



Rowan-Cabarrus Community College continues to build its biotechnology program. The college recently gained approval from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to offer associate degrees in biotechnology and agricultural biotechnology starting in August 2009.

Both programs will prepare students for research and technical jobs being created by the North Carolina Research Campus in Kannapolis. That could mean more than 5,500 biotech jobs by 2013 and 14,000 by 2032, according to a study commissioned by the City of Kannapolis.

"The universities and other employers with operations on the research campus will look to RCCC to provide the training programs needed to meet many of their work-force demands," Carol Spalding, RCCC president, said in a statement. "RCCC also will serve as a bridge to the research campus for local residents."

While RCCC began offering biotech courses last spring, students would have had to complete degrees requirements at Gaston College and Forsyth Technical Community College.

The hope is those who enroll in the classes next fall will take lab-intensive, second-year courses in a new biotech facility at the research campus, said spokesman Jeff Lowrance.

Campus developer Castle & Cooke is still working on the financing details of that facility, Lowrance said, noting the college hopes the project breaks ground by year's end.

Meanwhile, the college is recruiting key faculty, such as agricultural biotechnology program head and a new expanded role, dean of biotechnology, science and mathematics.

RCCC also is working with Gaston College to develop a certificate program to train residents with science or lab backgrounds for work as clinical research technicians or assistants.

For more information on biotech classes at RCCC, call www.rowancabarrus.edu/biotechnology or 704-216-7200.

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