

RESEARCH REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECT TOPIC	Working and Serving in Pitt's Regional Communities: Opportunities and Challenges		
NAME	Dr. Sheila Confer, Director of the Academic Village, Pitt-Greensburg. Ann Emmerling, Director of the Blackburn Center, Greensburg, PA. Dr. Dean Nelson, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, Pitt-Greensburg. Founding Member of The Center For Applied Research (CFAR). Dr. Frank Wilson (Sociology), Founding Member of the Center For Applied Research	DATE	March 29, 2019

REPORT INTRO

Our panel will present the efforts of Pitt-Greensburg's Center For Applied Research, formed in 2012 to utilize our professional skills to aid the work of government and non-profit agencies and groups dedicated to addressing problems and improving the conditions of life in Westmoreland County. Doing that has allowed us to provide opportunities for our undergraduate students to learn and practice research methods that enrich and expand their academic experience, while enabling our participating faculty to engage in multi-disciplinary collaborative and impactful research.

BACKGROUND

Pitt-Greensburg faculty, staff, administration and students have understood that service to our community has always been a core part of our mission, and we have engaged our community in many ways over many decades. Our panel can offer insights from that experience, and a reminder that there are other types of Pitt communities providing challenges and opportunities for service. As one of Pitt's undergraduate-only teaching schools in a major research university, some of us wondered what kinds of research would be most appropriate for us to pursue. The formation of CFAR was our response. Focusing on our experiences thus far will demonstrate how academically based community engagement opened new avenues for collaboration with community partners, and in particular became a catalyst for expanding and stimulating long-standing relationships. For this purpose we will use the Blackburn Center as a case in point. Ann Emmerling, its current director, will be one of our panelists.

CONCLUSIONS

We also expect to share some challenges we face that may elicit ideas and suggestions from those attending our workshop.