

Margaret Roberts '20, English



Over the summer, I had the pleasure of interning at Kneerim & Williams, a reputable literary agency situated on Boston's lively Canal St. Founded in 1990 by Jill Kneerim and Ike Williams, the agency is well into its third decade of representing talented writers of all genres, with a heavy focus on nonfiction.

As an editorial intern, my work at the agency largely involved sifting through the submissions inbox in search of queries with potential—a task that, though sometimes bleak, proved highly rewarding whenever something good turned up. I also read and evaluated manuscripts under consideration, and even gave my input on works-in-progress by clients. The work was intellectually stimulating and allowed for subjectivity—though my academic background as an English student at Wellesley certainly helped, I also felt myself listening to my intuition more and more, learning how to verbalize my gut reactions to projects rather than trying to consider everything objectively. I became more aware of my own literary tastes and preferences as well, which helped me approach my work more intelligently. And, because I was lucky enough to have a lot of freedom in terms of where I focused my energy on a day-to-day basis, I was also able to spend time on projects in which I already felt invested, which made my work enjoyable and rewarding.

I also did staple intern tasks: getting the mail, sorting the mail, going to the post office, going to the bank, filing things, copying things, scanning things—once, even returning (and rescheduling) an incorrect flower delivery. I got to experience a lot of the West End this way.

As the only intern in the office, I received plenty of support and attention. Lucy Cleland '13 was an absolute gem, answering even my most idiotic questions with endless patience (I think she showed me how to work the copier twice), and I learned quite a bit about the industry—and what I should consider when evaluating works of writing from a publishing perspective—from discussing various projects with her. I was able to sit in on biweekly editorial meetings, which were both informative and never-boring. Despite the seriousness and quality of their work, the agents themselves—and everyone else in the office—are down-to-earth and kind, and the office environment in general is calm and relaxed. I had a lovely-yet-exciting summer, and I recommend this internship to anyone who enjoys reading contemporary literature, tends to have hard opinions on things, and enjoys wearing jeans to work.