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Cedarville Will Pilot New College to Law Enforcement Program

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- Cedarville University criminal justice students have a new streamlined path toward a career in law enforcement.

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine announced on June 23 the newly established College to Law Enforcement Pathway Program. The program is an initiative of the Ohio Office of Law Enforcement Recruitment, and it is believed to be the only one of its kind in the United States.

The College to Law Enforcement program is an honors program that will offer professional training, leadership development, and mentoring with current law enforcement personnel, including chiefs of police and other law enforcement leaders. Junior and senior students are eligible to apply this year, but enrollees will be limited to juniors beginning fall 2022.

Students are guaranteed a job after successfully completing the program and earning an undergraduate degree in criminal justice.

Cedarville, along with nearby Central State University in Wilberforce, will pilot the program over the next two years. After this two-year trial period, the program will be available to an increasing number of university criminal justice-related programs in the state of Ohio.

"This program creates a pool of pre-qualified college-educated and mentored law enforcement applicants for law enforcement agencies in Ohio with a special focus on including minorities and women," noted Dr. Patrick Oliver, director of Cedarville's criminal justice program and lead consultant to the Ohio Office of Law Enforcement Recruitment. Each graduate of the program is guaranteed a job.

"It is expected that program graduates will perform well in the basic academy, field training, and as officers working independently in the field."

Will Geist is a junior criminal justice major at Cedarville who plans to apply. "This program provides a great gateway to law enforcement for college students," he said. "This streamlines the process by allowing law enforcement to pick the best they can find of prequalified, vetted applicants to hire, while maintaining the traditional hiring process."

Geist, who presently serves as a student cadet with Cedarville University Campus Security, said he would like to serve as a deputy sheriff someday, and possibly as a U.S. Marshal. "Law enforcement is a great opportunity to show love and compassion," he said. "The Bible says that God has enabled the government to keep the peace, punishing evil and rewarding the good. I want to help people in their time of need, to be firm and fair, and to help keep order."

"This program will select and evaluate students based on six core values, and all of them are biblical principles," Oliver said. "I believe Cedarville University has many students with the profile this program

is looking for. The mission and goals of this program are consistent with the mission of Cedarville, which is in part to prepare students for lifelong leadership and service.”

So far, 13 Ohio law enforcement agencies have signed on, including: Beavercreek Police Department, Dublin Police Department, Fairfield Township Police Department, Fairview Park Police Department, Franklin County Sheriff's Office, Lancaster Police Department, Lebanon Police Department, Ohio State Highway Patrol, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Reynoldsburg Police Department, West Chester Police Department, Xenia Police Division, and The Ohio State University Police Department. New agencies continue to inquire about joining this pilot program.

“Law enforcement officers today are being asked to do more,” Oliver said. “They are being asked to address social problems such as mental illness, substance abuse, homelessness, along with an increasingly violent society. This means that the skills, character traits, and training required are becoming more complex.

“Even as law enforcement agencies struggle to find more applicants, they still must raise standards to identify applicants with greater talent, skills and abilities. This pilot program is designed to address these demands.”

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 Arts in Criminal Justice program, strong graduation, and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and high student engagement ranking. For more information about the University, visit cedarville.edu.