

## Dr. T. Ryan Hall, M.A. English Language & Literature, 2008

*By Melissa J. Rush*

### President, ESLI Western Kentucky University

*“You can never underestimate the power of empathy and understanding the human condition, and I believe my degree did a great deal to help me develop those skills.”*



Dr. T. Ryan Hall completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Kentucky, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in economics. Hall then chose to continue his post-graduate education at Western Kentucky University; first being awarded his Master of Arts in English Language & Literature and subsequently his Doctor of Educational Leadership and Administration.

Hall is currently the president of [English as a Second Language International \(ESLI\)](#). ESLI recruits and trains international students before placing them in university degree programs. He currently works with six universities in the United States and one in Canada. There are currently four departments within the organization: academics, recruitment, admissions, and finance. Hall is tasked with managing the relationships between partner universities, as well as organizations abroad. “I often work with governments to find opportunities for international students, and I help shape the vision for our own company while working with schools to help define internationalization.”

Dr. Hall also teaches literature and writing classes for WKU. His goal in remaining directly involved with the students in the classroom is to help them “appreciate and understand the magic of the written word.” He asks that his students to learn to articulate their true beliefs and assumptions in ways that will express their voices. Hall believes his English degree is critical in imprinting the English language skills needed by students seeking degrees in English.

In addition to his degree being valuable in the classroom, Hall noted that his critical thinking skills and ability to develop an understanding of diverse populations have

made him successful in a career that requires a high level of writing and communication. Emails and written documents are used daily in creating proposals and business plans around the globe. “Being able to articulate yourself in a professional, understandable, and relatable manner is essential in my work.”

When asked what advice he might offer current or future students he shared his belief in being a good citizen. Hall feels it is essential to understand civics and how the way we organize our society and create laws will have a far greater impact on a student’s life than any practical training or philosophical reflection. “With a college degree, you have a responsibility to be well-informed and participative.” Hall related ways in which he uses his degree outside of WKU, having interests in politics and culture, and sharing those thoughts through writing and presentation. He also believes his ability to “read between the lines” and separate fact from fiction serves him daily.

Hall had high praise for several professors in the English department that he felt made a tremendous difference in his academic life. The late Dr. Elizabeth Oakes was instrumental in helping him transition to graduate student and academic. From Dr. Logan, he learned the art of patience and persistence. Dr. LeNoir helped Hall find his teaching voice, while Dr. Reames and Dr. Rigby demanded he think beyond his preconceptions. Dr. Fife helped Hall become a teacher, and Dr. Schneider chaired his thesis and supported his development in becoming a better thinker and writer. Dr. Endres allowed for philosophical space, and finally, Dr. Poole became an advisor for Hall’s doctoral dissertation. “The combination of Alex’s kindness, intelligence, and humor could not have been a greater boon.”

Dr. Poole had kind words for his former student as well; “Dr. Hall exemplifies the skills English majors possess: Strong oral and written communication, an ability to solve complex problems, and a global outlook. I am proud of his leadership at ESLI.”

