

Marisa Williams, B.A. English Creative Writing, 2018

By Joseph Shoulders

News Producer
Multi-Media Journalist
WBKO



“Don’t let someone make you feel inferior for pursuing a liberal arts degree. We wouldn’t have movies, books, comics, any form of entertainment they enjoy if not for liberal arts. You are valid in what you want to pursue. This is not a frivolous degree.”

Marisa Williams graduated from Western Kentucky University in 2018 with a major in Creative Writing and a minor in Folk Studies. She knew she wanted to study English before coming to WKU because she had always wanted to “write as a career in some capacity.”

“I have wanted to be an author since I was eight years old,” Williams said. “My first story was about a cat lover and dog lover falling in love but told from the pets’ points of view, and I never stopped writing creatively.” Williams is making progress towards this goal as she edits a Young Adult Contemporary novel that she hopes to begin querying within the year. She also has two Young Adult Fantasy novels in the drafting stage.

Williams credits many experiences at WKU to her development as a writer. One course she mentioned was Intermediate Poetry Writing with Dr. Tom Hunley because she did not think she could write poetry before taking the course. She said she learned, “I can actually write anything if I take the time and remind myself I can be good at it!” Williams also enjoyed learning from Dr. Alison Langdon in the British Literature and Medieval Literature surveys. Williams said, “In her classes I felt like I became a better academic writer, which I think in turn has helped me in my job.”

An influential experience Williams had outside of the classroom was working with the WKU Community and Outreach Coordinator to assist with the [Southern Kentucky Book Festival](#). “I made amazing networking connections with actual published authors doing what I do in the genres I enjoyed reading and writing,” Williams said. She

continues to volunteer as a moderator and organizer. The SOKY Book Fest is no longer sponsored by WKU, but students can apply through the [English Department internship program](#) to work with the organizers.

To support her writing career, Williams wanted a job that also utilized her English degree. She applied for an administrative assistant position at WBKO, and in February of 2020, she was hired as a News Producer and Multi-Media Journalist. “They saw my writing background and asked if I wanted to see if I would be a good fit for the producing position,” she explained.

Williams described what she does in her positions. “I write the morning show. I go through news outlets we are affiliated with and also pick the top national stories of the morning that may have broken overnight or have new information coming through. I also look for communication from local law enforcement agencies and community programs that have relevant news to our audience,” she said. “I do not have a background in journalism beyond one year of high school newspaper, so I did not ever see myself in this field. But, I am here, and I feel as though I excel.”

Williams believes her experiences in WKU English prepared her well for the positions. She said, “What I have found is that you can teach someone how to use a certain software, how to have better news judgement as they go along, but it’s rare you can teach someone at this stage in life to be a better writer. Creative, academic, or non-fiction—every bit of writing I did in college helped me to become a better writer.”

