

Legislative Report on the Rowan-Cabarrus Community College Biotechnology Training Center

Submitted to:

North Carolina General Assembly
Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee

Statutory Purpose:

This report is submitted pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 115D-58.17, which requires the State Board of Community Colleges to report on certain recurring programs. This report provides an update on program activities, objectives, accomplishments, itemized expenditures and fund sources, and the impact of the program on its intended purpose. (2023-134, s. 6.3.)

To: North Carolina General Assembly Fiscal Research Division Team

From: Dr. Carol S. Spalding, President, Rowan-Cabarrus Community College

Date: February 3, 2025

Memo: Report on Rowan-Cabarrus Community College Biotechnology Training Center

This memo is being submitted in response to the North Carolina Community College System Office's request for a report on the Rowan-Cabarrus Biotechnology Center to provide to the NC General Assembly Fiscal Research Division Team. The original budget language from the 2006 state budget allocated funds for the "Kannapolis Research Campus – Funds the Rowan-Cabarrus Community College Biotechnology Training Center and Greenhouse at the North Carolina Research Campus in Kannapolis. Funds will be used for equipment, faculty and staff, building operations and lease expense."

The College's Research Campus facility has never included a greenhouse.

Rowan-Cabarrus Community College Biotechnology Center Summary

The Rowan-Cabarrus Biotechnology Building is located on the North Carolina Research Campus (399 Biotechnology Lane, Kannapolis) and is home to many of the College's science-based curriculum classes, adult career services, and a robust, growing nursing program. The 62,332 sq. ft. education building is in year 16 of its 20-year lease and includes classrooms, science laboratories, nursing labs, offices, multi-use rooms, and student spaces with a library. The building provides spaces for students to experience real-life training in science-related courses and nursing.

During the 2024-2025 academic year, the Biotechnology building served 703 individual students, comprising 448 curriculum students and 297 continuing education students. The College also served over 300 adult students through the R3 center, providing career services such as resume and job application assistance.

Most of the courses taught at the Biotechnology Building are designated as Tier 1A or 1B by the North Carolina Community College System, which indicates that their course content serves "priority occupations that have documented skills gaps and pay higher wages."

In January 2022, biopharmaceutical company Eli Lilly announced an investment of more than \$1 billion to establish a new manufacturing site in Concord, North Carolina, bringing nearly 600 jobs to the region. This marked the first major biopharmaceutical company to locate in the area and is expected to catalyze additional growth across the biopharmaceutical sector in Cabarrus County and the surrounding region.

In response to the increasing demand for a highly skilled biopharmaceutical workforce, Rowan-Cabarrus leveraged private investment to renovate space within the Biotechnology building and develop a new aseptic laboratory. This specialized training environment expands the College's capacity to prepare students for cleanroom and sterile manufacturing processes essential to biopharmaceutical production. This new program serves as a critical resource for training future process technicians. These biopharmaceutical training opportunities strengthen the region's workforce pipeline that supports emerging and existing biopharmaceutical employers.

Rowan-Cabarrus Nursing Programs

The Biotechnology building offers four nursing education programs, demonstrating the College's strong commitment to ensuring our region is prepared with the healthcare workforce it needs. These programs include the Practical Nursing (PN) program, the Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) program, the Licensed Practical Nursing to Associate Degree Nursing Bridge program, and a Nurse Aide licensure program.

In addition, the College renovated space within the Biotechnology building to relocate a portion of the Nurse Aide program. This enhancement strengthens coordination across nursing pathways and creates a more integrated healthcare training environment at Rowan-Cabarrus. Also, to meet industry demand and address student waitlists, the College added an evening option which began in Spring 2024.

During the 2024-2025 academic year, the nursing programs celebrated the completion of the following students:

- Associate Degree Nursing: 70
- Associate Degree Nursing LPN to ADN: 47
- Practical Nursing: 20

Every student who graduated from the College's nursing program was hired immediately into a full-time career.

Science-Based Transfer Courses: Many students use this building to take Uniform General Education Transfer Component (UGETC) courses, which provide a strong foundation in essential knowledge and skills and ensure a seamless transition between institutions.

National Science Foundation & National Institutes of Health Grants: Over the past five years, in partnership with UNC-C, the College has been part of a National Science Foundation Scholarships in STEM (S-STEM) grant and a National Institutes of Health

Bridges to Baccalaureate (B2B) grant housed in this building. Both grants leverage the building's unique position on the Research Campus to carry out project activities and provide students with a unique experience.

Annual Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) Open House

The Biotechnology Building is home to the College's annual "STEM Open House," a longstanding tradition that has taken place in the College's Biotechnology Building for the past 13 years. The College partners with the N.C. Science Festival, a month-long celebration across the state intended to bring science to life for children and adults to showcase STEM in education. This is a two-day event that invites the public to attend on the first day, while on the second day, middle and high school students attend with their schools. The annual event draws an average of 500 visitors of all ages to enjoy fun, interactive exhibits related to science, technology, engineering, and math.

Community Outreach

The Biotechnology Center also opens its meeting spaces to several local and state partnerships. Examples of those organizations include the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC), numerous State of NC organizations, and local workforce development agencies. In addition, the multi-purpose space hosts graduations and pinning ceremonies to celebrate student completion.

R3 Career Services (Refocus, Retrain and Re-employ)

The College's R3 Career Services program began in response to the Pillowtex manufacturing company abruptly closing nearly 20 years ago. The program is a well-known resource in the community for adults seeking a career change and looking to upskill their talents to support a job transition. These fee-free classes are offered online and in-person and help students with job applications, resume building, and more. The program has partnerships with several local organizations, including The Opportunity House, Rebuild 2.0, the Food Stamp Program for the Cabarrus Department of Social Services, and the North Carolina Manufacturing Institute.

Budget Summary

The N.C. The General Assembly report requested an update on the Biotechnology Center budget, including equipment, faculty and staff, budget operations, and lease expenses. The chart below details those expenses for the 2025 fiscal year. As noted below, 82% of the budget is spent on the building itself, including the building lease, insurance, taxes, repairs and maintenance, and utilities. Approximately 18% of the budget supports College personnel located at this facility and the ongoing resources required to sustain building

operations and programming, including salaries and benefits, supplies and materials, and travel and transportation.

Budget Description	Budget Amount
Building Lease, insurance, tax	\$2,503,285.00
Communication and Utilities	\$197,678.00
Contractual Services	\$98,143.00
Salaries and Benefits	\$603,547.00
Supplies and Materials	\$19,863.00
Travel and Transportation	\$7,320.00
Equipment, Repairs and Maintenance	\$93,828.00
Grand Total	\$3,523,664.00

Photos of the Rowan-Cabarrus Community College North Carolina Research Campus Location



Left: Outside photo of the College's location on the North Carolina Research Campus

Right: New Aseptic Lab and Training Room





LEFT: Nursing students learning with a high-tech simulator manikin

RIGHT: The College's first BioWork program graduates



LEFT: Annual STEM Open House that hosts nearly 500 people per year