



Ohio Association of Community Colleges

# The Forum

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE NEWS AND INFORMATION

## FROM THE DESK OF OACC PRESIDENT DR. RON ABRAMS



Dr. Ron Abrams,  
OACC President

The only constant is change.

This is an often used cliché, but it seems particularly appropriate in the ever changing world of higher education.

Thirteen of our community colleges are undergoing change in academic year, switching from the quarter calendar to the semester calendar.

Belmont, Columbus State, Clark State, Sinclair, Southern State, Cincinnati State, Central Ohio Technical College, Washington State, Marion Technical, Hocking, North Central, Zane State and Rhodes State College are all converting to the semester system with this school year as are many of the four-year schools including Ohio State University.

With that, many schools are projecting temporary enrollment drops as students get use to the new system. The Ohio Association of Community Colleges is working to communicate this phenomenon to policy makers and others to educate them on this to educate them on this temporary issue.

### Student Success Center

The OACC is proud to announce that the OACC Student Success Center is now operational. (Please see related story in this edition.)

Led by Ruth Silon, a former faculty member at Cuyahoga Community College, the Student Success Center will be an integral part of OACC's strategy to help our community colleges in their work to ensure that more students achieve a post-secondary credential that has value in the marketplace.

Silon comes to the OACC with a strong background in community colleges, having served as an English faculty member at Tri-C for several years. The OACC Student Success Center is funded by a grant from the Kresge Foundation.

### College Coaches

The OACC has partnered with the Ohio College Access Network to place college coaches provided by AmeriCorps, the national community service organization, at ten of our community colleges.

This approach will help our participating colleges give more personal attention to students in the quest to help them complete a credential.

We are excited about this opportunity that is funded by a grant from the AmeriCorps organization.

Ohio Association of Community Colleges

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## OACC TO PARTICIPATE IN ECOSUMMIT 2012



4<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL ECOSUMMIT  
**ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY**  
RESTORING THE PLANET'S ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

The Ohio Association of Community Colleges is participating in an event this fall in Columbus that is billed as an event to "bring together the world's most respected minds in ecological science to discuss restoring the planet's ecosystems."

The OACC is among the more than 1,000 organizations to participate in EcoSummit 2012, to be held Sept. 30 through Oct. 5 in the Greater Columbus Convention Center. Find information about this great event at: <http://www.ecosummit2012.org/>.

The OACC will have a display at this international event highlighting the many programs, facilities and initiatives that are green friendly at Ohio's 23 community colleges.

# COLLEGE SPOTLIGHT: STARK STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**By Irene Motts**

*Director of Marketing & Communications*  
Stark State College

Excitement is building in Canton, Ohio as Stark State College researches a location for its new Downtown Canton Satellite Center, thanks to a \$10 million allocation from Ohio's biennial capital budget for higher education.



## STARK STATE COLLEGE

According to Stark State College President Dr. Para M. Jones, downtown Canton was selected as a central location to provide training for the oil and gas industry that is emerging in Stark County and surrounding counties. Plans are uncertain as to whether an existing facility will be renovated or a new facility constructed. The College currently serves more than 1500 students taking classes at several locations in downtown Canton and will consolidate those locations with the new facility while adding programs that support the oil and gas industry.

"Expanding our presence downtown also allows us to better serve our urban population with training to fill jobs created by the oil and gas industry," Dr. Jones said.

With several programs already in place on main campus to support that industry, such as welding, hydraulics and pneumatics, blueprint reading, surveying, wastewater and water treatment, pipefitting and mechanical maintenance, expanding curriculums to address the needs of the oil and gas industry is a natural fit.

"Programs in sustainability and environmental safety, currently offered on main campus, will be expanded to fill industry needs," Dr. Jones said. Plans also call for Stark State to partner with Zane State College to offer a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) program, with a virtual training simulator at the downtown Canton

location. A site for a shared driving range, where students train directly on trucks following virtual training, is also in the works.

"There is a huge supply chain around the oil and gas industry located in Stark and surrounding counties, and we will continue to evaluate our current programs and develop new programs to support that supply chain," Jones said. "We look forward to working with our community business partners to support this process."

The College currently provides credit apprenticeship programs in CNC and advanced machining for about 75 employees at Ariel Corporation's world headquarters in Mt. Vernon, OH. The company is a world-class manufacturer of natural gas compressors that are critical to oil and gas industries. Stark State is also considering a partnership with Central Ohio Technical College (COTC) to deliver general education courses to Ariel.

In the energy field, Stark State College has for many years led in programming, training and research partnerships with international and world renowned companies such as The Timken Company, Lockheed Martin and LG Fuel Cell Systems, formerly known as Rolls-

Royce Fuel Cell Systems (US), which has its global headquarters on Stark State's campus. Longtime corporate partner Diebold Incorporated has had its global training headquarters on Stark State's campus for more than 20 years. Stark State is currently partnering with The Timken Company on the \$11.8 million Wind Energy Research and Development Center at its new Emerging Technologies Airport Campus.

## OHIO APPRENTICESHIP WORK HONORED NATIONALLY

Ohio has been recognized as a “trailblazer and innovator” by the U.S. Department of Labor for its practices in registered apprenticeships.

Led by Dr. Michael Snider, Project Coordinator with the Ohio Association of Community Colleges, Ohio was recognized for its “Ohio Statewide Articulation Agreements.” The labor department recognized Ohio and more than 70 other trailblazers and innovators for their work with the Registered Apprenticeship system and their success and innovative approaches to training U.S. workers.

“The programs selected for recognition come from a wide range of industries and geographic locations. Yet, they all share a unique understanding of how a combination of mentor-based, on-the-job training and classroom instruction can provide a worker with the skills needed to not only do a job, but become a respected journeyworker throughout his or her career,” U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis wrote in a blog post on the federal agency’s Web site.

“Thanks to their efforts, yesterday’s bricklayers are becoming today’s building retrofitters. They are training computer programmers, pharmacy techs, and even young doctors at the Center for Disease Control to improve patient care. They are fostering partnerships with employers, community colleges and state workforce agencies to maximize that growth and expand our reach,” the labor secretary wrote.



The awardees were honored at an Aug. 1 event at the Labor Department in Washington honoring the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the National Apprenticeship Act.

## COMPLETION COACHES TO HELP COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS SUCCEED

Community college graduates will return to community colleges throughout the state to serve as “Completion Coaches” to help first-time students enrolled in developmental education courses earn a degree or certificate.

It’s all a part of the AmeriCorps College Completion Coaches Initiative, a strategic partnership between the Ohio Association of Community Colleges (OACC), the Ohio College Access Network (OCAN), and the Ohio Commission on Service and Volunteerism (ServeOhio).



“In this exciting initiative, we are using the leadership skills of recent community college graduates to provide mentoring and coaching to community college students, many of whom are first-generation college students,” said Ronald Abrams. “These ‘Coaches’ will provide their students with the support needed to create their educational completion plan, and then coach them through challenges they may encounter as they move ahead through their plan.”

The coaches, which will be at ten Ohio community colleges this fall, will each serve a cohort of 100 students who are first-time community college goers, enrolled in developmental education courses and Pell-Eligible. The Coaches first task will be to help their student cohort in completing their developmental courses and then helping them to enroll in college-level credit courses. This, research shows, is a big stop-out point for students. Having the Coaches available as a support system will help students

power through this potential obstacle and help them progress through their completion plan.

In all, more than 20 “Coaches”, part of a new AmeriCorps program, will participate within the following community colleges: Columbus State Community College, Cuyahoga Community College, Hocking College, Lakeland Community College, North Central State College, Northwest State Community College, Owens Community College, Southern State Community College, Terra Community College, and Zane State Community College.

The Ohio Association of Community Colleges (OACC) and the Ohio College Access Network (OCAN) entered into a strategic partnership to develop and implement the AmeriCorps College Completion initiative, combining the expertise and mutual goals of both organizations to make an impact on college retention and success in Ohio. The collaboration received a \$287,842 grant for the first year of a three-year grant cycle from ServeOhio, which is Ohio’s commission on service and volunteerism that helps solve Ohio’s critical economic challenges by administering AmeriCorps funding that targets areas of education, opportunity, healthy futures, veterans, environmental stewardship and disaster services.





# CAPITAL INSIDER

*A Perspective on Ohio Politics from the Viewpoint of Key State Leaders*

Each quarter, *The Forum* invites state leaders to share their views and opinions on policies and issues that have a direct impact on Ohio's community colleges.



State Sen. Chris Widener

State Sen. Chris Widener, R-Springfield and the chair of the Senate Finance Committee, offers his insight in this issue's "Capital Insider" column.

In difficult economic times, the most convincing way for someone to make themselves more marketable as a potential employee is by pursuing a specialized and quality education.

Many of the seeds for Ohio's economic recovery are sown in the soil of education innovation. One group that we can thank in particular for keeping higher education affordable is the Ohio Association of Community Colleges.

According to the [National Center for Education Statistics](#), average tuition at a four-year university was \$14,870 in 2009. That same year, average tuition at a community college was just \$2,272 according to [CollegeBoard](#).

The gigantic space between these two figures represents the window of opportunity that Community Colleges hold open in an economy dependent on higher education as a catalyst to success.

Community colleges not only provide a competitively priced product, but they

also produce a competitively awarded product. Graduates from community colleges can be found in virtually every aspect of daily life. The nurse in your family doctor's office, the manager at your local electronics retailer, the master's student at one of Ohio's state universities, or a limitless number of other people you may encounter could have-as often is the case- received an exceptional and competitive education for an affordable price at an Ohio community college.

In the 10<sup>th</sup> State Senate District, Clark State Community College is no exception to the reassuring trend of innovation.

***"According to the National Center for Education Statistics, average tuition at a four year university was \$14,870 in 2009.***

***That same year, average tuition at a community college was just \$2,272, according to College Board."***

Just this past July, Clark State announced availability of new Industrial Technology and Medical Information course-loads at one of its branch campuses.

These programs will be available to recent high school graduates looking to increase income potential, working professionals looking to move into a managerial role, or busy parents eager to provide their children with more opportunities.

***"In this trying state budget climate, the OACC will be a key collaborator in the shared vision to market innovation as a backbone to opportunity."***

Community colleges in Ohio boast an enrollment exceeding 300,000.

These students are taking advantage of opportunities that may not have existed without community colleges, and will doubtless expand with the institutions that facilitate them.

In this trying state budget climate, and with student debt soaring, community colleges have proven to be an effective tool in Ohio's tool chest.

Moving forward, the OACC will be a key collaborator in the shared vision to market innovation as a backbone to opportunity.

Ohio's 23 community colleges, as well as all of their 300,000 students are fortunate to have a capable and willing resource to advocate for their needs. Further, the citizens of Ohio are fortunate that the gateway to the jobs of tomorrow is growing ever wider as evidenced by the work of Ohio's community colleges.

*State Sen. Chris Widener represents the 10th Ohio Senate District which encompasses Madison, Clark and Greene counties. He is the chair of the Senate Finance Committee. Before coming to the Senate, Widener served three terms as the state representative for the 84th House District.*

## NEW PRESIDENTS TAKE THE HELM AT TWO NORTHWEST OHIO COLLEGES



*Dr. Jerome Webster,  
Terra Community College*

Dr. Jerome Webster is the new president of Terra Community College in Fremont, Ohio. President Webster took the reins on July 2 from Dr. Marsha Bordner, who retired.

“I am very excited, humbled and honored to serve in this role,” Webster said in a statement. “I believe so much opportunity exists at the college to serve our students and all of our communities with distinction.”

“I look forward to working with what I believe is the best faculty and staff on any college campus,” Webster said.

Previously, Webster served as the vice president for student and administrative affairs at Terra since August of 2008. He was chosen by the college’s Board of Trustees earlier this year to succeed President Bordner when she retired on June 30.

Webster holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration with a concentration in human resources from Olivet College in Michigan. After working as a residence hall director and housing coordinator at Olivet, he briefly served as a human resources associate at Standard Federal Bank.

Webster returned to higher education by taking a position at the University of Toledo. Webster spent 10 years working in various positions in university housing. Webster completed a master’s degree in educational technology and human resources development and received his doctoral degree in higher education administration at the University of Toledo.

Webster participated in the Community College Presidential Fellowship Program, which brought him to Terra, where he was eventually hired as the dean of student services. In January 2003, Webster accepted the position of dean of students at Lawrence Technological University in Southfield, Michigan. Four years later Webster signed on as the dean of student affairs for Cuyahoga Community College.



*Dr. Mike Bower,  
Owens Community College*

Meanwhile, at Owens Community College in Toledo, Dr. Mike Bower took over as president on July 1. John Satkowski had served as interim president.

“As I researched Owens Community College via website during the presidential search, I was impressed with the College vision statement with reference to excellence, innovation and collaboration,”

Bower said in a statement from the school. “My vision for Owens Community College

is to be recognized for our expertise in utilizing emerging technologies through innovative ideas from both our internal and external stakeholders, as we continuously improve our quality programs with the ever changing nature to advance higher education in this region through excellence, innovation and collaboration.”

“Owens Community College will continue to strengthen the capacity to be responsive to student needs by working closely together to share resources,” Bower said.

Before coming to Owens, Bower had served since July 2008 as the president of Lake Region State College in Devils Lake, North Dakota.

Before that, Bower served as Executive Dean Extension Campus/Continuing Education/Corporate Services for Mott Community College in Flint, Michigan, from 2004 to 2008.

Bower also has served as campus dean of Chippewa Falls at Chippewa Valley Technical College in Eau Clair, Wisconsin. From 2001 to 2003 and held several leadership positions at Central Community College in Columbus, Nebraska from 1997 to 2001. Bower’s background also includes stints as an instructor at Ivy Tech State College and as an adjunct instructor at Indiana University–Kokomo, both located in Kokomo, Indiana.

Bower is a military veteran and was honorably discharged from the U.S. Army.

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# OHIO LEGISLATURE CONSIDERS STATE PENSION REFORM

The Ohio Legislature has given final passage to bipartisan bills that reform the Public Employment Retirement System, the State Teachers Retirement System of Ohio, the School Employees Retirement System, the Ohio Police & Fire Pension System and the Ohio State Highway Patrol Retirement System.

All of the bills seek to increase the solvency for the funds that contain more than \$160 billion in financial assets that cover more than 1.5 million public employees, retirees and their beneficiaries.

None of the measures, according to an OACC analysis, would increase the employer contributions to the pension systems.

Based on direction from its leadership, the OACC was neutral on the bills and will continue to communicate the details of the measures to the group's membership.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

*Dates are subject to change. For more information, or to use the OACC Conference Room for your next meeting, contact Leah Dickinson at [ldickinson@ohioacc.org](mailto:ldickinson@ohioacc.org) or (614) 221-6222. Additional information is available online at [www.ohiocommunitycolleges.org](http://www.ohiocommunitycolleges.org).*

### September

#### 13 CAO Meeting

OACC Offices, Columbus

#### 14 CFO Meeting, Columbus

#### 14 OCSAO Meeting, Columbus

#### 21 OACC-HR Meeting

#### 21 OACC Presidents Meeting, OACC Offices, Columbus

### October

#### 11 CAO Meeting

OACC Offices, Columbus

#### 12 OCSAO Meeting

Columbus

#### 19 OACC CFO Meeting

Columbus

#### 19 Presidents Conference Call

### November

#### 1-2 OCSAO Meeting

#### 8 CAO Meeting

OACC Offices, Columbus

#### 9 CFO Meeting

Columbus

#### 16 OACC-HR Meeting

#### 16 Governing Board

#### & Presidents' Meeting Columbus

## OACC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### Matthew P. Smith

Chair

Trustee, North Central State College

### Diana H. (Dee) Talmage

Chair Elect

Trustee, Owens Community College

### Dr. Paul Brown

Vice Chair

President, Zane State College

### Dr. Kevin Boys

Vice Chair Elect

President, Southern State Comm. College

### Liz Gates

Secretary

Trustee, Belmont Technical College

### Dr. Barbara Gellman-Danley

Treasurer

President, Rio Grande Community College

### Darryl D. Mehaffie

At-Large Trustee

Trustee, Edison Community College

### Dr. Morris Beverage

At-Large President

President, Lakeland Community College

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Belmont College • Central Ohio Technical College • Cincinnati State Technical and Community College  
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Eastern Gateway Community College • Edison Community College • Hocking College  
Lakeland Community College • Lorain County Community College • Marion Technical College  
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