

Adriana Funke, B.A. English Professional Writing, 2016

By Melissa Rush & Max Chambers

International Rights Director, JABberwocky Literary Agency, Inc.

“I’m glad I went to a university that values global citizenship. I do not doubt that my knowledge of other cultures helped give me an edge in the interview process for my current job.”



Initially, it was Western Kentucky University's Photojournalism program that led Adriana Funke to the university, but the Professional Writing program combined her visual creativity with the ability to write critically and analytically. She served as the Advising and Outreach Chairperson for the Student Representatives of the Office of Study Abroad & Global Learning and, she spoke about her experience studying in Europe at the Study Abroad graduation reception.

Taking part in the WKU Study Abroad program was a highlight of Funke's time at WKU. She studied twentieth-century literature, travel writing, Italian, and archaeology while at the Lorenzo De' Medici Institute in Florence, Italy. "Almost daily I think about my host family and the friends I made in Tuscany. I'm glad I went to a university that values global citizenship."

She also participated in the English department internship program as a teaching assistant for English 299: Introduction to English Studies. Throughout the semester she assisted the professor in grading assignments, holding additional office hours, preparing teaching assignments, and scheduling guest speakers.

After graduating from WKU, Funke was accepted into the [Columbia Publishing Course's](#) United Kingdom session in 2017. During the month-long course, Funke lived at Exeter College on the campus of Oxford University in England. "My classmates and I attended daily lectures from editors, agents, scouts, production managers, subsidiary rights directors, and authors. The course concluded with Book Week, an intense workshop where we were split into groups and tasked with 'creating' a publishing house. We produced a list of our (hypothetical) forthcoming titles— everything from

the cover design, to who the author would be, to the marketing campaign for each book, to production costs and projected sales figures. It was an exhausting experience, but it was an amazingly helpful introduction to how a publishing house functions.” Funke was then hired by [JABberwocky Literary Agency, Inc.](#) as a Foreign Rights Assistant before being promoted in September 2018.

As the International Rights Director, Funke works with international publishing houses to sell manuscripts in other countries. “As the director, I oversee all of the negotiations and I personally handle the more delicate ones. I also do more ‘behind the scenes’ work with royalty statements and tax forms, and I plan out our long-term projects, such as preparing for London Book Fair.”

Funke suggests that current students focus on networking and take help when offered. “I would encourage undergrads to network and use the resources available to them at WKU. For example, I got my publishing internship by talking with a friend of a friend who knew someone who worked at an agency. When someone tells you that you can reach out to them for advice or help, they generally mean it, so you shouldn't be afraid to follow-up with them. In fact, if any current WKU students have thought about publishing, I would be more than happy to chat with them.”

