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SOUTHERN STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESS RELEASE



Pictured above is Nicole Sheppard

Southern State Congratulates Newest Graduate of Ohio Leadership Academy for Student Success

Assistant Professor of Education Nicole Sheppard recently completed a year-long fellowship with the Ohio Leadership Academy for Student Success. Aimed at enhancing student success within community colleges, the academy gathers mid-level faculty and staff for a year of training, exchanging ideas, and immersion in how to promote student success.

Professor Sheppard was nominated for this opportunity based on her outstanding commitment to her students and to Southern State. She joined the college several years ago as a faculty member and quickly got involved in various committees and projects around campus. Most recently, she has also been serving as the Division Coordinator for Art, Humanities, and Education and willingly stepped in to serve as a Steering Committee member for a major enrollment management project currently underway.

“It’s an honor to congratulate Professor Sheppard in completing this fellowship,” said Southern State President Dr. Nicole Roades. “Student success is a critical component of our work and through Nicole’s investment of time and energy in Academy participation, she will help our college accelerate our student success efforts. I appreciate Nicole’s willingness to always lean into learning and leadership opportunities. She is a major contributor of making Southern State a great place to learn, grow, and realize success,” concluded President Roades.

The Ohio Association of Community Colleges created the academy in 2019 to reverse management turnover by strengthening internal advancement pipelines within the state’s 22

community colleges. The academy is an extension of work done by the OACC's Success Center for Community Colleges. Mentoring and supporting talented higher education administrators is vital at a time when their institutions shoulder an ever-increasing responsibility for graduating workforce-ready employees in fields such as teaching, business, information technology, and healthcare and nursing, said Laura Rittner, Vice President of Operations and Student Success at the OACC.

By bringing together educators with different higher ed roles, the Leadership Academy permits a deeper understanding of how parts of each school mesh to create student success models, Rittner said. "It's crucial that students excel in their academic journey, and the new fellows have learned how to implement transformational changes in their colleges to make that happen," she added.

The Ohio Association of Community Colleges (OACC) represents the presidents and trustees of Ohio's 22 public two-year institutions, advancing community colleges through policy, advocacy, professional development, and strategic leadership. Serving nearly 250,000 Ohioans annually, community colleges connect students to in-demand careers and are the top workforce partner for Ohio employers with more than 1,000 employer partnerships.

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