



# THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

April 29, 2025

## 2024-2025 Board Members

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Past Pres Edwin Peacock

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Mike Wollinger

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Membership John Cantrell

Foundation Joe Morris

Programs Luther Moore



## *“Pound-For-Pound, NC’s Most Consequential University” (Just Ask Its President, Dr. Rhett Brown)*

by **Marilynn Bowler**

Dr. Rhett Brown, now in his tenth year as President of (as he described it) "one of the best kept secrets in higher education," brought Wingate University closer to our hearts and minds with his intriguing presentation to Charlotte Rotary on Tuesday, April 29th.

**Benton Bragg** proudly introduced our speaker, citing his long history with Wingate both as a graduate of the Class of 1989, and then his roles as Associate Dean of Students, University Planning Officer, Dean of Enrollment Management and Vice President for Student Life and Enrollment Services.

With a nod toward PDG **Luther Moore**, **Benton Bragg** and **Chuck Howard** who each serve on Wingate University's Board of Trustees, Dr. Brown stepped to the MIC and jumped right into his message of why his school deserves the attention it's been receiving not only in our region but across the state of North Carolina and beyond.

Enrollment is up and steadily rising. Wingate now enrolls more students from Mecklenburg and surrounding counties than any other of North Carolina's thirty-six private or independent colleges. Wingate University is top quality, affordable and life-changing, and Dr. Brown's goal is to make Wingate the "most consequential university" via a guiding document/case statement/provocative and strong story which showcases the school as the "anchor institution" it has truly become.

Across the nation, according to the esteemed Economic Mobility Index, "out of fourteen hundred colleges and universities, Wingate ranked seventy-second in the nation, public or private. That's the highest ranking in North Carolina among private institutions," Dr. Brown told us. "At Wingate University, *we have always been adaptive*, and that philosophy has made the school's impact on the community, its ROI, and its undergraduate and graduate programs' "relentlessly relevant,"" a phrase Dr. Brown feels speaks for the school.

He shared the success of Wingate's athletic successes, its healthcare education programs, and even the university's recent acquirement ~ in partnership with the Town of Wingate, the County and the State ~ of one-hundred and twenty new acres which will be the site of a new community around the school, as yet another step in making Wingate University a magnet for students with a vision for success.

During the Q&A session, **Susie Masotti** asked Dr. Brown for his thoughts on the potential that Limestone University in Gaffney will close due to funding, and whether he sees this happening to schools like Wingate. Dr. Brown's response was that he's grateful to be where he is because of the proximity to Charlotte and the surrounding communities where most of their students come from. Dr. Brown added that St. Andrews in Laurinburg is facing the same situation as Limestone, and both are in areas that don't have the same support as Wingate. He also mentioned that many smaller schools in more rural areas were already struggling before COVID and are hurting even more now.

**Bill Gill** asked, "Given that a significant number of your students are on reduced tuition, where does the money come from to support those students?" Dr. Brown responded that Wingate relies heavily on tuition revenue, but many students attend either tuition-free or at reduced rates. State, local, and federal partners/programs that do assist, i.e., the Federal Pell Grant and the North Carolina Need-Based Grant, as examples, are crucial.

Wingate University is making a difference ... to its students, to its community, and to the world of higher education. Fortunately, Wingate has a tremendous asset in the person of Dr. Rhett Brown, President (and Chief Cheerleader).

A recording of the meeting can be found here:

With Slides: <https://vimeo.com/1080043402>

Without Slides: <https://vimeo.com/1080045059>

The program begins at 29 minutes and 40 seconds.