



For Immediate Release
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**OHIO'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES CELEBRATE 10 YEARS OF
INCREASED ACHIEVEMENT AND DEGREE-COMPLETION**

***Ohio Community College Graduation Rates Have Increased Nearly 200% Since
the Launch of the OACC Success Center in 2012***

COLUMBUS – More than 250 Ohio community college leaders came together at Columbus State Community College on September 14-15 to celebrate 10 years of increased achievement by Ohio's community college students. In particular, community college graduation rates have nearly doubled over the past decade.

The progress is credited to the new, innovative work that Ohio's community colleges have done to tear down barriers to degree completion, particularly for students of color. The colleges' collaboration has been facilitated by the Success Center for Ohio Community Colleges, created 10 years ago as a first-in-the-nation effort to develop new strategies for helping more students complete their degree and certificate programs.

"Ohio's community college students are driven to succeed and with the right opportunities we see time and again just how much they can achieve. It's inspiring to see and great news for them, their families, Ohio's employers and our state's future," said Jack Hershey, president of the Ohio Association of Community Colleges (OACC), which sponsors the Center.

Highlights of the Center's decade of work include:

- Improving Degree Completion: 162,000 associate degrees have been awarded, with a 16% increase in 2021 compared to 2013.
- Increasing Job-focused Credentials; 33,7000 long-term certificates have been awarded, with a 34% increase in 2021 compared to 2013.
- Closing the Equity Gaps: The total number of total credentials awarded annually to African American students has increased by 40% since 2013.

"Ohio's community colleges have seen significant improvement in the overall completion rates of students, which is one of our top goals. It's so rewarding to see it happen," said Laura Rittner, executive director of the center. "Our challenge now is to build on this success by spreading it to more students and increasing the opportunities they have to achieve in the workforce."

Over the past decade, the Success Center has hosted nearly 20 Student Success Leadership Institutes and more than 40 additional workshops and webinars to help drive student success at the colleges. Among the work and student-focused reforms that colleges have done through the Center to help drive increased graduation rates is:

- More than 60 strategy sessions since 2016 at which community college leaders came together to strategize, share ideas and challenge each other.
- The implementation at all 23 community colleges of a “Pathways Coach” and additional professional development supports to help college leaders implement student-focused reforms.
- A system-wide cultural change to embrace the increased use of data in decision making, including the use of custom reports on student progress and momentum, funding models, labor market outcomes, and student financial wellness.
- New, strong partnerships with national organizations like the Community College Research Center, The Aspen Institute, National Center for Inquiry and Improvement, Jobs for the Future, and more that provide Ohio colleges professional development opportunities and support to scale student success reforms.
- The establishment of a statewide hub for leadership development focusing on student success for college faculty, staff, and cabinet-level leaders.
- The 2019 launch of the OACC Leadership Academy for Student Success for mid-level for mid-level faculty, staff, and administrators (below vice president level) with clear leadership potential and interest in advancing within the college and the field.

Community college’s collaboration efforts are supported by the Ascendium Education Group, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Joyce Foundation. For more information, please visit www.OhioCommunityColleges.Org.

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