

Laura Long, B.A. English Language & Literature, 2013

By Melissa J. Rush & Madelyn Chambers

Digital Marketing Manager, Nashville Rescue Mission

*“You are the only person that can determine
your future. No one will do it for you.”*

Laura Long graduated *cum laude* with her bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature from Western Kentucky University in 2013. While at WKU, she participated in Study Abroad programs through [Harlaxton College](#) in Grantham, England, and [Semester at Sea](#). Long is currently the Digital Marketing Manager for [Nashville Rescue Mission](#), a nonprofit that provides resources to “hungry, homeless, and hurting” people in the Nashville, Tennessee area.

Although Long did not plan to attend college, her mother insisted that she be the first generation in her family to become a college graduate. Despite her uncertainty when she arrived on campus, Long believes studying at WKU was “one of the best decisions of my life.” Her English courses also prepared her well for the job market. “I write content, prepare strategies, and research industry trends almost every day in my job,” said Long. “My education at WKU taught me how to do that well.” Long feels that Professor Walker Rutledge, Dr. Wes Berry, Dr. Niko Endres, and Dr. Ted Hovet were instrumental in her academic success.

While pursuing her English degree, Long was honored as a President's Scholar, Honors College participant, Study Abroad Ambassador, and recipient of the Thomas G. Jones Scholarship. She also published her work in the *Ashen Egg*.

After graduation in 2013, Long applied for a summer internship in Retail Merchandising and Management with Nordstrom in the Pacific Northwest, far away from her home in Bowling Green. “At the time, I was excited to graduate, despite not truly having a long-term plan,” said Long. “Looking back, it seemed like a solid plan, but I can't believe my mom let me do it.” Long worked in communications and marketing positions for Nordstrom and PureRED after completing her internship for



Nordstrom. These positions prepared her to be the Digital Marketing Manager for Nashville Rescue Missions, a position she has held since 2016

Long is responsible for all online communications and marketing. She manages search engine optimization (SEO), web design, social media content, email marketing, analytics and reporting, digital campaigns, crowd-funding campaigns, digital marketing trend research, and all promotional materials. "I get to tell the powerful stories of men and women through a digital form to raise money," said Long. "It's a dream job."

Long believes her English degree from WKU is key to her success. Her ability to research, self-teach, and communicate well equipped her to excel in her field. Long especially feels that learning how to identify with characters in literature has led to better interpersonal skills, which she uses daily to empathize with the men and women seeking services from the Nashville Rescue Mission.

In her free time, Long enjoys gardening, working out, and reading historical fiction as often as possible. "My fiancé and I [also] like to take our fur baby, Waylon, for walks and adventures," said Long.

Long recommends that students keep their course notes. She still keeps her notes from literature classes in a binder in her office as a reference guide. She also reminds students to not be afraid of entering the job market after college. "You must work hard to get where you want to be. Unfortunately, some of you will have to work harder than others. But I will share this: don't be fearful. As long as you work hard, set goals, and take care of yourself, you will be successful in whatever path you choose."

