

IACIS 2026 Ben Bauman Award of Excellence

Dr. Barbara Jo White



Dr. Barbara Jo White is Professor of Information Systems in the College of Business (COB) at Western Carolina University (WCU), where she's taught since 2005. Her career reflects a lifelong commitment to service, community building, teaching, and scholarship that began long before entering academia. Before WCU, Dr. White served as a U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) in the Dominican Republic ('87-'89), where she created the World Map Project which brought volunteers and host country nationals together to hand-draw and paint large world maps on school walls. The project later expanded to U.S. schools through the creation of the "Monster Map," which won the Award for Outstanding Community Service from the National Council of Returned PCVs. She has supported the project for decades, including digitizing the World Map Project Manual for PCVs and coordinating a large-scale map project with the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. Following Peace Corps, Dr. White developed an environmental education and team-building program at Trinity Camp and Conference Center of the Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina, enabling thousands of students to experience North Carolina's coastal ecosystems. She also developed her first database to manage hundreds of school groups which inspired her pursuit of a Ph.D. in Information Systems. At WCU, Dr. White approached faculty development much as she approached community development projects in the Peace Corps. Recognizing that faculty often worked in isolation, she made it a personal mission to foster a more collaborative culture through Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) articles and Scholarship of Engagement projects with multiple faculty members from various disciplines. She has coauthored over 40 publications with over 30 different WCU colleagues and students, often working with new faculty and faculty without terminal degrees. Dr. White's commitment to teaching, engagement, and collaboration has been recognized through numerous awards, including WCU's Board of Governors Creative and Innovative Teaching Award, Outstanding Achievement in Teaching Service Learning Award, University SoTL Scholar Award, CoB Excellence in Research Award, and CoB Engagement Award. Throughout her career, she has followed a simple philosophy learned through volunteer service: identify a need, bring people together, build capacity, and make the community a better place whether that community is where you live, worship or work.