

DATE: March 28, 2025

CONTACT: Jim Bellamy 419.267.1267 jbellamy@NorthwestState.edu

**NORTHWEST STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE IS THE #BESTDECISIONEVER
STUDENTS, LOCAL LEADERS MAKE A CASE FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE
AND LESS DEBT THIS #CCMONTH**

ARCHBOLD, OHIO – Northwest State Community College is the "best decision ever," according to many who have attended it and acquired a high-quality higher education with little or no student debt. The college is encouraging current and former students, supporters, business partners and our community to join the 2025 Community College Month—or #CCMonth—campaign to bring attention to the value and importance of the college to our community.

#CCMonth is a grassroots education and outreach campaign coordinated by the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) across the United States every April. The primary goals of #CCmonth are to improve awareness of the economic, academic, and employment advantages of attending community colleges. The campaign also challenges the public and the media to reconsider common misconceptions of public two-year colleges.

"Economic inequality is a defining quality of our time," Dr. Todd Hernandez, President of Northwest State said, "but it doesn't have to be. "Across the United States, students who choose to attend a community college for the first two years of their higher-education careers will save an average of \$35,000 to \$50,000 on the cost of a bachelor's degree. Our college also has unique partnerships with local businesses designed to equip students to fulfill in-demand jobs that pay gainful wages. #CCMonth is an opportunity to celebrate the importance and value of our college to our community and to demonstrate how we are cultivating skills for the future."

Public community colleges are a uniquely American educational model that was designed to guarantee access to affordable, high-quality higher education for all people. They are the primary educators of life-saving nursing and other healthcare professionals among many others. They also serve as an onramp to bachelor's, master's and higher-level degrees for many students, and particularly for the most demographically and socioeconomically diverse students. They guarantee fair admissions for all students. Many community colleges also provide supports for students who need them, including those who are food and housing insecure, who need childcare while attending classes, and more. And without community colleges, many American students would not be able to access higher education at all due solely to financial limitations and other inevitable barriers.

In short, community colleges were created to serve the needs of their communities and to make good on the promise of American meritocracy, eliminating barriers faced only by disadvantaged individuals—and they do it exceptionally well.

Despite some ongoing stigma about community colleges, research from New America's annual Varying Degrees study and other sources has shown that the majority of American people hold community colleges in the highest regard among all higher education institutions with respect to being worth the cost of attendance, whether tax dollars should support them, and whether they spend their resources wisely and run efficiently.

More Americans also believe community colleges are more underfunded than other institutions, and "a majority believe that students need career-related support (88%), financial aid (87%), and academic support (85%). They also strongly believe that colleges and universities must provide more, and favor the provision of housing (82%) and food (76%) support and on-campus child care (70%)," according to the survey report. Community colleges throughout the United States provide these services so that the most disadvantaged students will have a chance at succeeding in their higher education careers.

“Everywhere I go, I am told by current and former students that choosing to go to a community college is one of the best decisions they ever made,” said ACCT President and CEO Jee Hang Lee. “The reality is that many students don't realize this until after they attend and realize what opportunities their community college gave them, and how much their instructors at the college cared about them. Our goal is to get the message through to students before they make one of the most consequential financial decisions of their lives: choosing a college or university.”

Each year's #CCMonth campaign has made millions of impressions across social media platforms, including X, Bluesky, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and TikTok, and prominent supporters have included federal agencies, former U.S. First Ladies, current and former governors, and many others. This year, organizers are encouraging students and other to take the message to their favorite online social platforms to spread the word about the importance of community colleges in cultivating skills for the future, and the unique affordability that community colleges offer to financially challenged generations.

###

Northwest State Community College is an accredited two-year, state-assisted institution of higher education that has served northwest Ohio since 1969. Northwest State is committed to providing a quality, affordable education with personal attention and small class sizes. The College offers associate degrees with numerous transfer options, short-term certificate programs, and workforce training programs designed to meet the needs of local businesses and industries. For more information, visit NorthwestState.edu or call 419.267.5511.

