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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](https://twitter.com/cedarvillenews)

Pharmacy Students Joining MIT Health Care Problem-Solving Marathon

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- The Cedarville University School of Pharmacy has been accepted to attend the inaugural NYC Grand Hack on November 16-18 at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City, New York.

The Grand Hack is a program of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) that brings some of the brightest minds together from various fields to design innovative solutions for pressing needs in health care.

Dr. Justin Cole, assistant professor and director of the Center for Pharmacy Innovation, will attend with Jinho Son, a second-year professional pharmacy student from Lacey, Washington, and Andrea Adegoke, a second-year professional pharmacy student from Raleigh, North Carolina.

“I am honored for the opportunity to participate in the NYC Grand Hack,” expressed Son. “I am thrilled to be surrounded by various professions at the NYC Grand Hack and be exposed to the unique ideas that will unravel there. My personal vision is to bring back the knowledge from the experience and apply it practically to the community around me.”

The NYC Grand Hack is a variation of an event held by computer programmers who come together over a weekend to create new software solutions. In 2010, MIT applied this same problem-solving model to the health care profession.

Today, MIT Hacking Medicine’s hackathons are the most well known and highest quality of their kind in the world. Health care companies and devices have been imagined and realized from previous hackathons: PillPack, a pharmacy that redesigned the prescription process; Augmented Infant Resuscitator, a device that improves newborn resuscitation; Arsenal Health, a patient scheduling software; and Podimetrics, a company dedicated to a world without diabetic foot ulcers.

At the NYC Grand Hack, Cole, Son and Adegoke will join with health care providers, designers, engineers, developers, programmers and entrepreneurs to solve problems revolving around three themes: rehabilitation and human performance, lung cancer and mental and public health.

Each idea will be pitched at the hackathon, then the teams will form organically, so Cole, Son and Adegoke will most likely end up on different teams.

“Being on different teams will be a really great experience because we will have an opportunity to spread our influence among various groups,” explained Cole. “We also will be gathering perspectives we can bring back to Cedarville as we continue to work on developing solutions through the Center of Pharmacy Innovation.”

A health care hackathon follows a specific design-thinking process that results in a testable concept. Each hackathon team will research existing solutions to develop a prototype that solves their specific problem. At the end of the hackathon, teams will compete for an endorsement from mentors and judges.

“Often these new solutions are pushing the limits of medical ethics,” describes Cole. “I think our team is well prepared to contribute innovative ideas with a commitment to Christian ethics and biblical truth. I really think that is where our students are going to shine at the event.”

During the rigorous application process, Cole expressed Cedarville’s school of pharmacy’s vision to bring a health care hackathon to the greater Dayton area in order to solve problems pertaining specifically to people living here. The goal is to hold a Dayton health care hackathon in one to two years.

“I am very excited to be a part of the NYC hacking event,” expressed Adegoke. “This will not only give me an opportunity to change the way I think of the profession of pharmacy but also make way for this school of pharmacy to birth more future pharmacists who plan on bringing more innovation to the profession as a whole.”

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,193 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.