

INTRODUCTION: Hello, this is Michael Eure, and I'd like to invite you to the Michael EURE Show featuring student hosts and very special guests talking about variety of interesting topics. You can find us on the Eagle Stream YouTube channel.

MICHAEL EURE: Good afternoon, and welcome to the Michael Eure Show. We have a very, very special guest today, Mr. Brian Anweiler, and he is the athletic director at Wake Tech. But we're going to start with brief introductions, and we'll start with Jerry because Jerry always knows how quickly this goes.

JERRY GREENE: Hi, my name is Jerry Greene. I'm a student at Wake Tech in my second semester, and I'm majoring in cybersecurity.

EURE: Right.

ANWEILER: Hi, I am Brian Anweiler. I'm the athletic director at Wake Tech.

EURE: Sarah, can you take us over to the side for a little bit, and we're gonna do a little linkage? Sarah? Thank you.

This is a slideshow that Jerry put together, and we just were trying to make sure that people had a good idea what Wake Tech offers in athletics. So, this is men's basketball, and if you wanna chime in at anytime, Brian, you can. And this is another man's basketball, women's basketball, women's soccer, women's soccer, beach volleyball, men's soccer, softball, baseball, women's volleyball, women volleyball. And esports, which is brand new to me, and I love it. So, now we can go back where we were, and Jerry, you can start with a question.

GREENE: All right, Brian, can you please tell give us a little bit more details about yourself and what are some things you enjoy, and how did you get to the Wake Tech Community College Athletic Department?

ANWEILER: Hey, it's good to be on with you guys today. I have a non-traditional role but, or way I got to my role at Wake Tech. I started as a community college student at a community college in Florida, Tallahassee Community College, and the basketball coach there, men's basketball coach, knew I had an interest in television and video, and he needed somebody to videotape his games. And that is really how I got started in athletics, and I just started getting involved and enjoyed it, and from there, I worked my way up in the communications field and still enjoy athletics. And I was able to become the athletic director at Tallahassee Community College when I was 26 years old and was very fortunate. I was there in some way, as a student, as a part-time employee, as a full-time employee for 17 years.

And then I left there to go to Northern Virginia Community College for over 10 years, and then I came to Wake Tech in 2019. So, I have been around in different things, from communications to student activities to athletics and, you know, student services, and student affairs is something in my background.

EURE: And before you ask the next question, I want to remind the audience that, if you have any questions or comments, please ask them in the chat. Thank you. Go ahead, Jerry.

GREENE: This next question is interesting. I play video games myself, so can you talk about the very exciting esports program, which was one of the innovations you launched at Wake Tech?

ANWEILER: Well, I can say that we are one of the trendsetters in esports. I mean, I think we're on the cutting edge with what we're doing at Wake Tech with our esports space we have, where we have a venue at our South campus, and we're actually adding another one at our RTP Campus. So, it's going to be very similar to the space at South.

Esports has really exploded in the last five years with participants and colleges participating. Just in our first year, in the in the spring of 2021, we won a national championship in our division in Overwatch. This year, in the spring and the fall of 2021, we had five teams in the postseason, which included our Rocket League, we had several, Overwatch and Valorant, and then I think we're looking to add League of Legends.

There are so many games that we could offer. Unfortunately, just don't have the bandwidth right now to keep adding all the different games that are offered, but we're, we're working hard to try to not just have competitive intercollegiate play, but at some point, we want to add recreational play for Wake Tech students to compete against other Wake Tech students. We're not there yet, but it's something that we definitely have on our radar and we want to do. So, esports is very popular. We have 35 to 40 students competing on behalf of the college, so it's a big size and, you know, the sky is pretty the limit.

GREENE: I guess I'll go ahead with the next question. What are some of the other sports offered by your department, and are there any upcoming events-slash-activities that students, faculty, staff and the community can attend-slash-participate in?

ANWEILER: Sure. So, in the fall, we have men's and women's soccer and court volleyball, which is the volleyball for the old days, and then in the winter, we have men's and women's basketball, and in the spring, we have baseball, softball and we've added beach volleyball. And then esports is, is basically fall, winter and spring. So, that goes year-round. So, we have nine teams, and esports is kind of like track and field. You can have lots of different sports, per se, within track and field. So, like, within esports, we have basically four teams inside of esports.

So, we do have a really robust athletic program. We have the biggest athletic program, I believe, in, for public colleges in North Carolina, for public two-year colleges, and for upcoming things, we are hosting a men's basketball tournament over the holiday break, December 29th and 30th at the Wake Tech South campus. It's gonna be at 1 o'clock and 3 o'clock on those days, and we've got Fayetteville Tech, Brunswick Community College and Caldwell Tech, along with Wake Tech all competing. So, it will be a fun, a fun New Year's, the Christmas break or during Christmas break. While a lot of folks are home, we'll, we'll be right here.

EURE: I wanna interject for a minute. We do have a couple of questions in the chat. So, can we kind of address those? OK, so this is from Dr. Chris O'Riordan-Adjah, the head of engineering at Wake Tech. So, Jerry, can you do that?

GREENE: Dr. Chris asks Dr. Brian, thanks for sharing, what are some of the challenges that students, the student-athletes, face when it comes to balancing their academics and sports?

ANWEILER: Yeah, that's a really good question from one of our faculty members, and it's, it is hard. Our student-athletes are juggling being full-time students, participating on teams. Some of, some of them are working. Some of them are even possibly taking care of children or brothers or sisters. So, it is a lot to balance, and so, that's something that it is hard, and it's not, yeah, a lot of folks don't realize, especially in the two-year college level, just the amount of time and attention they have to give to sports, but they also are trying to do so many other things, just like all of our students are trying to do. So, it's really no different when going to school full time, working full time. You gotta balance it all, and, you know, I wish I had a secret weapon that we could just both have their focus solely on their academics and their, and their, and their athletic endeavors.

But what our hope is that they realize that those athletic endeavors will lead them to a path to finish their degree, whether it's a two-year or a four-year, and if they can see how those all interconnect, that they'll realize, you know, you know, maybe if I don't leave the work or if I, I can't do everything I need, if I want, if this is my pathway to a four-year degree, then maybe I can focus more on that. Again, we, we do have sympathy, empathy, and understanding and try to, how do we how can we balance that. But it really is a, that's a really good question, and it's, and it's something that's hard to answer because, again, it is a challenge and sometimes our student-athletes, you know, they come from all backgrounds and, you know, we have everything from 4.0 students, say, on down and, you know, how do they balance that? And so, it's something that we strive for every day and one of the things that, that my personal, or our goals as a program are, how athletics can focus on transferable workforce skills. How do you balance time? How do you do conflict resolution? How do you communicate? How do you lead? Those are all soft skills that athletics teaches, and hopefully, we can figure out a way to, to make those soft skills transferable workforce skills so that, you know, you're just not on the basketball team. But hey, I'm learning something that can apply toward a job and my, my career on how to handle problems in the workplace or team conflict. It happens to all of us and certainly happens with teams, so whether that's athletic teams or work teams. So, we get it, and that's something we're working on.

EURE: This is from David Kwan, and I will say David is a student that I was his success coach a few years ago, and he graduated from Wake Tech engineering department and graduated from N.C. State engineering and now is working on his master's in aerospace engineering. So, he asked this question, he used to be in student government as well.

GREENE: David Kwan asked how does one join the esports team? Are there tryouts like other sports teams?

ANWEILER: Absolutely. So, one thing you wanna follow, esports is really different, but we do do it, and they have a platform called Discord, and Discord for me is a foreign thing, but it's very popular in, in the

esports community, and that's where you go to find, and we have different channels within esports. You can find the Wake Tech esports team and that's where a lot of information is shared, also on Twitter and Facebook and our website waktechsports.com to find out when we're going to do tryouts. But we certainly do.

I, I'm gonna be honest with you, but it's not something I completely understand how it all fits together. But we have a great coach and great coaches that help our teams, and they make it all run, and usually the students that are competing on esports understand how that all works together and how you join and, and, and link up behind the scenes to play a game. So, absolutely there are ways to, to do that, to, to try out. And, you know, esports is, has a fall season and a spring season and, and one thing, esports is just like our other teams is you have to, you have to be a full-time student and you have to have a certain GPA and, to play. So, yeah, it's, it's just becoming a, a really big deal.

EURE: We have more questions for you, but we have some more in chat as well.

ANWEILER: OK, wow.

EURE: All right, Kevin Brown, associate vice president.

GREENE: Kevin Brown asks how can students support our athletic teams, and how much does it cost to attend games or matches?

ANWEILER: So, great question there, Kevin. Students can come in any number of ways to support teams. First of all, it's free to come to a game, so one of the things is, like, just because you go to a community college doesn't mean you can't enjoy all the same things you did in high school or at a four-year school. People pack out the gyms in high school, and they pack out the gyms at their college or university. So, do that here at Wake Tech. It's a lot of fun. We have really talented teams. If it's esports, you can watch online, to baseball, softball, basketball, volleyball, go, go to a game. It's free – how about that? We have some really nice places to play.

At the same time, how can you be involved? You can be like me and be the least athletic person ever and still participate in athletics. Like, I joke that I'm athletic by title only. You can see it by my six chins. So, I definitely think there's a way to be involved, if you're interested in communications, in marketing, video, sport management, athletic training – there's, there's any number of ways that you can be involved with our teams and if, just connect with me and I'll connect the coach. But I think you gotta be able to commit to it just like any other team. But, but, yeah, for sure, I mean, any number of ways to be involved, and we don't have to just be a member of a team and a lot of folks who try out for a team are disappointed if they don't make it, but one of my things is like, there's always ways to be involved and I think being a part of something is what makes athletic so special.

EURE: All right, this is Dr. Chris again, Jerry.

GREENE: Dr. Chris asks, is there extra tutoring that the athletic department, is there extra tutoring that the athletic department can provide, either through the tutoring center to help students who will miss classes due to sport, sport travels and events?

ANWEILER: Again, always room for improvement there, but a great question. Yes, we promote, promote and promote our ILC to our student-athletes to, to utilize. You know, we really wanna do structured study halls, but those are hard. And ILC is a little bit different because you have to go in with the specific question, so it's not like they can just go in and ask random needs. It's gotta be focused. But again, the ILC is something we promote, just not within athletics, but with our whole school, where students take advantage of. And I do wish we had some more resources for some, for tutoring for students. You know, one of the things that we had, we've struggled with, and it was a student in one of the vocational classes, well, he wanted to play in the soccer team, but also in one of our vocational programs, and, unfortunately, the welding or HVAC or some of those, they have very structured times, and the student just wasn't able to go to practice and games on certain days if we play because if he missed class, that part of his academic program, he was gonna fail. And that's not what we want to do. We do not. We're here to help promote student success, not hinder it.

So, you know, sometimes students have to balance that. We talked about that early on, balance being a student-athlete, but you're also a student first. I am proud to say that we've had one student make it to the professional level in baseball, Major League Baseball, and pitch for the Los Angeles or California Angels. But that's not where most of our students go. So, they, they're here to get a degree and transfer or prepare for a job.

EURE: Well, congratulations to that athlete. I have a question before Jerry, do your athletic teams engage in community service? I know that they do at some schools. Is that something we do as well?

ANWEILER: We have in the past, and I'll say, I came in September 2019, and the world stopped six months later. So, we haven't been able to do things that we wanna do and we've done. I think we sponsor a, a roadside cleanup thing and, and, obviously, the things that we wanna do, our baseball team is done a few blood drives recently, they've done some other things. Our softball team has done a Miracle League Game for some students down in Smithfield. So, we've definitely done some things. I think we wanna do more, but I think that COVID has been a challenge for that area. But again, it's definitely something that we wanna do more of, but we do do it, for sure.

EURE: Jerry's gonna do a question, and then we have a comment in the chat.

GREENE: For those students and people that don't know, how and when can interested students or applicants to Wake Tech try out for its various teams?

ANWEILER: Great question. So, the best place to find out is when we do that is in the Wake Tech website. If we have them, we do it. It's been a little challenging in the last two years with tryouts just because of COVID, and we didn't even have teams mostly in the 2021 academic year. We just had baseball and esports. So, we're trying to figure out how that works. But we do try to offer tryouts for all of our teams. Typically, those are in the fall, but one of the struggles with, particularly soccer and volleyball, is

we have tryouts before the semester even starts. So, August 1st is when we start practice, and that's usually when we have tryouts that first, that first week of August. So, students usually aren't even thinking about, "Do I wanna play on a team?" But hey, the season even starts before school starts sometimes. So, those are some things that students have to understand, if you wanna play on a team, you got to be proactive and look for when the tryouts are posted and where they are, what time it is. You know, make sure you don't have work schedules or things like that. Make sure "Am I full time? Am I even eligible to play?" So, those are things that we wanna promote.

But again, we do have tryouts mostly in the fall, and if a student wants to play on one of our fall-specific sports, and that's women's soccer, men's soccer and volleyball, and even esports, tryouts often are even before school starts. So, hopefully that answers that question.

EURE: And the next comment is from Enrique Rodriguez, who's a new student success coach.

ANWEILER: He is. He's awesome.

EURE: He's your women's soccer coach. OK, Jerry, you got that?

GREENE: Yeah. Enrique Rodriguez says now success coaches will support athletes as well as all new students at Wake Tech.

ANWEILER: So, we're so excited about this new opportunity. What Michael [Coleman has] been doing for a number of years, and now it's growing, that we have folks like Coach Rodriguez got, like we've got a number of staff, team staff, that can really, as we say, reach and rally around our students and to try to give them the support systems and, you know, what they need to get from point A to point B to point C on their journey through Wake Tech, and I, I'm excited about these new opportunities and, you know, what that means for our students, not just our student-athletes but our students and, again, to show them, because we all know the jobs of the future, you know, require an associate degree from Wake Tech or another community college. I, you know, love my job at Wake Tech, but I'd probably make a lot more money as a plumber so, or an electrician or a welder, and, you know, there's so many opportunities in our two-year colleges, and Wake Tech particularly, from IT to cybersecurity and all that stuff, it just leads to jobs, and high-income job at that.

Our students have, have great opportunities in front of them if they take advantage of it, and our student success coaches are the ones that can really, as well as our advisors and everybody behind the scenes. Like I said, I, I always joke too, this is off subject but a rant I'll make, you know athletes are no different than anybody else. There's a team behind the team, and it's everyone from admissions to the registrar to our academic advisors to our success coaches, financial aid, all those, business office, all those work together to help our students. And I wanna make sure we recognize those folks too, because I know I can't do my job without them doing theirs.

EURE: And before you ask the next question, Jerry, I remember when I first met you on Northern Wake campus.

ANWEILER: Brand new.

EURE: And there was a resource fair, and you were there representing the Athletic Department. And I noticed how you interacted with students, and you really get care, and we talked about that, and you have proven to be exactly the kind of person we thought you were. And I just want to say everybody that works with students don't always like it, but I can tell that you do. OK?

ANWEILER: Yeah, thank you. I said we try. I mean, we're not always successful, but we sure try, and I said we have some students that, you know, they go through a lot. You know, we we've dealt with so many life situations this year, the challenges, and, you know, we've helped any number of students persevere and continue their educational journey. And sometimes it's hard, hard stuff going on out there, but we we, we work hard and not just for athletics, but Wake Tech does an amazing job, but you know, I left out our wellness staff and what, what Michael Coleman and his team do. You know, it's just absolutely amazing.

EURE: And I did wanna say, we were initially set up to do the student success coaches, but for some reason, we didn't get to do that this time. But just look us up on Wake Tech website, say success coach or student success coach.

ANWEILER: I'll promote you.

EURE: Thanks. successcoach.waketech.edu. Thank you, Sarah. Jerry?

GREENE: All right, what are some of the ways someone who might be interested in participating in various aspects of Wake Tech athletics, whether it's they want to be a player or coach or supporter, get connected to you or staff within the Athletic Department?

ANWEILER: Well, waketechsports.com you click on the button that says "Inside Athletics" and the staff directory, they can find me. On Twitter, I'm there, but usually an email is the best thing, you can find, find me either the Wake Tech website, waketech.edu or waketechsports.com, to connect. Again, I'm, we're always willing to help. And like I said, it's free for, to come to a game, and we're always looking for people to help, whether students or anybody else.

EURE: We're getting close to the end, but we want to give you a quick little musical break. So, Sarah, you can put in from the African American Latino mixer, which we sponsored with Student Activities, who also has given us a few T-shirts if we want to give them away today. So, students, if you just ask a question in the chat or make a comment and let us know you're here, you'll get a Wake Tech throwback T shirt. All right.

(Music playing)

EURE: All right. And I just had a question from student, but they asked me in the Teams chat. Her name is Kaela Lopez, and we worked through the semester and [indecipherable]. She wants to be on the women's soccer team. Her question is, do four-year universities come to Wake Tech to recruit?

ANWEILER: Absolutely. Absolutely. Absolutely, yes. I mean, our student-athletes go on, if, if, you know, they have to have the, you know, talent and they academics to get there. But absolutely, you know, we have student-athletes compete at the NCAA Division I level all the way down the different areas. You know, we have coaches come to our gyms, at our fields for, well, we don't have fields, but where we play they, they come, and there's any number of opportunities to be seen. So, absolutely, yes.

You know, we've had women's soccer players go on to play at Shaw University and other schools. We've had volleyball players, men's and women's basketball players, baseball players, you know, everything. And even esports students now will be able to start at Wake Tech and go on to the four-year schools as well. So, yes, absolutely. That's a great question, and it's something that we take a lot of pride in when our student athletes start their journey at Wake Tech and, and continue on to a four-year school if, if that's what they want to do. But we also have students that don't. They, they, they come to Wake Tech, they've had a great experience playing at Wake Tech, and now they're ready to just move on to a four-year [school] or a career without playing. So, we're here for everybody.

EURE: Do you have any more questions, Jerry? If not, I want to make sure to remind the audience to ask your questions. Make your comments in chat, and for students in particular, just say hello. Thank you. I know we're winding down. We only have four more minutes.

ANWEILER: Well, I, you know, I made a lot of thanks early on, but I also, you know, a lot of people it takes to do our job. You know, we've got Sarah and her team behind the scenes that that worked in our media area that, that I've called upon for a number of things, and Michael, what you do as well. So, we want to make sure that we thank everybody here because it takes a lot of folks to do our job and then make sure we should give everybody a shout-out. I'm still missing somebody but, like, most definitely wanna make sure that we do that because Sarah's been a big part of the Wake Tech athletics too.

EURE: OK. And I want to thank the Office of Innovation – I always mess up – Effectiveness and Innovation. There was a grant for studying online students and getting them involved with activities, and I came to talk to the students, and they said, "Welcome to the Michael Eure Show," and that's how it happened. I did not ask for it. It was kind of put on me, but it has been quite enjoyable, and I've worked with Carlos, and he's going to be coming up, and Sarah and Dr. Roddenberry and Kai Wong and Dr., not Dr., Bryan Ryan. All those people really helped make Eagle Stream come to life, and it has really taken off, and I thank them for collaborating with me, and I guess Student Activities because my supervisor had to agree and they did. So, I have enjoyed it.

So, we have another remark in the comments first. Carlos, Dr. Carlos McCormick. Go ahead.

GREENE: Dr. Carlos says good afternoon. Thank you for this engaging conversation. How can staff support the athletic department?

ANWEILER: Well, I feel like I just mentioned, like, what, what his team has done, they, they helped me, like, in 2020, when, when, like, kind of the everything stopped, we did a virtual postseason awards live online. So, Carlos and Sarah and the, they all helped me check out cameras and so, and how, so it's just,

it takes a village, and I want to make sure we say that. But, you know, we have an adjunct faculty member, Michael, that that helps us with athletics. He's just been important part of our team. These days, we can use help in so many different ways. There's so many different parts of the college from, you know, faculty that would be interested in, in engaging with our students off the court. From that tutoring that, that's been asked about a few times, particularly in the STEM and the English, like, you know, a lot of our students, you know, they, they really need help in that, and, you know, while we do have programs on campus that, there is nothing to replace that one-on-one connection, even if it's virtual through Teams because of COVID. But the those are, those are some great ways to get connected. But, you know, technology side, I mean I work with IT so much right now with different projects that we've had going on. So, they're helping us. But, but if you if you are looking for ways to become involved, from an academic side to support side, there, there's, there's a spot for you, I promise. And we won't wear out our welcome either, but there's a there's always a way. Again, that's how I got started in athletics. It wasn't because of my athletic talent, it was just because, hey, this was, I got involved, and this was fun, and now look at me here at Wake Tech, and I'm really enjoying my time here.

EURE: I'm, I'm gonna let Jerry ask the last question, and I wanna say Patty Cooper, we saw you. Thank you for your comment.

ANWEILER: You love Patty Cooper, too?

EURE: Yes. We're going to be seeing you or, or supporting the event at Jingle, Jangle Java on the Northern Wake Campus tomorrow. Thank you for coming up with that, but yeah, Jerry, go ahead.

GREENE: How can students or other interested individuals get in touch with you?

ANWEILER: So, I mean, the easiest thing is just remember waketechsports.com, click on "Inside Athletics," look me up. My phone number is 919-866-5508, but if you don't remember that, waketechsports.com is easy to remember, and you can find our contact information there.

EURE: And now we're coming to the end. So, Brian and Jerry, and Jerry, you can start if you can give us your closing statement, and we'll just say goodbye.

GREENE: Well, I don't have any huge closing statement, but, you know, I'm a fan of athletics, so it was really interesting to hear what Brian had to say today.

ANWEILER: Well, thank you. I hope to see you in a game.

GREENE: Yeah, for sure.

EURE: Brian, do you have any closing statement?

ANWEILER: I just want to thank you guys so much for your time and this, you guys said this would be the fastest 30 minutes on video, and it sure has been. I just, you know, want to make sure that, you know, folks know about what we do because, again, we go in the community and [hear] "I didn't know Wake

Tech did that. I didn't know Wake Tech did that." And it's just not athletics. It's so many other things that we do, or they come into our facilities and see how nice they are. You know, we're very blessed and very fortunate to have the resources and, and facilities and infrastructure and, you know, when folks walk in and they see what we are and it's, like, realize, "This is tech, community college?" So again, having opportunities like this to spread that message is, is awesome. So, thank you guys.

EURE: Thank you. And we might have to bring it back. Don't be surprised.

ANWEILER: Thank you.