



KANNAPOLIS - Now more than ever, the passport of education is a necessity, not a luxury, Carol Spalding said at her inauguration as Rowan-Cabarrus Community College's third president, on Friday at the North Carolina Research Campus.



As she addressed the RCCC faculty, staff and students, delegates from other colleges and universities, local and state dignitaries and other guests, Spalding spoke of the local history and the future of education.

Spalding mentioned the jobs that left the area when the local Pillowtex plant closed and former employees coming to the community college for help.

The theme of the inauguration was, "Passport to the Future." Spalding mentioned that the idea of a passport was not new to her since she earned her bachelor's degree in international studies, but said she later learned that education was the true passport.

"Students in the area cannot just rely on technical skills," Spalding said. "We know for a fact most jobs require some college education. This community must raise the educational aspirations."

For the community college's part, Spalding said it will offer additional online services and continue to work with other colleges.

Spalding said the college will also serve as a flagship in its partnership with the North Carolina Research Campus.

"I am convinced very soon we will have a groundbreaking for the RCCC building here on the North Carolina Research Campus that will symbolize our participation in a preferred future," Spalding said.

Research Campus founder David Murdock was one of the other inaugural speakers and mentioned the partnership between the two institutions.

"The community college is a linchpin between the research campus and the critical recruitment to bring additional companies to this area to enhance and expand employment in our area and raise the standard of living," Murdock said.

Spalding began her role as president on Aug. 11, 2008 after serving as the Open Campus president of Florida Community College at Jacksonville since 1988.

She earned a bachelor's degree from University of Louisville in Kentucky and a master's degree in human resources management from Pepperdine University in Santa Ana, Calif. Spalding earned her doctorate in education from Columbia University in New York.

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