

Mara Farmer, B.A. English for Secondary Teachers, 2016

By Madelyn Chambers

**M.A. Student, University of
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Clark High School**

“Enjoy and savor the time that you’re having in college. It’s a really unique experience to live in a place for four years where you’re surrounded by other creative and open-minded people who are interested in the same things as you, and you can read together and write together and talk about big issues and be intellectually challenged.”



Mara Farmer (née Muccigrosso) graduated *summa cum laude* from WKU in May 2016 with a bachelor's degree in English for Secondary Teachers. Currently, she teaches English and literacy at George Rogers Clark High School in Winchester, Kentucky. She is also pursuing her master's degree in library science from University of Kentucky, hoping to graduate in August 2019.

As a Louisville, Kentucky native, Farmer feels Western Kentucky University was the perfect choice. She was particularly drawn to WKU's English department and campus environment: "I was really impressed with Western's teaching program. I didn't even apply anywhere else." As the first in her family to go to college, Farmer was at first afraid to choose English instead of a "more practical" career, but she knew that English was where her passion lay. "I felt a calling to share my love for reading and literature and all of that with young people." Farmer achieved great success during her time at WKU; she published an essay in *Ashen Egg* in 2015, received the Outstanding Student in English for Secondary Teachers award, and attained the position of Scholar of the College for Potter College of Arts and Letters.

Farmer feels that all her English courses propelled her to success after WKU. She feels that English 476 with Dr. LeNoir helped prepare her to teach literature to high school students, and she recommends it to all EST students as both "informative and formative" for teaching. "English 476 and literature surveys were my favorites probably. I took a lot of Dr. Langdon's classes, medieval lit and English 299. Her classes really opened my mind to other mindsets... and that helped form me as a person."

Outside of classes, Farmer participated in Golden Keys and Circle K through the Honors College. Farmer used her last semester at WKU to student teach in England through the College of Education and Behavioral Science's International Student Teaching Program, which inspired her love of travel.

Like many WKU students, Farmer's last semester was hectic: "I got back [from England] in early May, graduated a few days later, got called a couple days after graduation by people at [George Rogers Clark High School] asking for an interview. I came in for an interview, and they offered me a job the next day."



Currently, Farmer is an English teacher at George Rogers Clark High School. She is also pursuing a master's degree in Library Science from the University of Kentucky, which will allow her to become a school librarian. So far, she has travelled to Mexico, France, England, and the Bahamas. She also writes as often as possible, mainly working on young adult book reviews for teachers.

Looking back on her time at WKU, Farmer encourages current students to enjoy their whole college experience. "When you're in college, you complain a lot on social media about how stressful college life is, but once you finish college and get out in the world you think 'Wow, that was such a unique four years for me to be surrounded by people who are interested in the same things as me.'" She also encourages English students to savor their classes at WKU: "Just sitting in a literature survey class, reading really cool stuff, and sitting with a bunch of super smart people and unpacking the text and talking about the text; I miss that so much. Being an English major is the coolest."

