

LEARNING THAT WORKS.



FROM THE DIRECTOR

I have always believed **learning is the one thing no one can take away from you**. Some of it pays off in a paycheck. Some of it is its own reward. All of it belongs to the learner forever. Our job is to help fulfill whatever purpose someone brings through our doors.

This is what Learning that Works means to me.

Student success and workforce development are often talked about as separate priorities in higher education, but at Columbus State University, **they are frequently the same work**. Continuing & Professional Education demonstrates it every day. **CSU students** add industry credentials to what they are already learning in the classroom. **Working adults** build the next skill their careers require. In fact, some start here and discover their path leads to the admissions office, while others return to learn something new long after commencement. Our English Language Institute builds a bridge into academic study. Our Testing Center supports people pursuing admission, certification, licensure, and employment. And sometimes **a child's first experience of Columbus State** is a summer program that makes a university campus feel like a place they belong.

This year's stories of discovery deserve to be told:

Leo, a business leader from Colombia, spent four semesters in our English Language Institute. Last fall he completed the program and began his next chapter as **an MBA student in the Turner College of Business and Technology**—and now serves as an international student ambassador, helping other students find their footing.

Freyder, an ELI Bridge student, studied intensive English while pursuing his passion for classical guitar, earning academic credit along the way. He crossed the bridge to become a **full-time student in the College of the Arts**.

David, a project manager for over a decade, **never believed he could pass the PMP**—until he did. Now he teaches for us.

Michaela, a graduate assistant whose work in our office became **her professional training ground**, is now at Global Payments.

The reach extends well beyond those who register for a course: 600 Aflac claims analysts, 300 JROTC cadets, 65 early-childhood educators, and a classroom of Army soldiers all learned with us this year without ever navigating our registration system.

FY26 was a year of transitions. We completed long-running projects, like a course built for the Georgia Division of Child Support Services to help foster youth understand responsible parenting. And we celebrated a milestone as the Youth Dance Conservatory became the Dance Preparatory Academy, building a bridge between community creativity and college curriculum in our College of the Arts. What held—and what grew—was the work this community asks of us directly. **Nearly half of our households find us through word of mouth**; in this work, there may be no stronger endorsement.

Our team is not large, but the work is—and CPE staff, instructors, student employees, faculty partners, employers, community organizations, and colleagues across CSU **carry it together**. I have watched this team ask, again and again, what would make our learners' next step possible. And I have watched them do the work, again and again, to make it happen. **That is the difference between running programs and believing learning works**.

There is still more to build. We are not trying to be everything to everyone. We are trying to understand where Columbus State University can make a meaningful difference, **build the right next step, and make that step easier to find, access, and trust**.

What we are required to report does not always capture everything that matters; in these pages, we have tried to give you both. **I hope you see more than a collection of programs. I hope you see people crossing bridges we helped build**—into the university, into a profession, toward a credential, through a career change, back to learning after time away, or deeper into a life of learning for its own sake.

In a valley that lives on both banks of a river, we know what bridges are for, and we know how to build them. That is the work reflected in this report. **It is evidence of Learning that Works**.



Warmly, Sam

Samantha K. Miller Gurski, MS, PMP

Director, Continuing & Professional Education
Columbus State University



REACH — WHAT WE DID

140,000+

CONTACT HOURS OF INSTRUCTION

The equivalent of one person learning eight hours a day, every workday, for **70 years**—delivered across youth camps, professional and contract training, the English Language Institute, dance, and community enrichment.

4,466

REGISTRATIONS

1,727

HOUSEHOLDS

26

STATES

12

COUNTRIES

3,580

EXAMS PROCTORED BY
THE TESTING CENTER

RESULTS — WHAT CHANGED

380

CREDENTIALS EARNED BY
CSU STUDENTS — 93.4%
FINAL PASS RATE

74 + 11

CAREER-TRAINING
CERTIFICATIONS +
REAL-ESTATE LICENSURE
QUALIFIERS

2

ELI STUDENTS
TRANSITIONED TO CSU
FULL-TIME

3

BRIDGE STUDENTS
TAKING ACADEMIC
AND ELI COURSES

1

STUDENT ACCEPTED TO
GEORGIA STATE

35%

OF HOUSEHOLDS
RETURNED—AND
GENERATED 75% OF
REGISTRATIONS

13

FALL 2025

11

SPRING 2026

F-1 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS—PAYING STUDENT FEES

675

EMPLOYEES UPSKILLED FOR INDUSTRY PARTNERS

GUIDEPOSTS — four commitments from CSU's *Better Together 2030* strategic plan run through this report. Each section is marked with the commitments it serves.

Student Success — preparing students as they advance toward graduation, careers and meaningful lives.

Community Impact — driving innovation and creating opportunities for continued economic development and improved quality of life in our region.

Responsible Stewardship — promoting the ethical and transparent management of resources for the individual student and for the university.

Economic Competitiveness — elevating the university to be a destination for higher education and contributing to the vitality of the Chattahoochee Valley.

Learning that Opens Doors

ENGLISH LANGUAGE
INSTITUTE

STUDENT SUCCESS · COMMUNITY
IMPACT



22

STUDENTS CALLED THE ELI
HOME

12

COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

13 of 18

FALL STUDENTS RETURNED
IN SPRING

15

ALREADY ON THE FALL
ROSTER AHEAD

HOME COUNTRIES



Twenty-two students from twelve countries called the English Language Institute home this year—each one from a different country than the next, from Vietnam, South Korea, and Japan to El Salvador, Colombia, and India. Most held F-1 visas, recruited and enrolled in the same year new international enrollment fell sharply across the country. The fall roster ahead already lists fifteen, including four students advancing into the Bridge program and four arriving from Japan through a partnership the 2025 visa disruption had interrupted.

NUMBERS IN CONTEXT

In fall 2025, new international enrollment fell 17% nationally. The ELI grew its pipeline in the same year.

OPEN DOORS 2025 · INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATION

The learning extended beyond the classroom. Through Passport to Columbus, campus interview missions, and partnerships from the Coca-Cola Space Science Center to the Bo Bartlett Center and Oxbow Meadows, ELI students used the university and the city as their learning environment—while CSU conversation partners and TESOL students learned alongside them.

Access runs in every direction: classes under \$50 for adults trying something new, online options for working schedules, and summer camps where a child's first visit to a university campus ends with wanting to come back.

ELI BRIDGE

Freyder — across the Bridge

A Bridge student, Freyder studied intensive English while pursuing classical guitar, earning academic credit along the way. He completed the program and matriculated full time into the College of the Arts.

ELI BRIDGE → COMPLETION → COLLEGE OF THE ARTS



Freyder with his Intensive English Program completion certificate.

Learning that Builds Careers

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS ·
COMMUNITY IMPACT



Six hundred Aflac claims analysts trained in medical terminology and critical thinking this spring—part of a growing partnership that also includes freshman internships and a certificate program in development. It is the largest single training engagement in the department's year, and it never touched our public catalog.

Career credentials moved throughout the portfolio: 74 career-training completions led by NASM Personal Trainer and the CompTIA family; 11 real-estate students qualified for licensure, with employers recruiting directly from the classroom at our hiring event; 30 teacher professional-development enrollments; and a 40-hour sUAS drone maintainer course delivered for 15 soldiers.

NUMBERS IN CONTEXT

59% of workers will need upskilling or reskilling by 2030;
39% of core job skills are changing.

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM · FUTURE OF JOBS REPORT 2025

INTERNATIONAL CONTRACT

Busan Global Village · South Korea

CPE was contracted to train up to 60 teachers in TESOL for Young Learners—24 contact hours each. A new international training market opened in the same year an established one was interrupted.

NUMBERS IN CONTEXT

A changed geopolitical and military funding landscape made it harder for some learners to pursue their goals this year. These numbers were earned against that headwind.



CPE now holds PMI Authorized Training Provider status, authorizing delivery of official PMP exam-preparation content. The first CAPM/PMP face-to-face series launches this fall.



Employers recruiting at the real-estate career day, Elizabeth Bradley Turner Center.



On-site at Aflac: CPE instructors under the wings of the house mascot.

Learning that Creates Pathways

PATHWAYS

STUDENT SUCCESS · ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS



David — from learner to instructor

ACADEMIC LEARNING → PM READY → CAPM → PMP → CPE INSTRUCTOR & THE NEXT LEARNERS

David worked in project management for more than a decade without believing he could pass the PMP. He took PM Ready, helped shape the model that embeds industry credentials in academic courses, earned his CAPM, then his PMP—and now teaches for CPE.

ELI → MBA

Leo — from the ELI to the MBA

A business leader from Colombia, Leo spent four semesters in the English Language Institute. Last fall he completed the program and began an MBA in the Turner College of Business and Technology, where he carries a strong GPA—and serves as an international student ambassador, helping other students find their footing.

ELI · 4 SEMESTERS → TURNER COLLEGE MBA → STUDENT AMBASSADOR



Leo with his IEP completion certificate.

Pathways run through every program

REAL-ESTATE PRE-LICENSING → STATE LICENSURE

HESI EXAMS → NURSING ADMISSION

GACE PARAPRO → A CLASSROOM CAREER

ACCUPLACER → A PUBLIC-SAFETY BADGE

EMBEDDED CREDENTIALS → A RESUME THAT TRANSLATES A TRANSCRIPT

COACHING

Lifelong Learning Success Coaching

Some pathways need a guide, not a course. CPE's one-on-one coaching pairs learners with personalized guidance and reflection—turning goals into plans and plans into finished work.

"Lifelong Learner Coaching empowered me to take initiative and confidently lead big and meaningful projects that once felt out of reach... a transformative experience in building both self-direction and purpose-driven growth."

KRISTI LEUTELE — COACHING PARTICIPANT

BRIDGE → ENGINEERING

Eden — the Bridge, working as designed

Eden took academic courses and intensive English at the same time—counting as a university student and building an academic record. She earned an excellent TOEFL score and transferred to pursue an engineering degree in her chosen specialty.

BRIDGE → TOEFL → ENGINEERING DEGREE

Learning by Doing

WORKPLACE LEARNING

STUDENT SUCCESS



Student assistants, graduate assistants, and seasonal Activ8 staff—most of them current CSU students or alumni—run real operations: programs, events, customer service, supervision. The department is a training ground with a payroll.



Michaela Hargrove at commencement.

"My graduate assistantship in CPE was one of the most rewarding parts of my graduate experience. The skills I developed helped me land my job."

MICHAELA HARGROVE — CPE GRADUATE ASSISTANT, NOW AT GLOBAL PAYMENTS



Staffing the ELI's information table—student employees run events like this one.



The Activ8 seasonal staff.

Learning Across a Lifetime

YOUTH & ENRICHMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT



Sixty-nine percent of Activ8 families come back. Forty-two percent explore another part of the catalog—the strongest crossover in the portfolio. Summer camps in science, art, cooking, and robotics fill to capacity; dance students train year-round; and adults learn to make bread, sail, paint, and Zumba a mile from home—92% of enrichment registrations come from the Columbus area. These classes serve our neighbors.

The CALL partnership carries lifelong learning further still: monthly educational engagement among older adults is linked to measurably slower cognitive aging—and CALL members are the rare tenth who participate.

Half of US children whose parents want structured summer programs can't get in. CPE's scholarship seats with CCSSC address exactly that gap.

AFTERSCHOOL ALLIANCE · AMERICA AFTER 3PM · 2026



Today I learned that it's
ok to get my hands dirty!



Today I learnd
how creative
I can be

Personal enrichment in session: charcuterie and Zumba. Below, an Activ8 craft session bookended by campers' written reflections.



Spring break campers meet CSU police—and try out the driver's seat.

Across course evaluations, students rated their instructors 9.3 out of 10—with 8 in 10 giving a perfect score.

FY26 COURSE EVALUATIONS

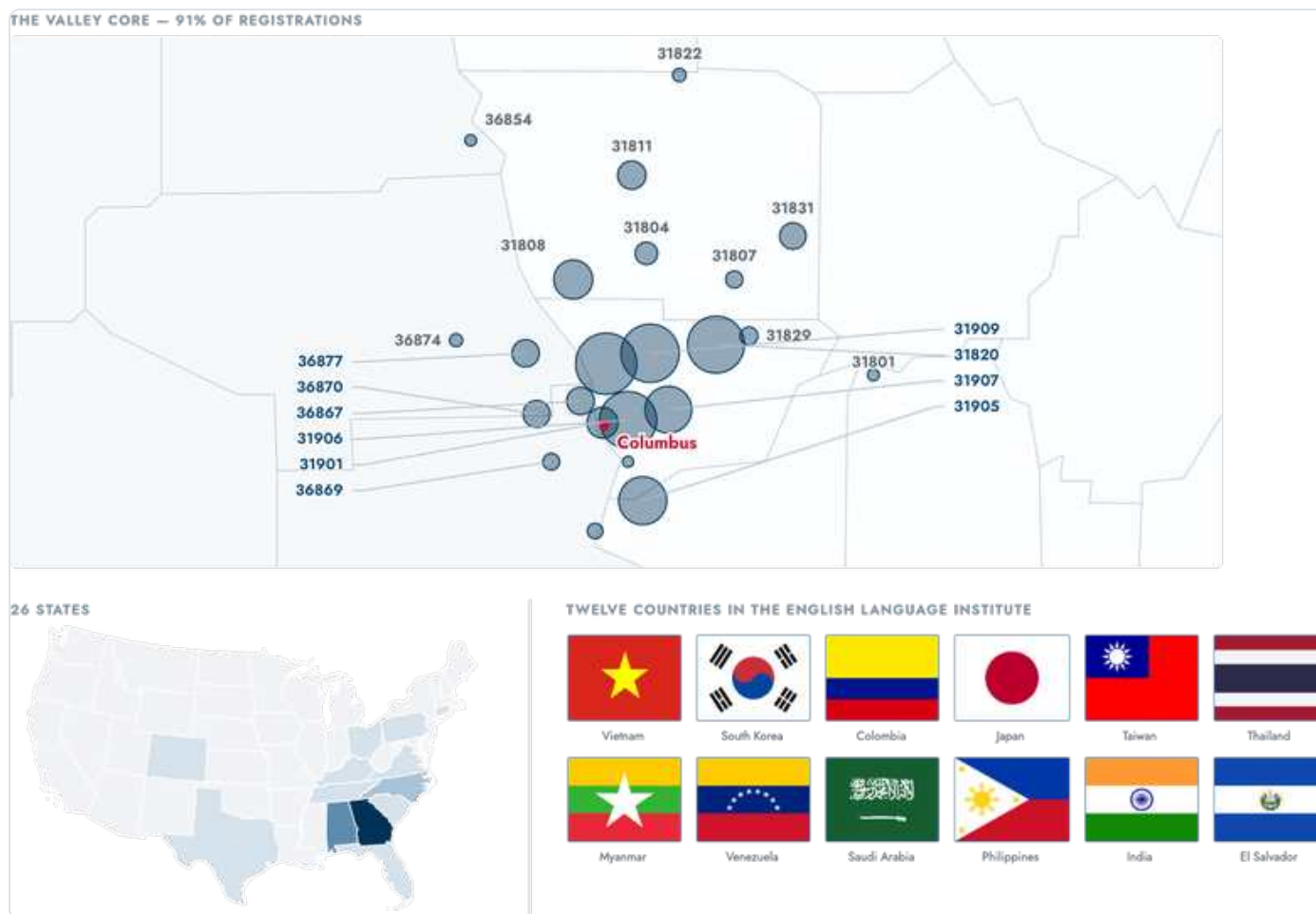
Learning that Strengthens the Region

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

COMMUNITY IMPACT · ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS



FY26 learners came from 243 ZIP codes across 26 states—79% from the Columbus area, 12% from the Alabama side of the river, and a tail that reaches military families as far away as an APO address in South Korea. Enrichment classes serve our neighbors; professional programs reach a region.



Top: the valley core by county—circle area proportional to registrations, the largest ZIPs labeled. Below: the 26 states with FY26 registrations, and the ELI's twelve home countries.

The **Testing Center** administered 3,580 exams across six delivery channels—adding a Pearson VUE site in March to Prometric, ProctorU, GACE, ACCUPLACER, and HESI. The hiring pipeline for the city's police, fire, and sheriff's services runs through its 283 public-safety exams.

Georgia faces a 20% RN shortfall by 2038—the seats for HESI nursing-admission exams are regional infrastructure.

HEALTH RESOURCES & SERVICES ADMINISTRATION · 2025

CREDENTIAL PARTNERS

CompTIA

CERTiPORT
A PEARSON VUE BUSINESS

Pearson
VUE
Authorized
Test Center

NCTA
NATIONAL COLLEGE
TESTING ASSOCIATION

Partners across the valley

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

COMMUNITY IMPACT · ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS



YOUTH · STEM

JROTC STEM Leadership Academy

Three hundred cadets spent a week of summer on campus—building robots, flying drones through competition arches, and visiting the CSU Archives—backed by a sponsor bench including DoDSTEM, Delta, Lockheed Martin, and Panasonic.



The JROTC STEM Leadership Academy: drone competition, pool robotics, and the CSU Archives.

CONTRACT TRAINING

Partners across the valley: CALL, Job Search Success, CCSSC scholarship seats, the Japanese Saturday School, Enrichment Services' early-childhood educators, area schools, and employers—plus the ELI's community classroom: METRA, Uptown Columbus, the Coca-Cola Space Science Center, the Bo Bartlett Center, and Oxbow Meadows. The Georgia Division of Aging Services and CTC are already signed on for the year ahead.



A 40-hour sUAS drone maintainer course delivered for 15 soldiers.



CPE + Aflac partnered to train 600 analysts in the TRACK Method.

Learning that Strengthens CSU

INSIDE THE UNIVERSITY

STUDENT SUCCESS · RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP



The Embedded Industry Credentials Pilot

536

CSU STUDENTS GIVEN
ACCESS

424

EXAM ATTEMPTS

380

CREDENTIALS EARNED

93.4%

FINAL SPRING PASS RATE
— UP FROM 88.8% IN
FALL

With more than ten faculty partners, three industry credentials—Generative AI Foundations, PMI Project Management Ready, and Intuit Personal Finance—were embedded inside existing CSU courses. Participation was voluntary and reached 75–81%. Every credential went home with a degree student who now graduates with an industry certification alongside the transcript. CPE operates the program end to end: vendor contracts, vouchers, platforms, proctoring.

The university's international students begin here:

Bridge students count in university enrollment and pay tuition and fees while completing intensive English—the ELI is an enrollment pathway, not just a program.

The CSU Testing Center proctors for students and faculty in addition to the public—this includes recruits for local police and fire departments.



CPE staff at the Ask Me tent, welcoming students on campus.

BETTER TOGETHER: 2030

"Deploy a robust professional education model tied to specific workforce needs in the Chattahoochee Valley."—CSU strategic plan, naming CPE's mandate

STUDENT SUCCESS · BRIDGE PATHWAYS · EMBEDDED
CREDENTIALS · STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP · PORTFOLIO & DATA
INFRASTRUCTURE

COMMUNITY IMPACT · 600 ANALYSTS · PUBLIC-SAFETY
TESTING · JROTC · SCHOLARSHIP SEATS

ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS · CREDENTIALS ALIGNED
TO REGIONAL SHORTAGES



The CPE team at the university's holiday decorating contest.

LOOKING AHEAD — FY27, IN THREE COMMITMENTS

1 • Expand workforce & employer programming

Increase industry partnerships; deliver the first PMI sessions under our Authorized Training Provider status.

2 • Grow credential pathways

Grow career-training completions past 90; sustain the embedded-credentials model in partnership with the colleges.

3 • Expand access & digital reach

CPE and ELI landing pages live on columbusstate.edu; four ELI online courses delivered; analytics live with a published baseline.

Whatever purpose brings you through our doors, we are here to help you fulfill it. Thank you for trusting us.



CONTINUING & PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

COLUMBUS STATE UNIVERSITY

LEARNING THAT **WORKS.**



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Elizabeth Bradley
Turner Center

Continuing and Professional Education

Conference Center

English Language Institute

Testing Center