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## SOUTHERN STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESS RELEASE



### Southern State Celebrates Community College Month

This April, Southern State joins colleges nationwide in celebrating Community College Month, highlighting the essential role community and technical colleges play in powering America's workforce and expanding economic opportunity.

This year's theme, "**The Smartest First Step. The Strongest Next Step,**" captures the full reality of what community colleges offer:

- A **first step** for many individuals who begin their higher education journey affordably and transfer successfully
- A **next step** for workers upgrading their skills in a changing economy
- The **complete step** for folks earning a terminal credential that launches an essential, well-paid career in fields like nursing, IT support, industrial maintenance, business, and more

Southern State has a rich 50-year history of expanding opportunities across the region. The College celebrated this milestone throughout 2025 and is poised to shift their focus to new strategic priorities in 2026, which will serve as a pivotal year for innovation, expanded partnerships, and modernizing operations.

As part of the College's new strategic plan, Southern State will focus on a set of strategic priorities that are designed to meet the region's needs, strengthen student outcomes, and support long-term sustainability. These priorities include building a future-ready portfolio of programs, shaping a sustainable dual enrollment strategy, attracting and engaging more students, enhancing student success and outcomes, modernizing operations and data systems, and strengthening people, systems, and culture.

Each year, the college serves over 2,000 students across the region and supports more than 300 graduates who are taking that next step of entering the workforce or continuing their education. Southern State's mission centers on providing accessible, affordable, high-quality education, and its vision commits the college to being an indispensable partner in advancing student success and strengthening regional economic growth.

"Community College Month is an opportunity to recognize the transformative impact of accessible education," said Southern State President Dr. Nicole Rodes. "We are proud to empower our students with the skills, knowledge, and support they need to succeed—whether they are entering the workforce or continuing their education at a four-year institution."

Southern State offers a wide range of workforce-aligned programs designed to meet local and regional industry needs. Students can pursue careers in fields such as healthcare, business, technology, and skilled trades, often completing credentials in two years or less. Many programs include hands-on learning experiences, internships, and partnerships with local employers.

In addition to career-focused pathways, Southern State provides strong transfer opportunities through articulation agreements with many four-year colleges and universities. These partnerships ensure that students can begin their education at Southern State and transition smoothly to complete a bachelor's degree, saving both time and money.

Affordability remains a cornerstone of the College's mission. Students at Southern State pay significantly less in tuition than at four-year universities. For example, in-state tuition at Southern State is approximately \$6,000 per year, compared to national averages of roughly \$13,000 annually at public four-year institutions. By completing an associate degree at Southern State and then transferring those credits, students can earn a bachelor's degree for up to half the cost of attending a four-year institution all four years.

In addition to the competitive tuition rate, 78 percent of Southern State students qualify for grants and scholarships, which are considered "gift aid" and do not require repayment.

“Community colleges are the smartest first step and the strongest next step for many learners,” said President Rodes. “Whether a student is preparing to transfer, seeking a career-ready credential, or building new skills through short-term training, Southern State provides the pathway.”

For more information about Southern State’s programs, or enrollment, please visit [www.sccc.edu](http://www.sccc.edu). Summer and Fall Semester registration is currently underway—Connect with us today.

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*Southern State does not discriminate, in its programs or activities, against applicants, employees, or students on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, national origin (ancestry), military status (past, present or future), disability, age (40 years or older), status as a parent during pregnancy and immediately after the birth of a child, status as a parent of a young child, status as a nursing mother, status as a foster parent, genetic information, or sexual orientation. Questions about this should be directed to the Lead Title IX Coordinator, 100 Hobart Drive, Hillsboro, OH 45133; (937) 393-3431.*