

## More than Just a Program

Meeting new people has never been my forte. Going up to strangers and saying, “Hi, my name’s Kelly. What’s your name?” felt like giving a speech to the United Nations General Assembly. Attending parties left me feeling awkward, socially inept, and very discouraged. How was I going to survive the real world once I left the comforts of home? Would I be able to make new friends and find a community in which I would be comfortable? These questions weighed heavily on me as I prepared to take the next step in my education: college.

Cedarville University was a whole new world to me. I felt lost and small in the midst of hundreds of students. When I entered my first Professional Writing and Information Design (PWID) class, I saw nine unfamiliar faces looking right at me, and I immediately wanted to run straight back to my dorm room. Thankfully, Professor Nicholas Carrington pushed me to interact with my new classmates, and I eventually made friends and started to have fun in the class.

College can be a busy and sometimes lonely experience, especially for an introvert, but the PWID program offered me a community for interaction and enjoyment. Through group events like the annual Halloween party and Christmas party, my classmates, professors, and I interacted outside of classes and got to know each other on a more personal level. I learned to appreciate the different personalities of my classmates and how I, as a person, fit into the group. The PWID’s annual spring trips also enhanced the program’s sense of community. These trips can be wonderful times of unique bonding. I’ve had good conversations with my professors and classmates while learning more about myself. As a group, we have attended conferences, visited many companies, eaten at restaurants, played games (a lot of Mafia), and built stronger relationships with each other. I never regretted going on any of those trips and have come to regard the annual spring trip as one of the highlights of the school year.

The PWID’s community enriched my time at Cedarville University and my learning experience. Each year brought me closer to my PWID classmates, making every PWID class a joy to take. I learned new skills in the classroom, but it was the people and professors in the class who made it worth taking. Those relationships buoyed me when difficult times occurred during my college career. I owe a lot to Professor Sandra Harner and Professor Nicholas Carrington. They set the friendly tone and welcoming atmosphere of the major, making a wonderful community where students, like me, can grow and flourish with each other.

As my time at Cedarville University ends, I realize the PWID major is more than just a program, more than a set of classes you have to take before you get a degree, and more than a

title on your resume. It's a group of people with varying personalities and skills. It's a place where you can learn, think, and grow as a professional and an individual. It's a place where I have learned more about people, life, and myself, but what's most important about this program is this: it's a community that has become like family.