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Military Service Organization Celebrates One Year of Operation

CEDARVILLE, OHIO – Cedarville University's Military Service Organization (MSO) recently celebrated its one-year anniversary of creating connections with veterans, elected officials, and representatives from the Veterans Administration).

Professional pharmacy student Ankit Pandav formed MSO in 2017 after seeing a disconnect between veteran students with other students attending college right after high school.

"The transition is hard; we feel very out of place" said Pandav. "In the military, we have the mentality of taking care of the guy next to us at all times. At school, it's a completely different lifestyle. The community at Cedarville is a great thing for veterans; we just need to extend it to meet them where they are."

MSO has grown to 20 students who meet to encourage each other and serve the community. They take regular trips to the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Dayton, Ohio, to minister to the veterans there and aid the homeless community that surrounds the center. MSO hopes this will become a platform to support and serve veterans statewide.

In early February, MSO had its first election and elected Drew Adams, a second-year professional pharmacy student from Woodford County, Kentucky, as their president. Adams has served with the Columbus infantry as part of the Marine Corps Reserve since 2016.

"We're currently trying to grow MSO and connect more of the military personnel from Cedarville to our group," said Adams. "The military is a huge part of a veteran's identity and at Cedarville, you tend to lose that connection. We want to rebuild that unity with other veterans on campus."

Both Adams and Pandav were invited to the Ohio Statehouse for the annual Veterans Caucus in December 2017 to participate in discussions about the needs of veterans in Greene County and how to support them through pharmacy practices. They attended with three other representatives from the Veterans Outreach Committee, a part of Cedarville's chapter of the American Pharmacists Association Academy of Student Pharmacists (APhA).

Cedarville University's School of Pharmacy was the only pharmacy school represented at the event and Ohio State University was the only other school with a campus military organization at the event.

"One goal in attending the caucus was to learn," said Pandav. "We also wanted to represent the Cedarville school of pharmacy to show how a pharmacy school can support veterans. We just need to see the needs and learn how to meet them."

"Attending the caucus was important for our students to see a wide variety of stakeholders and Veterans Affairs program supporters come together and share the many opportunities and initiatives statewide," said Dr. Angela Mickle, dean of the school of nursing, who also attended the event. "Men and women who have served our country were willing to sacrifice all, and we have an amazing opportunity to serve local veterans."

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 3,963 undergraduate, graduate and online students in more than 150 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.

Photo Cutline: Cedarville University's Military Service Organization (MSO) had a busy first year with high hopes for 2018.