

OWENS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Foundation & Alumni

..... AWARD-WINNING E-NEWSLETTER



September 2026

From City Council to CBS Sports, Career Mentors Return to Owens This November

For the seventh year, Owens Community College's School of Liberal Arts is opening its virtual doors to the community with *Discover Your Possibilities*, a lineup of nine free career sessions throughout Career Development Month this November.

Presenters bring real-world experience to Owens students and alumni alike, including Toledo City Councilwoman and Owens Director of Admissions Erin Kramer, who will discuss the path from campaign to council, and WGTE Public Media's Marcus Harrison, a five-time Emmy-winning producer and Toledo native. Additional sessions cover careers in librarianship, animation, songwriting and video production, led by working professionals in those fields.

All sessions are free and open virtually to anyone curious about what's next. Registration and the full schedule are available at [this link](#).



Career and Transfer Services Invites Employers to Partner with Students

Owens Community College's Career and Transfer Services is inviting alumni, donors and community employers to partner directly with students preparing for the workforce. Employers can get involved by attending job and career fairs, serving as mock interviewers or posting positions on College Central Network, the department's free and unlimited online job board.

Once registered and approved, employers can post, edit or repost job listings and, in some cases, search student and alumni resumes directly. Each option gives students real-world exposure before graduation, from interview practice to direct connections with local employers. Businesses interested in partnering can reach Career and Transfer Services at careerservices@owens.edu.

Owens Enrollment Grows for 8th Consecutive Semester, Reaching Highest Mark Since 2020

Owens Community College enrolled **7,652** students for Fall 2026, its highest 14th-day headcount since before the COVID-19 pandemic and the eighth consecutive semester of enrollment growth, according to the college's Sept. 8 announcement.

The 3.1 percent increase over Fall 2025 was driven by both new and returning students. Owens welcomed 2,049 new students, up 5 percent from Fall 2025, while 3,120 continuing students returned, a 4.5 percent increase.

"It's clear that we are not only drawing new students, but students are choosing to stay and persist toward their academic goals," said Dr. Blake Renner, vice president of enrollment management and student affairs. Renner pointed to Owens' academic programs, transfer options and wraparound advising as key drivers.

Registered Nursing remained the college's top program with 518 students, supported by the \$27.8 million Healthcare Education Center. The new Bachelor of Science in Nursing program added a second cohort of 20 students this fall, building on its first class of nine, who are on track to graduate in 2027.



\$1.4 Million Federal Grant Expands TRIO Program's Reach at Owens

A new five-year, \$1.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education will allow the TRIO Educational Opportunity Center at Owens Community College to serve 1,000 individuals annually, up from 850 during the previous funding cycle.

The EOC helps first-generation and income-eligible residents across northwest Ohio take steps toward college and career training, from FAFSA completion and admissions guidance to workforce development coaching. Since 2021, the program has served nearly 2,500 individuals, and more than 400 participants enrolled or re-enrolled in college during the 2024-25 academic year alone.

"These funds are vital to TRIO EOC's ability to serve northwest Ohio communities and families," said Brandon Gaddy, director of TRIO programs at Owens. The expanded funding will also connect more participants with training for in-demand careers offering quicker paths to employment.

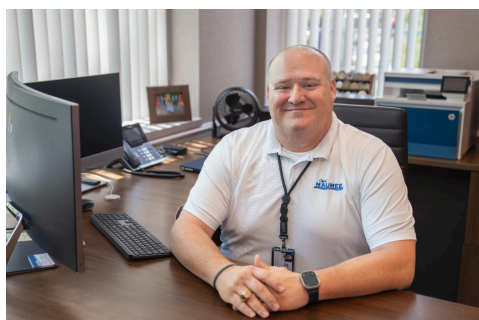
Owens Boasts Nation's Only Accredited Associate Degree MRI Program

The Owens Community College MRI program has earned an eight-year re-accreditation, the maximum term granted by the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT). Owens remains the only Associate Degree MRI program in the country to hold this accreditation.



"It signals that the program is not simply meeting minimum expectations, but that it has demonstrated the quality systems, resources and outcomes necessary to sustain excellence over time," said Dr. Denise Smith, Owens vice president of Academic Affairs and provost.

The renewal followed a self-study and a three-day site visit, during which reviewers praised the program's simulation lab in the Healthcare Education Center for preparing students with hands-on, realistic clinical training before they enter patient care settings.



Alum's Path in Public Service Takes Him From Owens Classrooms to City Hall

Owens Community College alumnus Josh Hartbarger was named city administrator and director of public safety for the City of Maumee in June, capping a public service career that started with his 2005 Associate

of Arts General Concentration degree at Owens.

Hartbarger, who grew up in Whitehouse, said Owens instructors and mentors like former political science professor Jarvis Gamble and Dermot Forde, who helped re-establish student government during his time on campus, shaped the direction of his life. Hartbarger served as the Owens student government president before going on to earn a bachelor's degree from Bowling Green State University and a master's degree from Ohio University.

After graduation, Hartbarger spent six months in Antarctica leading building inspections for Raytheon Polar Services before returning to northwest Ohio, where he built a 25-year career with the Village of Whitehouse, rising from inspector to fire chief to deputy administrator.

"Without that foundation at Owens ... I never would have went on for anything else," Hartbarger said. "I owe Owens a lot."

Now leading Maumee's government operations, Hartbarger credits the same lessons in listening and collaborative problem-solving he first learned in an Owens classroom.

Owens Launches Virtual Mentorship Program

Owens Community College has launched a new virtual mentorship and networking platform through Upnotch, and the School of Liberal Arts is the program's first participant.

The college is looking for Liberal Arts alumni willing to serve as mentors, sharing career guidance, industry connections and real-world experience with current students. The commitment is flexible: mentors create a profile, set their own availability and choose which meetings to accept, with the option to pause their profile at any time. Meetings can be as brief as a single conversation or develop into an ongoing relationship, depending on what works for both mentor and student.

Mentors also gain access to Upnotch's broader network, connecting with alumni, professionals, employers and fellow mentors across the platform. The initiative aims to build lasting connections between Owens students and the region's workforce, supporting both student success and long-term regional growth.

Liberal Arts alumni interested in joining can **register at this link** using code **TFYCGE**. Questions about the mentorship program can be directed to Kelle Pack at kelle_pack@owens.edu or Ann Sergent at ann_sergent@owens.edu.



Owens Foundation Providing Scholarship as Jill of All Trades Returns for 4th Year

Owens Community College will welcome more than 100 local high school students on October 15 for the fourth annual Jill of All Trades, a day introducing young people to careers in STEM, skilled trades, apprenticeships and technical fields.

Thanks to the Owens Foundation, one participating student will receive a \$1,000 scholarship toward a future Owens education. Beyond the scholarship, the event connects students with hands-on experiences that build confidence and strengthen the region's skilled trades workforce.

Sponsorship opportunities remain open for the 2026 event. Those interested in becoming a sponsor can view the sponsorship packet at owens.edu/academics/stem/jill-trades.



"Birds and Sky" Takes Flight at Owens This Fall

The Walter E. Terhune Art Gallery at Owens Community College is hosting "Birds and Sky," a new exhibit featuring work from eight regional artists memorializing the annual warbler migration through northwest Ohio and The Biggest Week in American Birding.

The exhibit draws on one of the region's signature natural events, when birdwatchers from around the world travel to northwest Ohio each spring to witness the migration along Lake Erie's shoreline. Each artist brings a distinct interpretation of that seasonal spectacle to the gallery walls.

"Birds and Sky" is open through October 16 at the Terhune Art Gallery.

Nominations Open for 2027 Express Hall of Fame

Nominations are open October 1 for the Owens Express Hall of Fame, Class of 2027. The Hall of Fame recognizes outstanding athletic alumni, coaches or supporters who have successfully participated in or represented Owens Community College athletics.

Since 2016, nine athletes, six coaches or administrators and five teams have been selected for the Hall of Fame. Last year's inductees were former volleyball coach Sonny Lewis, three-sport standout athlete Heather Sobbry and the 2019 NJCAA national championship volleyball team.

Nominees must meet one of these requirements: received postseason athletic honors at Owens, successfully coached at Owens or received honors at an institution beyond Owens, or serve as a contributor or supporter of Express athletics. They also must be a reputable citizen in the community and more than five years removed from competition or time at Owens.

Athletic teams, alumni, family members or associates may nominate individuals or teams for the Hall of Fame. The nominations will go before a five-person selection committee, chaired by the athletic director.

Visit owensexpress.com/HOF to find the nomination link. Nominations close October 30.

Warren & Flick Bring Genre-Blending Sound to Owens' Free Concert Series

The Accent on the Arts free concert series welcomes Warren & Flick to the Center for Fine and Performing Arts Main Stage Theater at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 14.



Jacob Warren on double and tenor bass and Grant Flick on violin, tenor guitar and nyckelharpa craft a sound that blends original composition and improvisation with classical, jazz and folk traditions. The concert is free and open to the public.

The complete Accent on the Arts schedule is available at owens.edu/arts.

Support Owens Fundraisers!

Wednesday, September 30 | 4-10 p.m.

Raising Cane's
10576 Fremont Pike
Perrysburg, OH 43551

Mention the fundraiser at the restaurant
or apply code **RCFUND96**
to online or app orders at checkout
and Cane's will **donate 15%** of Net Sales
to Owens Community College Foundation.



Wednesday, October 21 | 4-8 p.m.

Fundraiser Night at Panera Bread
10981 Fremont Pike
Perrysburg, OH 43551

Show the flyer and we will receive
25% of the net sales.

Check out all of our upcoming events!
owens.edu/events



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