Lane Graves Perry III, Western Carolina University

LANE G. PERRY, Ph.D., is the Director of the Center for Service Learning (CSL) at Western Carolina University. Although he has only been at Western Carolina for two and a half years, in this time he has significantly strengthened relationships between the CSL and entities across the university as well as between the university and the local community. Highlights of his institutionalization efforts include developing a new strategic plan for the Center to align with the university's strategic plan, increasing the number of documented service-learning courses from 14 in 2010 to 50 currently, and serving on the four-person team that submitted WCU's successful renewal application for the Carnegie Community Engagement classification. His support for faculty includes designing a Community-Based Activities Faculty Survey and spearheading the creation of the Provost’s Advisory Board for Academic Community Engagement which vets service-learning course designations, recommends scholarship winners, and selected the first Excellence in Community Service Award for faculty. He received an $18,000 Bringing Theory to Practice matched grant from AAC & U to develop the Ripple Effect Learning Community, an interdisciplinary program that has served 42 first-year WCU students over the past two years. Dr. Perry has also strengthened the collaboration between the CSL and the Coulter Faculty Commons for Teaching Excellence, serving as a facilitator at New Faculty Orientation and the Summer Teaching & Learning Institute, and as a co-planner for the 2015 Engaged Scholarship Retreat. It was the focus on collaboration across many different offices, players, and champions that made these achievements possible.

In 2013, Lane facilitated a partnership between entrepreneurship Professor Bill Richmond (and students) and Habitat for Humanity of Macon County to bring Habitat back to Jackson County. This project has resulted in an engaged Macon County Habitat serving in Jackson County, a student-led chapter on campus, and the creation of a work plan by an entrepreneurship class to eventually open a Jackson County Restore.

In a nomination letter, one student leader who served through the CSL wrote, "Dr. Perry has set the bar for civic engagement through service, partnerships and innovation, leading the charge to make service a way of life of any student...Dr. Perry's work at WCU has fostered the new face of the campus as an engaged institution."

Dr. Perry earned his BA and MEd at the University of Central Oklahoma and from 2008-2012 lived in Christchurch, New Zealand and worked at the University of Canterbury, where he completed his PhD in Higher Education and served as a faculty member in the College of Education.
Perry has published and presented on the influence of service-learning on student engagement and how service-learning and community engagement can serve as a responsive pedagogy for bridging the space between the community and classroom. In 2013, he was elected to the board of the International Association for Research and Service Learning and Community Engagement.