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Immersive Learning Takes Athletic Training Education to Transparent Level

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- Observing an expert is one of the best ways to learn, and [Cedarville University's Master of Athletic Training](#) students are taking shadowing opportunities to the next level with the program's new immersive experiences.

Beginning this year, Master of Athletic Training graduate students at Cedarville University will begin immersive experiences as a core element of their graduate education. Students will shadow athletic training professionals in a variety of areas to learn the "ins and outs" of their future profession.

"The whole objective is to prepare our graduates so they become quality athletic trainers," said Dr. [Ken Blood](#), clinical education coordinator and associate professor of athletic training. "After time spent in the classroom and lab, it's time for students to transition to a clinical setting where they can come alongside top professionals. It's a great way for our students to be mentored in a real-world setting."

With the first graduate cohort starting last June, students will complete four immersive experiences in two years. These include a four-week spring and an eight-week summer experience in the student's first year. Before the students complete the second year of the program, they will participate in a pair of four-week experiences.

"After graduation, students will feel optimally prepared for the workforce," said Blood. "The new immersive experiences orient students to the full breadth of day-to-day tasks of their profession." Blood believes the students will understand what it is like to be in staff meetings, complete documentation and participate in committees, in addition to their athletic rehab and training responsibilities.

The immersive experiences will connect students with a wide variety of unique opportunities, beyond traditional high school or college athletics appointments.

"It is wide open as to what students can experience," mentioned Blood. "They might shadow a professional who works with first responders, dancers or even in an industrial setting. We think these placements will help them carve out their niche specialty as an athletic trainer."

Immersive experience placements can be flexible and often include students working near their hometown, on campus or other desirable destinations. Currently, three students are assisting with Cedarville's men's and women's basketball teams and the Yellow Jackets indoor track teams. Two additional students are working with Shawnee High School athletics in Springfield, Ohio, and Athletes in Action of Xenia, Ohio.

According to Blood, the summer immersive experience placements will take students to three football programs, including Liberty University, Kent State University, and Gallaudet University. A student will also participate with FC Cincinnati professional soccer league.

“Something that has been placed on my heart during my time at Cedarville is the Deaf community, and more specifically, deaf athletes,” said Katie Hall, a student in Cedarville’s Master of Athletic Training program. “Recently I have been feeling called to serve the Deaf community and provide medical care.”

Gallaudet University, in Washington, D.C., is the only liberal arts college in the world exclusively devoted to educating deaf and hearing-impaired students.

“During my immersive clinical this summer I will have the chance to learn more about what it is like to provide medical care for the Deaf,” said Hall, a resident of Stow, Ohio. “This experience will provide me with a better idea if this is a path I will choose to pursue upon graduation.”

Students in Cedarville’s Master of Athletic Training program will be prepared to pass the National Athletic Trainers Association - Board of Certification (NATA-BOC) national exam to become a certified athletic trainer. In addition to first-time graduate students, Cedarville also offers a Bachelor of Science in sport medicine and Master of Athletic Training accelerated completion option, allowing students to complete both degrees in five years.

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 5,082 undergraduate, graduate, and dual enrolled high school students in more than 175 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 [Master of Athletic Training](#), high graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and the #4 national ranking by the Wall Street Journal for student engagement. For more information about the University, visit cedarville.edu.

Written by Alex Boesch

Photo captions:

- 1- Dr. Ken Blood.
- 2- Dr. Ken Blood teaches the immersive structure to a pair of Master of Athletic Training students.

Photos by Scott Huck, Cedarville University