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New Virtual Tour App Aids College Students

CEDARVILLE, OHIO – With easy access and mobility in mind, Cedarville University will launch a new virtual campus tour in August to help prospective students learn more about the university without having to travel.

The tour will be fully mobile compatible so anyone, anywhere can take advantage of all features to gain a better understanding of what makes Cedarville so special.

“Like most colleges, we always encourage students to visit campus personally to be sure Cedarville is the right fit,” said Janice Supplee, vice president for enrollment management and marketing. “However, nearly two-thirds of our students come from outside the state of Ohio, so this virtual tour meets a real need.”

The tour will be accessible on desktops, laptops, tablets and smartphones without the need to download and install an app. This service will provide visitors with a unique experience that combines audio, video and photographs to guide them through the beautiful 400-acre campus. It features 3D virtual reality experiences of several sites on campus by using innovative cardboard viewer technology, allowing viewers to use their smartphone to view a full 360-degree, virtual reality image.

“The virtual reality experience is a great component,” said Michael Pells, digital marketing manager. “For example, it can allow admissions counselors at a recruitment event to show prospective students a really unique view of campus.”

The tour also includes 16 360-degree images from key locations around campus, which do not require the use of a virtual reality viewer and can be viewed on any mobile device or desktop computer.

The tour is being developed by CampusTours, one of the world's leaders in virtual tours and campus maps. CampusTours has developed tours for the United States Capitol as well as hundreds of colleges, high schools, nonprofits and government agencies around the country.

“Because of how realistic the virtual experience is, the tour allows that prospective engineering student from California or that pharmacy prospect from Florida to view our beautiful campus,” said Supplee. “It allows them to walk through the labs, and see a residence hall before they ever purchase a plane ticket to be here in person.”

Throughout the tour, users will be greeted by virtual tour guides who will provide a plethora of interesting information at each stop along the way. The virtual tour also includes a convenient campus map, photo galleries, videos and other useful information for each stop.

“We had the chance to attend a conference in Chicago last year that highlighted the importance of having something visually compelling to show prospective students,” said Pells. “In order to get students aware and inquiring [about Cedarville University], you have to grab their attention.”

A winner of three Webby Awards, the Internet's highest honor, CampusTours has helped more than seven million students take virtual tours or view interactive maps. Many CampusTour partners have seen increases of up to 25 percent in actual campus visits and 15 percent in applications after launching virtual tours.

In addition, some institutions have had as many as 90 percent of incoming freshmen take a virtual tour. Cedarville will have the ability to expand the tour at a moment's notice, adding new stops along the way as the campus expands or current buildings are upgraded.

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 3,620 undergraduate, graduate and online students in more than 100 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings and leading student satisfaction ratings.