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## SOUTHERN STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESS RELEASE



**Photo caption:** Graduates look on during the 2026 Commencement Ceremony held May 8 in the Patriot Center at Southern State Community College.

### **Southern State Celebrates 2026 Commencement Ceremony**

Southern State Community College recognized the graduating class of 2026 during its annual commencement ceremony held Friday, May 8, in the College's Patriot Center.

The evening's festivities began with an invocation provided by Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Vice President of Service and graduate Logan Savage of Highland County, followed by the singing of the national anthem by Dr. Jessica Wise, Laura Brookes, and Michele Rout.

Southern State's Faculty Senate President James Barnett and College President Dr. Nicole Rodes welcomed the graduates, their families, friends, and supporters.

"The graduates we are celebrating this evening have persisted in their commitment to earning a college degree or certificate," said SSCC President Dr. Nicole Rodes. "On behalf of the Southern State team, we are extremely proud of their hard work and accomplishments," she added.

Of the 258 graduates in the 2026 class, 227 earned associate degrees and 35 were awarded certificates. They range in age from 16 to 60 and come to Southern State from 18 counties. While some of the graduates may be the first in their family to earn a degree, many others are following a long family tradition.

Among the Class of 2026, over half of the graduates began their college careers at Southern State while in high school and continued with the College to earn their degrees. Also, 60 students who received their associate's degree have not yet graduated from high school. This is possible through Ohio's College Credit Plus program.

Dr. Erika Goodwin, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, provided the recommendation for degrees followed by the presentation of candidates and awarding of degrees.

Concluding the ceremony was the benediction provided by graduate Grace Allen of Highland County.

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