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Interactive College of Technology

2025 NEWSLETTER

ICT OFFICER'S LIST

CEO: Elmer R. Smith

COO: Gregory A. Koch

Chief Academic Officer: Thomas A. Blair

VP, Chamblee Campus: JoAnn Koch

CAMPUS DIRECTORS

Gainesville: Margaret P. Smith- Campus Director

Chamblee: JoAnn Koch - Vice President

Morrow: Josue Rodriguez

Newport: Vanessa Kennedy

N. Houston: Michael J. Ollsen

Pasadena: Jocquelyn T. Armistad

SW. Houston: Diane K. Nguyen

Thrive as a Working ADULT STUDENT

As an adult, pursuing higher education can be a tough task, especially when combined with the demands of a full-time job. However, with the right mindset, strategies, and support, it is possible to successfully balance work and academic responsibilities.

Strategies for Success

1. **Create a Schedule:** Plan out your day, week, and month to ensure you have enough time for work, studying, and personal activities.
2. **Set Realistic Goals:** Break down larger goals into smaller, achievable milestones to maintain momentum and motivation.
3. **Seek Support:** Connect with classmates, join study groups, or find a mentor to help stay focused and inspired.
4. **Utilize Resources:** Take advantage of online resources, such as digital textbooks, tutorials, and academic support services.
5. **Prioritize Self-Care:** Make time for activities that promote physical and mental well-being, such as exercise, meditation, or spending time with loved ones.

Tips from Successful Adult Students

The good news is that if others can do it so can you. ICT has helped thousands of students get a degree while working full-time and taking care of kids. Here is some words of advice from some of them:

"Start small and be consistent. Do not try to do too much too soon."
- Rachel, working mother of two.

"Find a study buddy or accountability partner to help stay motivated." - David, full-time employee and part-time student.

Can I Change My Future?

Being an adult student while working requires dedication, perseverance, and creativity. By developing effective time management skills, seeking support, and prioritizing self-care, adult students can thrive in their academic pursuits while maintaining their professional and personal responsibilities. Remember, the benefits of higher education extend far beyond the classroom, and the sense of accomplishment that comes with achieving your goals is invaluable.

ICT CAMPUS NEWS

OUR STUDENTS

ALL CAMPUSES

This year, all of Interactive College of Technology's campuses held graduation ceremonies in the month of June. Newport, KY held theirs on June 6th. The Texas campuses held theirs on June 14th. Then the Georgia campuses held theirs on June 21st. Over 500 students came to these different ceremonies to receive their diploma or degree. The graduates and their families heard speakers from both the college and the community and celebrated this milestone achievement afterwards with their families and friends.



GEORGIA CAMPUSES:

CHAMBLEE

Chamblee's student center and meeting spaces have been active recently with great events. In May, the campus hosted a seminar on fraud by the World Asian Law Enforcement Coalition which included a speech by the Dekalb County District Attorney's office. Later that same week, the Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce held their annual telethon in the Chamblee student center. Then, the following week, a job fair was held in conjunction with Carrington Cares, a nonprofit that helps those with learning disabilities find employment. Together, over a hundred people attended these events. As always, the Chamblee campus has shown it is not only a great place to learn, but also a great location for the community to get together.



In the Blair Academic Center, a full Academic Support Center has been implemented. Mr. Gaurav Bhatia, the Director of Media Services is planning more tutoring sessions, student resources, and events for the campus. If you would like to use the media center please visit Mr. Bhatia in Room 122.

ARE OUR MISSION

GAINESVILLE

This past month, the Gainesville Campus celebrated Haitian Flag Day with their Haitian community. Haitian Flag Day marks the birth of a national symbol that represents the country's hard-won independence, unity, and hope. It all began on May 18, 1803, when the Haitian flag was officially adopted during the Haitian Revolution — a revolution that changed the course of history. During the Haitian Revolution, leaders Jean-Jacques Dessalines and Alexandre Pétion designed the flag by removing the white stripe from the French tricolor, symbolizing the rejection of French colonial rule and the birth of Haiti as an independent nation. The campus celebrated with performances, food, drinks, and a great spirit of community.



MORROW

We are so proud to celebrate with instructor Dr. Nguyen. He has obtained another Master's Degree in English. Dr. Nguyen is a lifelong learner who shares his passion for education with his students. This is his second Master's Degree and fourth college degree. For those of you that have not met this amazing educator, Dr. Nguyen was born in war-torn Vietnam. His parents were poor and could not afford to send him to college; so, when he came to the United States he set out to educate himself. Since he was unable to receive his doctoral degree when his father passed, Dr. Nguyen is looking forward to walking across the stage at Clayton State University to accept this honor.



CAMPUS NEWS CONTINUED

TEXAS CAMPUSES:

SOUTHWEST HOUSTON

We are proud to say that Southwest Houston student, Nduwke Asonye, is graduating from the college's Information Technology program with a job offer from Amazon. He recently addressed the Houston graduating class of 2025. He told those at the convocation about his story. He was born and raised in Houston to Nigerian immigrant parents. He had traveled to over 28 countries and worked in many fields before enrolling at ICT. Through the Information Technology program, he was able to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to accept a position in Amazon's Information Security Analyst Program in Boston. Good luck Nduwke!

NORTH HOUSTON

In June, Michael Ollsen returned to ICT after 15 years to serve as the new Campus Director for the North Houston Campus. Mr. Ollsen previously held the role of Director of Education for both ICT's North and Southwest campuses. His extensive background in ESL instruction, curriculum development, and educational leadership will serve him well in this new position.

Most recently, he served as the ESL Department Head and Honors English Teacher at Van Houston Academy. Prior to that, he led Mountain View Christian Academy in Hefei, China, where he founded the campus, spearheaded accreditation efforts, and spent five years cultivating a culture in which 85% of graduates matriculated to top 100 universities. He also led the ESL Department at Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of San Antonio.

Mr. Ollsen holds a Bachelor of Science in Applied Learning and Development (English specialization) from the University of Texas at Austin. Whether training teachers, designing curricula, or mentoring students, his work is rooted in the belief that education unlocks opportunity. He is also committed to upholding the standards that have made Interactive College of Technology a stellar educational institution.





PASADENA

Pasadena has a lot to celebrate. Their recent HVAC technician classes had a terrific pass ratio for their EPA and NATE Certifications. The students worked very hard to pass these rigorous, multiple-choice, knowledge-based exams. NATE (North American Technician Excellence) certifications are nationally known and respected by employers.

In addition, to celebrating at the Pasadena campus. The Pasadena Campus also set up a table at the Pasadena Strawberry Festival May 15-18th. They met with dozens of the 60,000-strong crowd at the event and educated the community about ICT's diploma and degree programs.

KENTUCKY CAMPUS:

Newport is ICT's smallest campus, but that just means that each person has to play a bigger role. Chad Sizemore brings a wealth of experience and heart to the role of Admissions Associate. With several years of professional experience across College Admissions, Human Resources, and Customer Service, Chad has consistently demonstrated a unique ability to lead with purpose. Beyond the workplace, Chad serves as a Pastor, a calling that perfectly aligns with his passion for mentorship and community. His pastoral role has shaped his leadership style, infusing his work with empathy, integrity, and a desire to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

Chad is helping students succeed. One such student is Yolanda Chapman. According to The HVAC Technical Institute, women only make up 1.5% of HVAC industry professionals. ICT's students are changing that. Yolanda Chapman, a 3rd semester student, is already working in the field and installing equipment all by herself. Special thanks to Dee Hornback for helping guide Yolanda, teaching her and getting her this position.



CEO'S MESSAGE

ONE COLLEGE. ONE GOAL.

We recently held our graduation commencement ceremonies in Kentucky, Texas and Houston. I would first like to congratulate our graduates on reaching this milestone! Your hard work and dedication have paid off, and you should be incredibly proud of yourselves. I want to remind our graduates and our current students that education is not just about the diploma or degree you have earned, but a life-long pursuit.

Your education has equipped you with more than just technical skills or the ability to have a conversation in English. Our programs teach how to solve problems creatively, to master a subject, and to collaborate with others. By finishing your classes, you prove that you can set a long-term goal and accomplish it. These skills will serve you well in whatever path you choose.

Our students are part of a larger community. As a college focused on adult students, we realize that many of our students work full-time jobs or are caregivers while taking classes. Our students choose to be here. They want to improve their lives. That is a responsibility everyone at ICT takes very seriously.

In closing, I would like to leave you with a quote from Nelson Mandela, "The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall." You have the potential to make your mark on the world.

Best wishes for a bright and fulfilling future,

Sincerely,
Elmer R. Smith, Chief Executive Officer

Elmer R. Smith



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

OTONIEL TOLEDO

Otoniel Toledo has been a part of the Gainesville, GA ICT campus for twenty years now. He has made a huge difference on hundreds of students lives as an instructor, an advisor, and now as a manager.

How did you come to ICT?

I was a fulltime Hispanic pastor. I stopped by to introduce myself. They told me they were looking for a Vocational ESL teacher and I was teaching ESL for free at the church. I thought, “hey, I could help people and make a little money.”

And then you went from being an instructor to an advisor?

Even as an instructor, I was always in communication with the students—phone calls, text messages, and emails. If they were absent, I would send messages through friends. I would always work with the students to help them out. If they did not have a babysitter, or lost a job, or did not have a driver’s license, I was always willing to help. If they wanted to become a citizen, I would coach them. I would always try to find a solution for their needs so they could attend classes. When I see the students are happy, then it makes me happy.

Now you are in a new role as a manager?

This is an opportunity for the staff to work together with passion and dedication. It will not be easy for me. I still teach every morning, and love that, but now I will manage people after that. But this is an opportunity to mentor new instructors and advisors so we can all make the most of the education here. I love to inspire my co-workers. That is what this is all about, to leave a legacy.

What do you enjoy the most about ICT?

I love making a difference in our students lives. I have seen students get jobs and flourish. So many have become citizens. I think students come to Interactive College of Technology because we welcome them with open arms. We do not neglect anybody. A lot are immigrants might not have family here. But in Gainesville, it is a small college, so we all know each other. This can be their family.

What do you wish the students knew about their teachers?

That we are here for them.

Sounds like you work hard, what do you do outside of work?

God, family and friends. I like to go to church on weekends, and do mission trips. I like to spend time with my family. My daughter just graduated. I am so proud of her. Then, community, I enjoy helping those that need love and guidance. So, I am always doing something.



VESL PROGRAM

LANGUAGE PAVES THE WAY

Language plays a vital role in shaping your future by opening doors to new opportunities, fostering personal growth, and bridging cultural divides. Here are some ways language can enhance your future:

- **Career Advancement:** Proficiency in multiple languages significantly boosts your job prospects, especially in industries like international business, diplomacy, and tourism.
- **Cultural Competence:** Language skills enable you to connect with people from diverse backgrounds, fostering global understanding, empathy, and cooperation.
- **Travel and Exploration:** Knowing multiple languages allows you to navigate foreign countries with ease, broadening your perspective and enriching your travel experiences.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Language proficiency facilitates communication with individuals from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds, expanding both your professional and social networks.
- **Personal Growth:** Learning a new language challenges your cognitive abilities, builds confidence, and exercises your brain—leading to improved memory, problem-solving skills, and mental agility.

Investing time and effort into improving your command of the English language—or any language—can have a profound impact on your future. It unlocks new opportunities, fosters personal development, and connects you with people and cultures around the world.



OUR INSTRUCTORS

IT INSTRUCTOR APPRECIATION!

Dear Mr. Bonds,

I hope this message finds you well. As the semester ends, I wanted to take a moment to extend my deepest gratitude for your guidance, patience, and belief in me throughout this course.

Receiving a 4.0 in your class meant a great deal to me, especially considering I faced some personal challenges toward the end. But beyond the grade, what I value most is the way you taught, encouraged, and spoke to the potential within me—even during times when I struggled to see it in myself.

Your words and your presence left a lasting impression. I do not know if anyone has ever taken the time to say this to you, but I hold you in the highest regard. You are a man of great patience, deep knowledge, and genuine compassion. Your ability to teach while inspiring confidence is a rare and powerful gift. I will always remember how you challenged me, how you tapped into my ability, and how you helped me face my fear of learning new platforms like Excel, PowerPoint, and Word.

One conversation in particular will stay with me: when you told me, “If you learn one new thing a day, count that as a victory.” That simple truth helped me shift my mindset. Over time, I no longer feared the work—I embraced it.

I was also truly honored to hear that you shared kind words about me with Ms. Vanessa. To know you saw greatness and potential in me—and even suggested I help guide new students—means more than you know. It is gestures like that which remind me this journey is about more than just assignments—it is about people who make a difference in the lives of others.

As the great poet Maya Angelou once said, “I have learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” You made me feel seen, capable, and supported—and I will carry that with me always.

Thank you, Mr. Bonds, for making this learning experience so meaningful. I do not believe it was by coincidence that I had you as a teacher—I believe it was divine. Your encouragement, your words, and your belief in me have helped shape the way I view myself and my abilities, and I will carry that with me into every room I walk into.

With heartfelt appreciation,
T. Jennings



ICTEXTERNSHIP

EXTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Good afternoon, everyone,
I wanted to share a quick update since Ms. Dominique
has completed two weeks with us!

She has demonstrated strong billing, office
administration, HIPAA compliance, and client
relations skills. This week, she conducted
candidate screenings, scheduled interviews,
began building her HR portfolio, assisted with
client intake processing, researched ideas
for a staff outing, and attended an ADP
webinar on Tax ID compliance.

It has been great to watch her connect classroom
knowledge with real-world application in a mental/
behavioral health setting. We are excited to continue
supporting her growth and development.

Best,
Kierra Smith
Impact Therapy, LLC
Human Resources Operations Manager



FUNFACTS

Did YOU KNOW THAT

- While almost every sector of higher education is seeing fewer students, trade schools are seeing an increase.
- Enrollment in construction trade is up 19.3%, culinary arts 12.7%, medical programs 3.4%.
- Meanwhile two-year public colleges' enrollment is -7.8% and four-year colleges are -3.4%.

*The Hechinger Report, Trade Programs—unlike other areas of higher education—are in hot demand, 4/17/23

A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

There's a reason you chose to go to college at ICT. Whether it is the flexible class schedule, location, programs offered, or you knew someone who went here, we are here to help you. We're also here for any of your friends or family that need to learn Vocational ESL or change their career.

If you know someone who wants to learn more so they can earn more, come by admissions or give the campus a call. We can help more people together.



We'd love a 5-STAR REVIEW



Chamblee GA



Morrow GA



Gainesville GA



Newport KY



SW Houston TX



N Houston TX



Pasadena TX