

Seth Dukes, B.A. English Professional Writing, 2015

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Seth Dukes graduated in December 2015 with a BA in English with a concentration in professional writing and a minor in literature. Dukes started out as a reporter for the [Leader-News](#) in March of 2016. In July, the previous editor of the *Leader-News*'s sister paper, the [Ohio County Times-News](#), retired, and Dukes was promoted to the role of Editor. The *Ohio County Times-News* publishes every Wednesday and has a circulation of over 6,000.

Dukes says he was first attracted to journalism because he "loves writing, and journalism allows [him] to write every day." He also emphasizes that not having a journalism degree had little bearing on his entry into journalism. The skills he developed as an English major, especially in his professional writing classes, made him capable of learning the ins and outs of journalistic writing. Dukes believes that the skills he learned in the Department of English at Western Kentucky University gave him the necessary confidence during the interview process to make him an attractive candidate for a job that was not directly related to his major.

As a writer and editor of a local paper, Dukes explains that he has to "keep my readership in mind with every article I write and every page I design." He credits the professional writing program's focus on document design as being crucial to his work. "During my education, we really focused on factors that affected readability," Dukes says. He also stresses that being able to articulate exactly why a document or page design is successful or not is a useful skill to have in any field, not just journalism. When asked about his favorite part of his job as an editor, Dukes was hard pressed to choose just one thing. He says that he enjoys "the variety of experiences" his job provides him, as well as the fact that he "[gets] to meet a lot of wonderful people from the community."

Dukes credits his time at WKU with getting him to a career he vastly enjoys: “The skills I have learned in the professional writing program, specifically in the capstone class, helped me get a job which leads me to very interesting places.”

Reflecting on his time on the hill, Dukes says he wishes he had taken advantage of WKU’s study abroad opportunities. He shared his belief that studying abroad “is an experience that every undergraduate should have.” When asked if he had any advice for incoming freshmen, he reiterated the important role of academic advisors. “Your advisor is more than just the person who removes the hold on your account so that you can register for classes,” Dukes explained. “Get advice from them!” He also suggests that soon-to-be English graduates should start to compile their work into a portfolio so they can have examples of their skills for potential employers.

