

Haley Cade, B.A. English Creative Writing, 2013

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Haley Cade, a native of Louisville, Kentucky, graduated from WKU in 2013. Communication skills she learned from her time here are necessary in working for a company that assists with the development and maintenance of online degree programs for regionally accredited, non-profit institutions across the country. "At the time of completing the survey," Cade explained, "I was an enrollment counselor, which means I helped prospective students navigate the admissions process at both the undergraduate and graduate level. At this time, I am an articulation and transfer coordinator, meaning I review transfer credits and collaborate with registrars from multiple institutions to ensure that transfer credits for incoming online students are accurate. This is in an effort to maintain the academic integrity of each school while also enabling adult learners to return to their education and complete a degree." Her job is mainly done over the phone or through email, so Cade has become less reliant on body language and more how she carefully chooses her words. "Not only did my English degree prepare me with a diverse vocabulary, but it also exposed me to different voices in various forms of writing. Beyond that, I also am able to convey my point through written word, which is incredibly useful when corresponding with student and faculty via email."

Remembering her time at WKU fondly, Cade reflects, "Due to the creative nature of the subject, I felt the most at ease in the English department. The community is one where you can address issues independent of academics or curriculum and the assistance you receive is directly related to you as a person. In creative writing, this attention to self is important, as it directly affects the work you yield as a student and as a writer outside of the classroom." Cade said that it may seem odd that her creative writing and art history majors prepared her for her current position but felt that her education

prepared her in numerous ways. “Our partner institutions vary in size and have different levels of experience in the online environment, so it is extremely valuable to be able to formulate an abstract idea and convey information in a concise manner that is both professional and warm. My English degree has provided the tools to tailor my responses effectively in a way that fosters a positive work relationship with the client and still allows for progress.”

Cade explains further, “I’ve always been impressed by the English department faculty for their willingness to recognize the student as more than a producer of work. College is a time of such rapid change in an individual. It is to the credit of professors that students are able to emerge from this period of time with degrees and the skills to enter the workforce with their creativity intact.” She understands that oftentimes prospective students will communicate a predilection towards one area but feel hesitant about pursuing a field in the liberal arts because there are increased career opportunities in other areas. “What I have learned, and what I have shared with students who communicate this concern, is that your professional successes are linked to certain skills that can be fostered in a number of disciplines. For me, my professors at WKU were supportive and engaging within their respective departments, but they also openly encouraged interdisciplinary studies because it produced more interesting work in creative ventures.”

Her advice to current students in examining what track would be most beneficial is to instead identify what will be fulfilling early on in collegiate careers. “I was always intellectually challenged and able to build a supportive community within the major. Regardless of the path you choose, having the freedom to develop yourself as a person while pursuing something you truly enjoy will provide you with a basis that can readily be applied in any field.”

