

KANNAPOLIS — Dr. Carol Spalding wasted no time before visiting the N.C. Research Campus, where the college she now leads will play a key role.

On Wednesday, her third day at work, the new president of Rowan-Cabarrus Community College toured the biotechnology hub that will require thousands of clinical research assistants, laboratory technicians and other science workers over the next decade.

RCCC is expected to train many of them.

"We will be a vital part of it," Spalding said. "This really showcases what community colleges can do."

The Research Campus will operate with five support workers for every doctorate.

"The most important thing is to get the people in the community trained to get the jobs that are local," Spalding said.

While the campus will attract researchers from around the world, RCCC can fill many of the support positions locally, Spalding said.

Community colleges tailor their programs to match the needs of local employers. When David Murdock broke ground two years ago on the \$1.5 billion life sciences center in downtown Kannapolis, RCCC created a new biotechnology program and hired four new professors.

One of the next buildings scheduled for construction on the 350-acre campus is a new branch for RCCC. It should open in 2009. Three other buildings should open this fall.

Developers have called the community college the "linchpin" of the Research Campus, which will include 10 universities and dozens of private companies and labs, as well as the Dole Nutrition Institute and the David H. Murdock Research Institute.

Murdock owns Dole Food Co. and campus developer Castle & Cooke.



The new Rowan-Cabarrus Community College President Carol Spalding, on the left, visited the N.C. Research Campus in Kannapolis. Jeanie Moore is on the right. Photo by Wayne Hinshaw, Salisbury Post



Rowan-Cabarrus Community College President Dr. Carol Spalding speaks to the faculty Monday in the Teaching Auditorium on the north campus. Photo by Sean Meyers, for the Salisbury Post

Spalding had just descended a ladder on the fourth floor of the Core Lab when she spoke to the Post. She and other RCCC officials had climbed to the highest point in the building to view a recently completed ceiling mural by Brenda Mauney Council.

"She asked me, 'How's your art department?' " Spalding said. "I told her I'd have to go back and check."

The mood was light as Spalding toured alongside Jerry Chandler, vice president of administration, and Jeanie Moore, vice president of continuing education.

Ray Paradowski, president of the college's board of trustees, and Carla Howell, Spalding's assistant, also attended.

The officials smiled and laughed as they introduced their new president, only the third leader in the history of the community college.

Spalding noted that Murdock designed the campus to encourage collaboration between researchers and institutions.

"The purpose of the architecture is to help people connect," she said. "This really enhances the scientist's life."

Spalding and her husband recently bought a house in the Westlake neighborhood of Kannapolis so she would be close to all three community college branches in Salisbury, Concord and at the Research Campus.



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faculty Monday.
Photo by Sean Meyers, for the Salisbury Post