



CASE STUDY

Increasing First-Time Student Persistence by 13% at Colorado Technical University

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Colorado Technical University (CTU) is a career-focused institution serving a predominantly online student population of non-traditional adult learners who are often balancing work, family, and other responsibilities alongside their education. For CTU, building community and a sense of belonging is not optional. It is central to keeping students enrolled, engaged, and on a path to graduation.

CTU had invested in online community tools for nearly a decade, with approximately 62% of students engaging with their prior platform. When CTU partnered with InScribe, they did not simply replace a tool. They transformed their approach to peer connection and co-curricular engagement.

Just five months into their InScribe partnership, the impact on persistence was already clear. First-time-in-college students who engaged in the community persisted at rates 13% higher than those who did not, and the broader student population outpaced non-engaged peers by 3%. With 85% of surveyed students reporting a greater sense of belonging, CTU has found a scalable, moderatable, and measurable solution to one of online education's most persistent challenges.

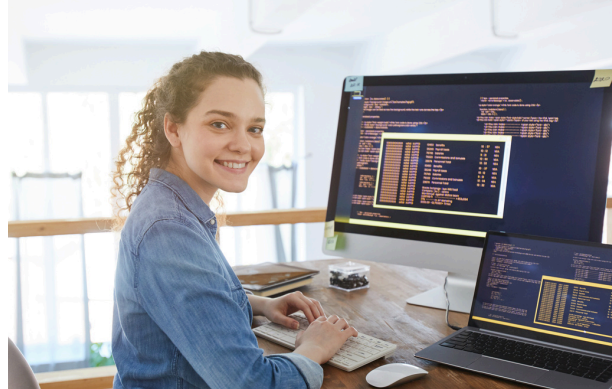


"Near peer engagement is essential to build a growth mindset with a non-traditional student population. Our persistence is 3% higher across the University population for students that adopt and engage in a community vs. those that do not." Terri Hines, VP, Student Affairs |

Colorado Technical University *Results reflect the first five months following CTU's January 2026 launch.

ABOUT COLORADO TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

Founded in Colorado Springs in 1965, Colorado Technical University is an accredited, career-focused institution serving working adults, military students, and career changers through online and



RESULTS AFTER 5 MONTHS

13%

persistence
improvement for
first-time-in-college
students

3%

persistence
improvement across
the broader student
population

40%

of new students
adopted the
platform within five
months of launch

85%

of surveyed
students report a
greater sense of
belonging

campus-based programs in business, technology, healthcare, engineering, and security studies. Ranked among the Best by U.S. News and World Report for nine consecutive years, CTU's mission is to provide industry-relevant higher education through innovative technology and experienced faculty. With a predominantly online student population and rolling enrollment across short course formats, building community and peer connection is one of CTU's most important and complex challenges. [Learn more about CTU.](#)



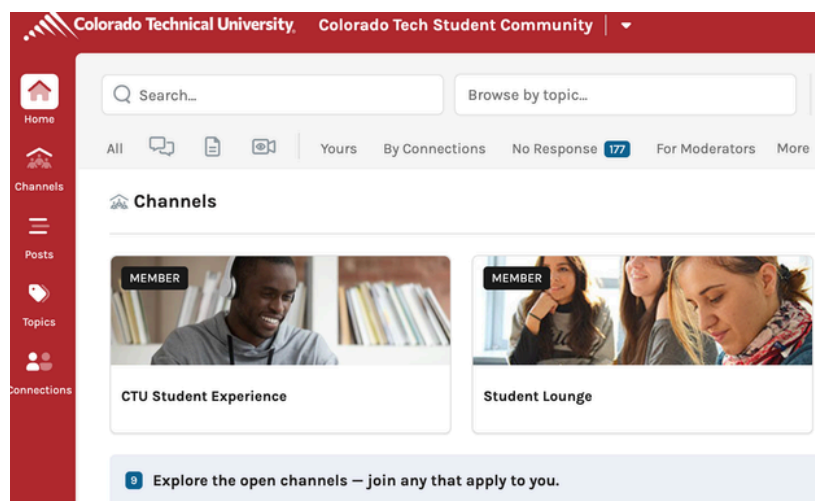
THE CHALLENGE

For years, CTU recognized the critical link between peer connection and student success. The university had invested in a third-party community tool and built engagement habits around it, with approximately 62% of students participating across the student lifecycle. But the tool had a fundamental limitation: CTU had almost no visibility into what was happening inside the community.

Without access to data, reporting, or the ability to direct topics and channels, CTU could not measure impact, ensure compliance with its University Code of Conduct, or align platform activity with institutional learning outcomes. The institution was running a community it could not see, shape, or fully stand behind. And for a student population of non-traditional adult learners already at high dropout risk, that was not good enough. They needed structured pathways to belonging: clubs, interest channels, academic support resources, and conversations capable of building the growth mindset necessary to persist through personal and academic challenges.

THE SOLUTION

After evaluating demonstrations from five partners, CTU selected InScribe for its robust moderation capabilities, flexible community architecture, and meaningful data and reporting tools. The decision involved a cross-functional team that included the VP of Student Affairs, VP of Academic Operations, Provost, and platform and operations analysts, reflecting the institutional weight CTU placed on getting this right.



InScribe replaced CTU's prior platform with a community environment that gave the institution a level of control it had never had before. CTU could now create and manage topics, channels, clubs, and resource hubs; moderate conversations to ensure compliance with the University's Code of Conduct; and generate the reporting needed to demonstrate impact across every level of the organization.

CTU launched InScribe with intention. In the weeks surrounding go-live, Hines and her team brought live demonstrations to stakeholders across the institution, from the Executive Team to Faculty groups, Admissions, and a University-wide Town Hall. The result was an institution that understood and embraced the community from day one.

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THE OUTCOME

Since launching in January 2026, CTU's InScribe community has gained meaningful traction at a pace that reflects both the strength of the platform and the institution's deliberate approach to change management. Within just five months, 40% of new students have adopted the platform at the point of application or orientation, a strong early signal for a rolling-enrollment institution where students enter every session year-round. CTU's prior platform reached 62% engagement across the full student lifecycle over many years. InScribe is tracking toward that ceiling in a fraction of the time.

The persistence gains among engaged students are significant, with first-time-in-college students showing a 13% improvement and the broader student population outpacing non-engaged peers by 3%. Co-curricular survey results reinforce the story: 85% of surveyed students report a greater sense of belonging, and CTU achieved its highest-ever student satisfaction score for community as a support service.

Moderation efficiency has improved meaningfully as well. CTU's team now spends less time managing community standards violations than it did on the prior platform, even as daily active participation has grown. The InScribe mobile app, which delivers alerts in real time, has become an essential tool for Hines to stay connected to the pulse of student conversations, reading every new and flagged post as they arrive.

FROM ADOPTION TO STUDENT IMPACT

40%

New student adoption
5 months after launch

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

One priority is the potential migration of CTU's student clubs and organizations from a separate alumni platform into InScribe, consolidating the student community experience and reducing the friction of managing multiple tools. The team is also exploring whether alumni might eventually be invited into the community, deepening peer networks across the full student lifecycle.

Perhaps most significantly, CTU is evaluating a potential integration between InScribe and its Student Relationship Management system. This connection would link community engagement data to other behavioral signals, creating a more complete picture of student health and enabling proactive outreach before students are at risk of stopping out.

For institutions like CTU, where a large share of students never set foot on campus and are navigating high dropout risk from the pressures of adult life, community is not a nice-to-have. It is a retention strategy. InScribe has given CTU the infrastructure, the data, and the control to make that strategy work at scale.