

OWENS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Foundation & Alumni

..... AWARD-WINNING E-NEWSLETTER



July 2026

Will Your Golf Ball Be the Lucky \$1,000 Winner?

Before the first foursome tees off at the Owens Community College Foundation Golf Classic on Monday, September 21, one of the most anticipated moments will occur. A drone will lift off over the practice green at Belmont Country Club carrying 200 numbered foam golf balls. At 11:30 a.m. the balls will drop, bounce and roll toward the target holes below. The five that land in or closest to a numbered hole win prizes.



You do not need to be present to win. For \$20 per ball, you can join the fun while supporting Owens students through the Foundation and the Golf Classic. Tickets are available online, through the Foundation office or on-site the day of the event. Prizes include the \$1,000 prize, two season tickets to the Marathon Center for the Performing Arts, two tickets to a BGSU football game and a Toledo Zoo Family Membership.

Every ball purchased helps fund scholarships and programs that change students' lives.

Get your Drone Drop tickets or register to golf at owens.edu/golf.



New Chief of Police Brings 13 Years of Campus Law Enforcement Experience

Owens introduced Jennifer Emptage as its new Chief of Police and Director of Public Safety and Security during a swearing-in ceremony on Monday, July 6. Emptage will lead a department of 12 employees responsible for safety across the Toledo-area and Findlay-area campuses.

Emptage, pictured with Owens Board of Trustees Chair Michael Bridenbaker, brings nearly 13 years of law enforcement experience in patrol, investigations and leadership roles. She most recently served as a lieutenant for the Bowling Green State University (BGSU) Police Department and holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and a master's degree in forensic investigation, both from BGSU.

"I'm honored to join the Owens Community College community and to lead a department committed to safety, service and integrity," Emptage said.

"My goal is to create an environment where every student, faculty member, staff member and visitor feels safe, supported and valued, and where our officers are seen as trusted partners in the campus community."

Emptage takes over for Dwayne Dotson, who served as interim chief and will remain with the department as police sergeant.



Substitute Teacher Earns Toledo Transportation Club Scholarship to Become Truck Driver

The Toledo Transportation Club (TTC) has created an annual scholarship for Owens Community College students enrolled in the CDL certification program, aimed at removing financial barriers for local residents training to become truck drivers.

The scholarship, created in partnership with the Owens Community College Foundation, is worth nearly \$6,000 annually and has already been awarded for the 2026-27 academic year to Gavin Davidson, who began classes in early July.

"The TTC is proud to do our part in helping address the regional driver shortage by funding a CDL certification for a driver entering the local transportation industry each year," said club president Mike McCabe.

"We are hopeful that this scholarship can provide the support someone needs to begin a rewarding career and become an asset to our community."

Davidson has worked for FedEx for six years and also works as a substitute teacher. The scholarship, he said, gave him the financial stability to pursue truck driving without worrying about his income dropping during summer break.

The Owens Community College Foundation has awarded more than \$3 million in scholarships since 2002. Scholarships assist students financially so they can pursue their education and do not need to be repaid. More information on scholarships as well as information on how to apply can be found at owens.edu/foundation.



Inaugural Dental Hygiene Class Marks 50th Anniversary with Visit to Updated Owens Campus

When Beth Pycraft and her classmates arrived at Owens Community College in the 1970s, campus didn't extend past Oregon Road and Health Technologies Hall was brand new. To celebrate the 50th anniversary of their graduation as the first class from the Dental Hygiene program, 10 alumni returned to campus in June to tour the Healthcare Education Center, including the Dental Hygiene lab.

Alumni who visited included Ellen Baatz Moeller, Laura Imhoff Thomas, Susan Clements Weaver, Joan Harpen Hohenberger, Jan Hilton Strong, Jill Morse, Beth Sayler Pycraft, Terrie Schwartz Pope, Denise Wulff Potts and Mary Kay Ziegler Whitner.

"We didn't even know where we were on campus," Pycraft said, noting how unrecognizable the updates made it.

The group was impressed by the modern equipment, a contrast to the 1970s-era tools they trained on.

"It was inspiring to see the pride they still have in the program and their excitement about the opportunities available to today's students," said Teresa Kania, chair of the Dental Hygiene Department.

Owens Receives State Funds to Advance Next Phase of Toledo-area Campus Transformation

Owens Community College has received an Ohio Department of Higher Education loan totaling nearly \$1 million to support the demolition of Health Technologies Hall and Bicentennial Hall, marking the next step in the college's long-term vision to reduce operating costs and align the campus with regional needs.

For more than five decades, the buildings served as the center of healthcare education at Owens, preparing thousands of nurses and allied health professionals. That role ended in 2025 when Owens relocated its nursing and health professions programs to the new Healthcare Education Center, a \$27.8 million renovation of the former library and Audio/Visual classroom buildings.

"These buildings helped shape generations of healthcare professionals and represent an important chapter in our history," said Dr. Dione D. Somerville, Owens president. "The state investment allows us to continue transforming our campus in ways that best serve students and our region."

There is no specific timeline for deciding the future of the signage — including the "O" — that sits atop the Health Tech building. Senior college leadership will take the necessary time to complete the evaluation before making any decisions. An announcement will be made when the decision is final.

Owens has spent approximately \$217,000 annually to maintain the closed facilities. The \$991,495 state loan will eliminate those costs, with resources redirected toward other strategic investments. While plans for the site have not been finalized, leaders envision a welcoming campus gateway. Demolition is expected this fall.



Conversations

with OWENS COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENT
DR. DIONE D. SOMERVILLE

Podcast

Five Voices, One Region: A Conversations Podcast Roundup

Owens Community College President Dione D. Somerville's Conversations podcast is revisiting some of its most memorable episodes from the past year in a new compilation highlighting the leaders and educators shaping northwest Ohio.

The featured guests span business, economic development, K-12 education, philanthropy and higher education, each offering a perspective on the partnerships strengthening the region. Together, their conversations reflect a shared commitment to collaboration, innovation and investing in people and communities.

Featured guests include:

- Vince DiPofi, *CEO of SSOE*
- Neil MacKinnon, *Mayor of Rossford*
- Dr. Brian Treece, *president and CEO of the Findlay-Hancock County Community Foundation*
- Dr. Veronica Motley, *retired Sylvania Schools Superintendent*
- Jami Williamson, *Owens Professor*

The compilation episode offers listeners a chance to catch up on conversations they may have missed and revisit the ones that resonated most, with new episodes continuing throughout the year.

Listen now: rss.com/podcasts/owensccconversations

Also available on Amazon, Apple, Google, iHeart Media and Spotify.

Ten Owens faculty members receive rank promotions

Ten faculty members received rank promotions for the 2026-27 academic year at the June meeting of the Owens Community College Board of Trustees.

Deborah Sullivan (*pictured*) was promoted to a professor of Nursing in the School of Nursing and Health Professions.



Receiving promotions to rank for associate professor were Dr. Sara Burke (Physical Therapist Assistant Program), Bernard Goedde (Transportation Technologies) and Susan Nichols (Dental Hygiene).

Promotions to the rank of assistant professor were awarded to Chloe Arredondo (Physical Therapist Assistant), Jodi Gore (Social Work), Thomas Kepler (Diesel), Dr. Maria Reinbolt (Occupational Therapy Assistant), Jennell Twigg (Radiography) and Wendy Zettel (Nursing).

In May, the Board of Trustees approved initial tenure contracts for six faculty members: Anita Coleman (instructor of American Sign Language and ASL Interpreting), Neal Fogle (instructor of Transportation Technologies), Jacqueline Heilmann (assistant professor of Nursing), Lesa Swimmer (assistant professor of Biology), Elizabeth Zacharias (assistant professor of Nursing) and Zettel.

Help Owens Students Start the Year Strong

This year, Owens received a record-breaking number of scholarship applications, with more than 1,000 students seeking support to continue their education. That kind of demand shows just how many students need help affording college, and your gift to the general scholarship fund helps meet it.

Many Owens students are also parents. As the school year begins for their own kids alongside their college classes, that added expense

Support Owens Students with School Supply Drive

The Center for Campus and Community Connections is hosting a School Supply Drive through Aug. 17. All donations go to Owens students and families in need first. Extra items will go to local schools. Items needed include pens, pencils, notebooks, paper, earbuds, binders, pocket folders, sticky notes, index cards, dry erase markers, backpacks, calculators, planners, chargers and more.

can stretch a tight budget even further. The Student Emergency Fund helps bridge that gap, covering unexpected costs so a temporary financial setback does not derail a student's education.

Give today at owens.edu/foundation and help a student stay on track.

Contact

alanna_kyer@student.owens.edu with questions.



Calendar of Events

owens.edu/events

August 20

Women's Soccer at Alpena Community College

August 24

Fall Semester begins

August 27

Women's Soccer vs. UNOH, 1 p.m.

August 28-29

Sonny Lewis Volleyball Invitational

August 29

Men's Soccer at Cuyahoga Community College, 2 p.m.

August 31

Volleyball at Delta, 6 p.m.

September 2

Women's Soccer at UNOH, 1 p.m.

September 2

Volleyball vs. Lakeland Community College, 6 p.m.

September 3

Sculpture Walk Opening Celebration, 5 p.m. (Center for Fine and Performing Arts courtyard)

September 4-6

Volleyball at College of DuPage Invitational

September 5

Women's Soccer vs. Lakeland Community College, 11 a.m.

September 5

Men's Soccer vs. Lakeland Community College, 1 p.m.

September 7

Labor Day (College Closed)



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OWENS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
FOUNDATION

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