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SOUTHERN STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESS RELEASE



Photo Caption: Pictured above are Southern State's 2025-26 SOCHE excellence award recipients. From left to right: Rainee Angles, Dr. Jeff Montgomery, and Elizabeth Burkard.

Southern State Community College honors three employees who will receive SOCHE Excellence Awards

The Strategic Ohio Council for Higher Education (SOCHE) has recognized three Southern State Community College individuals who have demonstrated excellence in teaching, service, and leadership. Those honored with the 2025-26 SOCHE Excellence Awards include Rainee Angles, Dr. Jeff Montgomery, and Elizabeth Burkard.

Professor of Theater and Speech at Southern State, Rainee Angles is Southern State's Faculty Excellence Award winner. Angles concludes a 20-year career marked by exceptional teaching, artistic leadership, and lasting impact. As Director of Theatre, designer, and actor, she built a vibrant program emphasizing hands-on learning, collaboration, and community engagement. Her mentorship empowered countless students to develop confidence and creativity. A steadfast advocate for the arts, she leaves an enduring legacy that has enriched both the College and its broader community.

Dr. Jeff Montgomery, College Credit Plus Coordinator for Southern State, is receiving the Staff Excellence Award. Montgomery has excelled in this new role after retiring as Dean of Academic Affairs in summer of 2025. He has strengthened CCP partnerships and his organization and

communication have enhanced instructor effectiveness and the student experience. He also played a significant role on the HLC Assurance Argument writing team for the College's ten-year Comprehensive Evaluation. His work reflects a strong commitment to academic excellence and continuous improvement.

Southern State Director of Marketing Elizabeth Burkard has been selected to receive this year's Campus Impact Award. Burkard led the institution's 50th anniversary with vision and creativity, coordinating a year-long celebration throughout 2025 that elevated community engagement and institutional pride. Through strategic storytelling, branding, and event planning, she highlighted the College's history and impact while strengthening its public presence. Her leadership fostered collaboration across departments and deepened connections with alumni and partners, leaving a lasting impression on the College's identity and future.

"Southern State is fortunate to have many wonderful faculty and staff," says Southern State's Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, Dr. Erika Goodwin. "The three award winners this year exemplify Southern State's core values and have made a significant impact on our students and their colleagues. We are honored to recognize three truly outstanding members of our team," Goodwin adds.

SOCHE is the regional leader for higher education collaboration, engaging with colleges, universities, and industry to transform the economy through the education and employment of nearly 200,000 students in southwest Ohio. See more at <http://www.soche.org>.

For more information about Southern State Community College, its faculty, and educational offerings, visit <http://www.sccc.edu>.

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