

OWENS COMMUNITY COLLEGE Foundation & Alumni



NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2025

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Welcoming Our Newest Alumni - Owens Community College Class of 2025



The Owens Community College Board of Trustees Student Life Committee recognized four students for outstanding achievements and involvement inside and outside of the classroom.

Jeremy Hermiller, a Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) student, received the Exemplary Academic Achievement recognition.

Candace Summerskill, a Diagnostic Medical Sonography student, received the Exceptional Student Leadership recognition.

Allison Hepp, a Dental Hygiene student, received the Exceptional Student Life Involvement recognition.

Abby Vogt, a Physical Therapist Assistant student, received the Exemplary Academics and Extraordinary Community Engagement recognition. [Read more](#)

Outstanding Graduate Awards and Success Stories

Academic schools honor their outstanding graduates based on success criteria that vary by award, including academic, professional, volunteer, personal and more. The faculty, staff, administration, and fellow alumni congratulate these outstanding graduates:

School of Business, Hospitality Management and Public Safety

Business Technologies
Outstanding Graduate:

[Rosa Sanchez](#)

Outstanding Graduate in Food,
Nutrition and Hospitality:

[Jennifer Lesko](#)

Criminal Justice Outstanding
Graduate Award:

[Sharon Downes](#)



School of Liberal Arts

Gerald Bazer Award for the Outstanding Arts and Sciences

Graduate: [Lawson Mazur](#)

ASL Interpreter Preparation Program Outstanding Graduate:

[Monica Turner](#)

Early Childhood Education Outstanding Graduate:

Meredyth Lambert

Education Transfer Concentration Outstanding Graduate:

[Sarah Sutter](#)

Social Work Transfer Pathway Outstanding Graduate:

[Brittany Persinger](#)

Outstanding Graduate Awards and Success Stories (continued)

School of Nursing and Health Professions

Janell Lang Award:

[Jennifer Villegas](#), Radiologic Technology Program

Peggy Bensman Award:

[Eliza Hummel](#), Registered Nursing

Barbara Rood Student Choice Nursing Award

Option A: [Kimberly Berry](#)

Option B: [Alyssa Viengmany](#)

Option C: [Lauren McMurray](#)

Findlay: [Eliza Hummel](#)

Linda Myers Outstanding Radiography Graduate Award:

[Jordan Yeager](#)

MRI Outstanding Graduate Award: [Nicole Jennings](#)

Health Information Technology Outstanding Graduate Award:

[Kristen Endicott](#)

OHIMA New Graduate Award: [Kristen Endicott](#)

NWOHIMA New Graduate Award: [Kaitlyn Maxwell](#)

Health Information Technology Spirit Award: [Theresa Vargas](#)

Occupational Therapy Assistant Outstanding Graduate Award:

[Amy Ziegenfelder](#)

Surgical Technology Guiding Scalpel Award in Exceptional Leadership: **Claire Ulrich**

Surgical Technology Beyond the Scalpel Award: [Gracie Squires](#)

Surgical Technology Outstanding Graduate Award: **Claire Ulrich**

Association of Surgical Technologists National Honor Society: **Claire Ulrich**

Diagnostic Medical Sonography Outstanding Graduate Award:

[Megan O'Brien](#)

Vascular Sonography Outstanding Graduate Award: [Emily Burhart](#)

Physical Therapist Assistant Outstanding Graduate Award

Findlay Cohort: [Jeremy Hermiller](#)

Toledo Cohort: [Alexis Jackson](#)

Dental Hygiene Clinical Excellence Golden Scaler Outstanding

Graduate Award: **Tavish Wever**

Dental Hygiene Community Service Outstanding Graduate Award:

Macy Briggs

Dental Hygiene Colgate STARR Award: **Kennedy Vrooman**

Dental Hygiene Christopher L. Simmons Honor Award:

[Derek Koster](#)

Owens Caterpillar Graduate James Henige Named All-Ohio Academic



Owens graduate James Henige strived to do his best while studying in the college's Caterpillar Dealer Service Technician Program. Even so, he admits he was caught off guard when he was recognized as a member of the All-Ohio Academic Team by the Ohio Association of Community Colleges.

"I did not expect to receive such an honor," Henige said. "Recognition at the state level validates the hard work that I put into my program, and I'm very humbled." [Read more](#)

Alumni Spotlights: Crystal Smith and Gwendolynn Davis



[Crystal Smith](#), an Owens Community College alumna, recently received a Toledo American Advertising Federation 2025 Mosaic Award for the Most Promising Multicultural Student for her work on a podcast and student broadcast at the University of Toledo.

Smith said winning the award was a validation of her sacrifices and hard work. "It was like breaking stereotypes, breaking barriers."

Smith is a single mom from Toledo who never thought she would go back to school. Thanks to insistence and support from her mom, Smith went back to school at Owens. She graduated with an associate degree in Political Science. From filling out financial paperwork and the FAFSA to registering for classes, she said Owens made the process of going to school easy.

"I went to Owens and I'm like, 'Oh, this is great, like I could do this,'" Smith said. "Owens was the stepping stone for all of this."

After graduating from Owens, Smith seamlessly transferred to UT, where she graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor's degree in media communications. She's now working toward a master's degree in strategic communication and social media from Bowling Green State University.

Through her now award-winning journey, Smith said she, "100 percent wouldn't be where I'm at without Owens." [Read more](#)



[Owens Alumni Hall of Fame 2025 Honorable Mention:](#)

Gwendolynn Davis began her healthcare journey as Gwendolynn Gregory, working as a nurse's aide before the STNA role existed. Her passion for patient care led her to Owens Community College, where she earned her

Associate Degree in Nursing and became a registered nurse.

She later earned her BSN, MBA, and MSN from Spring Arbor University and completed coursework in a Doctor of Nursing Practice program at Walden University. Gwendolynn spent 25 years at the Medical College of Ohio and also held leadership nursing roles at the Northwest Ohio Psychiatric Hospital and the Toledo-Lucas County Health Department.

Since 2023, she has been serving as Clinical Teaching Faculty for Owens School of Nursing and Health Professionals.

As an educator, she is known for her student-focused approach, earning praise from both learners and physicians. Her mentorship and advocacy have shaped the careers of countless future nurses. Gwendolynn Davis is a proud Owens alumna and a shining example of how "Your success starts here" is more than a slogan - it's a promise fulfilled.

[Alumni Hall of Fame](#) nominees will be considered for three years following their nomination. Nominations for the [2026 awards will open November 1, 2025](#). 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!](#)



[In this episode](#), Dr. Dione D. Somerville sits down with OACC President and CEO Avi Zaffini, leading efforts to support and advocate for Ohio's 23 community colleges and their leadership teams. Since stepping into the role in 2023, Avi has focused on strengthening workforce development initiatives, expanding partnerships and ensuring that Ohio's community colleges remain a vital pathway to economic opportunity.

With a career spanning government, business and education, Avi is dedicated to fostering collaboration between Ohio's community colleges, employers and policymakers to create stronger opportunities for students and workers. [Listen Here](#)

President's Blog: Beyond Tuition - Understanding the Hidden Challenges for Students

As we celebrate the achievements of the Class of 2025 across the U.S., we also pause to reflect on what it took for students to cross the finish line. At Owens Community College, we've always known that success isn't just measured in credit hours or diplomas - it's found in the determination, sacrifice, and resilience of the individuals earning them.

Our latest results from the Fall 2024 Student Financial Wellness Survey, conducted by Trellis Strategies, provide a timely and honest look at the lives of our students and the challenges they face as they strive forward. We see many of these same trends with students from colleges and universities across the country.

[Read more](#)

Revisit the [January 2025 Conversations](#) and join us in welcoming **Laura Koprowski**, Chief Executive Officer of the Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority (TARTA), to the Owens Foundation Board of Directors.

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

Schedules Available Soon:

[Express Men's Soccer](#)
[Express Women's Soccer](#)

Owens Express Baseball Advances to Fourth District Tournament in Five Seasons



Owens Completes Renovation of Gym Floor

CULTIVATING *the* ARTS

Walter E. Terhune Art Gallery

"Super Natural"
Jules Webster, Artist in Residency
[Opening Reception June 5, 5-7pm](#)
Show on display through August 1

Oregon Road Film Series: Film Challenge Winners

To watch all video entries or support the awards program, [click here](#).
Fall 2025 Film Challenge kick-off:
October 10, 12pm, CH100

Work & Play

Career & Enrichment Classes:

[Basic Life Support/CPR](#)
[Ceramics](#)
[Computer Training](#)
[Encaustic Painting w/Studio Time](#)
[Online Professional Development](#)
[Photography](#)
[Podcasting and Vlogging](#)
[Studio Art Welding](#)

KIDS SPRING CLASSES & SUMMER CAMPS

Scholarships are available!

Water Workforce Graduation

The third cohort of 20 Owens Community College students earned their Water Treatment Professions certificate at 9 a.m. on Thursday, May 8 in Veterans Hall. This is part of the Water Workforce Coalition, which was formed thanks to a \$500,000 grant from the U.S. EPA. TMACOG and the City of Toledo also form the coalition, which responded to northwest Ohio's anticipated operator shortages due to retirements by 2028. This graduating cohort will bring the number of graduates to 65 over three cohorts.



Owens ASPIRE Program Class of 2025

Twenty-eight students received their high school equivalency (HSE) certification during the commencement ceremony on May 29, 2025 in Veteran's Hall. Five students passed at least one subject with *GED College Ready* and three passed with *GED College Ready + Credit*. The [Owens ASPIRE program](#) offers free classes on campus and at many sites along the I-75 corridor, from Toledo to Findlay in adult basic skills, English for Speakers of Other Languages and other Workforce training. This ceremony marks the culmination of much hard work for graduates who have persevered and overcome many challenges to attain their academic goals. To support the program and future graduations, please specify the "**ASPIRE Support Fund**" in the dropdown menu of the [online giving form](#).

Owens Early Learning Center Pre-K Graduation

The Owens Community College Early Learning Center (ELC) at the Findlay-area Campus celebrated the graduation of its 19th Pre-kindergarten class with nearly 80 friends and family members of the graduates.

Owens ELC is a 5-star Step Up to Quality childcare center. Many of the Pre-K graduates started with the ELC as toddlers and have grown and developed with the help of Owens staff. Owens will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the ELC next academic year.

To support the program and future graduations, please specify the "**Childcare Program Support Fund - Findlay**" in the dropdown menu of the [online giving form](#).



Your Foundation Support at Work - On The Golf Course!

Please [join us](#) on September 15, 2025, at Belmont Country Club for an exciting day of golf and philanthropy at the **23rd Annual Golf Classic!**

After check-in, golfers will enjoy a generous boxed lunch and watch the Golf Ball Drone Drop, followed immediately by a shotgun start at 12 p.m.

During the dinner and awards program, sponsors and tournament winners will be recognized and giveaway prizes will be announced.

Proceeds from this year's outing will be used to purchase equipment for our Computer Information Systems (CIS) lab and program, such as a new server, laptops, monitors, hardware and networking equipment. The CIS department serves over 700 students annually and provides training for students pursuing careers in IT networking, computer programming, web development, computer systems support and cybersecurity.

[Register today](#) - sponsorships and foursomes for the 60th Anniversary event are already filling rapidly! [Email](#) to inquire regarding volunteer opportunities.

Drone Drop Tickets

Drone Drop tickets are also available for purchase [here](#). Winners will be announced during the awards ceremony and need not be present to win. Prices include cash and gift cards!



Celebrating 60 years of Owens **1965-2025**



Contact us!

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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!](#)



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