"It's a demanding lifestyle to be a student and an athlete," explained MacKenzie Parsons as she talked about her time at the University of Cincinnati, “but the university sets us up for success.

As a senior majoring in special education and a leader on the field as a middle fielder for the women's lacrosse team, Parsons has put in the work for four years to set herself up for success. With a 3.68 GPA and exceptional accolades from those who surround her, CEAS is proud to honor MacKenzie Parsons as the Scholar Athlete of the month for March, 2012.

Parsons inherited her love for the game through her close-knit family. "My two older brothers played in high school and college. I was always out playing with them. Lacrosse for girls was not very big when I was younger - so I didn't start playing until the sixth grade," Parsons explained. Although she made a valiant effort to join the boys team at a young age, she was turned down and had to wait until a girls team was finally formed.

Although Parsons started late, she worked that much harder to catch up to girls who had been playing longer. "Being on a club team really prepared me to compete. We would travel to areas where Lacrosse was popular, so competitions in places like Maryland were hard and presented a strong opportunity to play with and learn from great competitors."

Coming to UC was an opportunity Parsons knew she couldn't pass on. The UC lacrosse program had its first season in spring of the 2008-2009 school year. The following year, the team officially joined the Big East which also happened to be Parsons' freshman year. "Coming into a newly developed program, I had the
chance to make a mark and play as a freshman." Starting immediately is something that has truly benefited her.

Although her hometown of Hudson, Ohio is four hours away, that never limited her support system. Parsons glowed as she spoke of the fan base she has in her family. "My family comes to all of my home games and even some away games that are close to home. My grandpa is my biggest fan and a huge support for me. I cherish my time with him so much, so I love it when he comes to cheer me on."

Highlights for student athletes come in all different forms and for Parsons, "being awarded the Legion of Excellence was huge. It recognizes athletes for their athletics and their academics." Of course, as with most athletes, she hopes to add a Big East win to one of those collegiate highlights. "Being a Bearcat means to wear the C paw with pride, work hard at everything you do on the field and in the classroom and then to be successful."

As for women’s lacrosse players in the future, “my advice to incoming freshman would be to prioritize your time between school and practice and to make sure you get all your homework done!”

As Parsons enjoys the rest of senior year, she plans for a future that includes attending graduate school to obtain her masters in special education. She has offers from a number of schools but hopes to land one that also offers the opportunity to stay involved in lacrosse.

The College of Engineering and Applied Science Honors Scholar-Athletes

Dean Carlo Montemagno of the University of Cincinnati’s College of Engineering and Applied Science and Whit Babcock, Director of the UC Athletics Department announced that the college is sponsoring the UC Scholar-Athlete of the Month award in the 2012 academic year. This is the fourth year that CEAS has sponsored this honor.

Each month of the academic year, the College of Engineering and Applied Science, CEAS, recognizes a UC scholar-athlete who has demonstrated success both in the classroom and in an athletic arena. To be eligible for the award a scholar-athlete will have completed 2 years of
education at UC, have a defined major, a cumulative grade point average (or GPA) of 3.2 or better, be in good standing, and have achieved athletic success.

"CEAS is pleased to recognize scholar-athletes from across the university who stand out both academically and in athletic competition. Their dedication, competitive fire and ability to balance the demands of classroom, athletics and life parallel our own students," stated Dean Montemagno. "Our students balance work and class schedules on a daily basis and are rewarded with top jobs upon graduation."

On behalf of the College of Engineering and Applied Science, I am honored to announce that CEAS recognizes MacKenzie Parsons as the UC Scholar-Athlete of the Month. MacKenzie is a starting midfielder on the Lacrosse Team. She is an outstanding competitor on the field and a leader in the classroom with a strong GPA in Special Education in the College of Education, Criminal Justice and Human Services. MacKenzie Parsons has earned our acclaim."

"With a GPA of 3.68 and her solid performance as a midfielder, MacKenzie Parsons continues to prove that scholarship and athletics do go “hand-in-hand”. Her dedication to excellence during our matches and in class is a model for all of our student-athletes," affirms Mr. Babcock.

"It is an honor to have one of our collegiate partners, the College of Engineering and Applied Science, stepping forward to recognize our scholar-athletes."

Each UC Scholar-Athlete of the Month is awarded a clock during the Athletics Recognition Banquet in the spring. Additionally, a tribute to each scholar-athlete is made by the college during a home game of each active sport that month.