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Tina Jones, M.B.A. '15 wanted an M.B.A. with a distinctly Christian foundation.

M.B.A. OFFERS WEALTH OF BIBLICAL WISDOM

by Clem Boyd

While more than 100,000 Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) degrees are conferred each year, Cedarville is one of the few universities where a biblical, God-honoring perspective is woven throughout each course. And that leads to real riches — a wealth of wisdom for developing a business career that goes beyond bottom-line impact to eternal significance.

“With a Cedarville M.B.A., you’re getting, for the same dollar as other M.B.A.s, the additional joy of having a biblical approach to life and your value system reinforced,” noted Dan Sterkenburg, Associate Professor of Business and Management and Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs.

“We are providing a much richer foundation and environment for learning.”

WISE BEHIND THE WHYS

The undergraduate program, while touching on theory, places a higher emphasis on the mechanics of business: how to compute net present value, how to compute a bond value, how to do market research. The M.B.A. program teaches mechanics as well, but devotes more time to understanding and applying the underlying theories and concepts of business.

“Since we are dealing with human behavior, we need to recognize God and man in their positions: God infallible, man fallible,” Sterkenburg explained. “For instance, why do we need accounting controls? Because we’re fallible, we make mistakes, we get tired or distracted, and oh, by the way, we actually purposefully try to sneak and cheat and deceive.”

It was exactly that foundation that brought Devin Robinson '03, M.B.A. '15 back to Cedarville for his M.B.A.

“I didn’t have much experience in business,” said Robinson, who served four years with the U.S. Air Force, then enlisted with the Maine Air National Guard. “I was thinking about moving into the corporate world, so I wanted to make sure I developed my business perspective through the lens of Christian business people.”

Tina Jones, M.B.A. '15, a Financial Aid Specialist with Clark State Community College in Springfield, Ohio, wanted to position herself for future job growth, but she also wanted to learn in a Christ-centered environment. She had a bachelor's degree in actuarial science from The Ohio State University but knew an M.B.A. would be a good move.

"I wanted that Christ-centered foundation," Jones explained. "That's what Cedarville is. They prepare you for the business world, but at the same time, they teach you principles of leadership and problem-solving that line up with the Bible and with Christ. That was one of the greatest takeaways for me."

PREPARATION FOR NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Because of his M.B.A., Robinson was positioned to make a move into his dream job.

"Out of the blue one day, a friend calls me and asks, 'If I was going to retire or leave, would you want my job?'" he recalled. "I responded, 'Oh my goodness, don't tell me this if you're not serious.' I had always been secretly jealous of him having that job. It was a real blessing from God."

So, with eight months still left in his M.B.A., Robinson moved from manager of a small ad agency with six employees to the Chief Marketing Officer for the Maine Veterans' Homes, a network of nursing and rehabilitation facilities with close to 2,000 employees serving nearly 700 veterans daily.

"It was a big step. I would not have been ready if not for the Cedarville M.B.A. program.

"Prior to this program I had never read anything on *Harvard Business Review* or in *Forbes*," he said. "Our CEO circulates a flyer that has snippets of business articles, and we're supposed to comment on them during a round table discussion. Because of the research and writing I did for the program, I can immediately latch onto concepts and then expound and debate about them, and I know where to find more information."

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SUPPORT BEYOND EXPECTATIONS

Sterkenburg himself wishes he could have taken the Cedarville M.B.A. when he was seeking a graduate program in the 1990s. "I really missed the biblical integration," he said. "I relied on fellow Christian students and Bible studies at work to provide that missing piece.

"We give students that Christian and biblical worldview, and the interaction with other students, which, even though it's online, can be based in faith," Sterkenburg added. "If they're struggling with something in the workplace, and it applies to something they just learned in class, they can share with colleagues quite freely."

Robinson appreciated that greatly. "There were a couple of guys who were older and had a lot of experience," he said. "In the online discussions, I found their insights really valuable. There was a multigenerational aspect to the conversations, paired with a strong thread of Christian worldview throughout the program, which was really valuable."

Jones found the support she received extremely beneficial. "When I was having trouble, I would call Mr. [Curtis] Cline [90, Director of Online Student Success] and he'd give me advice, counsel me, offer Scriptures to think about, and pray for me," she said. "That was enough to encourage me to continue on. And it wasn't just one time, but several times. I've never received that type of support from another university."

Sterkenburg is proud of the Cedarville M.B.A.'s quality and academic rigor as it compares to other online programs. But what distinguishes the degree even more is the camaraderie among the students who are seeking to honor Christ in the business world. "This kind of environment is a real encouragement," he said. "We're fellow sojourners here on earth and getting our M.B.A.s."

Clem Boyd is Managing Editor of Cedarville Magazine.

Program Highlights

M.B.A.

- **Biblical worldview** and practical application in each course
- Seven-week terms provide **flexibility** for working professionals
- **Interactive** course websites optimized for multiple devices including computers, tablets, and smartphones
- **Affordable** tuition and available financial aid
- Dedicated program adviser ensures **support** while you pursue your degree and maintain other commitments
- Cohort-based approach builds **community and network** for Christian business professionals

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