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## **Cedarville University Students First Recipients of Innovation Award**

**CEDARVILLE, OHIO** -- Two Cedarville University students are the first recipients of the Beyond Innovation Award, an honor given to young entrepreneurs who are developing validated business models. The award provides tuition relief for students enrolled in either the Beyond Startup Accelerator or entrepreneurship classes at the university.

Alayna Ackley, a junior adolescent/young adult life sciences major from Mears, Michigan, and Roman Skurdal, a junior economics and finance double major from Snohomish, Washington, are leading team ventures through the university's startup accelerator in the spring and are almost ready to scale their businesses.

"Accelerator students learn how to start and scale their business through a series of deliverables rooted in startup conventions," said Kyle Peterson, deputy director of entrepreneurship for the Beyond Accelerator at Cedarville. "These weekly assignments are reviewed by an association of entrepreneurs in residence committed to frequent mentorship throughout the course."

The assignments are tailored to each team venture and may address topics such as market analysis, marketing campaigns, pricing models and customer discovery. In the spring, Ackley, Skurdal, and their teams will conduct research to complete each task.

[Ackley's app-based workout game "Encore" won first place at The Pitch](#), a funding competition hosted at Cedarville early in the fall semester. It uses a card game format to make exercise fun and competitive. Skurdal and his team have not yet developed a name for their venture and are keeping the idea under wraps for now.

Applications for fall 2021 entrepreneurship scholarships, like the Beyond Innovation Award, open in February.

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,550 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, including its [Master of Business Administration in Innovation and Entrepreneurship](#) program, 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](http://www.cedarville.edu).

Written by Tessa Landrum