



CENTRAL
CONNECTICUT
STATE UNIVERSITY

The Future Is Central: Investing in the Institution's Next Chapter



Agenda

- Research 2 Polytechnic
- Seven Pillars
- Development of Investment Case
- Timeline
- Closing



Central Connecticut State University

Research 2 Polytechnic University

Central Connecticut State University, the only Public Research 2 (R2) Polytechnic University in New England



Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) – Worcester, MA
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) – Cambridge, MA
Wentworth Institute of Technology – Boston, MA
New England Institute of Technology (NEIT) – Warwick, Rhode Island



What is a Research 2 Polytechnic?

R2 is a Carnegie Research Activity Designation for universities with high research spending and doctorate production. Thresholds:

- At least \$5M in research spending
- 20 or more research doctorates awarded annually

A polytechnic university typically emphasizes:

- Applied learning (hands-on, experiential education tied to real problems)
- Applied research designed to be tested/refined in real-world settings, often with industry/community partners
- An emphasis toward STEM, engineering, technology, sciences, and applied science, often with strong co-ops, internships, and workforce pipelines



Benefits of Central's R2 Polytechnic Transformation

Benefits to Students

- Achieve strong career outcomes
- Gain early access to high-impact spaces, labs, and studios; learning by doing
- Build a higher-value skill portfolio
- Expand their employer network
- Pursue greater undergraduate research opportunities
- Complete industry-connected capstones
- Earn degrees that signal, “ready on day one”
- Strengthen civic and community impact
- Increase satisfaction and probability of degree completion

Benefits to Graduates

- Builds self-confidence in abilities
- Creates portfolio of work that is easy to demonstrate
- Increases earning potential over time
- Strengthens readiness for graduate school(s)
- Allows earned stackable credentials in support of lifelong learning
- Creates greater career flexibility
- Opens pathways to Connecticut’s growth sectors



Benefits of Central's R2 Polytechnic Transformation

Benefits to Faculty & Staff

- Increases career satisfaction
- Expands greater access to research capacity and visibility
- Strengthens alignment between advising, career services, and academics
- Grows greater access to corporate sponsored research and projects
- Advances research and scholarly work inspired by industry and community needs, and real problems
- Develops more competitive environment for grant funding
- Enhances reputation for recruiting students, faculty, and staff

Benefits to Central Connecticut State University

- Provides a clear, differentiated identity
- Strengthens student recruitment and retention
- Expands the university's research profile
- Increases overall competitiveness
- Leads workforce development efforts
- Advances interdisciplinary innovation
- Enhances community and economic impact
- Attracts top faculty and staff talent
- Accelerates clearer career mobility pathways
- Increases the university's potential to contribute to social mobility



Benefits of Central's R2 Polytechnic Transformation

Benefits to Community We Serve

- Strong local talent pipeline
- Access to resources to solve problems and innovate
- Workforce upskilling for adults
- Expanded access to university resources contributing to stronger and healthier communities
- Improved public-sector capacity
- Support for economic growth and business innovation

Benefits to CSCU System

- Systemwide research lift
- Shared research infrastructure model
- Clearer “applied learning” backbone for the system
- Stronger transfer-to-advanced pathways
- Reputation and enrollment tailwind for the whole system

Benefits to State of Connecticut

- Workforce pipeline acceleration in priority sectors
- Keep more talent in-state
- More applied R&D capacity for Connecticut companies
- Stronger innovation ecosystem
- Economic development leverage
- Public-sector modernization support
- Regional equity and access



A Comparison of Central and Some Polytechnic Universities

Completions 2023-24 (Central's Top 12 Academic Program Clusters)

Program Cluster	Central	Cal Poly - San Luis Obispo	Cal Poly – Pomona*	Cal Poly- Humbolt
Business, Management, Marketing	X	X	X	X
Social Sciences	X	X	X	X
Computer & Information Sciences	X	X	X	X
Psychology	X	X	X	X
Education	X	-	X	-
Communication & Journalism	X	X	-	-
Biological and Biomedical	X	X	X	X
Health Professions	X	- +	- +	- ✓
Liberal Arts and Sciences	X	-	X	-
Engineering Technologies	X	-	-	-
Visual and Performing Arts	X	-	X	X
Engineering	X	X	X	-

* R2 Polytechnic University

+ Agriculture is within its top 12 completion program clusters

✓ Natural Resources and Conservation is within its top 12 completion program clusters



Some Polytechnic University Student Profiles

Student Profiles								
Characteristic	Central		Cal Poly - San Luis Obispo		Cal Poly - Pomona		Cal Poly - Humbolt	
	Undergraduate	Total Enrollment	Undergraduate	Total Enrollment	Undergraduate	Total Enrollment	Undergraduate	Total Enrollment
Male	54%	51%	49%	49%	56%	56%	46%	44%
Female	46%	49%	51%	51%	44%	44%	54%	56%
First Generation (undergraduate)	46%	--	24%	--	50%	--	37%	--
Underserved Groups (Hispanic, African American, and Native American)	36%	34%	26%	26%	57%	57%	33%	33%
Pell Grant*	40%	--	19%	--	47%	--	44%	--

* Undergraduate, degree-seeking



Pillars

Research 2 Polytechnic University

<p>Colleges of Engineering, Science, and Technology (CEST) and Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (CHRS)</p>	<p>Undergraduate and Graduate Academic Programs with Unique Designations and Strong Liberal Arts and Social Sciences Foundations</p>	<p>Central Workforce and Innovation Hub & Applied Research</p>	<p>Community and Global Engagement</p>	<p>Central Talent Development Framework</p>	<p>State-of-the-Art Facilities</p>	<p>Financially Sustainable Institution and CCSU Foundation</p>
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CEST and CHRS

Engineering

- Civil, Electrical, Mechanical, Software

Applied Sciences

- Cybersecurity, Artificial Intelligence, Physics & Engineering Physics

Technology

- Robotics and Mechatronics, Computer Engineering Technology, Manufacturing Engineering Technology

Sciences

- Biomolecular, Biology, Chemistry and Biochemistry, Earth and Space

Health Sciences

- DNAP, DPT (in-progress), PA (in-progress)



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Unique Designations and Strong Liberal Arts & Social Sciences Foundations

NSA-validated cybersecurity distinction (regional first/only claim)

- Only university in New England offering NSA-validated Programs of Study in both Cyber Defense and Cyber Operations
- Designated a National Center of Academic Excellence (CAE) in Cyber Defense (NSA)

Age-Friendly University (AFU) Global Network

- In May 2017, CCSU became the first university in Connecticut to join the Age-Friendly University Global Network, signaling a sustained commitment to adult learners, lifelong learning, and inclusive campus design

Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement (renewed 2026)

- A nationally recognized designation affirming CCSU's strength in applied learning, reciprocal partnerships, civic engagement, and measurable public impact

John Lewis Institute for Social Justice

- A signature institute advancing equity, civic leadership, dialogue, and community-centered scholarship across the campus and region

First in State of Connecticut to develop Comprehensive Learner Record (CLR)

Continued Development of State-of-the-Art Facilities

- New (1.1M) Forensics Lab - Investment in a creating expanded capacity for applied, hands-on learning and workforce-aligned training in investigative and forensic methods
- Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience Lab - A specialized research lab supporting high-impact undergraduate and faculty research at the intersection of brain, behavior, and social interaction



The Liberal Arts & Social Sciences

- An interdisciplinary, real-world problem focus makes Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (LASS) essential, not optional. A polytechnic approach elevates applied projects where LASS provides the connective tissue: translating ideas into practice through human-centered design, ethics, communication, policy, and community partnership so initiatives succeed in real organizations and communities.
- Stronger experiential learning and career outcomes for students by expanding co-ops, internships, applied studios, and employer/community partnerships.



Pillars

Research 2 Polytechnic University



Applied Research

Clusters of Excellence

- Industry 4.0, Cybersecurity, and/or Artificial Intelligence
- Global Health
- Climate and Ecological Resiliency
- Transformational Models in Education
- Economic Inequality



Central Connecticut Workforce and Innovation Hub

Connecting Students, Faculty, Community and Industry

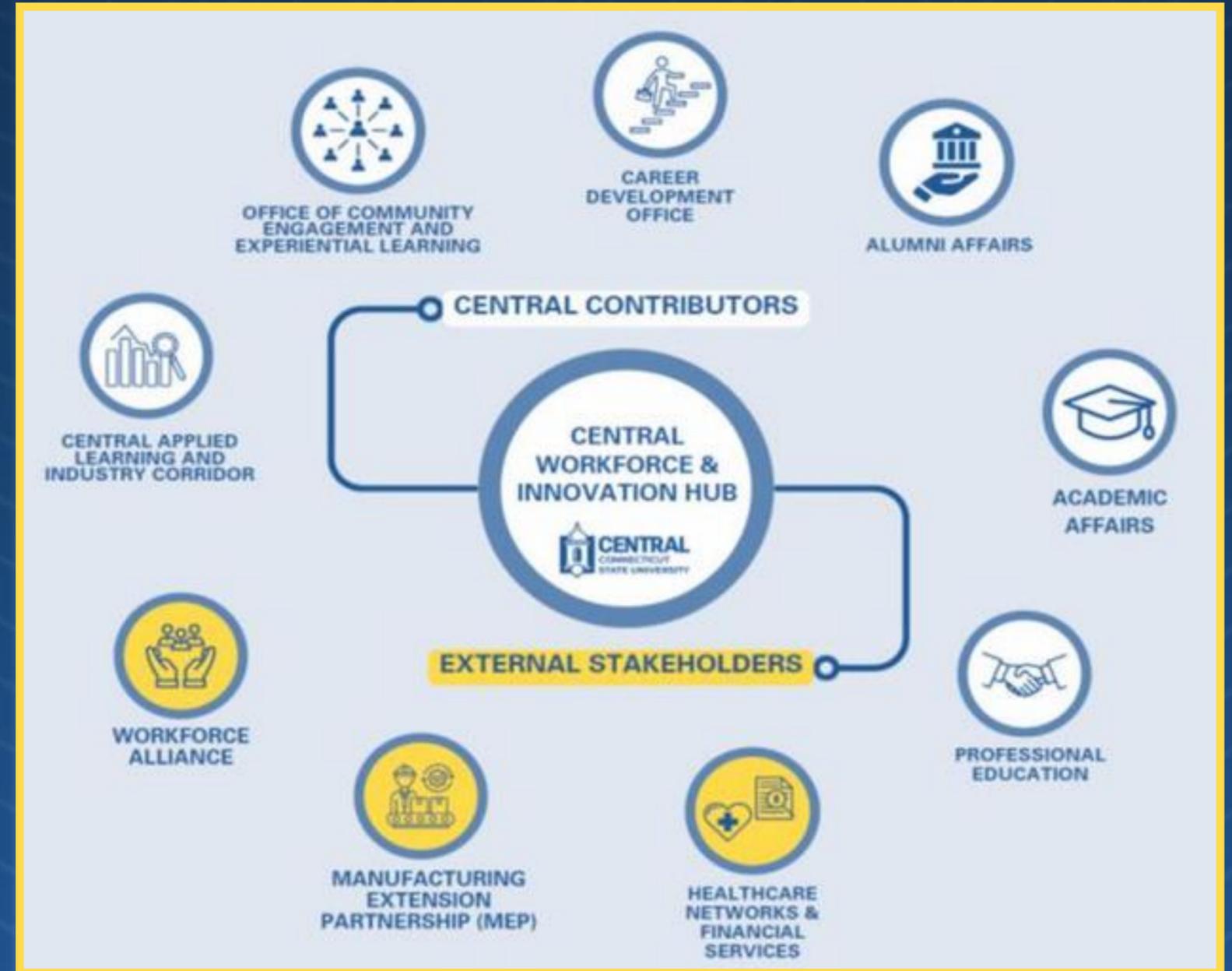


CENTRAL CONTRIBUTORS

- Central Applied Learning and Industry Corridor
- Office of Community Engagement and Experiential Learning
- Career Development Office
- Alumni Affairs
- Academic Affairs
- Professional Education

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

- Workforce Alliance
- Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP)
- Healthcare Networks & Financial Services



Central Applied Learning and Industry Corridor (CALIC)

Areas of Emphasis

Artificial Intelligence

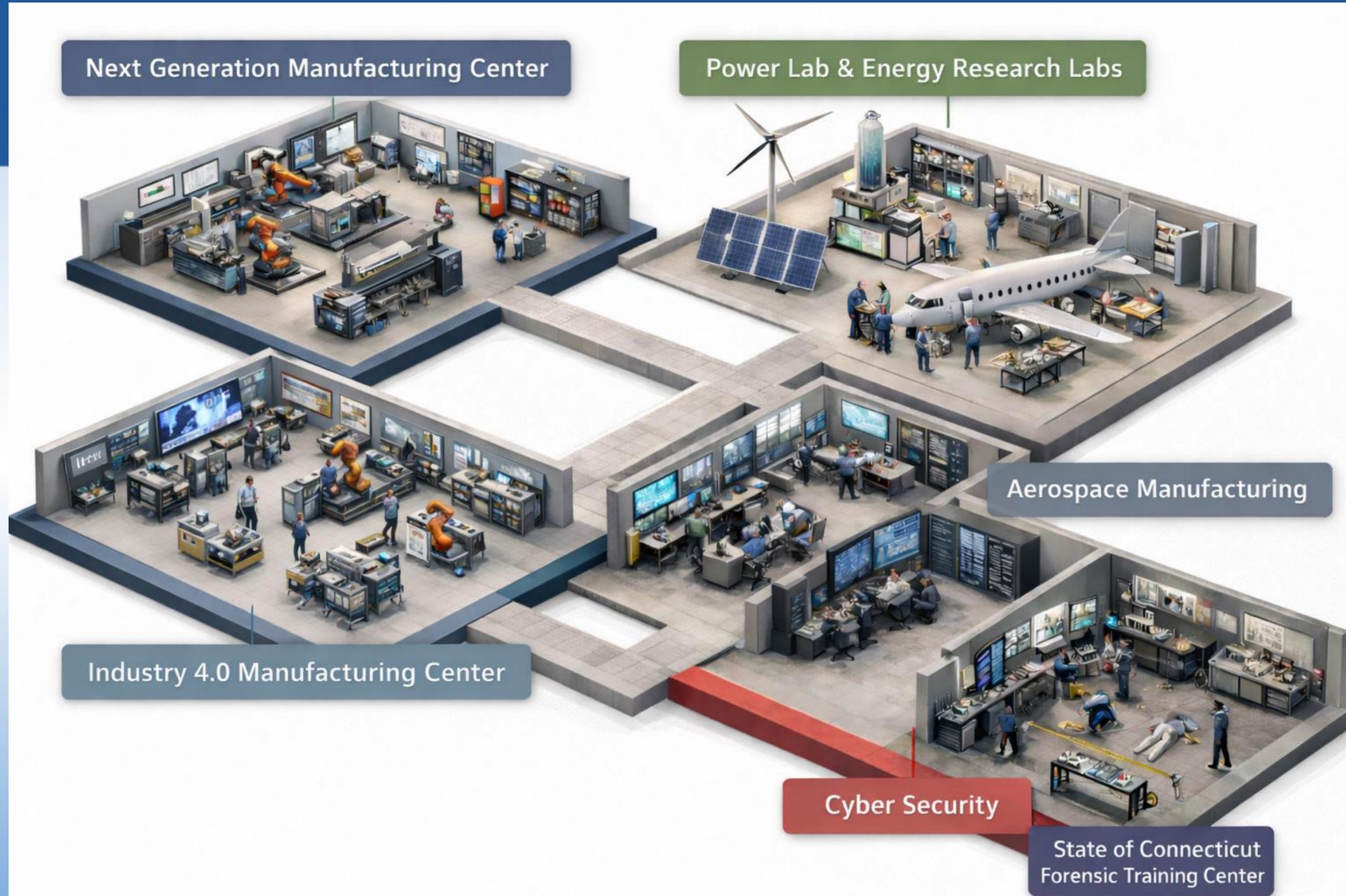
Cybersecurity

Industry 4.0

Focus Areas

- Hands-on learning as part of undergraduate and graduate curriculum; Capstone courses
- Co-op and experiential learning opportunities
- Professional education courses
- Research inspired by industry
- Industry simulations
- Co-location of companies

Concept Layout of CALIC



Pillars

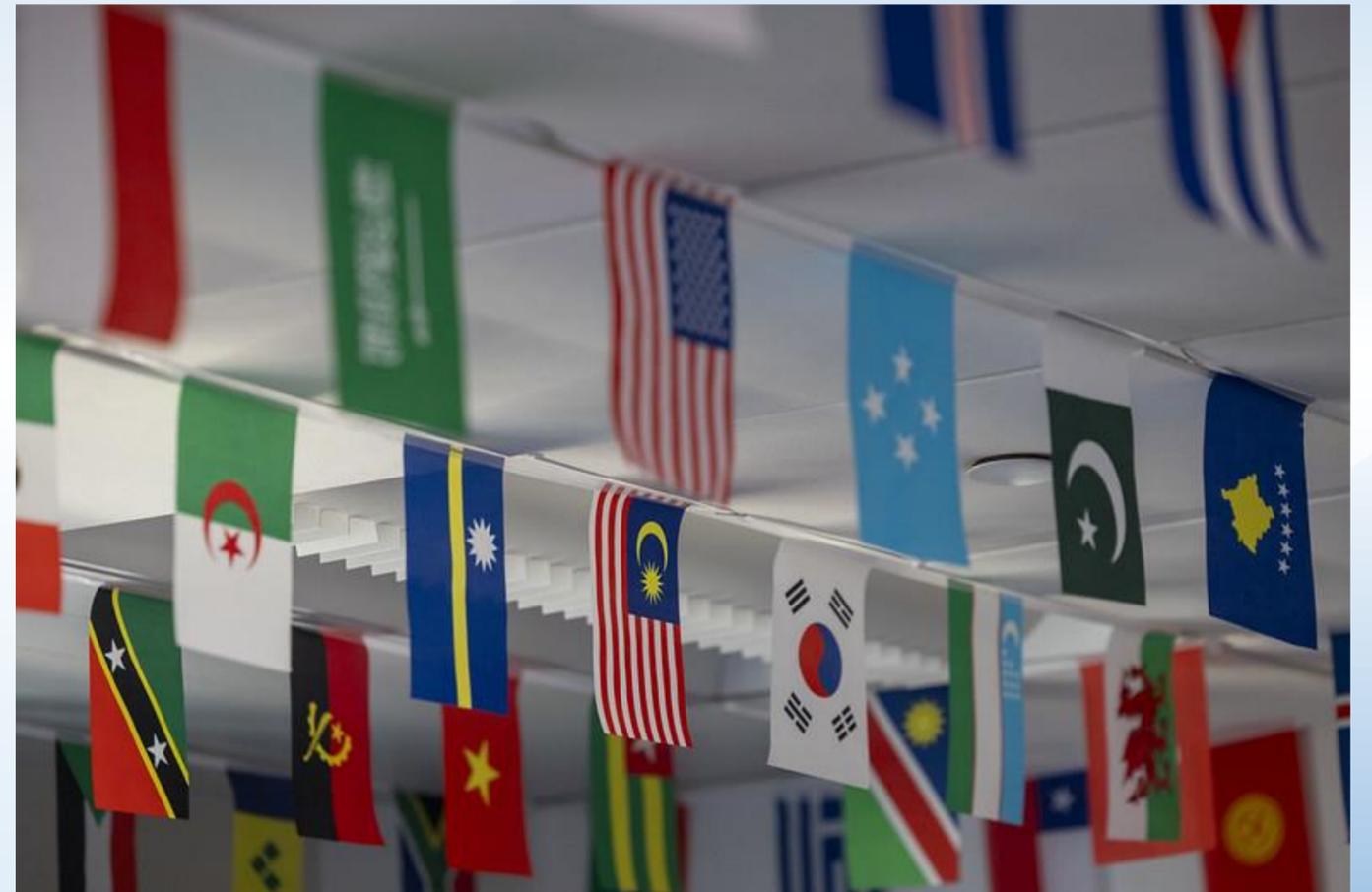
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Community and Global Engagement

- **Community Engagement Institution by the Carnegie Foundation Until 2032**
- **Global Engagement**
 - Spain, the Caribbean, and Latin America
 - Europe
 - Asia
 - Africa
 - Middle East (In Exploration Phase)



Pillars

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Central Talent Development Framework

Two Applied Learning Opportunities for every graduate

- Central's Applied Learning (CAL) Program
- Central's Stipend Program

Artificial Intelligence Literacy

Tools to Document Experiences

- Central Pulse
- Central Success Journey
 - Comprehensive Learner Record

CentralPulse 



Pillars

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State-of-the-Art Facilities



- Applied Innovation Hub
- Community Health Education Clinic
- Media Center
- Artificial Intelligence Corridor
- Cybersecurity Hall
- XR Lab (Extended Reality)
- Drop-in Childcare Center and Lab School



Pillars

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Financially Sustainable Institution and CCSU Foundation

- **End of Year Balance 2025** → **\$778,978**
- **Estimated End of Year Balance 2026** → **\$2,614,956**
- **CCSU Foundation Endowment** → **>100 M**



Development of Investment Case

Task Forces

- Steering Committee – Dr. Zulma Toro
- Academic Programs – Dr. Kim Kostelis
- Unique Role of Interdisciplinarity and the Liberal Arts and Social Sciences – Dr. Kristine Larsen and Dr. Kathleen Bantley
- Physical and Technological Infrastructure – Mr. Sal Cintorino
- Campus and Community Engaged Learning – Dr. Joanne Leon
- Strategic Partnerships – Dr. George Claffey
- Resource Development and Investment Plan – Dr. Joe Farhat
- Institution Name – Ms. Lisa Bigelow



Taskforce Committee Membership Profile

- AAUP Academic Faculty
- SUOAF Administrative Faculty
- CCSU Current Students
- CCSU Alumni
- Connecticut Employers



Task Force Charges

Steering Committee

Keep the development of the investment case on track and connect and integrate the work of all the task forces into a cohesive vision.

Academic Programs

Develop inventory of current academic programs in science, applied science, and others. Create a plan for the development and offering of academic programs to support the polytechnic designation. Resources needed as well as timelines for each program should be included.

Unique Role of Interdisciplinarity and the Liberal Arts and Social Sciences

Identify institutional strengths, efforts, and uniqueness in these areas and develop a vision as to how these and additional initiatives will contribute to a unique and stronger polytechnic education and community impact. Clearly define the process to integrate disciplines in the educational, research, and community service endeavors.

Physical and Technological Infrastructure

Create an inventory of existing physical and technological infrastructure that supports academic programs, research, and service in engineering, science, applied science-health, and technology. Identify any additional infrastructure needed to support the vision for a unique polytechnic institution.



Task Force Charges

Campus and Community Engaged Learning

Identify and define applied and experiential learning opportunities available to students beyond their academic majors, develop an inventory of these endeavors, and create a framework to expand access where gaps exist. Work collaboratively with the Ad hoc Committee of the University Curriculum Committee to align definitions, share findings, and support a cohesive institutional framework for applied and experiential learning within the polytechnic vision.

Strategic Partnerships

Document existing partnerships with industry, community organizations, private foundations, individuals, institutions of higher education (domestic and international), K-12 education systems, and government agencies. In addition, include information on external grants and fundraising activities. Generate a plan for expansion of external partnerships to enrich the student educational experience, for applied research and fundraising, and establishment of advisory boards for each academic program.

Resource Development and Investment Plan

Review Central's Five-Year Financial Sustainability Plan and create a resource development and investment plan including enrollment growth, diverse sources of funding, entrepreneurial endeavors, and state required investment to achieve Research 2 Polytechnic status.

Institution Name

Investigate the possibility of a new name that will better reflect the polytechnic designation. If a name change is justified, create at least two recommendations for a new name.



R2 Polytechnic Proposal Development Timeline

February 2026 → February 2027



Key



Milestones



R2 Polytechnic is Central to Connecticut

Central Connecticut State University's transition to an R2 Polytechnic is a commitment to our students, our neighbors, and the future of Connecticut. It means:

- More opportunities for students to learn by doing, to build portfolios and to graduate with the skills, confidence, and professional networks that translate into meaningful careers.
- Deeper partnerships with employers and community organizations, where classrooms extend into labs, studios, clinics, field sites, and real workplaces. Innovation solves real problems and talent stays and grows here at home.
- Stronger, safer, healthier, and happier communities are built.
- A stronger state economy: a pipeline of job-ready graduates, applied research that supports industry and public service, and a university that anchors workforce development from first credential to advanced degree.

This is how Central Connecticut State University delivers on its public mission by expanding access, accelerating mobility, and building a thriving, resilient Connecticut.



“When you make a decision, however large or small, do not ask, ‘What is the easy thing to do?’ or ‘What will cost the least money?’ or ‘What will make me the most loved or popular by those affected by the decision?’ **Just ask what is the right decision**, all things considered. ... In the long run... people, your people, will respect you for following your conscience...”

Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C.

President, University of Notre Dame (1952-1987)

thank you



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