

I cannot think of a more deserving young man to recommend for the John Lewis Youth Leadership Award than **Leonte Cooper**.

Leonte is the type of student every college and university attempts to recruit and is proud to have in attendance. Although admitted to Columbia University, Leonte choose to pursue his education here in the Buckeye State, attending Stark State College (Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, degree with honors and high distinction) and The Ohio State University (currently finishing a bachelor's degree in Regional and City Planning).

A self-proclaimed "motivated young professional who adores reason and liberty," he brings that description to life each and every day.

Incredibly civic-minded, Leonte served our country in the US Armed Forces as a Systems Support Specialist. In continuing his education, he willingly serves as a voice for his fellow students, first as an officer for the Stark State College Student Government and then as Deputy Director of Government Relations for the Undergraduate Student Government at The Ohio State University. Also at Ohio State he serves on the Student Council of the College of Arts & Sciences. He was elected to the General Assembly of The Ohio State University, Undergraduate Student Government but decided to withdraw his nomination for the 2020-2021 school year to focus on community work inside the struggling neighborhood where he lives in East Columbus.

Leonte is a tireless advocate for social justice and routinely supports movements and joins protests to bring about meaningful change. In the summer of 2019 he served as the first chairman of the [Youth Advisory Board for Continuum of Care](#) in Summit County, addressing homelessness in his hometown and beyond. Under his leadership, the Board received a City of Akron grant to launch a community event in service to residents.

Leonte's community service also includes engagement as president of the Spring Hill Tenant Council; as a member of Strengthening Stark's Student Engagement Taskforce; and as a volunteer with the League of Women Voters, Haven of Rest Ministry soup kitchen, and Feed My Starving Children organization.

He has demonstrated his commitment to representing students to our local, state and national governments. His advocacy, for instance, has taken him to the Ohio State House, where as part of the Governmental Relations Committee for The Ohio State University student government, he advocated for House Bill 9 which would allow students to successfully transfer credits earned in Ohio to any other public university in the state.

Leonte is a leader in every sense of the word. He possesses charisma, integrity, kindness and loyalty, and is respected by both peers and administrators. While balancing a heavy course load and maintaining a perfect GPA, Leonte is also extremely active both on and off campus. As he encounters obstacles, he rises to challenges that would likely deter others. For example, when he first began his studies at Stark State College, due to lack of transportation he literally walked an hour and a half to Stark State College Akron, and an hour and half home.

In all that he does, he seeks to make a difference. For Stark State, the difference he made still continues beyond his graduation. As a student organization leader for the Cru Club (formerly known as Campus Crusade for Christ) at Stark State Akron, he partnered with the Sociology Association to create and raise funds for Stark State College's Lamplighter Emergency Fund to

help students with financial emergencies. The fund, the first of its kind, was developed solely through the desire and initiation of Leonte's group to help their fellow students.

His lasting impact is evident in other ways, too. During his keynote to the incoming class of 2021, Leonte encouraged students to use a planner, outlining his own detailed planner use and subsequent success. In the weeks that followed, students picked up more planners than any prior semester in Stark State history.

Leonte remains a role model in the minds of Stark State students and administrators alike. As an honor student with a 4.0 GPA and multi-semester President's List recipient, Leonte received the 2018-2019 All Ohio Academic Team nomination. He also was selected as the student keynote speaker for many College events, including the President's and Dean's Reception, Career Services Employers Advisory Board, Annual SSC Donor Luncheon, SSC Senior Nights for high school students and also as a co-keynote speaker for the incoming SSC class of 2021 Jump Start program. He also is likely Stark State's most recognized student, as the College featured him prolifically on area billboards, TV commercials and other marketing materials. With his track record of exceptional leadership, character, and academic achievement, we are proud to have Leonte as a Stark State alumnus.

Even beyond Stark State, his charisma draws in anyone he meets. When Leonte first met Ohio Senator Vernon Sykes, for instance, during an All-Ohio award luncheon, he was soon the sole student to be invited to the Senator's office to continue their conversation. Leonte also was the only student chosen to stand with the presidents of Stark State College and The Ohio State University as they signed an articulation agreement, serving as an example of an exemplary student who benefited from the pact.

Leonte's compelling persona also resulted in 2019 SSC Common Read author David Giffels asking Leonte to share his story in Dr. Giffels new book, *Barnstorming Ohio: To Understand America*.

His magnetic leadership extends also to his peers. In the same semester Leonte joined Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, he was nominated and elected by his fellow members to serve as a Phi Theta Kappa officer. That same year he received the Order of Athena Distinguished Chapter Officer Award and his five-star membership. He also was instrumental in the Chapter's college project, focusing on food insecurities and supporting fellow students with a food drive for the SSC free pantry.

We have no doubt that the exceptional Leonte Cooper is exactly the type of young man the extraordinary Congressman John Lewis would be proud to have inspired.



Cooper for Senate

Social and Behavioral Sciences of the Arts and Sciences College



Major: Political Science/Pre-Law

The Problem

The College of Arts in Sciences at The Ohio State University is facing unprecedented challenges. Enrollment/credit declines lost the college about \$10.5 million dollars in recent years. This is at a time when University enrollment numbers are at high records. Basically, other colleges (Business, Engineering) are gaining and the Arts and Sciences is losing. As a consequence, the college is hiring less permanent faculty, cutting the amount of tenure positions available, and some are even begrudging students who transfer in credits or take college/advanced courses in high school. They are suggesting policies that make it more difficult to get an Arts and Sciences degree

compared to other colleges, to make up for revenue. This will lead to short gains for the college and increasing long term downward revenue trends on top of crushing student debt making the college less attractive to students. This is why I must take office: to fight the misguided attempts of faculty, that will lead to the college's permanent stagnation.

Making Sure We're Heard

As a voting member of the College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Senate, I've gained insight into how curriculum is developed, the approval process for initiatives, and navigating the massive bureaucracy of our University. I stood up to faculty who tried to make it harder for students to transfer credits to the college, who've tried to add to the required amount of courses for graduating for the sake of profits, and who have suggested ideas that would make their quotas and resumes look good, but students' job prospects look bad, and with your vote I will continue to stand up.

Vision

I believe in a Liberal Arts education that we as students can feel proud to put on our resume. I envision an Arts and Sciences College that is guided by our professional needs as students and not the profits of departments that no longer produce what students want. A Liberal Arts education is supposed to prepare us to be engaged in our communities and to live an impactful life. My vision for the College of Arts and Sciences is a revolutionary transformation in liberal arts curriculum and approaches to teaching. I see a practical Arts and Sciences College, competitive, fairly funded, that delivers the tools for a well-paying job and the education of a fulfilling career for all its graduates.

Senator Spotlight

“The College of Arts and Sciences lost \$10.5 million dollars due to enrollment in 2018 and yet still REFUSES to innovate! No student should have to leave their passion to find a good job. I'm fighting against policies that keep the liberal arts stagnant and to enact policies that lead to a liberal arts education we can be proud to put on a resume!”



#BLACKLIVESMATTER





OPEN HOUSE
check us out

lowest tuition
in the area

Stark State
COLLEGE



Stark State
COLLEGE

Easy transfer



