
Butler Center in the Media

The Butler Center's research regularly shows up in local and national media. Below is a collection of news coverage, interviews, and expert commentary featuring our faculty and their work on regional economic issues.

Butler Center Student Assistant Featured in WRBL Interview on Changing Family Trends

Jordan Mills, a student assistant at the Butler Center for Research and Economic Development, was recently interviewed by WRBL to discuss rising child-rearing costs and the economic factors contributing to delayed parenthood among younger generations. During the interview, Mills shared her perspective on why many Gen Z and Millennial adults are increasingly choosing pet ownership over having children, citing financial pressures, housing affordability, and broader economic uncertainty. She also emphasized the importance of thoughtful family-planning decisions to help ensure children are raised in stable and supportive environments. [Read the full article here.](#)

CSU Leaders Present Butler Center's 2026 Columbus Economy Report at Georgia Economic Outlook

The Butler Center for Research and Economic Development's Columbus Economy 2026 report was recently presented at the Georgia Economic Outlook by Dr. Tesa Leonce, Dean of the Turner College of Business and Technology, and Dr. Michael Rothlisberger, Chief Academic Strategy Officer.

During the presentation, Dr. Leonce highlighted the key findings from the Butler Center's report, emphasizing major trends shaping the Columbus regional economy. These findings provide valuable context for policymakers, business leaders, and community stakeholders as they plan for Columbus's economic future. [Read the full report here.](#)





Dr. Fady Mansour Warns Declining Consumer Confidence Could Signal Recession Risk

Dr. Fady Mansour warns that a significant drop in consumer confidence could push Georgia closer to a recession. He explains that when consumers lose confidence, they tend to cut back on spending, which can slow economic growth and intensify downturn risks. Mansour notes that national economic indicators point to weakening consumer outlooks, a trend that could have broader implications for the state's economy. His comments highlight the importance of confidence as a driver of economic activity and a potential early signal of recessionary pressure. [Read the full article here.](#)

Honors Biology Student Explores the Economic Impact of the Chattahoochee River

Honors Biology student Wesam Diven interviewed Mrs. Melissa Ingle Hammer, MBA, as part of the new River Program. This innovative course promotes experiential and collaborative learning through research and engagement with community leaders, culminating in an end-of-course presentation that explores multiple facets of the Chattahoochee River.

Wesam chose to focus on the economic influence of the river on the Columbus region. During their discussion, they examined how the area's economy has evolved over time—from a foundation in manufacturing to a growing emphasis on tourism. They also explored the trade-offs between economic development and environmental stewardship, as well as the challenges associated with building and sustaining infrastructure along the river.

The Butler Center for Research and Economic Development is proud to collaborate with students from diverse disciplines throughout the year. One of the Center's core tenets is to promote the inclusive and sustainable growth of the greater Columbus area, making partnerships like this an essential part of its mission.



Dr. Fady Mansour Featured on WalletHub: Understanding the Drivers of Inflation and How to Slow It Down

In his latest WalletHub feature, Dr. Fady Mansour offers expert insights on the key forces shaping today's inflation. He explains how monetary expansion, pandemic-era stimulus, and interest rate hikes have influenced price levels and consumer spending. Dr. Mansour also discusses the Federal Reserve's strategy to bring inflation back under control—without pushing the economy into recession—and how emerging technologies like AI could reshape the balance between growth and stability. Read the full article here. [Read the full article here.](#)

The Butler Center Featured in the Ledger#Enquirer for its **Columbus Economic Forecast 2025**

The Butler Center for Research and Economic Development was prominently featured in the Ledger#Enquirer for its [Columbus Economic Forecast 2025](#), presented at the Georgia 2025 Economic Outlook event. The forecast highlights expected trends in unemployment, wage growth, and demographic shifts in the region. It also offers guidance for local leaders and businesses navigating a year shaped by inflationary pressures, labor market adjustments, and shifting population dynamics. [Are Trump tariffs making Walmart more expensive in Columbus? See our price check.](#)

Dr. Fady Mansour Featured on WalletHub: How can credit card companies afford to offer big sign-up bonuses?

Dr. Fady Mansour recently authored an expert article for WalletHub exploring how credit card companies can afford to offer generous sign-up bonuses. Drawing from industry data and Federal Reserve insights, Dr. Mansour explains how companies recoup costs through interest charges, annual fees, and transaction fees, while also using targeted strategies to build long-term customer loyalty.

The article also examines how limited-time promotions influence consumer behavior and how shifts in sign-up bonus offerings can serve as signals of broader economic trends—highlighting the relationship between consumer confidence and lender strategy. [Read, How can credit card companies afford to offer big sign-up bonuses?.](#)

Economic Impact of a Pickleball Facility in Columbus

In our continuing effort to support the Columbus community, the Butler Center for Research and Economic Development conducted a study on the new pickleball facility in Columbus, GA. The study, which was recently featured on WRBL, explores the facility's impact on local tourism, text-sm business growth, tax revenues, and overall quality of life. We're proud to provide data-driven insights that support strategic investment and community development. We acknowledge the valuable support of the Columbus Pickleball Association and our partners throughout this project. [Watch the full report here.](#)

Implication of changing U.S. tariff policies

Dr. Fady Mansour discussed the complex economic implications of changing U.S. tariff policies with WRBL News 3's Michelle Jennings. Those include a potentially stronger dollar and increased technological investments, but also involve significant risks like an economic slowdown, job cuts, and uncertainty that could ultimately text-ig to deflation. [Read the full article here.](#)

Columbus Economic Forecast 2025

The Butler Center for Research and Economic Development was featured in the Ledger-Enquirer for its **Columbus Economic Forecast for 2025**. Presented at the Georgia 2025 Economic Outlook event, the forecast provided with both statewide and local economic insights. Academic leaders and researchers highlighted the importance of leveraging Columbus' resources to stimulate growth and strengthen the region's economic future. [Read the full article here.](#)

Columbus Economic Outlook 2024

We are pleased to announce that the Butler Center has recently published a book titled "Columbus Economic Outlook." This publication offers an in-depth analysis of current economic trends in Columbus, Georgia, providing valuable insights into the local economy's performance and challenges. It may serve as a useful resource for policymakers, business leaders, and community members seeking to understand and navigate the evolving economic landscape.

[Read the Columbus Economic Outlook 2024](#)

Columbus Residents on Port Strike and Economic Concerns

In an interview broadcast last week, Dr. Fady Mansour, Director of the Butler Center for Research and Economic Development, assured Columbus residents that the port strike would soon end. He identified housing inflation as a key factor in worker dissatisfaction and noted that automation will remain a critical issue in future labor negotiations. Dr. Mansour also warned of potential spillover effects into other industries with collective bargaining power, especially as housing costs continue to be a significant economic concern.

[Read CSU Economics Professor breaks down the reasoning behind the port strikes full article](#)

Students visit the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta

Students from the Turner College of Business and Technology had the amazing chance to explore the inner workings of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. This trip provided us with insights into the operations of the central bank and its significant role in shaping our economy.



Tourism Continues to Enrich Columbus' Economy and Culture



The Butler Center for Research & Economic Development was recently featured in Columbus State University News for its latest study on the economic impact of tourism in Columbus. The study revealed that 2.07 million visitors traveled to Columbus, spending more than \$377 million. This tourism activity created 4,491 hospitality jobs with a payroll exceeding \$151 million and generated \$20 million in visitor-related county and state tax revenue, which supports essential public services for residents.

Additionally, a previous Butler Center study on the economic impact of hosting the Kayak Championship found that the event created 23 jobs, generated \$2.7 million in economic output, added \$1,081,000 in income, and contributed \$167,000 to local, state, and federal taxes. In another study on occupation and award dynamics in Columbus, the Butler Center identified a growing demand for hospitality management jobs, a reflection of the city's vibrant tourism sector.

These findings highlight the vital economic contributions of tourism and the expanding opportunities within Columbus' hospitality industry. The Butler Center remains a key resource for understanding local economic trends and supporting sustainable growth throughout Columbus and the surrounding region.

For more information, [read the full article in the Columbus State University News](#).

Participating in the Grand Opening of Wealth Intelligence's New Location in Columbus

The Butler Center at Columbus State University is pleased to announce our participation in the grand opening of the new Wealth Intelligence location in Columbus. We were delighted to engage in a productive discussion with Mr. Bryan Oglesby and Mr. Alfredo Gonzalez during the event, reinforcing our ongoing commitment to fostering strong connections within the business community.



Featuring the Butler Center: Economic Depressions and Their Effects on Business and Consumers

Dr. Fady Mansour, Director of the Butler Center for Research and Economic Development, speaks on the effect of economic recession/depression on business and consumers and how they can survive.

[Read the full article on Money Geek for more information!](#)

Butler Center Contributes to Bi-State Housing Market Assessment with Georgia Tech and Community Partners

The Butler Center at Columbus State University played a crucial role in the Regional Housing Market Needs Assessment project, collaborating with Georgia Institute of Technology, United Way, and Home for Good. This bi-state initiative, covering Russell and Lee Counties in Georgia and Alabama, aims to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the local housing market. Led by Georgia Tech's Center for Economic Development Research (CEDR) and supported by Troy University, the assessment seeks to identify key trends, drivers of demand and supply, and assess current and future housing needs, including market-rate and workforce housing.

[Read the full article on WRBL News3](#)



\$350M Development Expected Around Synovus Park, Guided by Butler Center Study

The economic impact study conducted by the Butler Center for Research and Economic Development for the redevelopment of Synovus Park in Columbus, GA was highlighted in the Columbus Ledger-Enquirer's coverage of the project. The study, mentioned in the article by Brittany McGee, outlines the plan for the \$50 million renovation project scheduled for completion in 2025. It anticipates a phased approach to development, potentially spanning multiple years, aimed at revitalizing the South Commons area and leveraging minor league baseball to catalyze economic growth. The

study's findings were cited alongside positive economic forecasts, underscoring the project's potential to attract diverse business ventures and enhance community amenities, such as housing, retail, and recreational spaces.

[Read the full article for more details at Ledger-Enquirer!](#)



Columbus Celebrates Braves Double-A Relocation to Synovus Park

Dr. Tesa Leonce, Associate Dean of the Turner College of Business and Technology and representatives from the Butler Center, Jiane Rabara and Oliver Odde recently attended the groundbreaking event for the Double-A Atlanta Braves BallPark! This event marks a significant step forward in the relocation of the Atlanta Braves MiLB Franchise, a move facilitated by pioneering research led by Dr. Fady Mansour and his team at the Butler Center.

Dr. Mansour's study, conducted through the Butler Center, provided invaluable insights that influenced Columbus' decision to welcome the Mississippi Braves, the Double-A affiliate of the Atlanta Braves to Golden Park, which has now been renamed Synovus Park. Backed by a \$50 million bond from the Columbus Consolidated Government and a hefty

\$300 million investment in Synovus Park's refurbishment, this relocation holds immense potential to breathe new life into the region and ignite economic development. [Read the full article on CSU News for more details!](#)



Butler Center's Study Highlights Economic Boom in Columbus

Discover key findings from the CSU Butler Center's recent study, spotlighted in a comprehensive article detailing Columbus' economic revitalization. With insights into job creation, private investments, and community development, this study shows collaborative strategies propelling Columbus towards a brighter economic future.

[Read more on Georgia Trend](#)



the Narrative: Jerald Mitchell, president and CEO of the Greater Columbus Georgia Chamber of Commerce. | Photo credit: Nathan Leduc

Strength

Understanding Student Loan Repayment Dynamics

Columbus State University's (CSU) Butler Center offers valuable insights into the economic impact and student loan payment strategies in a recent interview by Hannah James. Dr. Fady Mansour, Associate Professor of Economics at CSU, highlights the rising costs of education and the necessity of a degree in today's job market. With loan repayments projected to impact disposable income and overall spending, Dr. Mansour emphasizes the potential economic repercussions, particularly for lower- and middle-income borrowers. [Watch the WRBL News3 Segment](#)



Atlanta Braves MiLB Franchise Relocation Facilitated by the Butler Center's

Dr. Fady Mansour's study, conducted through the Butler Center, offered significant insights that influenced Columbus' decision to welcome the Mississippi Braves, the Double-A affiliate of the Atlanta Braves to Golden Park. Backed by a \$50 million bond from the Columbus Consolidated Government and a \$300 million investment in Golden Park's refurbishment, this relocation holds the potential to revitalize the region and stimulate economic development. [Read the full article on CSU News](#)



Butler Center Highlights Columbus State's FY22 Economic Impact: \$290M and Growing

In an interview with WTVM News, Dr. Fady Mansour commented on the study conducted by the University System of Georgia and released on June 27, which reveals that Columbus State University's economic impact surged by 2.5% in Fiscal Year 2022, reaching \$290.2 million. This growth, identified by the Butler Center's economic research, is attributed to CSU's \$251.4 million in initial spending, complemented

by an additional \$38.8 million of multiplier impact on the local community. [Read the full article on CSU](#)



News

Identifying Employment Gaps in Columbus Area

The findings of the recent report by the Butler Center for Research and Economic Development focused on employment trends in the Columbus area. Highlighting 10 significant occupational gaps, the report indicates the need for targeted strategies to address shortages in crucial sectors like software development, healthcare management, and business operations. Director Fady Mansour provides actionable recommendations, emphasizing the importance of tailored educational programs to bridge these disparities and promote workforce development in the region. [Read more on Turner College of Business and Technology's Blog](#)



Impact of COVID-19 on Healthcare Utilization

New study led by Dr. Fady Mansour from the Butler Center for Research and Economic Development, and colleague Dr. Nour Kattih of Middle Tennessee State University, explores how the COVID-19 pandemic affected healthcare usage, spending, and health metrics in the U.S. The study, set to appear in a future issue of *Research in Economics*, applies data from the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey to a propensity score matching techniques in order to analyze the variation in healthcare outcomes due to the pandemic. [Read more on Turner College of Business and Technology's Blog](#)



Wage, Inflation, and Middle Class

In an article published by the Ledger-Enquirer, Dr. Fady Mansour, director of the Butler Center for Research and Economic Development at Columbus State University, explains that while wages have risen, they haven't kept pace with inflation. This has resulted in a decrease in real purchasing power. The discussion touches on the changing dynamics of the middle class. Dr. Mansour emphasizes the importance of understanding the difference between nominal and real wages to grasp the true impact of inflation on financial well-being. [Read more in the Ledger Enquirer](#)



Columbus Tech Meetup: Exploring the Future of Technology

The inaugural Columbus Tech Meetup successfully brought together industry leaders, academics, and professionals to discuss transforming Columbus into a major technology hub. Key speakers, including Dr. Fady Mansour, Dr. Rania Hodhod, and Curtis O'Neal, shared valuable insights on emerging trends and opportunities. The event facilitated meaningful networking and collaboration, setting the stage for future innovation and growth in the region.

In this meeting, Dr. Mansour discussed that technology isn't just a tool; it's the engine of productivity. Research indicates a strong correlation, with a 70 percent link between productivity growth and digitization over the past three decades.

The average productivity growth in the United States from 1948 to 2019 stood at 2.2%. However, recent years have seen a slowdown, with growth diminishing to 1.4% between 2005 and 2019. The McKinsey Global Institute estimates that maintaining the long-term average of 2.2% productivity growth could add a staggering \$10 trillion to the US GDP by 2030, translating to \$15,000 per household.

While the US as a whole has shown notable productivity growth, regional variations are significant. Georgia, for instance, recorded a productivity growth of only 1.3% from 2007 to 2019, trailing behind states like California (2.14%), Colorado (1.77%), and Texas (1.33%). Bridging these gaps necessitates focused efforts to strengthen technological infrastructure, foster innovation, and enhance workforce skills.

[Dr. Fady Mansour LinkedIn](#)

Butler Center Featured in Turner College's 2023-2024 Brag Book

The Butler Center has been featured in Turner College's 2023-2024 Brag Book. The feature highlights the significant contributions of Dr. Fady Mansour and his team in promoting sustainable economic growth and informing public policy in the Columbus area. Key projects include an impactful economic study that supported the return of professional baseball to the Chattahoochee Valley, expected to generate substantial economic benefits and job creation. Additionally, the impact

of hosting the kayak championship were also discussed—where the project is expected to generate \$2.7 million in output, primarily from direct spending. The feature also addresses employment trends, wage trends, and industry snapshot, showcasing the Center’s significant role in addressing labor market gaps through educational programs and community engagement.

[Butler Center Brag Book](#)