



For Immediate Release

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**FOUR OHIO COMMUNITY COLLEGES RECEIVE NATIONAL RECOGNITION
FOR IMPROVING STUDENT SUCCESS**

*Tri-C, Lorain County Community College, North Central State and Columbus
State Recognized Among Nation's Best*

Four Ohio community colleges have been recognized by a national organization committed to helping students – particularly low-income students and students of color – achieve their goals for academic success, personal growth, and economic opportunity. Cuyahoga Community College, Lorain County Community College and North Central State were among eleven schools to earn “Leader College” designation from Achieving the Dream (ATD) for their efforts to improve student success and narrow opportunity gaps. The organization also recognized Columbus State Community College as one of two recipients of the Leah Meyer Austin Award, recognizing the significant cultural changes it has made to improve student success.

“To be selected as a Leah Meyer Austin Award winner, a college must be courageous enough to make big changes in everything that impacts the ability of their students to be successful,” said Dr. Karen A. Stout, President and CEO of Achieving the Dream.

In addition, Stout added the Leader of College Distinction Award recognizes colleges “that have lived their reform work over time and seen real improvements in student achievement across the institutions.”

“This honor recognizes the hard work of our faculty and staff. They have been on a years-long journey to meet students where they are and help them reach their goals,” said Columbus State President Dr. David Harrison. “While our journey continues, this award is recognition of significant progress made by the Columbus State team.”

“Ohio’s community colleges have all focused on ways to drive student success on our campuses and it’s such an honor to see four of our schools being recognized as some of the nation’s very best,” said Jack Hershey, president and CEO of the Ohio Association of Community Colleges. “What makes Ohio so

special is we know that the leaders of all four institutions are sharing their best practices and experiences amongst their colleagues to help the collective efforts of all 23 of our colleges to implement aggressive reforms aimed at improving student success and equity.”

Hershey said that Ohio’s performance-based funding formula put in place by the Ohio General Assembly in 2013 is working and driving student success across all community colleges. A two-day student success conference hosted last week by the OACC in Columbus, unveiled new data that showed an 8.5 percent increase in the number of students earning credentials, including a 22.5 percent increase in students earning one-year certificates, even while enrollment has declined due to a strong economy.

About Achieving the Dream: Achieving the Dream (ATD) leads a growing network of more than 220 community colleges committed to helping their students, particularly low-income students and students of color, achieve their goals for academic success, personal growth, and economic opportunity. ATD is making progress in closing academic achievement gaps and accelerating student success through a unique change process that builds each college’s institutional capacities in seven essential areas. ATD, along with nearly 75 experienced coaches and advisors, works closely with Network colleges in 41 states and the District of Columbia to reach more than 4 million community college students.

About the Ohio Association of Community Colleges: The OACC represents the presidents and trustees from the state’s 23 public two-year institutions that works to advance our community colleges through policy advocacy and professional development. For more information on the OACC, visit www.OhioCommunityColleges.Org.

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