

**Contact: Elizabeth Burkard**  
Director of Marketing  
937-393-3431, ext. 2624  
800-628-7722, ext. 2624  
eburkard@sscc.edu

## SOUTHERN STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESS RELEASE



Photo caption: Pictured above is Jacob Bice (left) and Jeff Wallace (right).

### **Southern State Community College Announces Latest Graduates of Ohio Leadership Academy for Student Success**

Two leaders at Southern State Community College have graduated as fellows of the sixth cohort of the Ohio Leadership Academy for Student Success.

Graduating as fellows from Southern State Community College are Jacob Bice, Coordinator of the Testing Center, and Jeff Wallace, Professor of English.

Created by the Ohio Association of Community Colleges (OACC), the Leadership Academy brings together mid-level professionals for an intensive year-long experience focused on advancing student success, strengthening leadership capacity, and preparing leaders for institutional change management roles.

Since its launch in 2019, the program has become a nationally recognized model for developing internal talent within community colleges. The program was created to strengthen leadership pipelines across Ohio's 22 community colleges and has since inspired replication in states including Arizona, Michigan, New York, Texas, and Washington.

The academy is an extension of work by the OACC's Success Center for Community Colleges, which supports institutions with implementing evidence-based strategies that improve student outcomes and connect learners to meaningful careers.

“It’s an honor to congratulate the newest graduates of the Ohio Leadership Academy for Student Success,” said Dr. Nicole Roades, President at Southern State. “Creating a seamless education experience that places student success at its core is our top priority, and these two Southern State leaders will help us continue to achieve that goal.”

“Community colleges play a critical role in preparing Ohioans for high-demand careers and strengthening our state's workforce,” said Laura Rittner, Vice President of Operations and Student Success at the OACC. “The Ohio Leadership Academy invests in the talented professionals who make that work possible. By developing leaders across departments and disciplines, we create stronger institutions and better outcomes for students.”

Rittner added that the academy helps participants develop a broader understanding of how different areas of a college work together to support student achievement.

“Student success requires leadership at every level,” she said. “These fellows have gained the knowledge, skills, and network needed to drive meaningful change on their campuses and help students reach their educational and career goals.”

The academy's focus on student success and leadership development comes at a pivotal time for Ohio, as employers across industries, including manufacturing, information technology, and healthcare, continue to seek skilled talent.

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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