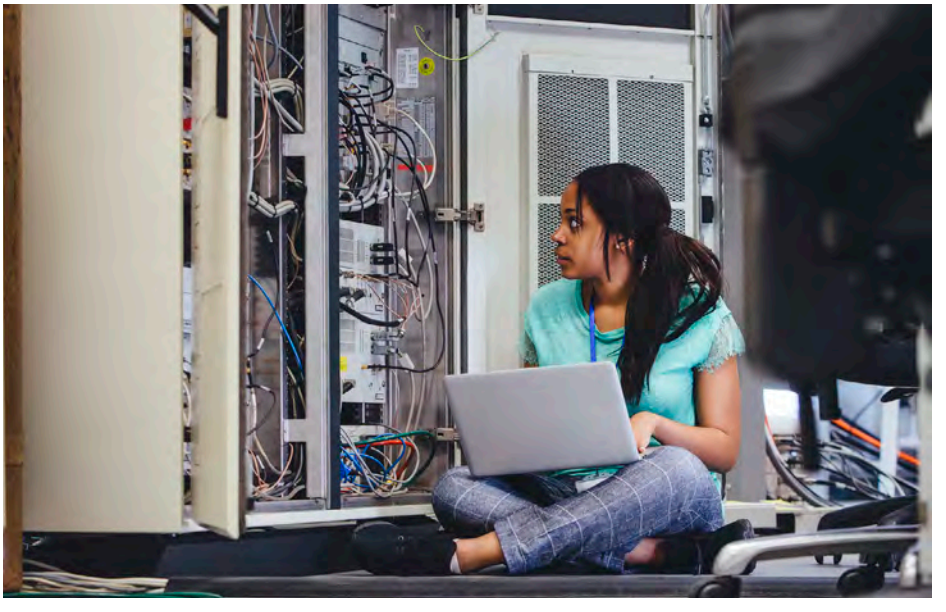






COMPUTER TECHNOLOGIES

Career Path	National Median Salary
Advertising and Graphic Design (AAS, C)	$26,100-$74,700
Information Technology - Cyber Security (AAS, D)	$43,113-$100,510
Information Technology - Computer Engineering (AAS)	$44,000-$112,000
Information Technology - Computer Programming and Development (AAS, C)	$50,000-$107,000
Information Technology - Data Science and Programming Support Services (AAS, C)	$60,000-$129,000
Information Technology - Healthcare Business Informatics (AAS)	$33,087-$68,680
Information Technology - Mobile Applications Developer (AAS, C)	$43,000-$94,000
Information Technology - Network Management (AAS,D, C)	$36,318-$77,935
Information Technology - Storage & Virtualization (AAS)	$33,906-$74,643
Information Technology - Technical Support (AAS, C)	$35,000-$68,680
Information Technology - Web Designer (AAS, C)	$50,000-$70,000
Information Technology - Web Developer (AAS, C)	$50,000-$85,000
Medical Office Administration - Medical Office Professional (AAS, D, C)	$32,000-$45,000
Medical Office Administration - Medical Billing and Coding (AAS)	$38,000-$55,000
Medical Office Administration - Healthcare Administration (AAS)	$38,000-$55,000
Office Administration - Legal Office (AAS, C)	$35,000-$60,000
Office Administration - Office Finance (AAS)	$32,000-$50,000
Office Administration - Office Professional (AAS, D, C)	$30,000-$45,000
Office Administration - Office Software (AAS, C)	$32,000-$50,000
Simulation and Game Development (AAS, C)	$40,100-$78,000



Sources: U.S. Department of Labor www.bls.gov, www.salary.com, www.naceweb.org, and employer surveys. Salaries may vary based on experience, education, and location.

BUSINESS AND PUBLIC SERVICES TECHNOLOGIES

Career Path	National Median Salary
Accounting (AAS, D, C)	$30,250-$44,000
Baking & Pastry Arts (AAS, D, C)	$29,472-$46,964
Business Administration (AAS, C)	$37,000-$83,700
Business Administration/ Global Business Management (AAS, C)	$37,000-$85,400
Business Administration/ Human Resources Management (AAS, C)	$38,040-$57,400
Business Administration/ Marketing (AAS, C)	$31,200- $55,680
Business Analytics (AAS, C)	$35,000-$60,000
Cosmetology (AAS, D)	$15,962-$47,383
Criminal Justice Technology (AAS, C)	$32,508-$56,319
Criminal Justice Technology/Forensic Science (AAS, C)	$34,410-$56,360
Culinary Arts (AAS, D, C)	$23,000-$55,000
Early Childhood Education (AAS, D, C)	$20,300-$45,300
Esthetics (C)	$24,300-$36,000
Fire Protection Technology (AAS, C)	$30,000-$40,000
Hospitality Management (AAS, D, C)	$28,640-$51,030
Project Management (AAS, C)	$67,758-$73,106
Supply Chain Management/ Distribution Management (AAS, C)	$31,000-$50,000
Supply Chain Management/ Global Logistics Technology (AAS, C)	$31,000-$50,000

HEALTH SCIENCES

Career Path	National Median Salary
Computed Tomography - CT (C)	$61,317-$74,110
Dental Assisting (D)	$37,630-$53,130
Dental Hygiene (AAS)	$57,200-$74,526
Emergency Medical Science (AAS)	$33,380-$56,990
Health and Fitness Science (AAS, C)	$24,130-$59,830
Health Simulation Technology (AAS, C)	$22,734-$45,011
Human Services Technology (AAS)	$25,140-$34,750
Human Services Technology/Mental Health (AAS, C)	$28,850-$38,520
Human Services Technology/Substance Abuse (AAS, C)	$25,140-$40,400
Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) (D)	$66,801-$80,441
Medical Assisting (AAS, D)	$27,580-$38,340
Medical Laboratory Technology (AAS)	$35,692-$57,720
Nursing, Associate Degree (AAS)	$61,330-$79,000
Pharmacy Technology (AAS, D)	$20,580-$42,400
Phlebotomy (C)	$27,350-$38,800
Radiography (AAS)	$40,684-$60,944
Therapeutic Massage (D)	$27,640-$57,280

Sources: U.S. Department of Labor www.bls.gov, www.salary.com, www.naceweb.org, and employer surveys. Salaries may vary based on experience, education, and location.

Against All Odds

Community Support Helps Former Foster Youth Succeed

There are 300 students working to become registered nurses in the Martha Mann Smith School of Nursing at Wake Tech. Hundreds more are in pre-nursing, hoping to get into the acclaimed program. It's one of Wake Tech's few competitive entry programs, due to the limited availability of clinical training sites.

None of that stopped Kelsea Read – she applied to the program and got in! And it's not the first time she has beaten the odds. Kelsea grew up in foster care, and she was on her own once she turned 18. She was aware of the stats and knew they were not encouraging: **Less than three percent of young people who age out of foster care succeed in earning a college degree**. But Kelsea also knew – as she often says, with conviction – "I am not a statistic!"

After graduating from Panther Creek High School, she enrolled in Wake Tech's Fostering Bright Futures program, which gave her the support she needed to earn an associate in science degree. Fostering Bright Futures was established in 2008 to provide academic, social, and financial support to help former foster youth succeed in their college endeavors. The program focuses on eliminating the barriers these students often face as they seek an education and more productive, independent lives.

"In foster care, you're taught not to ask for help," Kelsea says, "and while that mindset made me resourceful, it also taught me that I could rely only on myself." Fostering Bright Futures, she learned, offered a support structure that allowed her to worry less about surviving and focus more on thriving in her academic pursuits.

"These students face all kinds of obstacles," says Michelle Blackmon, program coordinator for FBF. "Some need academic support, others need assistance with finances or transportation, and some can benefit from having someone to talk with about the challenges they face. We try to understand each student's unique situation and provide what is needed."

The Fostering Bright Futures program currently serves 30 students – but that number will soon double, thanks to a three-year, $346,000 gift from Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina. The funds will go toward program materials, technology, and other resources to help expand the program to 60 students. Blue Cross NC joins a network of community partners who support the program, including Wake County government, AT&T, Lenovo, Dress for Success, the United Way of the Greater Triangle, and others.

"Achieving good health is about more than simply going to see a doctor. It's also about safe housing, reliable transportation and meaningful employment that allows individuals pursue their dreams," says Jesse Thomas, Blue Cross NC Vice President for the Medicaid Segment and Chief Executive for Healthy Blue. "Blue Cross NC recognizes the positive impact that the Fostering Bright Futures program has on our community. It provides needed support to young adults leaving the foster care system so they're able to thrive in the next stage of life, and it also aligns with our mission of improving the health and well-being of all North Carolinians."

Wake Tech President Dr. Scott Ralls says the value of a program like Fostering Bright Futures cannot be overstated: "These inspiring young adults have overcome serious obstacles to pursue the goal of an education. It's our responsibility to do everything we can to help them become happy, healthy, productive members of the community."

Since Fostering Bright Futures began 10 years ago, 13 students have earned associate's degrees, seven have transferred to universities, and six are working in their chosen field. Forty-five students are currently on a waiting list for the program, which has the potential to change their lives.

Learn more and support the program at **fosteringbrightfutures.waketech.edu**.

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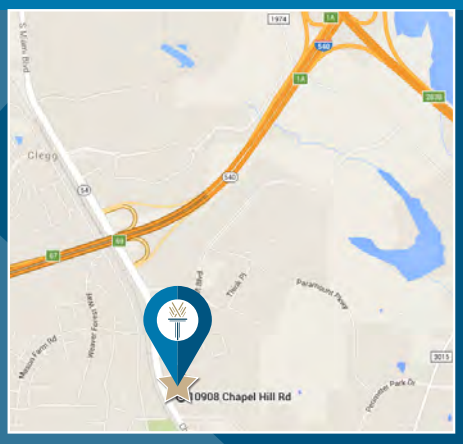

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