



2024 NEWSLETTER

ICTOFFICER'S LIST

CEO: Elmer R. Smith

EVP of Enrollment: Gregory A. Koch

EVP of Product Development: Thomas A. Blair

VP, Chamblee Campus: JoAnn Koch

CAMPUSDIRECTORS

Gainesville: Margaret P. Smith- Interim Director

Chamblee: JoAnn Koch - Vice President

Morrow: Josue Rodriguez

Newport: Vanessa Kennedy

N. Houston: Demi Banks

Pasadena: Robert A. Pope

SW. Houston: Diane K. Nguyenn

What DOES Success Look Like?

A graduate of Interactive College of Technology recently came back to film a testimonial video. He learned English at the college twenty years ago and went on to study Business Management. At the time, he worked as a carpenter during the day and drove a cab when he was not at his day job or in college. He said he saw his kids in the mornings before they went to school and on Sunday. Today, he is a project manager for a construction company. He lives in a nice area, his kids are in college, and he just took a vacation to his country of origin to see relatives.

This is just one of several student testimonials we have filmed from graduates of ICT. We talked with a lady who went from cleaning houses to running a successful medical practice. There were refrigeration students working in their field. Some students have started thriving businesses. Other Vocational English as a Second Language students have told us about a renewed confidence in being able to speak with teachers, doctors, and police officers, that they could not do before.

When looking at all these stories, one thing becomes clear. They all worked hard to make their current situation happen. At Interactive College of Technology, we have the right courses, supportive instructors, and advisors, Employment Assistance Coordinators, and more. Students have to put in the time and effort. The harder the student works to learn, the more they will get from each course. The more they learn, the more they can use when they start their career.

So, what is your idea of success? Is it a well-paying job or more time with your family; a new car or not having to worry about rent, being able to converse with any doctor or a job interview in all English, or all of the above? What success looks like to us is more students working hard to overcome their situation and returning to campus to tell their personal stories with smiles on their faces.

ICT CAMPUS NEWS

OUR STUDENTS

GEORGIA CAMPUSES:

GEORGIA

In September, the three Georgia campuses hosted blood drives at the same time. ICT partnered with a local non-profit blood bank named The Blood Connection that had buses furnished with everything needed for a smooth donation process. The buses came to Gainesville, Chamblee, and Morrow and worked with the campuses to get donations from students, faculty, and staff. All donations made during the blood drive went directly to help patients in the community where the blood was collected. Each donor could potentially save up to three lives.

A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED.

CHAMBLEE

The Chamblee campus' HVAC and refrigeration program recently received great news. They were named the **NUMBER ONE HVAC TRAINING PROGRAM IN ALL OF GEORGIA**. American School Search put ICT at the top of the list of twenty-seven Georgia HVAC colleges offering certificates and associate degrees in HVAC technology and HVAC maintenance. The ranking was based on data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and the National Center for Education Statistics. They were also named in the top twenty in the Southeast. "This is a great honor," said VP and Campus Director JoAnne Koch. "It always feels good to get validation from an unbiased organization that our programs offer the best education possible." The HVAC program was rated based on a number of factors including instruction, safety, graduation rate, cost/value, and more.



GAINESVILLE

Gainesville has some good news to share recently. One of their instructors, Ms. Jessica Mason, was recently promoted to the Director of Education position. Ms. Mason began with Interactive College of Technology as a CBT Lab Assistant in 2016 and has proven herself time and time again. She briefly left ICT but returned in 2021. Since her return, she has been one of ICT's leading Computer Based Training (CBT) instructors and has been actively engaged in curricula and program development. She has a passion for the success of her students. She also has a passion for the Gainesville campus which will help drive success for the entire academic team. Ms. Mason replaces Robert Favor, who is retiring after twelve years at the Gainesville campus. ICT has been incredibly lucky to have had Bob working with the academic team for so long. We all wish him the best.



ARE OUR MISSION

MORROW

This fall, Morrow is excited to announce a new Director of Education. Dr. Yvette Thomas is an experienced academic leader with a track record in improving student outcomes and driving institutional success. Her expertise include instructional design, curriculum development, faculty development, online learning, and accreditation. Dr. Thomas has a strong background in utilizing technology to enhance teaching and learning, and she is skilled in managing complex academic programs and initiatives. Dr. Thomas holds a Ph.D. in Education from Capella University with an Instructional Design specialty and has served in various academic leadership roles, including Academic Affairs Director and Director of Education. Welcome Dr. Thomas.



TEXAS CAMPUSES: SOUTHWEST HOUSTON

The campus in Southwest Houston always holds a lot of activities. This Fall is no exception. There was the Fall Job Fair in September that hosted a number of employers looking for new hires as well as resources for students to help them with their resumes and interviewing skills. In October, they also held their annual International Day Celebration with students wearing their native clothes, speeches about different countries, cultural foods and drink, and more. In addition, the campus recently hosted an event where students could learn about 2024 Affordable Care Act Plans and get help with the open marketplace at Healthcare.gov. They are doing all these events in addition to welcoming students during class breaks to their newly decorated media center with game days and scavenger hunts.



CAMPUS NEWS CONTINUED

NORTH HOUSTON

North Houston has not only welcomed new faculty members but also brought back instructors from breaks or retirement. As a result, the campus has initiated a mentoring program where more experienced instructors support the newer staff. One standout among the newcomers is Erika Lee. Mrs. Lee teaches the daytime Level 2 reading class and is quickly becoming a cornerstone of the program. Each day, she arrives with an open mind, fully embracing the curriculum. She enriches the classroom with outside resources and fosters personal connections with her students. Her dedication is evident in her impressive results: over the past three months, she has achieved a 100% success rate for students advancing to the next class and a 92% engagement rate. Though she may be soft-spoken, her passion for her students speaks volumes.



PASADENA

At the Pasadena campus, Fall has been a time for celebrations. This past September the staff held a Student Appreciation Day. Students brought in homemade pupusas, salads, and birthday cakes for those with September birthdays. In addition, the campus had a booth at the acclaimed Pasadena rodeo. The staff took shifts representing the college right outside the entrance to the rodeo. They were able to give out t-shirts, giveaways, and information about their academic programs. They had a lot to talk about with the festival goers too. Not only has the campus continued to grow its population, but the students have been very successful. All the students from their Pre-VESL class graduated to the full course. They also were able to celebrate the fact that since January 1st, their HVAC students have had a 100% pass rate on their NATE certifications. Congratulations to all those students.



KENTUCKY CAMPUS

Interactive College of technology has been in the Newport area since 1988, but the reputation of the college has expanded out far beyond the city. Programs such as HVAC technology, Medical Office Administration, and Business Management have attracted students from all over the Northern Kentucky, Southern Ohio, and Southern Indiana area. Potential students have contacted the campus from as far away as Indianapolis and Dayton, Ohio. Yet, ICT is proud to be a part of Newport's community of 600+ businesses and still attracts most of its students from the greater Cincinnati area.

CEO'S MESSAGE

THE CEO'S LETTER

One of the most important rights that U.S. Citizens enjoy is the right to vote. Many of our students came from countries where this was not possible. Regardless of your affiliation, take advantage of this right and privilege.

Make no mistake, this election has implications for Interactive College of Technology and all of higher education. Let me take a minute to speak to the obvious issues.

Student Loan Forgiveness

We agree there are cases where some student loans should be forgiven; when the College engaged in meaningful misrepresentation. While there has been a lot of political rhetoric in this regard, the courts have largely blocked most of the forgiveness plans. The true answer is to work to minimize loan debt. Only borrow what you must. ICT is proud of the fact that our students have one of the lowest debt loads of any students attending a career college. Don't be fooled into believing you will not have to repay. Borrow smartly. Our staff is here to help.

Regulations

The current administration is pro-regulation and continues to try to find new ways to write and add more regulation. Make certain, ICT supports sensible regulation to protect students and help improve the student education experience. However, dealing with more and more onerous reports and regulations adds expense and increases student cost. Our colleges currently are regulated by each state agency, by our accrediting agency, by the Veterans Administration, SEVIS (for immigration issues), and the U.S. Department of Education. All of these agencies require annual reports, site visits, and other periodic reviews. All of this takes time away from our core mission of helping our students.

FAFSA

A change in leadership is needed to get this major problem corrected. Currently, it is a mess and has adversely affected thousands of students.

I point out these issues not to sway your vote, but to inform you. Pay little attention to the outlandish advertisements for either party. Do your own research and make an informed choice, but exercise your right to vote. If you are not registered, the Employment Assistance Department or your Academic Department Chair can help advise you how to get registered. Only a few days remain to register to vote on November 5, 2024. We all want the best for our country, state, county, city, and our students.

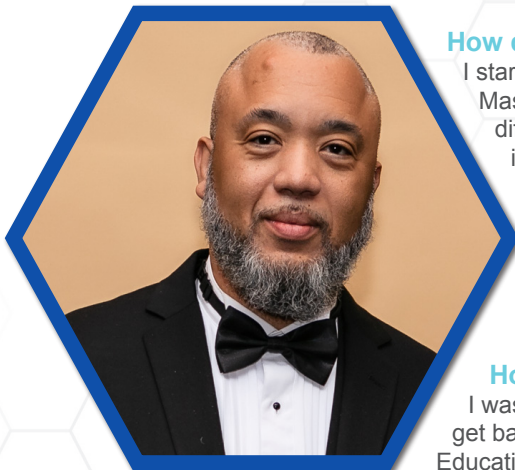
Sincerely,
Elmer R. Smith, Chief Executive Officer

Elmer R. Smith



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

JOE SCOTT



Many of ICT's students already know Joe Scott as an instructor. Many of the faculty and staff also know him as the Director of Education, first at Southwest Houston and now at the North Houston campus. However, not many have gotten to know his story.

How did you get started in education?

I started as an unpaid instructor's aide in graduate school. Before going on to my Master's program, I decided to go to a tech college, similar to ICT. I got all the different certifications. When I came back to the grad program, I told the instructor what I did, and then I showed him that he was not teaching everything correctly. He said, "since you went and got all the certifications, you are going to teach the class the first three hours, I will teach the fourth hour." So, I taught a master's level Networking 1 class, then Networking 2, then Cybersecurity. That is how I got into teaching. I went on to teach at ITT and other programs.

How did you find ICT?

I was doing a project on a military base in Richmond, Virginia. I wanted to get back home. I was looking online and saw ICT was looking for a Director of Education. I knew they had IT and Business Information Systems, which is my strength, but there was also the Vocational ESL program. English and I are not friends, but mutual acquaintances. So, I was nervous. But, since starting here I have grown to love it. I have learned more about English structure and how to teach it. It was great to relearn all the rules and get to the reason why we drop the "y" and add "ies."

What do you love most about teaching?

It is the challenge. You have so many different types of student at ICT. Being able to reach those students takes different methods and ideas. To see a student blossom and grow is the best part of it. They hold their heads up high as they walk across the stage and I get to say, "there goes my student."

Do you have any goals for the campus?

I look at our campus and the other campuses' trends. This is a small campus, so the theme here is "do more for less." We may not be as big as Southwest or Houston Community College. I have my staff trained to do more for the students because it is all our responsibility to advise, teach, and help the student. We wear many hats at this campus. My personal goal is to understand all the roles at the campus, instructors, financial planners, registrar, admissions, so when I become a Campus Director, I am prepared.

What do you do outside the classroom?

Sleep. I also do a lot of community service. I am very active with my fraternity and my masonic lodge. I'm very active with my fellow Shriners. So almost every Saturday, I am usually serving my community in some way.



Trouble with the FAFSA

Anyone who has applied for Financial Aid knows that filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid or FAFSA is an important part of the process. However, it is not an easy form to fill out. That was the reason the Department of Education recently tried to revise it. They wanted to make it simpler. However, as anyone who has tried to work with the FAFSA in recent months knows, it has been an unequivocal mess.

There have been delays, calculation errors, worries about yield rates, and hundreds of students have found their college plans disrupted. Those that have tried to call the Department of Education have gotten no help.

The one positive that has come from the revision is that colleges can no longer fill out the form for the student. This encourages the students to take ownership of their own process, ensures transparency, and prevents possible conflicts of interest where a college may incentivize students to misrepresent themselves. At ICT, it has meant that we had to improve our customer service during the admissions process. Our Financial Planners do more now to answer the student's questions. They now have laptops enabling them to sit with our students, go over the form in detail, and assist as needed.

The important lesson learned is to complete the FAFSA as early as possible. The Department of Education claims the process has been fixed but they still have a backlog of 6 million applications received this year. Luckily, our staff are always available to assist.



DONNA N. SMITH
Memorial Hall

FUNFACTS

CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

Recently, Interactive College of Technology was invited to participate in an Educational Leadership Conference of educators from around the world. The event, hosted by Cambridge University Publishing, was held at Churchill College, a part of Cambridge University. Educators traveled from as far as Brazil, Indonesia, and Venezuela for this experience. ICT's representatives, Greg Weaver and Viorica Cazacu, were the only representatives from the United States.

Presenters were renowned experts in the field of education and shared their experiences as well as their challenges. Their sessions included presentations in leadership, teaching students in a changing world, diverse assessment strategies, and how the use AI in the classroom will become transformational. "The teaching in a changing world presentation was especially interesting to me," said Viorica. "You can see why Cambridge has included teaching about global warming, architecture, highlighting on empowering our students to act for a sustainable future." Greg also added, "The opportunity to exchange ideas and strategies for teaching with so many educational professionals was astonishing."

The conference lasted for three days with one and a half hour sessions throughout the day. These lectures were broken up by networking time where participants could share ideas. The conference was then capped by a formal gala dinner at the famed King's College Cathedral. Congratulations to Mr. Weaver and Mrs. Cazacu for being chosen for this prestigious conference.

INTERACTIVE COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

Wed love a 5-STAR REVIEW

Chamblee GA Morrow GA Gainesville GA Newport KY SW Houston TX N Houston TX Pasadena TX