

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

By *Melissa Rush*

Foreign Rights Assistant, JABberwocky Literary Agency, Inc.

"I'm thrilled to say that I am exactly doing what I want to be doing at this stage in my career. I wasn't sure exactly which area of publishing I wanted to be in, but I learned to love the agent side of the business, and I became intrigued by the thought of working with foreign literary agents and publishers."



Initially, it was Western Kentucky University's photojournalism program that led Adriana Funke to the university, but as she moved to the professional writing program, she 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 was asked to speak about her experience in studying in Europe at the Study Abroad graduation reception.

After her graduation in 2016, Funke applied to the [Columbia Publishing Course](#) and was accepted into the CPC 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."

[JABberwocky Literary Agency, Inc.](#) primarily represents science fiction and fantasy fiction authors and sells their manuscripts in the best-suited markets. As a foreign rights assistant, Funke works with many international publishing houses to sell scripts in other countries. "My daily tasks cover several areas, but a typical day could involve reviewing contracts line by line to make sure the language is correct, using our database

to track those contracts through the signing process, emailing our partner agents in foreign markets, emailing our authors about pending offers, sending production material to the foreign publishers so they can print their translated editions, tracking royalty statements and overdue payments, and updating our agency's website. During tax season, I make sure our authors correctly fill out a specific type of U.S. tax form along with any necessary foreign tax forms." Her most recent project was working to facilitate meetings and update the foreign rights catalog for one of the most significant literary events in the world; the London Book Fair.

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. I do not doubt that my knowledge of other cultures helped give me an edge in the interview process for my current job."

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. She often helped with assignments during class periods as well.

One of Funke's best suggestion to current students was to continually network and take help when offered. She even provided her willingness to talk to students interested in publishing. "My two pieces of advice might sound cliché, but 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."

