

This summer I had the opportunity to intern at Beacon Press, an independent publisher of serious nonfiction with an emphasis on social issues. I knew that Beacon's mission resonated with me before I began my internship, and I was excited to combine my love of literature with my passion for social justice in a professional setting. I am grateful to both Beacon Press and BUCH for granting me this opportunity, and my experience this summer exceeded my greatest expectations.

I spent the first half of my rotational summer internship at Beacon Press with the editorial department, where my work primarily consisted of reading book proposals and drafting reader's reports on a wide range of topics, including neuroscience, politics, religion, and environmental justice. I also had the opportunity to sit in on weekly editorial staff meetings, where I listened to the team discuss and debate potential future Beacon Press titles. These meetings gave me a sense of how editorial decisions are made and greatly informed my own reports. I learned so much through reading and discussing with other members of the team, and it was really cool to observe and contribute to some of the earliest steps of the publishing process.

I also did a variety of research projects and other small tasks while working with the editorial department. I researched potential blurb sources, eligibility and entry requirements for book awards, and potential social issues for Beacon to explore in future publications. I also drafted rejection letters and edited the script of an upcoming audiobook. These projects allowed me to explore parts of the editorial process that I wouldn't have seen in our weekly staff meetings, so I was given a full picture of the many different roles and responsibilities that editors take on.

The second half of my rotational summer internship was spent with the marketing department, where my work included organizing spreadsheets, gathering updated shipping addresses for complimentary book orders, and drafting Tweets for Beacon Press's official Twitter account. I also had the chance to do some research on "BookTok," a new and extremely popular book tag on TikTok. As a reader who spends a lot of time on this tag, it was really cool to bring that knowledge to the marketing team and discuss the potential for Beacon Press to join this platform. Additionally, I had the chance to analyze and discuss 2021 trends on Beacon's blog and website, and this gave me a good idea of what content is consistently popular with Beacon's readership, as well as what social factors might change or influence readership trends.

As in the editorial department, I also sat in on weekly marketing staff meetings, and it was interesting to see how these teams differ in structure and communicate with one another. While I had a better understanding of the general publishing process from my time with the editorial team, my time in marketing gave me a completely different perspective of the work that goes into bringing a book to the shelves.

While I was initially very nervous about the fact that my internship was going to be virtual, I had an absolutely amazing experience this summer. Despite not being able to meet in person, I was able to talk extensively with a lot of wonderful members of the Beacon Press staff. The daily check-ins with my supervisors helped guide my work, but they also gave me the chance to talk about finer details of the publishing process, learn about other departments besides editorial and marketing, and ask any questions I had. Before this internship, I didn't really have a good idea of just how much goes into publishing a book besides reading and editing, so it was interesting and enlightening to learn about the many different roles on Beacon's team. These conversations

contributed just as much to my learning as the work I was doing itself, and I am so grateful to everyone who made time to chat with me.

My biggest takeaway from this experience is that Beacon Press *really* values their interns. Whether it was in formal staff meetings or Zoom coffee sessions, I always felt welcomed and valued as a member of the Beacon Press team. While I jumped straight into writing reader's reports in my first week with editorial, my supervisor also spent lots of time just describing the publishing process in general and making sure I had the necessary background to fully understand and contribute to our staff meetings. I was always able to ask questions or discuss things I was curious about, and I am beyond grateful to my supervisors for their efforts to help me gain as much as possible from this virtual internship. I felt valued as a team member here, and I gained more knowledge and experience than I knew was possible in just eight weeks.