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Immigration and Economics: Cedarville Student's Unique Research Leads to Prestigious Conference

CEDARVILLE, OHIO – Michael McDonald, a junior economics major, has developed a research project using economics to address current immigration issues. He presented his research at the Association of Private Enterprise Education (APEE) meetings in Lahaina, Hawaii, April 9-12.

McDonald's project takes an economic theory called the Coase theorem and applies it to the problems of illegal immigration, specifically addressing current tensions between the United States and Mexico.

The Coase theorem argues that when conflict occurs, it does not matter who has a right in the first place. If rights are assigned to one party or the other, and there are no costs of reaching an agreement, the two parties will eventually come to an agreement.

For McDonald, this project was a perfect way to combine his current studies in economics with his goal of pursuing a career in law.

"I like seeing how economics can be applied to so many other areas," McDonald said. "It's cool to see ways that these principles of how to make things more efficient and productive, which I'm learning about in my economics classes, can also be applied to business, law and government policy."

This project is the culmination of a three-credit independent study by McDonald, under the supervision of Dr. Marc Clauson, professor of history and law. This arrangement was beneficial because it gave McDonald undergraduate research experience and the opportunity to learn from professionals at the conference, Clauson explained.

"This conference is a really good opportunity to interact with some of the latest ideas in economics and learn from them," said Clauson.

McDonald presented at a student poster session at the conference, as part of the seventh annual APEE undergraduate research competition. He was the first Cedarville student to participate in this competition.

Dr. Jeffrey Haymond, dean of the school of business administration, and Dr. Bert Wheeler, Berry chair of economics, also attended APEE and presented papers in formal panels.

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 3,760 undergraduate, graduate, and online students in more than 100 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and leading student satisfaction ratings. For more information about the University, visit www.cedarville.edu.