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Genevieve Cheng 01:34

To anyone outside the world of publishing, it's not an industry that's well known. How it works, what careers it holds. Everything about it is almost a mystery to the uninitiated. So one of my favorite things to ask people who have done the Master is how did you discover it and what drove you to SFU MPub program. When Heidi finished her bachelor's degree in literature from UBC, she decided that editing might be the right path for her. But, publishing wasn't her first stop at SFU.

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Heidi Waechtler 01:57

So, I did an undergrad degree at UBC in English Literature and obviously enjoyed writing, reading. And was working in various administrative roles that allowed me to sort of flex some of those communication skills and decided, you know, like, I really, I'm not a great writer, but I'm actually really good at helping other people shape their writing and find their voice. I gravitated towards the editing certificate, which gave me a lot of those fundamental skills, and-but it really set me up personally for a freelance career. There wasn't necessarily like a clear path to going to an in house role at that point. So, I was doing a bit of freelance editing a bit of volunteer work. But, I decided at that point was that I really enjoyed the business side of publishing as well, and-and that's what was sort of missing for me as a freelancer. I didn't have that insight into the convergence of uh the business, like the commercial side of publishing and the actual creative editorial work, an-and that sort of nexus of culture building that I felt was really drawing me in. So-so that's what uh, inspired me to look into the MPub program. I felt like that was kind of the place to go to set me on the path towards an in house publishing career.

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Genevieve Cheng 03:14

Okay, so, then you did the Masters.

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Heidi Waechtler 03:16

Mhm!

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Genevieve Cheng 03:16

Did you find the editing certificate really helped your Master's experience?

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Heidi Waechtler 03:20

It was a completely different experience, because the MPub is a cohort. I think we had 18 in my cohort, this was in 2011. And, uhm, so you were doing, you know, spending virtually the entire day sometimes the night with your classmates, as you know, from working on projects and go-really going through the experience together. Whereas, um, in the editing certificate,



 Genevieve Cheng 06:39

Oh, it's still an issue. There's always these lists online about top ten most useless degrees to get. Communication is always one of the top ten: "It's useless, you don't learn anything? What are you doing learning to communicate?" So, my op-ed was just about how they just have really bad public relations.



06:55

[both laughing]

 Genevieve Cheng 06:56

No one really cares too much about the theory when you're not in it. Like, I love talking about the public sphere. But, that's because I'm a nerd about it and I'm a nerd about my degree, but like, anybody else would probably be like, what?

 Heidi Waechtler 07:00

Yeah, it's funny, you think about going to publishing school. Um, and you're like, I'm going to learn how to be a good designer, a good editor, a good salesperson, a good marketer, but I'm not sure that everyone goes in necessarily thinking I'm going to learn how to be a publishing thinker or publishing thought leader. And what I like about a publishing undergrad minor or a Masters is that it really gives you the space to think through all of the history and the current issues and the problems without constraint. And you can think about like, what might I contribute to the industry, and y-you don't have to be super practical all the time, you can dream a little more, I think, than in a more rigid like certificate program. Right? Yeah!

 Genevieve Cheng 07:52

Right.

 Heidi Waechtler 07:52

[music plays]

 Genevieve Cheng 07:57

After joking around about how to say the acronym for the Association of Book Publishers of British Columbia, the ABPBC, Heidi acknowledged how important the Master was in informing her decisions that she made while she was the executive director of the Association. But, I'm



road. Now that she found her path into the publishing industry as she had hoped, what part of the industry did she want to dive into first?

Heidi Waechter 10:52

After I did the MPub program, I decided to move to Toronto to do my internship at McClelland and Stewart "and I ended

larger company, you know, I was in the editorial department and we were very much... um, I wouldn't say operating in a silo, but we had limited opportunities to connect with other departments. Like we would periodically meet with, you know, production team or design team, sales team. It's not to say that we didn't collaborate, but I didn't feel I was getting the bigger picture of how all the pieces came together. And ~~to~~ ~~us~~





be interested in returning to in the future, teaching. Back in fall 2020, she was a guest

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Heidi Waechter 21:25

So, I did the-the coursework component of the program and went off to do my internship and thought I would try to complete my project report um during that time, and shortly thereafter. And had a few false starts, had a couple of different topics I started writing about, and kind of got busy with my work and building my career ~~sp~~ice

music 23:12

[music plays]

Genevieve Cheng 23:14

Well, thank you so much for sitting down. Wonderful experiences. Thank you for sharing a lot of interesting stories about your career and a lot of inside scoop.

Heidi Waechtler 23:23

Thanks, Genevieve. Thanks for inviting me and um all the best to you with your next career move as well.

Genevieve Cheng 23:29

Thank you, thank you.

music 23:38

[music plays]

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