

Public Works

W&L Inaugurates the Shepherd Loan Repayment Program

Last spring, W&L unveiled the Shepherd Loan Repayment Program (LRAP) to help new graduates balance their financial situation with a career in public interest law.

Established with the support of Nancy and Tom Shepherd '52, the LRAP endowment continues to grow and currently stands at approximately \$1,044,345. This year, W&L awarded the first grants to alumni who have demonstrated a commitment to serving indigents or underserved populations.

Tara Miller, director of Career Planning, is delighted that the program is up and running. She had the pleasure of delivering the good news to the recipients. "I called each one and told them W&L was paying off part of their loans. They all stopped breathing for a moment because they probably didn't think they would get the money," she said.

The grant, determined by a number of factors, including annual income, cost of living and debt service, makes a difference to the public interest lawyer's quality of life. Most earn in the low \$30K range and face the challenge of managing household bills and law school debt. As a result, many talented lawyers leave public interest jobs for better-paying ones.

W&L's LRAP will help change that trend.

Shawna Cheney '05, the Edmund D. Campbell recipient, works as a staff attorney at Blue Ridge Legal Services in Lexington. "Without the LRAP I couldn't afford to work here," she says. "It makes a huge difference to me. Without it I wouldn't be able to do this work that I love."



SHAWNA CHENEY '05 CHOSE A CAREER IN PUBLIC INTEREST LAW BECAUSE SHE FELT IT WAS THE MOST DIRECT WAY TO IMPROVE PEOPLE'S LIVES.

The other LRAP recipients include Anastacia Greene '04, staff attorney, Legal Services of Southern Piedmont, Charlotte, N.C.; Leah Garabedian '04, assistant public defender, Jackson, Mo.; and Michelle Williams '05, assistant district attorney, Judicial District 1, Durham, N.C.

For more information, please contact the Office of Career Planning at (540) 458-8535 or lawcareer@wlu.edu.