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## **New Testing Room Serves Students With Disabilities**

**CEDARVILLE, OHIO** -- Serving the 200-plus students who take advantage of Cedarville University's disability services, part of [The Cove](#), Cedarville's academic enrichment center, is The Cove's goal. Thus, they renovated part of their facility to add a testing space. The result is "The Boardwalk," a state-of-the-art testing room with 14 specially designed cubicles.

"Disability services' mission is to give equal access and opportunities to students with a disability, and meeting this goal during unparalleled student body growth was our motivation to renovate disability services," said [Kim Ahlgrim](#), director of The Cove.

"What sets The Cove's disability services apart is that we view our mission as not only fulfilling the legal requirement to provide for our students, but also showing care and concern for our students," Ahlgrim continued. "We hope to reach students and provide a beautiful space and caring staff for them, so they will feel heard, helped and supported."

The number of students enrolled in disability services has grown alongside the university's total enrollment, to the point that on busy days backpacks were lined up down the hallway as students waited to check in for their tests.

"We were using faculty and staff offices for testing, which wasn't efficient and wasn't effective," Ahlgrim noted. "Sometimes I'd go work in the kitchen while a student took a test in my office."

In scenarios like this, the staff at disability services tried to adapt but needed to develop a new space to better serve their students. Then, the university administration approved the renovation. Tara Winter, disability services manager, designed the room to specially accommodate students.

"The key factor in the design was maximizing space efficiency while providing a reduced distraction environment," Winter said.

Everything about the room is tailored toward an optimal environment. "We focused on making the room aesthetically calming," Winter continued. "The blue accent wall, soft lighting, blue-paneled carpet and light color palette are all intended to produce a calming environment for our students."

The room is specially insulated to minimize sound distraction. Even the rustic, seaside-themed clock ticks silently. Each of the 14 cubicles is equipped with a university computer, since exams are now predominantly administered online.

"Though 'The Boardwalk' was a little intimidating at first because it is a large testing room," a student registered with disability services noted, "I enjoy testing in it because it has the unique

ability to test many students at once while minimizing stress and distractions. It feels like you are in a room by yourself.”

Cameras are installed to make proctoring exams efficient and unobtrusive while also monitoring for medical emergencies, thereby meeting the needs of both student and professor.

“In The Cove’s disability services, students are far more than a number,” Ahlgrim said. “We want to get to know them and listen to their stories, to become an advocate and support them, and we are grateful to have a facility that matches our mission.”

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,715 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, 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](http://cedarville.edu).

Written by Brendan Rowland