

2018

On Internships: Kelsey Medlin, MAPW Alumna

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Kelsey Medlin



Kelsey Medlin—Photo courtesy of Samantha Ansley Photography

Kelsey is an MAPW alumni with a degree in Creative Writing and an Applied Writing supporting area. She graduated July 2018. The questions below reflect Kelsey's Spring 2018 semester.

In a few sentences, please describe your internship position, so that our readers get to know a little more about what you do.

This semester, I am working as Dr. Regina Bradley's editorial assistant as we develop the first draft of her upcoming novel. Each week, she sends me a draft of her chapter, and I provide feedback on what the development of plot, setting, and characters.

How long have you been in this internship and how did you find out about its availability?

This is actually my second semester working with Dr. Bradley as her editorial assistant. Last summer, I was informed through another graduate student that the English Department was looking for an editor for a new faculty member who was developing her new book. In the fall of 2017, I joined Dr. Bradley's writing process as she wrote her academic book about the OutKast and the Hip Hop South, and once

that book was completed, Dr. Bradley asked me to continue in the spring to work with her on her novel.

What was the process for you to apply and pursue your internship?

When I heard about the internship, I was connected with Dr. Smith-Sitton who asked me for my resume and cover letter to pass along to Dr. Bradley. A week or so later, I received news that I was accepted for the position. Dr. Smith-Sitton and I then filled out the paper work to receive credit for the internship through the university. The process required me to make an account and apply for the internship through HandShake.

Are there any specific reasons surrounding your professional development that led you to this internship? If so, please share them with us.

I have wanted to be an editor in the publishing industry since high school, and my first course in the MAPW program, Issues and Research, led me to develop a scholarly paper on how a predominantly white publishing industry affects minority writers, especially in a current industry culture that is calling for more diverse titles and authors. This topic is very dear to my heart as I wish to be an thorough yet thoughtful editor when I work with my future authors. If my experience as a writer has taught me anything, it's that writing is deeply personal and requires a lot of trust between the writer and editor as it is developed. My research opened my eyes to the fact that authors of color cannot trust their editors or publishers for fear of erasure and homogenization in order to be validated as "good" writing and published. This research has led me to want to challenge myself and reflect on my own editing process, so when I heard about Dr. Bradley's internship and her topic, I knew that I wanted to work with her so that I could grow as an editor.

How do you think this internship has helped you professionally? Any new skills or renewed skills that you may have developed as an intern?

Working with Dr. Bradley has helped me exponentially over these past two semesters. Under her guidance and through her academic and creative work, I have been challenged to reflect on my own editing process, to question why I make the comments that I make. Is it because of my own

cultural bias or something truly missing in the story for it to be clear? Dr. Bradley has also introduced me to a wide range of authors and stories that are outside of the white, straight, male cannon that has dominated my reading. By stepping outside of this hegemonic collection, I have widen my tools and techniques to better gauge what makes up a “good” story. This expansion has also helped my research and the development of my capstone as a call for this majority white industry to redefine and reflect the criteria they compare writers of color to when they edit.

Any special stories about your internship? Funny moments? Insightful moments?

Every meeting with Dr. Bradley is a joyful experience. She is incredibly funny and so much fun to work with. We keep each other laughing in our sessions. Plus, we are both big nerds, so we often dovetail to talk about the newest fantasy book or comic that just came out. We’ve spent quite a bit of time talking about “Black Panther,” but the cool thing about those conversations aren’t just that we get to “nerd out” but we are able to discuss them more deeply than the surface level conversations I have with people outside of academia. Together, we can talk about the art of storytelling and the way writers of color write themselves into existence, which is one of the most amazing parts of my internship with her.

Have you participated in other internships that may have provided you with professional development opportunities? If so, could you briefly tell us about them?

I have had the most wonderful internship opportunities through KSU. For a time during my undergrad, I was a double major in theatre and English. Through the Theatre and Performance Studies department, I was able to intern with the Center for Puppetry Arts as the understudy for the Fish in *The Cat in the Hat*. That show and the experience taught me a lot about the art of storytelling through performance. In my English degree, though, I had the opportunity to intern as a publicity and marketing intern for Peachtree Publishers, a children’s publisher in Atlanta, for a semester. The following semester, I moved into the editorial internship with the company, which led to me joining their company upon graduation in May 2016. Both internships with Peachtree Publishers provided me with knowledge about how the publishing industry works and the different departments and affirmed my desire to be pursue editing as a career path.



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