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4-20-2021

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**April 20, 2021**

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## **From Bahrain to Campus Leader: SGA President Has Come a Long Way**

**CEDARVILLE, OHIO** -- He grew up 7,019 miles away from Cedarville University, speaking a different language, enjoying a different culture and experiencing a different climate. Now, he's not only learning at Cedarville — he's leading.

Rufus Mathew, a junior computer science major from the Kingdom of Bahrain, was recently elected Student Government Association (SGA) president for 2021-22 at Cedarville University.

How he arrived at Cedarville in the first place is a story of its own.

"I had universities spanning seven different countries on my list," Mathew shared. "I heard about Cedarville because of its excellent cyber program and solid Christian foundation, and they also offered me strong scholarships."

When he moved internationally to attend Cedarville, Mathew was struck by the differences he encountered in food, weather and even how Americans conducted their friendships. The language barrier and difficulty of computer science classes further challenged him.

What he was most excited for, though, was the number of opportunities the university provided him. Though shy and disinterested in co-curriculars as a child, Mathew had a life-changing experience in ninth grade that shaped him to love participating in activities.

"I'd see people win accolades and awards, and I'd think to myself 'I could never do those things.' I kept to myself," Mathew explained. "But around ninth grade, I had a teacher come into class to talk about a speech competition. I volunteered without realizing it, and after the speech, the teacher came up, shook my hand and said 'Rufus, that was a very well done speech.'

God used that gesture to show me that with confidence from the Lord, I could do what my peers were doing and produce things of value."

Following that experience, Mathew craved extracurricular activities, but his opportunities were limited. When he arrived at Cedarville, he was surprised and excited about the opportunities for involvement the university offered.

"There were literally television screens posted on campus with opportunities on them," he recalled. "Opportunities to travel, to get paid for what you like to do, to professionally learn well, to meet people who were like-minded. I couldn't believe all of them."

Though having to learn to limit what he said “yes” to, Mathew loved the wide array of activities, which has included competing with Model U.N., serving as a tour guide, working at the university dining hall and Stinger’s, the snack shop, and working for IT.

At the start of his junior year, Mathew began serving as a campus community director, working with a small committee of volunteer students to develop student events on campus. Through this role, he developed a desire to run for SGA president in hopes of continuing such service.

In November, Mathew reached out to sophomore worship major Kasey Pot from Lebanon, Ohio, to be his running mate.

After their victory in the March SGA election, Mathew and Pot began planning for their term. Their goals include adding fun elements to SGA chapels, walking around campus weekly to talk with the student body and starting coffee hangs, where the two will go to different residence hall lounges each week, offer coffee to fellow students and engage in conversations.

They also look forward to helping support discussions on campus about mental health. Even further, they’re hoping to develop a website where students from all departments can post past internships as a resource to other students looking for similar experience.

“Our hope is that the student body will feel confident in who and where they are, and that they’ll take steps forward to serve the Lord as a result.”

With an example like Mathew — taking a huge step of faith to follow God’s will across the world — the student body will be more than equipped to learn and grow in those exact ways.

For more information on Rufus’ journey, click [here](#) to hear his episode on the [Cedarville Stories Podcast](#).

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 one of the largest private universities in Ohio, recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, including the [Bachelor of Science in Computer Science 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 Heidie Raine