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# A Vision for Future Faithfulness

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# A VISION FOR



We believe God has extended generous grace to us and that our commitment to follow Him has resulted in transformational growth in our enrollment, our finances, and, most importantly, our spiritual atmosphere on campus.

In an environment of significant spiritual and cultural headwinds, declining population of college-age students, and higher standards of accountability for the value of higher education, Cedarville University has witnessed substantial enrollment growth and strengthening of its financial position. We see this as evidence of God's generous grace and provision through His people.

## ENROLLMENT GROWTH

At most universities, the multiyear decline in enrollment continues. International student applications dropped by 6.6% this past year and that combined with a flat-to-declining pool of high school graduates, led to an overall decline of 1.7% in total student population.<sup>1</sup> This past year only half of all four-year schools met their admissions

goals.<sup>2</sup> Fortunately, at Cedarville, God has blessed us with enrollment growth.

Our total enrollment has grown from 3,472 to 4,193 during the past five years. This growth included 518 undergraduate students, each one representing an opportunity to impact a life for the Gospel during their 1,000 days of residential study. Our graduate enrollment has

# FUTURE FAITHFULNESS

BY THOMAS WHITE



grown from 231 to 434 during that same time, with programs that are intentional about equipping Christian professionals for career success and Gospel impact. Our deposits for fall 2019 have already broken our previous records.

This growth has created the need for expansion as students desire biblically faithful academic excellence. Now, we must ensure that the excellence of our faculty and programs is matched by the quality and appearance of our facilities and classrooms.

## FINANCIAL STRENGTH AT ALL-TIME HIGH

Twenty-five percent of private institutions reported running an operational deficit in 2017–18.<sup>3</sup> One in five small private colleges experience fundamental stress with Moody's

Investors Services renewing its negative outlook on higher education, stating that school closures would grow from 11 to 15 per year.<sup>4</sup> Yet at Cedarville, we have experienced a time of unprecedented financial stability.

- \$7.4 million of internal debt retired since 2013.
- \$13.7 million of external debt retired since 2013. We have early prepayment penalties on the remaining \$5.3 million, but are on course to be debt-free by 2023.

Since 2013, by God's grace we have also made, or are preparing to make, more than \$40 million in infrastructure improvements:

- Built two 48-bed townhouses (\$2.4M each)
- Built two 64-bed residence halls (\$3.3M each)



- Renovated and expanded science and engineering space (\$5M)
- Expanded our Physical Plant Operations Center (\$1M)
- Renovated and expanded the chapel (\$3M)
- Preparing to build a 282-bed residence hall (\$14M)
- Preparing to build an additional dining facility, including a Chick-fil-A (\$7M)
- Preparing to build a civil engineering facility (\$3M)
- And more!

The \$60 million of debt reduction and infrastructure investments in the past six years improved the fiscal health of the institution. As a result, our financial stability shows in our Composite Financial Index number, which has increased from a 1.5 in 2013 to an all-time high of 7.7. Financial institutions consider anything above a 3.0 good and above a 5.0 as ready to reinvest in the future health of the organization. Through the generous grace of God, Cedarville University has experienced transformational financial growth, positioning us well for an aggressive 10-year campus master plan.

Cedarville University is a worthy investment, with the financial stability to lead the way in training students who will stand for the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ, regardless of whatever environmental or cultural winds might rage against them.

Now is the time for further investment in an already-successful model to train the next generation of leaders with academic excellence to impact eternity. Operating from a position of strength, Cedarville intends to influence generations of students who will affect their families, their vocations, and their churches for all eternity. God has put Cedarville University in a position where strategic investments from God's people are needed, not to bail out a shaky enterprise, but to secure a thriving Christian university for generations to come.

## SPIRITUAL VIBRANCY

Changing lives and shepherding hearts toward God matters most. Numbers indicating enrollment and financial success and new or renovated buildings are for nothing if our students are not being transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our resources are simply the means by which students can be trained to reach the nations for the sake of the Kingdom, regardless of their vocation. All of this is driven

by a discipleship-based model aimed at training the next generation with intense discipleship and academic rigor.

We require a profession of faith for admission to Cedarville University. Yet, we know that many of the 1,000 new students who enter campus each year are not where they need to be with the Lord. For that reason, we begin the fall semester with a weeklong Fall Bible Conference. During this Bible conference, we clarify the Gospel, call for repentance, and provide an invitation to respond. In the spring, we have a three-day missions conference with a similar emphasis. This past year, through God's generous grace, we saw about 35 students make professions of faith and more than 200 students repent or rededicate their lives to Christ just during the Fall Bible Conference.

Through Bible conferences, Bible minor courses, discipleship programs, intentional mentoring, and more, students' lives are being transformed.

Megan's life was forever changed following Fall Bible Conference her freshman year:

*“What is incredible is I had actually planned to kill myself that night ... It seemed like there was so much sin in my life, and everyone at the University was so good, it just did not feel right. Thankfully, God had other plans.”*

That night, after Bible conference, Megan accepted the Lord and has begun a Bible study to help reach younger girls struggling with depression, anxiety, and sin.

For Heidi, it was all about genuine, authentic, Christian community she experienced at Cedarville:

*“When the Lord brought me to Cedarville, He just opened my eyes and I was able to see that this is the kind of community I had been craving. I saw in other people a deep affection for God that I wanted to have and knew I didn't have.”*

Heidi became active in our Discipleship Groups (d-groups) and serving in leadership on Disciple Council. She remained in Printy Hall, a popular freshman residence, to “pour into girls who are just starting out and maybe for the first time actually taking their faith seriously.” Heidi said, “The Lord has just given me a heart for that because of what He did for me.”

For alumnus Stephen, life change took place as he interacted with faculty and staff who modeled Christlike character and what it meant to honor God with your vocation:

*“The greatest lessons I learned at Cedarville weren’t explicitly taught, but were modeled by the faculty and staff who invested in my life. They gave me the foundation of professional knowledge and skills that opened the door for a rewarding engineering career, but even more importantly, they equipped me to apply that knowledge and serve intentionally as a professional living for Christ.”*

Through generous grace, God has allowed transformational growth to occur. This growth has occurred in numbers, finances, facilities, and, most importantly, in the hearts and minds of our students.

## URGENCY

Now, we must expand to continue serving students who desire a genuine Christian education committed to the authority of God’s Word with a passion for the Great Commission. We must begin realizing the campus master plan immediately. We are praying for partners in ministry.

Many colleges and universities have compromised and abandoned the authority of God’s Word. They have embraced evolution. They have no biblical worldview and because of that, they are immersing the next generation in secular humanism. Some of their students have no clue what they are missing as they graduate without a biblical worldview or even a proper sense for who they are in Christ and what God has called them to do. Other students desire what Cedarville offers, but will we have space for them?

We must do all that we can now to reach this generation for the cause of Christ. You can make a difference by investing in students’ 1,000 days at Cedarville. It will take all of us to accomplish the task at hand.

We ask you to pray for God’s continued blessing as we seek to transform lives through excellent education and intentional discipleship in submission to biblical authority. We need those prayers because only God can change hearts and minds.

We ask you to contribute your talents and energy by helping us recruit students, find internships, develop relationships with employers, and connect current students with alumni.

We ask you to prepare for requests in the coming days to partner with us through generous financial support. You will be making a fiscally conservative, Gospel-focused investment for changing the world by changing the lives of individual students during their 1,000 days on our campus.

“Cedarville University has been the investment with the greatest return over my 20 years of support. I know they will use my gift wisely, and I have seen the lives that have been changed over the years.”



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Would you prayerfully consider answering our bold call to faithful stewardship and Kingdom impact? Partner with us to equip students during their 1,000 days at Cedarville for godly service and vocational distinction to stand for the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ.

**Thomas White** became Cedarville’s 10th President in 2013. He earned his Ph.D. in systematic theology from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is the author and editor of numerous publications, including *First Freedom: The Beginning and End of Religious Freedom (B&H Academic)*.

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