

OWENS COMMUNITY COLLEGE Foundation & Alumni



NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2025

In this issue:

- [Owens Graduates 349 Students, Including 120 Nurses, at 44th Fall Commencement](#)
- [Owens Receives Prestigious Award for John Deere Tech Program](#)
- [Alumni Spotlight: Desire Taylor](#)
- [Conversations Podcast](#) featuring [Laura Koprowski, TARTA CEO](#)
- Department Announcements and Event Dates
- [Hot Jobs At Owens](#) - Adjunct Recruitment
- [ExpressNow - DragonNext Advantage: Partnership Benefits for Continuing Education](#)
- [Your Foundation Support at Work: Happy New Year! 2024 in Review](#)

Owens Graduates 349 Students, Including 120 Nurses, at 44th Fall Commencement



A total of 101 students graduated with honors, earning a 3.5 grade-point average or higher. Owens now has awarded more than 45,000 associate degrees, with this class bringing the total to 45,187. All ceremonies are available to [watch online](#).
[Read more](#)

Please join us in congratulating all the Owens Community College award winning graduates (*click individual names for full stories*):

Peggy Bensman Award and Barbara Rood Student Choice Nursing Award - [Colton Johnson](#)
Barbara Rood Student Choice Nursing Awards - [Ariel Campbell](#), [Whitney Heminger](#), and [Jessica Lightle](#)
Gerald Bazer Award for Outstanding Arts and Science - [Elizabeth White](#)
Business Technologies Outstanding Graduate - [Brittany LeGare](#)
Education Transfer Concentration Outstanding Graduate - [Sophie Kepling](#)
Social Work Transfer Pathway Outstanding Graduate - [Kelly Rowen](#)
School of STEM's Outstanding CAD Certificate Award - [Ed Walden](#)



Owens Receives Prestigious Award for John Deere Tech Program



Thanks to a continued focus on high standards, the John Deere Tech Program at Owens Community College was honored with a Platinum Award from the College of Tomorrow, the highest honor given out. The "College of Tomorrow" was created in 2011 to improve the alignment and processes across all John Deere College Partnership Programs in the United States. Awards are granted with Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze levels.

"The criteria in this program are robust. We are honored to meet John Deere Tech's high standards and receive the top Platinum honors in the College of Tomorrow awards program," said **Heath Weinau**, Owens John Deere Tech Program Coordinator and Instructor. [Read more](#)

Alumni Spotlight: Desire Taylor

While studying Theatre at Owens, alumna (2018) **Desire Taylor**'s drive and creativity were clear. She appeared in productions and one-acts and even developed an original solo performance titled "You're Going to the Moon." A trajectory was set. Since her time at Owens, Desire has completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting from Howard University (2021) and studied at the British American Drama Academy (2022).



And Desire's star continues to rise.

Desire was a cohort member of the Eugene O'Neill Theater Makers at the National Theatre Institute in Connecticut this past summer. This was an opportunity for her to create new pieces. Desire wrote and directed "HA HA HA," an introspective short film which tracks the inner thoughts and anxieties of its main characters. Desire also directed and devised a musical titled "The Badass Adventures of Savior Saint and the White Man's Machine," for which she wrote the script and libretto. Notes Taylor, "I was interested in finding a way for an ensemble to create using their instincts for rhythm and cadences." Collaborating with the cast, a musical accompaniment was established through experimentation.

Desire will be presenting at the Owens Spark Summit on March 6, 2025, to discuss these creative collaborations.

What's next? In June, Desire began a two-year study in The Miranda Family Fellowship Program, created by **Lin-Manuel Miranda** ("Hamilton," "In the Heights"). The program is dedicated to fostering an inclusive entertainment industry by identifying, cultivating and launching the careers of diverse talent. The two-year program provides mentorship and training to its fellows as well as access to casting agents, funding opportunities and entertainment lawyers. "I'm feeling very confident," says Desire. "Through this process, I'm getting to network and ask questions. It feels great to find connections."

Please feel free to continue sharing your Owens alumni success updates [here](#)!

Conversations Podcast with Dr. Dione D. Somerville

The award-winning Conversations podcast features Owens President Dr. Dione D. Somerville sitting down with community leaders each month. The Conversations podcast is available on Amazon, Apple, Google, iHeart Media, Spotify and many more podcast streaming platforms. Also check it out on the podcast's host site: [Listen Here](#). Then join the conversation - tell us about YOU by taking the four-question [Listener Survey!](#)



[Listen Here](#)

In this episode, Dr. Dione D. Somerville sits down with **Laura Koprowski**, the Chief Executive Officer of the Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority (TARTA). She has amassed more than 20 years of leadership in transportation, strategic planning, communications and public policy. Her career is marked by successful collaborations with public officials, civic organizations and businesses, driving partnerships that fuel organizational growth and regional transformation.

Laura holds a Master of Public Administration from Bowling Green State University and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Ohio University. Her educational background in public service has been foundational to her success in developing innovative programs and leading organizational change.

Before becoming CEO in 2021, Laura served as TARTA's Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Chief Communications and Customer Experience Officer, where she implemented strategic marketing and communications plans and cultivated a customer-centric culture. She has also served as Executive Director of the Ohio Public Transit Association (OPTA) and Vice President of Government Affairs and Communications at the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA).

With a proven track record in policy advocacy, organizational transformation and brand development, Laura is committed to advancing public transportation and improving mobility options for the Toledo region. She continues to lead TARTA with a focus on innovation, collaboration, and service excellence, positioning the agency as a leader in the transit industry.

Laura's passion for sustainable transportation and her forward-thinking leadership make her a key advocate for public transit at both the state and federal levels.

Department Announcements and Event Dates

We would love to see you at one of the many on-campus activities available to our community! Please be sure to check details and RSVP for events which may require pre-registration due to limited seating availability.

OWENS COMMUNITY COLLEGE ATHLETICS

Game Schedules Available:

[Express Men's Basketball](#)

[Express Women's Basketball](#)

Athletics Hall of Fame: Jan 25

Championship Team, 4 All-Americans, and Soccer Coach to be Inducted to Express Hall of Fame on **January 25, 2025**

Ceremonies will be held during halftime of the men's and women's basketball games. The men's game will begin at 11am. A reception will follow the conclusion of the women's game.

Owens OutComm Student Media

Owens OutComm Student Media is presenting new audio and video content. For more information and listening schedules, visit the [OutComm website](#)

CULTIVATING *the* ARTS

[Walter E. Terhune Art Gallery](#)

Passages:

Juried High School Art Show

Opening Reception Jan 31
on display through March 21

Creative Expressions and Alumni Hall of Fame Awards

SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, May 3, 2025 5:30pm @ CFPA



Sponsorship Opportunities Available

[Bookmark Sale](#) - Jan 23, 8am-8pm

["The Faces Of" Art Exhibit](#): 4/4 - 5/4/25

Opening Reception April 4, noon-1pm

[Author Visit with Sara Novic](#) - 4/24/25

10am Toledo & 3:30pm Findlay

[Catch up on BIG Read Podcasts!](#)

Work & Play

Career & Enrichment Classes:

[Basic Life Support/CPR](#)

[Ceramics](#)

[Computer Training](#)

[DIY Home Repairs & Renovations](#)

[Encaustic Painting w/Studio Time](#)

[Online Professional Development](#)

[Photography](#)

[Studio Art Welding](#)

[Real Estate Pre-Licensing Program](#)

eligible for funding through our Ohio Talent Ready grant - [click here to apply](#)

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR KIDS SPRING CLASSES AND SUMMER CAMPS

Register early to ensure your child gets a seat in these rapidly filling programs!

Hot Jobs at Owens - Adjunct Recruitment

DID YOU KNOW? Approximately 1/3 of Owens employees are Owens alumni! Re-join the Owens family as faculty or staff and foster student and community success!

A great career with great benefits in higher education.

The Owens Community College culture encourages inclusivity and celebrates diversity. With over 100 job opportunities currently available at both our Toledo-area and Findlay-area campuses, Owens offers a competitive benefits package that attracts the most qualified applicants in the region.

Enjoy competitive pay, paid time off, holiday pay and pension/retirement plans.

Adjunct instructor positions currently in high demand for:

- Nursing - bachelor or master degree
- Sciences - master degree
- Advanced manufacturing, skilled trades, and transportation - associate or higher degree



ExpressNow - DragonNext Advantage:

Partnership Benefits for Continuing Education

Spend less and go further in your education with the DragonNext Advantage, a partnership with Tiffin University.

DragonNext offers you the opportunity to begin your associate degree here at Owens Community College, then pursue your bachelor's degree at Tiffin University - at a discounted tuition rate.

- Designed to save you money and time!
 - **\$16,000 merit scholarship** for students attending classes at Tiffin University's main campus
 - **\$150 off per credit hour** for Tiffin University students attending classes online
- Your Owens Community College courses align with Tiffin University courses allowing for a seamless transfer to TU.
- You will receive support from both schools, working with dedicated counselors at each institution.
- Students will have access to services and programs at both schools, like career services, libraries, tutoring, athletic and student activities and more.
- DragonNext students are eligible for grants, loans and work-study programs designed for them.

MORE INFORMATION

Your Foundation Support at Work

As Owens Community College enters its 60th year of being the first choice for affordable, accessible, high quality education and training in our region, we thank all our alumni, donors, partners, and friends for supporting us and our students every step of the way!

You are vital in creating an Owens community that empowers our students to achieve their educational and lifetime goals.



Thank you for being a proud member of our community. Together, we are building a brighter future for the next generation. **Nearly 400 donors** like you collectively **contributed over \$500,000** to the Owens Foundation in calendar year 2024; an **increase of over 70% in giving** when compared to calendar year 2023!

Just a few accomplishments made possible by this incredible generosity include:

- **over \$250,000 in student scholarships awarded** for 2024-2025 academic year
- **approximately \$225,000 provided in program support funds** in calendar year 2024
- **nearly \$10,000 of student emergency support**

But there's still more work to be done, and we need your help! As the new year begins, we ask you to consider making a monthly contribution to empower the next generation of students.

Will you make a recurring gift today to create a lasting impact this year? You can make a meaningful difference in students' lives by [supporting the fund](#) that matters most to you, or explore other ways to [increase your impact](#). You can [give easily online](#) at the button below to make a one-time or recurring donation.

We hope to see you at one of the many upcoming 2025 events and activities celebrating 60 years of Owens excellence! As always, please feel free to [contact us](#) at any time with new ideas for the new year!



Contact us!

foundation@owens.edu
owensalumni@owens.edu
 567-661-7100

Join the New Facebook Page to Engage Further

You asked and Owens answered - new and improved ways to engage with fellow alumni and friends!

PLEASE VISIT AND FOLLOW [OUR NEW FACEBOOK PAGE FOR ALUMNI AND FOUNDATION FRIENDS!](#)

If you like the new monthly enewsletter, just wait until you see our new and improved Facebook page - be sure to like and follow to stay up to date throughout the month and [join the conversation with other newsletter readers!](#)



OWENS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
FOUNDATION