Congratulations to over 350 graduates who studied abroad!

Argentina
Meghan Baumgartner
Natalie Buller
Matthew Lawson
Shelby Rice

Austria
Rachel Brady
Lindsay Byrd
Seth Church
Sarah Fox
Kimberly Green
Dominic Piedmonte

Australia
Abigail Boyd
Kevin Carey
Victoria Conyers
Kelsey Hagan
Catherine Havel
Michael McKay
Christopher White

Chile
Taylor Berzins

China
Liuge Brinica
Alena Blochera
Rebecca Center
Joanna Chang
Angela Cook
Ryan Dillion
Elizabeth Gribbins

Costa Rica
Amanda Belcher
Gabrielle Canant
Brandon Farmer
Victoria Gilkison
Matthew Lawson
Gatlin Milam
Kasandra Mitchell
Shelby Pedigo
Lydia Richardson
Stephanie Schaefer
Mitchell Schooler
Meredith Smith
Jeremiah Stringer
Wesley Trail

England (UK)
Faith Akhuette-Oni
Rachel Archer
Nicole Armstrong
Jessica Arnold
Sarah Beach
Hannah Bertram
Laura Boone
Alyssa Born
Abigail Boyd
Kimberly Britt
Catron Burdette
Erin Burris
Kayleigh Coffey
Deanna Conner
Angel Curran
Jude Zoeller

Czech Republic
Seth Church
Michael Eichberger
Ryan Reed
D’Arcy Revlett
David Szimore
Janet Taylor
Celia Whelan
Chloe Williams

Ecuador
Michaela Ash
Porshia Austin
Danielle Berkshire
Nicholas Christian
Ashley Cleary
Travis Combs
Margaret Conway
Bridge Davis
Olga Durham
Callie Franks
Matthew Frazier
Isaac Greenwell
Loren Gross
Crysta Hicks
Brandon Holmes
Kyle Howard
Abbie Hutchison
Kelsey Kaezal
Kasey Kinney

India
Amy Givens
Elisabeth Hacksworth

Ireland
Faith Akhuette-Oni

Italy
Courtney Carter
Rebecca Chartoff
Ian Dowty
Rebecca Farmer
Stacey Forsythe
Meggie Genardi
Natalie Gilliam
Kaitlyn Haws
Holly Hayes
Samantha Lynch
Sarah McAllister
Amanda Reynolds
Meghan Ritchie
Megan Short
Jonathan Somoza
Jessica Story
Candace Thompson
Ainsley Wagoner

Japan
Kendra Kelley
Margaret Conway

Jordan
Haley Edwards
Elizabeth Gribbins
Jonathan Wurth

Kenya
Brandon Farmer
Matthew Frazier
Nancy Jolly
Kelsey Kaetzel

Mexico
Whitley Castro
Jessica Cecil
Caroline Gilbrelth
Brandon Farmer
Morgan Graham

New Zealand
Shannon Boone

Peru
Bethany Devore

Russia
Leah Turner

Scotland (UK)
Rachael Warr

South Korea
Rebecca Center

Spain
Caitlin Belcher
Cynthia Block
Christina Delevingne

South Africa
Amy Fehrenbach

Tajistan
Bailey Mack

Tanzania
Trevor Davis

Toppers at Sea
Ellen Barringer
Molly Keen
Kristin Nash
Jody Owen

Trinidad
ShaNeeka Brewton

UK

Virginia

Scotland (UK)
Leah Turner

Poland
Elizabeth McGrew
MAY 11, 2015 • GRADUATION • WKUHERALD.COM

Dear Graduates:

Congratulations on completing your WKU degree. I am proud of each and every one of you. I hope that I, and our faculty and staff, have served you well as you have pursued and completed your WKU course of study.

I look forward to seeing you at Commencement on May 16 and 17. There is not a more special moment for you, your family, and friends than to walk across that red carpet and experience the symbolic culmination of your years of hard work. I hope you enjoy that special moment as much as I will enjoy greeting you in Diddle Arena.

You are now joining over 100,000 WKU alumni, and your next chapter as a Hilltopper is about to begin. This chapter will be a lifelong love affair with a very special university that will be there for you as much in the future as it has been these last few years. Stay loyal, protect and defend your university, and keep that special WKU spirit at the center of your universe.

I am confident that we have prepared you well for your personal and professional lives. Work hard, serve your family well, be engaged in your community, be a global citizen, and lead people to do things that they did not otherwise think was possible. That is what Hilltoppers do. Always know that as you bring distinction to yourself and to those with whom you live, work, and play, you will also bring distinction to WKU. Thank you for continuing to strengthen your own name and our university’s strong reputation. We look forward to following your progress and counting you among our many successful alumni.

Congratulations! See you on Commencement weekend!

Go Toppers!

WKU PRESIDENT
GARY RANSDELL
CONGRATULATIONS to our graduating Library Student Assistants!

Emily Anderson
Kelsi Campbell Ashby
Danielle Davenport
Katie DeCoursey
Ling Hao Liu
Qi Liu

Christopher McConnell
Lyndsey Pender
Anna Pettus
Cecia Reyes
Ayaz Sadal
Kameron Simmons

Kelli Storm
Hieu Vo
Rachel Wyatt
Anna Young
Is graduation really here already? Knowing that this is the end of my journey on the Hill has brought a mixed bag of emotions: relief for classwork finally being over, excitement for the things to come, yet sorrow for knowing that this wonderful, once-in-a-lifetime experience is finally coming to an end.

It has been a joy, privilege and an honor to serve as the Student Body President and Student Regent. It hasn’t always been easy, but I have tried my best to do what is right for students here on the Hill. I am almost ready to pass the job on to my successor, but not before I take the opportunity to provide some words of encouragement to all students, graduating or not.

Graduating is a scary time for all of us whether we want to admit it or not. Graduates, don’t feel like you are any less successful if you do not have it all figured out. Break out of the assumption that the path to success has to be straight and narrow. In reality, most of the time people have taken a jagged, crisscrossed, back-and-forth path to get to where they are today. No experience is a bad experience, so just seize whatever opportunity you can find until you figure out your own way to success.

For those who will be remaining on the Hill, be sure to savor every moment. Take every opportunity that you can to get internship experience, volunteer and be involved in clubs. On the other hand, ensure that you are not taking too many opportunities that you forget to leave time for your own personal care.

Yes, college is first and foremost about getting an education and job preparation, but don’t forget to stop and smell the roses every once and awhile. Go out to RedZone, Waffle House or IHOP late at night with your friends just because. Go to the parade and Big Red’s Roar during Homecoming, even if you are not Greek. If you are lucky enough to get a good snow, sled down Van Meter or Hospital Hill until you are so sore you can’t move. These are the memories you will look back fondly on after your college experience is over.

To the class of 2015: congratulations, we did it! Whether we have it all of it or none of it figured out, we will find our way in the world; our time here has prepared us for nothing less. To those not graduating quite yet, enjoy your last days, months, or years on the Hill, because it will fly by before you know it.
COMMENCEMENT SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, MAY 15

GRADUATE COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY
5 P.M., DIDdle ARENA

SATURDAY, MAY 16

UNDERGRADUATE COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES
GORDON FORD COLLEGE OF BUSINESS & COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
9:30 A.M., DIDdle ARENA
OGDEN COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING & COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES
2 P.M., DIDdle ARENA
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE & POTTER COLLEGE OF ARTS AND LETTERS
6 P.M., DIDdle ARENA

SUNDAY, MAY 17

REGIONAL CAMPUS COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES
WKU OWENSBORO COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY
6:30 P.M., RIVERPARK CENTER
WKU ELIZABETHTOWN-FORT KNOX COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY
6:30 P.M., HARDIN COUNTY SCHOOLS PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
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- On the BG shuttle route
- Private bathrooms
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Phone: 270.746.9519 | Fax: 270.746.9419
www.campuspointewku.com
WKU Spirit Master Graduates

1st Row (left to right): Catherine Havel (May’15), Jay Todd Richey (May’17), Rebecca McPhearson (Dec. ’15), Kayla Lofton (Dec. ’15), Meghan McGuirk (May ’15).

2nd Row (left to right): Nolan Miles (May ’16), Grace McCullough (May ’15), Mckinze Willard (May ’15), Bennett Peck (May ’15), Catherine Stone (May ’15).

3rd Row (left to right): Kamilah Champion (May ’15), Natalie Gilliam (May ’15), Ellie Jolly (May ’15), Ashlee Manley (May ’15), Alyson Manley (May ’15), Kaitlyn Snyder (May ’15), Eric Marr (May ’15), Charlie Rhea (May ’15).
## Congratulations

### 2015 Graduates from the Department of Architectural and Manufacturing Sciences

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<tr>
<th>Masters of Engineering Technology Management</th>
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| DYLAN NONWEILER                                   |
| COLLIN SOUTHWOOD                                  |
| LARRY SWEETING                                    |
| JACOB THOMAS                                      |
| ANTHONY THORN                                     |
| KENDRA WHITAKER                                   |
| ZACHARY OSBORNE                                   |
| RAJ PATEL                                        |
| DOUGLAS PATRICK                                   |
| AMY RAINIER                                       |
| JESSE RICHARDSON                                  |
| JACOB SCHWINDEL                                   |
| FRANK WALKER                                      |
| JOHN WARD                                        |
| REBEKAH WATTS                                     |

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I decided to major in journalism the day the Chicago Sun-Times, one of my favorite publications, filed for bankruptcy protection. “Why on earth would you decide on newspapers?” my mom said. “Why not law school?”

Little did I know that her questions would become one of a series of tough questions I’d face when I told people I wanted to be a journalist. Conveniently enough, I received an excellent scholarship to one of the nation’s premier journalism schools, and I didn’t even have to leave the state.

I joined the Herald staff as the academics beat reporter in Spring 2012, having only one semester of introductory journalism courses and voracious reading habits under my belt. The first time I interviewed Gary Ransdell for a story, I couldn’t stop shaking (though admittedly, interviewing Jerry of Ben & Jerry’s fame was even more surreal).

When I left the country to study at Harlaxton, I still kept tabs on the Herald. I freelanced overseas and wrote a couple of jet-lagged stories once I returned from England. The following semester, I participated in the Disney College Program. Yet again, I freelanced, writing a feature on my experience working in Orlando for Mickey Mouse.

I came back to the Herald to write more, and I joined the Talisman staff to train a different set of writing muscles. This semester has been the most trying. As news editor, I became attuned to sirens wailing at any point around campus. I wrote stories about tuition increases, job losses, discrimination and a certain athletic team’s suspension, and none of it was easy.

I could not imagine these past four years without Student Publications, especially the College Heights Herald. I want to thank everyone at Student Publications for being encouraging, thoughtful and my family. I learned so much from every editor, every designer, every photographer, every writer, and I will miss you all dearly.

As a journalism student, I spent the past four years hearing about the death of print media, the conflicting messages of collaboration yet doing everything yourself, and how all journalists are corrupted liberals who let their biases seep through into their work. However, journalism isn’t the only major enduring these fallacies. To everyone graduating with a “useless,” “worthless,” “going-to-be-working-as-a-barista-forever” major, take pride in that degree. Own it. Don’t let preconceived notions or societal expectations sway you from following your dreams.

I’ve had to ask a lot of tough questions during my time here, but now it’s time to ask myself some very difficult questions. What do I really want out of life? Who am I? Who do I want to be? How do I get to that point? These existentialist questions seem cliché and Hallmark movie-worthy. But now I’m realizing maybe those questions became trite after generations of humans pondered those exact qualms. I’m comforted by that knowledge; seeing your predecessors scribe their own adventures and blaze their own paths is reassuring, especially when you’re in a “dying major.”

Sometimes the scariest part of graduating college involves knowing those answers. You just have to be brave enough to write the story.
Congratulations Honors College Graduates!

May 2015 Graduates

Whitney Allen
Rachel Archer
Erin Asher
Jordan Bates
Sarah Beach
Joshua Beal
Erin Beattie
Mollie Berger
Hannah Bertram
Carla Beu
John Biechele Speziale
Alyssa Born
Abigail Boyd
Emily Braunwart
Sarah Bright
Chloe Brown
Sara Brown
Natalie Buller
Kristina Burton
April Butler
Elyssa Carmony
Elizabeth Cecil
Seth Church
Kayleigh Coffey
Matthew Colonna
Deanna Conner
John Corum
Katelyn Cox
Caroline Culbreth
Whitney Davis
Janniqua Dawkins
Forrest Deacon
Lucas Deckard
Kelsey Deperto
Ian Dowty
Nefertiti-Angela Dukes
Jonathan Dunn
Emilee Dyer
Carol-Ann Eckenhals
Brandon Farmer
Riley Finwood
Sarah Fox
Jacob Frantz
Matthew Frazier
Jennifer Gaiko
Karyn Garner
Haley Garrison
Natalie Gilliam
Elizabeth Grammel
Elizabeth Gribbas
Loren Gross
Christina Guthrie
Kelsey J. Hagan
Haley Hagan
Jennifer Hail
Parker Hanna
Ericka Hardin
Paige Harrison
Taylor Hartman
Natalie Hayden
Madison Hayder
Sarah Haywood
Hayley Hilbert
Joshua Holland
Chelsea Howell
Kyndall Hudson
Tiffany Hughes
Jacob Hughes
Alexandra Hunter
Nayab Hussain
Katherine Jaggers
Nancy Jolly
Kelsey Kaetzel
Eryn Karmiller
Brandon Kerr
Garrett Kittinger
KaWai Kwon
Matthew Lawson
Shannon Lay
Jenna Lehkamp
Ashley Lethco
Abigail Lewis
Jinglin Li
Kawang Li
William Linder
Taylor Linville
William Lyle
Shareen Mann
Kyle Mann
Grace McCullough
Allison McCuhen
Maggie McGowan
Meghan McGuirk
Kristina Medero
Katie Meek
Samya Monem
Micaela Montgomery
Brittany Moster
Erin Napier
Kelsey Newcome
Amy Ni
Breanna Nuckols
Ryan Pait
William Parker
Poorvie Patel
Dharmesh Patel
Natasha Patterson
Phillip Pearson
Shelby Pedigo
Hannah Pennington
Glendon Phelps
Madeline Phillips
Christina Porter
Emily Potter
Jordan Price
Katie Prior
Janie Pratt
Nathan Puckett
Neil Pucell
Erin Raifff
Jeffrey Renden
Charles Rhea
Shelby Rice
Kiersten Richards
Emily Roach
Shelby Rogers
Tyler Scalf
Mitchell Schooler
Olivia Sharp
Noel Shaw
Megan Short
Kristian Shumate
Megan Siers
Jeanna Smith
Autumn Smith
Kaitlynn Snyder
James Soper
Helen Spalding
Joseph Starks
Kayla Steele
Kyle Stewart
Sarah Stukenborg
Kayla Sweeney
Janet N Taylor
Allison Tata
Derek Thompson
Cynthia Tope
Wesley Trail
Mallory Treece
Leah Catherine Turner

Zachary VanZant
Diana Vela
Jeffrey Walker
Rachel Walters
Claire Warren
Amelia Watkins
Wade Weatherholt
Jesse Wells
Celia Whelan
Samuel White
Leslie Whittaker
Elizabeth Whitters
Hayley Wilkins
McKinze Willard
Hunter Willis
Hannah Wilson
Timothy Wittuhn
Jonathan Wurth
Anna Young
Ashley Young

August 2015 Graduates

Courtney Broyles
Rebecca Center
Joan Devine
John Ferguson
Victoria Hampton
Melissa Hardesty
Bailey Mack
Savannah Osbourn
Victoria Peters
Emily Potts
Jade Primicias
Jon Warren
Jude Zoeller
It is unbelievable to believe in just 10 short days, I will be in E.A. Diddle, bear-hugging President Ransdell and receiving my diploma. This ceremonial act will symbolically represent my change in status from an undergraduate student to a Western Kentucky University alumni.

I believe graduation day is anticipated and experienced in two different paces, or from two different perspectives. Let’s call the first group the sprinters. These fast-paced, forward-thinking individuals would say something along the lines of “this day could not have come sooner.” However, that is not the case for the latter. The second group are those who desire a slower pace, and would attempt to tell you how they feel, but only mutter a few words before the tears would drown out any and all communication. And, me? I am just in denial.

I first stepped foot on the Hill in February of 2011 for a campus tour. Up until this point, I cynically discounted the theory of “love at first sight.” Now, more than four years later, I could not think of a better way to describe it.

My freshman year as a Hilltopper was exuberantly-exhilarating, yet equally exhausting. I got involved in more campus organizations than can be counted on two hands and changed my major three times. In hindsight, it is clear I was just trying to find my niche.

As freshman year came to a close, I received a late-night phone call in mid-April that would change my life forever. On the other end of the line was WKU senior and Spirit Master Chair Alex Faunders, telling me that I had been selected to serve as one of 32 Spirit Masters for the 2012-2013 year.

As stated in our mission, “Spirit Masters are the official student ambassadors of WKU. Through service WKU, we are responsible for preserving traditions, striving for excellence, and making the spirit of WKU contagious.”

I knew becoming a Spirit Master would change the course of my last three years of college, but never did I expect experiences that would change a lifetime.

When people ask me what is the best part of being a Spirit Master, without hesitation I reply, “the people.” It is a hodgepodge of 32 of the most high-achieving, compassionately-motivated individuals on this campus, from all walks of life.

Being a Spirit Master for three years and serving as chair this last year, I learned that leadership isn’t about how many people follow you, but rather how many people you’re able to serve.

There is something about this campus that is truly captivating. Some of my most favorable memories as a Spirit Master were giving campus tours. I gave tours to 5-year-olds and 75-year-olds. Elementary school students who thought Big Red was a “chewed up piece of Big Red gum” to alumni who cheered on the Tops at the Colonnade. Through my service as a a Spirit Master, I was able to experience the past, present and future of WKU. I will always reflect favorably and thankfully on the three years I was able to wear that gold plated name-tag, black pants and red, sometimes wrinkled polo.

Leaving anything you love is hard. For some, leaving WKU will mean moving away from home for the first time and gaining that extra ounce of desirous independence. For others, it will be the summoning beckon back to your former familiar. For me, however, it means that what has been my current familiar, will soon become former. Although my external, circumstantial situation will change, the internal transformation I have undergone will be eternal. Once a Hilltopper, always a Hilltopper. Go Tops!
Congratulations to the May and August 2015 Graduates from Ogden College of Science and Engineering.

Ogden College of Science and Engineering
Dr. Cheryl L. Stevens, Dean

MASTER OF ARTS
Mathematics
Charity G. Burriss
Emily M. Evanko
Thomas L. Griggs
Kerry J. Koch
Terry W. Pelfrey
Kayla M. Smith
Melinda V. Thompson
Matthew E. Wallace

MASTER OF SCIENCE
Agriculture
Danielle L. Berkshire
Justin P. Duckworth
Paige A. Montgomery
Jason T. Osburn
Ryan L. Phelps
Zachary P. Vincent
Yao Xue
Biological Sciences
Jeremy G. Barren
Michael A. Barrow
Mark J. Blake
Bright B. Kahndi
Panagiotis Kakavand
Wedanikia K. Majinde
Mychal D. Moses
Zheng Ren
Troy A. Robertson
Richard D. Suchanek
Troy A. Robertson
Laraine A. Tumblin
Douglas L. Rowland
Daniel C. Moore
Cameron R. Lile

BACHELOR OF ARTS
Chemistry
Michael A. Alrawi
Augustine O. Arong
Nicholas J. Cross
Blake Cvekrgos
Abdulameed Dawood
Samantha J. Duncan
Samuel B. Elsworth
Barrett A. Hampton
MingWei Hu
Bright B. Kahndi
Pegah Kakavand
Vedangh K. Mahabshabe
Mychal D. Moses
Zheng Ren
Troy A. Robertson
Richard D. Suchanek
Troy A. Robertson
Laraine A. Tumblin
Douglas L. Rowland
Daniel C. Moore
Cameron R. Lile
Biological Sciences
Jeremy G. Barren
Michael A. Barrow
Mark J. Blake
Bright B. Kahndi
Panagiotis Kakavand
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Zheng Ren
Troy A. Robertson
Richard D. Suchanek
Troy A. Robertson
Laraine A. Tumblin
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BACHELOR OF SCIENCE
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Mychal D. Moses
Zheng Ren
Troy A. Robertson
Richard D. Suchanek
Troy A. Robertson
Laraine A. Tumblin
Douglas L. Rowland
Daniel C. Moore
Cameron R. Lile
I would be lying if I said that the act of writing this essay weren’t more than a bit surreal. For the past semester, I have drifted through campus with a countdown clock looming over my head. At first, graduation was a distant prize, something that helped me sleep at night. January and February passed, and, as if all at once, the “eventually” that prefaced my final days at WKU became “soon.” Inevitable. Immediate. Professors, family and friends all seemed to suddenly converge on one question: “How does it feel to almost be done?”

How does it feel?
It’s like tripping on a drainage grate as you cross paths with some beautiful stranger. It’s like watching the lights fade during the premiere of “Avengers: Age of Ultron” only to hear someone ask if Batman would be making an appearance. It’s like entering Fresh Food immediately after the Leaky Cup Purge of 2015: Definitely a welcome change, but still an underwhelming compensation for all the times I left DUC—sorry, DSU—with Diet Coke splattered all over my shorts.

That’s graduation in a nutshell. It’s a mess of emotion, equal parts nostalgia and nausea, wonderment and horror.

This essay has been an exercise in retracing my steps, in desperately sifting through four years of memories and experiences for something that might impress all the people I used to think I needed to impress. If I’m being honest—and I am—I’d have to admit that my journey to this submission has been one stymied by more than self-deprecating humor. I entered WKU with a certain amount of cynicism and skepticism—pre-dispositions that I came to recognize as symptoms of deeper, often closeted issues: Prufrockian levels of anxiety, low self-esteem and a constant fear that I wasn’t good enough—physically, mentally, etc.—to pursue my dreams.

That internal saboteur grew quiet after I joined Student Publications.

My tenure on multiple Talisman and College Heights Herald staffs shattered my comfort zone in the best ways. In time, my patchwork of experiences made me more willing to take risks. I saw my mistakes, my struggles, as beautiful, for they became chances to grow and, ultimately, to adapt. Through Student Publications, I’ve come to realize that I exist beyond a GPA. I’m more than a semester’s worth of Steak ‘n Shake or an obscene number of all-nighters.

I am Josh Beal.

To acknowledge the profound impact others have had in shaping my personal journey is to discover the spirit of WKU. My fondest moments of college are those that allowed me to empower others: afternoons reading to the Burmese ESL students at Briarwood Elementary; morning roundtables with high school journalists; the gleam in strangers’ eyes as they found themselves in an edition of the Talisman.

Sometimes, when I’m lucky, I manage to shed my insecurities and catch glimpses of the way my friends and colleagues see me. It manifests in the tug of a smile or raucous laughter, a pat on the back or a Valentine’s Day card with “thank you” scrawled on the inside. These gems of clarity, in a quiet way, show me that I’ve made a small difference in other peoples’ lives. I think that’s reward enough.
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