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## **Professor Begins Two-Year Drug Research Project**

**CEDARVILLE, OHIO** -- Dr. McKenzie (Shenk) Grinalds, assistant professor of pharmacy practice, was recently selected to participate in the American College of Clinical Pharmacists Foundation's (ACCP's) Mentored Research Investigator Training (MeRIT) program. Over the next two years, Grinalds will undertake a self-designed pharmacy-related research project.

"The ACCP Foundation seeks to represent its members working in all areas of pharmacy," Grinalds explained. "The MeRIT program empowers newer practitioners to conduct clinical research and be innovative in the field of medicine."

Grinalds, who graduated from Penn High School in Mishawaka, Indiana, works as a clinical pharmacy specialist of neurology at Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton, Ohio, in addition to teaching at Cedarville University. She became interested in the MeRIT program after hearing about it from fellow faculty members. She wanted to gain experience in scholarship and research, and she appreciated the structured mentoring approach of this ACCP Foundation program.

"There are many programs out there, but MeRIT is a good place to start for practitioners with limited research experience," Grinalds said.

The MeRIT program requires an extensive application, which includes securing a local mentor, gaining support from the applicant's department chair, reviewing and researching existing literature in pharmacy and developing two potential research project ideas.

Now that she is accepted, Grinalds is preparing for a weeklong intensive program June 21-25 in Louisville, Kentucky. There, she and other participants will learn more about the program and meet with external mentors who will help direct their individual research projects.

"The program asks that 10% of our time be dedicated to research, so I'll certainly be busy next year," she added.

Grinalds has proposed two research projects. She will select which to pursue with the guidance of her mentor in coming months.

The first considers the effects of Onfi, also known as clobazam, an epilepsy medication approved for specific types of seizures but can also be used off-label when administered to adult patients. Grinalds is proposing a retrospective study of patient records to describe how this medication is currently being used in practice and to evaluate its safety and efficacy.

Her second project idea considers the proper dosing of intravenous immunoglobulins, medicines that help patients combat the negative effects of various immunologic and neurologic conditions. The dosing of intravenous immunoglobulins depends on a patient's weight, and Grinalds has proposed a study of how to select the most appropriate initial dose for patients who are obese.

"I'll learn more as I go, but I'm very excited about the opportunity that this program provides for people like myself to take a project from start to finish," Grinalds shared. "I'll be conceptualizing, designing, submitting protocols for approval, researching, collecting and analyzing data and presenting and publishing my findings. I'm looking forward to these next two years."

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 [Doctor of Pharmacy 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