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Interactive College of Technology

2026 NEWSLETTER

ICT OFFICER'S LIST

CEO: Elmer R. Smith

COO: Thomas A. Blair

VP, Chamblee Campus: JoAnn Koch

VP, CCO, Gainesville Campus: Margaret P. Smith

CAMPUS DIRECTORS

Chamblee: JoAnn Koch-VP

Gainesville: Margaret P. Smith-VP

Morrow: Jonathan D. Bonds

Newport: Dewanna P. Hornback

N. Houston: Michael J. Ollsen

Pasadena: Lee A. Bell

SW. Houston: Diane K. Nguyen

What Your Education Really Tells AN EMPLOYER ABOUT YOU

In a competitive job market, an education—whether a technical certification, an Associate of Science Degree or other specialized training—is far more than a checklist item. It signals to a prospective employer a set of valuable attributes that go beyond the specific subjects you studied.

Intellectual and Academic Foundation

First and foremost, your education demonstrates your baseline intellectual capability. Completing a rigorous program shows that you possess the necessary cognitive skills to absorb complex information, synthesize different ideas, and think critically. High grades or honors (like membership in the National Technical Honor Society) indicate drive and mastery in a specific field, assuring an employer that you have a solid understanding of the fundamental knowledge relevant to the job.

Commitment and Work Ethic

Perhaps the most potent signal is your commitment and persistence. Successfully navigating months of coursework, exams, and projects signifies a strong work ethic, self-discipline, and the ability to defer gratification. An employer can infer that students are capable of tackling long-term goals and managing multiple responsibilities under pressure—qualities essential for any demanding role. This “stick-to-it” attitude will mean that when the job gets tough, you will not walk away and quit.

Soft Skills and Adaptability

Modern education emphasizes crucial soft skills. Soft skills are traits that one cannot always learn in a book, such as customer service, professionalism, and the ability to work well with others. Group projects highlight your ability to collaborate and communicate effectively. Externships or extracurriculars show intellectual curiosity and a capacity for learning outside a core area. If you changed majors or faced academic setbacks, it can even signal resilience and adaptability—the capacity to pivot, recover, and keep moving forward when things get tough. In many positions, people need to be flexible and get what is needed done, even if it is not part of a job description.

In essence, your education tells an employer: “I have the foundational knowledge, the discipline to see a task through, and the capacity to keep learning and evolving.” It is a promise of future potential.

ICT CAMPUS NEWS

OUR STUDENTS

ALL CAMPUSES

Recently, Interactive College of Technology students with a 3.5 GPA or higher at each of our campuses were inducted into the National Technical Honor Society (NTHS). This is a great honor for the students and celebrates their hard work in their classes. The students and staff wore NTHS's purple and attended a special ceremony. During the ceremony, each chapter invited speakers to discuss the seven NTHS attributes: skill, scholarship, leadership, honesty, responsibility, service, and citizenship. Congratulations to all our new NTHS members!



GEORGIA CAMPUSES:

CHAMBLEE

Chamblee recently hosted several jobs fair events in November and December. Employers with immediate openings set up tables in the Chamblee Student Center, meeting dozens of students and community applicants. Employee Assistance Coordinators were also on hand to offer resume modification help and counseling for job seekers.

In December, the Media Center gave ICT employees a chance to bond, and the Teacher Meet and Greet let instructors take part in icebreaker activities there. The following day, the Media Center hosted a Faculty & Staff Board Game Day, providing friendly competition. Additionally, the Media Center celebrates employees' birthdays each month.

As 2026 begins, January kicked off the new year with student centered programs such as the New Year Music Celebration, a VESL Graduation Party, and a Talent Show. Throughout January, the Media Center is also collecting household items to benefit Tapestri, an organization that assists refugees, survivors of human trafficking, and domestic violence victims (January is Human Trafficking Prevention Month).



ARE OUR MISSION

GAINESVILLE

Gainesville is a college that sometimes feels like a family. They have a number of events that bring them together. Every five weeks, the students meet to introduce newcomers, get to know each other, socialize, and make friends. They also gather to promote citizenship workshops, GED training, and recently, CBT Instructor Nosa Oghafua presented a special weekend class on AI usage. In addition, the campus celebrates birthdays once a month and graduations at the end of each semester. The campus creates volunteer opportunities within the Gainesville community at food banks, hospitals, schools, and churches. They also invite groups into the college to present resources the students might need, such as health, finance, real estate, and other organizations. The Gainesville campus does more than turn students into graduates. They also turn students into a community.



MORROW

At the Morrow Campus, twenty-seven employees are dedicated to supporting student success. The VESL program benefits from several long-term faculty members who bring consistency and experience to instruction. The Office Technology/CBT faculty are newer to the campus but highly motivated and enthusiastic about engaging students in the learning process. In addition, the support staff—including the Registrar, Financial Planning, and Employment Assistance Coordinator—are long-tenured, knowledgeable, and deeply committed to serving students. Jonathan Bonds, who brings more than 25 years of experience in higher education, has joined the campus as Acting Campus Director. His career with Interactive College of Technology began in the 1990s at the College Park Campus, which later relocated to the city of Morrow. Mr. Bonds was promoted to Campus Director in 2014 and later to Director of Education in 2024 at the Morrow Campus. Having served in nearly every role within the institution, he brings extensive institutional knowledge and leadership experience and has received multiple awards recognizing his contributions as an educator.



CAMPUS NEWS CONTINUED

TEXAS CAMPUSES:

SOUTHWEST HOUSTON

At every ICT campus, our students are the number one priority. In 2025, a key goal for our Southwest Houston Campus was to help even more students graduate! Our admissions team, academic advisors, instructors, and administrators all collaborated closely with students to achieve this objective. And it worked! Withdrawal rates have dropped to their lowest point in years. Congratulations to the dedicated team and, most importantly, to all the students we look forward to celebrating at graduation in 2026.

NORTH HOUSTON

The North Houston Campus experienced notable growth in 2025, increasing total enrollment from 117 students just two years ago to 168 by the start of 2026. This growth was driven by the strength of the Vocational English as a Second Language program. However, the Office Technology program maintained a stable number of students as well. A key driver of North Houston's growth was the expansion and restructuring of the campus' admissions team.

The campus increased the admissions staff and diversified the department by hiring bi-lingual Arabic and Vietnamese speakers. In addition, the campus significantly augmented its Community Outreach Associates (COAs). The COAs are ambassadors for the college who go out to community events and high traffic areas to talk about ICT's courses with prospective students.





PASADENA

We are thrilled to announce that Ms. Lee A. Bell is the new Campus Director of our Pasadena campus. Ms. Bell brings more than a decade of leadership experience in higher education, with a strong background in admissions operations, enrollment management, and student centered leadership. She has successfully developed data driven recruitment strategies, strengthened community partnerships, and collaborated with faculty and students.



Many of you already know that the Pasadena campus is housed in a former bank. What's especially interesting is how the downstairs has been retro fitted into an HVAC technician program. Just beyond the 10 inch thick vault door you will find the electrical lab, where students learn about circuitry, wiring, and thermostats. There are classrooms for lectures on all aspects of the industry, and the basement is equipped with working furnaces and air conditioning models so students can practice what they are learning. So now the bank's basement is still full—and rich—with knowledge. The students have been rewarded with a solid return on investment, proven by their success on the NATE certification exams

KENTUCKY CAMPUS:

Looking back at 2025, we are proud to celebrate the incredible growth of our Newport campus. While they may be small, their impact is mighty—and they are just getting started!

This year, the North Kentucky campus has expanded its reach and strengthened its commitment to student success. Their dedicated team works tirelessly to support every learner who walks through the door, and the results speak for themselves. They have achieved high placement and completion rates for the students. This reflects the hard work and care of both our staff and our students.

Looking ahead to the new year, Campus Director Dee Hornback says, “We are excited to continue growing our numbers and building on this momentum. Here is to an even stronger 2026!”



CEO'S MESSAGE

ONE COLLEGE. ONE GOAL.

Happy New Year!

I want to begin by wishing all our students, team members, and the many organizations that we work with a very successful 2026.

We began the year with just over 2,700 students from all corners of the world enrolled in programs to acquire English skills or career skills in many different fields of study. During 2025, over one hundred of our VESL graduates chose to re-enroll in one of our career skills programs and pursue a diploma or Associate of Science Degree, taking advantage of the institutional scholarship provided to our VESL graduates.

While a vocational diploma can and should lead to a rewarding position, the Associate of Science Degree has even more of a profound and strategic value in today's competitive job market. The A.S. Degree is not merely a stepping stone; it is a powerful marketable credential that positions the graduate for immediate professional success and long-term career growth.

The primary benefit of the A.S. Degree is its career readiness and industry focus. Unlike degrees that prioritize broad theoretical knowledge, our Associate of Science Degree programs are meticulously crafted with direct input from our Program Advisory Committees made up of industry leaders. This ensures the curricula is current, state of the art, and relevant in equipping you with the specialized hands-on skills that employers demand, whether it be HVAC Technology, Healthcare, Information Technology, or other in-demand business fields.

Furthermore, an A.S. Degree enhances earning potential and career trajectory. Data consistently shows that individuals with an Associate Degree earn significantly more over their lifetimes than those with only a high school diploma*. It opens doors to entry-level positions that serve as launchpads for more advanced roles. Finally, the Associate of Science Degree provides unparalleled flexibility and opportunity. Should your career aspirations evolve, this degree serves as an excellent platform for further education. Through our Articulation Agreements with Morehead State University and DeVry University, our graduates are ensured a smooth transition to pursuing a Bachelor's Degree.

In closing, I want to wish our students the greatest success. Go Be Extraordinary! Separate yourself by being a high achiever and demonstrating that you will be the chosen organization's NEXT GREAT EMPLOYEE!

Regards,
Elmer R. Smith, CEO

Elmer R. Smith

*U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

DEE HORNBACK

Dee Hornback began her journey with Interactive College of Technology (ICT) in 2020 as an Admissions Representative. Since then, she has worn many hats and now proudly serves as Campus Director. Dee is passionate about supporting students and staff as they work together toward success.

How did you come to work at ICT?

In 2020, after 13 years as a wedding planner, I decided to leave the event industry and try something new. While searching on Indeed, I saw an opening for an Admissions Representative at ICT and applied. The interview was a group setting with Mr. Blair and Ms. Diana Mamas. I honestly do not remember what I said, but they hired me immediately—and I have loved being here ever since!

And then you held several positions?

Yes! After Admissions, I transitioned into the Employment Assistance role, which included additional responsibilities. I assisted HVAC instructors, helped the CBT instructor proctor Medical Administrative and Microsoft Office exams, and even worked the front desk. I have truly worn many hats here, and now my most recent role is Campus Director.

How has working in so many positions helped you as Campus Director?

It has been invaluable. I have built strong bonds with students because I have been part of their journey from day one—helping them enroll, find jobs, and even dressing up as the Easter Bunny for their kids! It also helps me support my staff because I understand what they are going through. My experience gives me a unique perspective—I am not just someone coming in from the outside.

What do you enjoy the most about ICT?

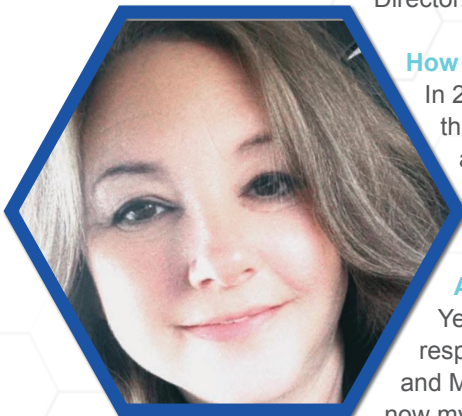
The connection with students. They know they can reach out to me anytime. If someone misses class, I notice and follow up. I know every student's name, what class they are in, and I genuinely care about their success.

I also know you have deep ties to the community?

Absolutely. My kids went to school in Newport, so I started getting involved in the community over 23 years ago. Over time, I have built strong relationships, especially through visiting local high schools. Schools trust us to help their graduates succeed, and they know we will take care of them. We are active in Job Corps, business associations, and other local initiatives.

And what do you do outside of work?

I recently bought a new home, which is exciting! I am also a crafter—I love making things and participate in community craft shows to share and sell my work. And I have a quirky passion: cows! I'm obsessed with them and often visit farms just to be around them and give them a pet.



A photograph of the Donna N. Smith Memorial Hall, a modern building with a curved glass facade and a blue sky background. The text "Q&A" is overlaid in a large, light blue font.

Q&A

Q&A

Q: How is my English level determined, and what level class will I be placed in?

A: Your level of English proficiency is determined by assessing your ability across the seven core language skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, Pronunciation, Vocabulary, and Grammar. Interactive College of Technology uses the CaMLA to find each person's level of English skill. Here is why.

The Role and Importance of CaMLA

The CaMLA English Placement Test (EPT) is the most utilized assessment across the globe. The CaMLA tests the ability is the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Many ESL schools link their own level names (e.g., Beginner, Intermediate) to the six CEFR levels to ensure global consistency.

What is CaMLA?

CaMLA is an acronym for Cambridge Michigan Language Assessments. It was a partnership between the University of Cambridge and the University of Michigan, two of the world's most prominent language assessment bodies (the organization is now known as Michigan Language Assessment).

Why is the CaMLA EPT Important?

The CaMLA EPT is important to the placement process because it is a validated, reliable, and standardized tool.

1. **Accuracy and Reliability:** The test items have been extensively pre-tested with English language learners of many different proficiency levels and backgrounds, ensuring the scores accurately reflect a student's ability. This precision minimizes the chances of a student being misplaced.
2. **Multiskill Assessment:** The EPT covers multiple areas—listening comprehension, grammatical knowledge, vocabulary range, and reading comprehension—to provide a comprehensive score of a student's overall receptive language proficiency.
3. **Efficiency:** The test is designed to be administered and scored quickly, allowing schools to place incoming students into appropriate classes without delay.
4. **CEFR Linkage:** The test scores are officially linked to the international CEFR levels (A1 to C1), which makes the placement result easy to understand and compare globally.

Q&A CONTINUED

| CEFR Level | User Category | Description |
|------------|------------------|---|
| A1 | Basic User | Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases. |
| A2 | Basic User | Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). |
| B1 | Independent User | Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. |
| CEFR Level | User Category | Description |
| B2 | Independent User | Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. |
| C1 | Proficient User | Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. |
| C2 | Proficient User | Can understand virtually everything heard or read. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning. |

Conclusion

Your placement into an ESL class is not a guess; it is a data-driven decision based on professional assessment tools like the CaMLA EPT. This rigorous process is critical because accurate placement is the single most important factor for maximizing your learning speed, reducing anxiety, and ensuring you are appropriately challenged by the course material.

ICTGRADUATES

DONNA N. SMITH
Memorial Hall



SPOTLIGHT & REVIEWS

REVIEW SPOTLIGHT

"My husband and I visited this college so he could talk to them about taking up HVAC classes. Chad the Admissions Advisor was very informative on everything my husband needed to know about the program. This is a very nice school and we were very welcomed by Chad and Nicolle and their whole staff. My husband is super excited to start his classes and looking forward to a great career. Thank you, Chad, for explaining everything and answering all of our questions and making my husband feel comfortable and ready to learn his new career in HVAC."

-Karen B., Newport Campus

"Todo el personal súper amable pero en especial la señora Giselle exageradamente buen me ayudó en absolutamente TODO de verdad que si es muy muy buena persona y demasiado atenta me encantó el trato."

-Valeria D., North Houston Campus

"Ms. Bartley has always been clear and very helpful, she cared about our success and make everything easy to understand. She always encouraged me and that is the reason why I did good in my academic field and I am lucky to have her as my Advisor. Thank you, Ms. Bartley, for everything."

-Sunita S., Chamblee Campus

"Excelente atención por parte del Sr José Medina que me asesoró y guió durante todo el proceso de inscripción! Siempre con la mejor disposición! Feliz de comenzar en este colegio!"

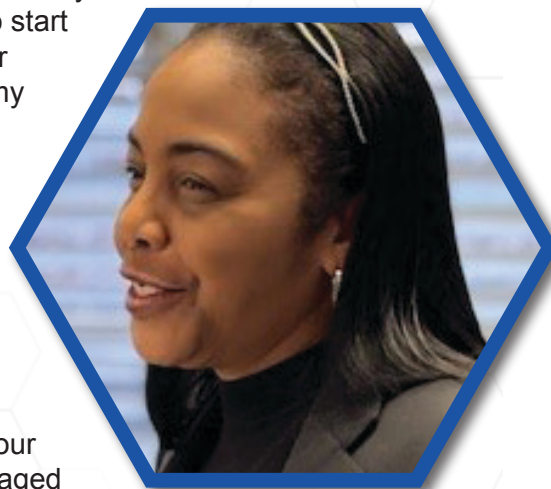
-Yaima R., Southwest Houston Campus

"I'm happy to have Ms. Annika Smith as my teacher. She is a very passionate person in her work, she really enjoys what she does, she is very sweet, and she always shows that she has something new to learn."

-Adriana L., Chamblee Campus

"I had a great tour, Nicolle helped me tremendously with paperwork and telling me a little bit about the environment. Mr Miles and Chad also both where a big help and made me feel very comfortable thank you so much."

-Aidin, Newport Campus



FUNFACTS

Did YOU KNOW THAT

What comes in your mind when you think of a media center? Books? Computers?

1. Well, did you know that the Media Center at Interactive College of Technology also has games like **Icebreakers**, **Scrabble**, and **Uno** that you can play?
2. Did you know that students and employees have access to excellent library subscriptions such as **Job & Career Accelerator**, **PrepStep**, and **World Book**?
3. The Media Center also provides tutoring services and academic prescriptions that allow students to get individual assistance in certain areas of development. Also, if you've heard about exciting activities like "Mango Monday," "Faculty & Staff Bingo," and "Book & Games Club," these were organized by the Media Center.

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