

I spent my summer as an intern at Beacon Press, a primarily-nonfiction publisher with a focus on social justice issues across a variety of disciplines. During my summer at Beacon, I was time and time again impressed by the level of care each member of the team put into each book, focusing on the potential impact of its message on the targeted readership, as well as the book's ability to sell. I would like to thank both BUCH and Beacon Press for making this internship possible, and for introducing me to the world of nonfiction publishing.

I spent one month in the editorial department under the supervision of the editorial director and an assistant editor. Though Beacon Press remains a hybrid work space, I attended daily check-ins with my supervisors over Zoom on virtual days to discuss my ongoing projects and pose any questions I had about my work or the editorial process. My supervisors were incredibly knowledgeable and eager to share what they knew. Many times, they sat down with me to discuss the state of the publishing industry or walk me through the different software programs used to track book data.

I reviewed book proposals and profit & loss calculations before sitting in on weekly editorial meetings as the acquiring editor discussed the merits of each proposal with the team. I also had the opportunity to attend a transmittal meeting, which is when the editor hands the completed manuscript off to the production department to be copyedited, typeset, and eventually turned into a physical book.

In addition to observing the work of established editors, I also had the opportunity to complete many of my own projects. I reviewed multiple new book proposals, compiling reader's reports for my supervisor to review before considering a book. I also wrote rejection letters where appropriate. My largest project during my time with the editorial department was writing the reader's guide for an upcoming book. My experience in editorial expanded my understanding of what it means to be an editor; the job is much more complex than buying a proposal, sitting down to mark up the manuscript with red pen, and then sending it off to the printer.

After my month in editorial, I spent two weeks in the publicity department. I compiled media contacts lists for two titles currently in production using databases for publishers. My assignments while in the publicity department included drafting questions for an author Q&A, compiling a facts sheet to be used for marketing purposes, analyzing the media coverage of past and comparative titles, and writing article and interview pitches for different media outlets. Since each publicist only handles their assigned titles, I had the opportunity to work with nearly every member of the department on the different books.

Much like with the editorial check-ins, my interactions with the people in publicity were not limited to details of immediate assignments. I learned about book publicity, but I also heard from those who had previously held publicity jobs in other sectors or had attended graduate programs in publicity or book publishing. Though I did not intern with the design department, I did have the opportunity to meet with a member of the design team during this time to discuss the effort that goes into creating book covers.

Once my two weeks in publicity were finished, I spent the last weeks working with the marketing department. While in marketing, I used the Beacon website to search for frontlist and backlist titles that could be grouped together in ads. I selected books and wrote copy for two ads. I also designed promotional materials and social media graphics for upcoming titles using Canva. I even had the chance to format and write one of Beacon's newsletters to academics. My supervisor in marketing also made sure to give me more day-to-day tasks, such as updating addresses and creating spreadsheets for book mailings.

Throughout my time at Beacon, many people reached out to me to chat about their job and to provide general advice. Toward the end of my time at Beacon, the staff ate lunch together, and I learned more about the people behind the press. I gained insight into the different roles at Beacon and how Beacon as a smaller independent press differs from larger houses where others had worked before.

My internship at Beacon was such a valuable chance for me to learn not only about publishing at Beacon specifically but about the industry as a whole and the uniqueness of the book market. I am beyond thankful for my supervisors, who guided me through my time at Beacon, and to everyone who made it a point to reach out to me over the course of the summer.