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CONTACT: Mark D. Weinstein
Executive Director of Public Relations
[937-766-8800](tel:937-766-8800) (o)
[937-532-6885](tel:937-532-6885) (m)
Mweinstein@cedarville.edu
@cedarvillenews

Cedarville Trustees Approve Concealed Carry Policy for Full-time Employees

CEDARVILLE, OHIO – At its May 5 meeting, the Board of Trustees of Cedarville University approved a campus concealed carry policy that allows full-time employees who choose to complete an application process to exercise their rights to carry under Ohio law and the Second Amendment of the Constitution.

Conceal Carry Policy

The policy specifically “authorizes the President to grant permission to faculty, staff, and trustees with concealed carry licenses to carry a concealed handgun on campus under approved terms and/or conditions consistent with state law.”

The president and administration will finalize the conceal carry procedures this summer, with implementation of the plan taking place August 1, 2017.

Deliberative Process

The concealed carry discussion began with leadership and Trustees in February 2016 when the House proposed a bill allowing Universities the authority to set their own policies. On Cedarville’s campus discussion ramped up soon after the Ohio Senate approved and Governor Kasich signed Bill 199 into law in December 2016. The law allows the board of trustees of an institution of higher education in Ohio to authorize concealed carry for its campus.

The deliberative process to implement a concealed carry policy for Cedarville included consultations with law enforcement, legal counsel, and insurance representatives; research of other universities’ concealed carry policies; and significant engagement with the campus community.

University employees participated in a town hall forum and provided input to the process through two campus-wide surveys. Results from the two surveys indicated only eight percent of faculty and staff did not want anyone to conceal carry on campus. The university’s student newspaper, *Cedars*, also conducted a student survey and reported favorable responses for a policy.

A planning task force made up of University administrators, campus safety officers, legal counsel, faculty, and operational leaders also met to refine the concealed carry policy proposal and to recommend implementation procedures. The result was the policy presented to the trustees for consideration along with procedures that faculty, staff, and trustees who wish to carry must follow.

“The process to bring a concealed carry proposal to our board for consideration was handled carefully, with significant input and dialogue, and always keeping the safety of our campus community as the highest priority,” said Thomas White, Cedarville’s president. “We weighed all of the issues very carefully to ensure we were moving in the best direction for Cedarville.”

Board Action

Board of Trustee chairman Rev. Chip Bernhard affirmed both the policy decision and the process for how this very delicate and serious topic was handled.

“The decision to allow our full-time faculty and staff members to carry concealed is the right decision for Cedarville,” said Bernhard. “The Board discussed this matter, and in our determination, we believed it was important to allow our conscientious faculty and staff to have the opportunity to exercise their second amendment rights, and, if necessary, to defend themselves should an incident arise in the future. It is our prayer, of course, that no one is ever forced to take this type of action.”

Emergency Preparedness

Already known as one of the safest college campuses in Ohio, many believe Cedarville will further strengthen this reputation as a result of the new policy.

The university’s leading criminal justice expert, Dr. Patrick Oliver, associate professor of criminal justice and former chief of police in Cleveland, Fairborn, and Grandview Heights, Ohio, contributed to the policy’s development and supports the trustees’ decision for a concealed carry policy at Cedarville.

“From my perspective as a peace officer in the State of Ohio,” he stated, “I believe the decision to allow law-abiding faculty and staff to conceal carry on campus is strategically beneficial given the growing safety concerns among institutions of higher education.”

Cedarville’s comprehensive campus emergency preparedness strategy follows the “run, hide, fight” protocol for an active shooter response, and the campus community will be trained accordingly.

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.