

Pamela Napier, B.A. English, 1978

By Abigail Ponder

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The world is constantly evolving, and the job market is changing gears along with it. Fortunately, English degrees are among the most versatile in the market—a fact Pamela Napier (1978, 1998) knows very well.

Napier graduated from Western Kentucky University with a BA in English in 1978 and an MA in communication in 1998. Following graduation, she worked in several different fields and positions: teaching high school English, working in public radio and in a professional theatre, serving as a museum educator, and even spending time as a human resources generalist. Through the variety of her positions, she learned “to be flexible and think on [her] feet.”

In 1996, Napier moved into a research administration position at WKU in the Office of Sponsored Programs. After spending 15 years with the department, she transitioned to Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia, where she organized a brand new [Office of Sponsored Programs](#) from the ground up.

As the office’s director, Napier helps staff and faculty members find resources to facilitate their research or creative projects. “The field of research administration requires strong analytical skills and the ability to understand complex grant proposal guidelines and federal regulations,” she said. “Technical and persuasive writing, along with editing, are daily activities. An English degree hones those skills.”

In Napier’s opinion, degrees in English are designed to provide maximum versatility through their frequent creative endeavors. “I believe that an English major is often the best hire for any job,” she said. “We can adapt to changes in our work environments because we have read so widely and have become citizens of the world through our reading of world literature.”

Ultimately, Napier's advice for other English students is to have an open mind when exploring potential careers. The job market of today isn't necessarily the same as it will be in the future. "[Before my career] I had never heard the term 'research administrator' when I was in college," she said. "My advice is to be open to trying any job that sounds interesting. The best jobs are those that allow you to learn something new every day."

