

5-22-2020

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 26, 2020

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Pomp and Circumstance in a Box: 2020 Grads Receiving More Than a Diploma

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- Although Cedarville University's class of 2020 didn't enjoy the normal graduation festivities because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the university wanted to think outside of the box with a special way to celebrate its graduates.

To celebrate in this way, Jonathan Lyons, director of advancement operations and campaign manager, with assistance from the marketing team, has coordinated a commemorative box that will be sent to each graduate. Inside the box, designed in university colors, includes the graduate's diploma, tassels, cords, the traditional "CU Later" t-shirt, and other memorable items that highlight the student's 1,000 days on campus as a student.



"We wanted to create a memorable experience to honor our newest alumni," he said. "I think people are going to be wowed by this and hopefully will want to post it on social media so family and friends can celebrate with them."

Without the commencement milestone, Lyons and others began searching for the best way to recognize graduates for their work at Cedarville. That's when the CU Grad Box project began.

Dr. Janice Supplee, Cedarville's vice president for marketing and communications, said their goal was to make this another part of the celebration of the class of 2020.

"We already knew we would have to mail the diplomas to our graduates, so we began wondering how we could make that special," Supplee said. "When you get this in the mail, it's going to be something you'll be excited to open."

In addition to the CU Box, the university held a special online Senior Celebration on May 2, and has been focusing on this year's class with video remembrances and other special recognitions on social media. The university will hold a regular commencement ceremony on Oct. 4, in full regalia, during Homecoming and Parents Weekend.

Staff from the university bookstore, marketing and communications, the registrar's office, among other departments, have come together to make sure the right diploma, cords, tassels, and shirts go in the right box, which then must be sent to the right address. All of the special components for the box will be packed Thursday, May 28 between 9 am and 4 pm in the Stevens Student Center. Shipping is expected to take place the first week of June.

"This has been a cross-campus collaboration," Lyons said. "We have moving parts from all across campus coming together to make this happen."

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,380 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 high student engagement ranking. For more information about the University, visit www.cedarville.edu.