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## University of denver summer publishing institute

by Jillian Bergsma There are not a lot of places that are better than Denver, Colorado in the summer. Perfect blue sky every day, mountains on the horizon-oh, and one of the best publishing programs in the whole world. The University of Denver Publishing Institute (DPI) was founded in 1976, and is one of the few post-graduate publishing programs available. Every year, DPI receives about 100 students to participate in the four-week course in the book industry. Speakers from all over the country will provide wisdom about the aspiring publishing professionals, knowing that students will soon be their collaborators and competitors. I spent four weeks of my summer out at Denver, soaking up everything I could about the industry. We heard from speakers from trading houses, scientific journals, literary agencies and printers. We met with editors, marketers, publishers and writers. Plus, we met our fellow students. I wouldn't be surprised if my classmates continued to be CEOs of Big Six houses, publishing the next big novel or reinventing the digital revolution. I think DPI is one of the best kept secrets in the publishing industry, and you'd be surprised how many people have come through the course. More than 3,000 students of all ages and interests have graduated and gone on to careers in book, journal and journal publishing (not to mention lots of other opportunities open to a DPI degree). The lectures are inspiring, the assignments are challenging, and the atmosphere is incredible. For a whole month, you eat, sleep and breathe books in all their different stages. We spent days on the intricacies of copyediting. We spent hours perfecting marketing budgets. And every day had something new. Here are some of the highlights (and I should mention that two of these folks are DPI grads themselves):

- Opening remarks/Publication overview: Michael Pietsch, Executive Vice President, Hachette Book Group and Publisher, Little, Brown and Company.
- Editor's role: Andrea Schulz, Vice-President, Editor-in-Chief, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Editing workshop: Directed by Karl Weber, President, Karl Weber Literary, former editor and publisher with McGraw-Hill, John Wiley & Sons, and Nan Gatewood Satter, Independent Book Editor, former editor of Doubleday.
- University Press/Scholarly Publishing: Peter Dougherty, Director, Princeton University Press.
- Copyediting: Alice Levine, freelance editor and former Copy Chief, Westview Press.
- Reference Publishing in the Digital Age: Larry Baker, Senior Content Project Editor, Gale/Cengage Learning.
- Children's books: Virginia Duncan, Vice President, Publisher, Greenwillow Books/HarperCollins Publishers.
- International publishing and subsidiary law: Kristin Kliemann, Vice President, Rights, John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Trade Books Marketing Workshop, Marketing Overview: Carl Lennertz, Executive Director, World Book Night USA and former Vice President, Marketing/Independent Retailing, HarperCollins Publishers.
- Social Media Marketing Strategies: Erica Barmash, Marketing Manager, HarperCollins.
- Magazine publishing: Daniel Brogan, editor and publisher, 5280: Denver magazine.
- A day with independent publishers: David R. Godine, David R. Godine, publisher; Gary Groth, Fantagraphics Book; Jack Jensen, Chronicle Books; Carolyn Sakowski, John F. Blair, publisher; Marina Tristán, Arte Público Press; and Peter Workman, Workman Publishing.
- Beginning: Dominique Raccach, CEO and publisher, Sourcebooks, IncWe took field trips to Tattered Cover, Frederic Printing and Fulcrum Publishing to make sure the business happens first hand. DPI planned career planning, mock interviews, and even network workshops to prepare its students for the post-graduation world. And, almost a month after leaving Denver, I still get notifications of job openings and opportunities for Denver grads. Of course, none of this would be possible without the work of some dedicated, talented and amazing employees. Joyce Meskis, Jill Smith and Jennifer Conder know what it takes to make this program work. I'm sure many of you are familiar with Joyce Meskis: champion of independent booksellers, enemy censorship, and around the inspirational figure in the book world. In addition to being director of DPI, she is also the owner and CEO of the famous Tattered Cover Bookstore. She is a role model for every student at the institute, and we were lucky to learn from her knowledge and commitment. Joyce and Jill gave me a little more insight into theirs on the program. Here's what they have to say about DPI 2012:IP: What do you think made DPI 2012 stand out? Jill: First, we kicked off with Michael Pietsch, the publisher of Little, Brown and editor of NY Times bestseller The Art of Fielding. We were also pleased to add a fantastic workshop on book production, taught by Jim Becker of becker&#amp;mayer!, which gave students an alternative picture of how books can be created and find an audience. IP: What are some of the elements that go into making DPI happen every year? Joyce: The institute happens as a result of the successful confluence of a million details, small and large over the 12-month period. It takes a full 11 months to prepare for the 4 weeks of class. As soon as a class is finished (actually, even before) we prepare for next year. IP: Why do you think this course is important, both for recent college grads and for professionals looking for a change in career? Jill: Denver Publishing Institute empowers students a comprehensive understanding of the area of publishing. Students can take that knowledge and use it to find their own place in the industry, a career best suited to their skills and interests. Participating in the Publishing Institute shows to employers that an applicant has a commitment to the field of book publishing, as well as the understanding of the industry that would take years to train at work. DPI caters to book lovers of all ages and backgrounds, and it's one of the best places to learn about and get into the publishing industry. For more information, visit their website at [www.du.edu/publishinginstitute](http://www.du.edu/publishinginstitute) and read more about the application process here.\* \*\*\*\* Jillian Bergsma is the author and contributing editor of Independent Publisher. She graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in English. She welcomes any questions or comments to her articles on [jbergsma \(at\) bookpublishing.com](mailto:jbergsma@bookpublishing.com). Comments Beautiful Denver, Colorado! As I mentioned in my last article, I have wanted to work with publishing since I was 12 years old. In college, after my very first English practice class, my professor pulled me into her office, sat down, and asked me what I wanted to do after graduation. I said I want to be an editor, with confidence. And then we started planning out the rest of my life. Along with a list of classes to take, extracurricular activities to join, and department alumni to contact, I was told that, after graduating, I would attend the Denver Publishing Institute (DPI). The Publishing Institute is a month-long intensive summer program run by the University of Denver. It was founded in 1976 by the late Elizabeth Geiser, a prominent member of the New York publishing industry. It is currently directed by Joyce Meskis, owner of the amazing Tattered Cover Bookstore. The classes consist of a week-long editing seminar, a week-long marketing seminar and lectures on each subject related to book publishing, all taught by professionals. In addition to DPI, there are two other major summer publishing programs: Columbia Publishing Course and NYU Summer Publishing Institute. All three boast superb networks that can help you land an entry-level job, and Columbia and NYU courses, apparently, are in New York City, right in the heart of the industry. However, only the Denver program concentrates solely on book publishing—unlike Columbia and NYU, both of which divide their time between books and magazines. This strong focus convinced me that Denver was the program that would be most beneficial to me. In 2010, my goal became a reality. Every morning, about a hundred of us would file in a lecture hall. For the first week we spent the mornings with Nan Satter and Karl Webber, two respected editors-turned-freelancers who led us in a book-editing workshop. During the summer, we had become read a book manuscript, for which we had to prepare a reader's report. In the workshop, Nan and Karl directed us in various editing exercises, culminating in a revised reader report of the manuscript. The mornings of our second week were devoted to a marketing workshop led by the ever-energetic Carl Lennertz, former VP of Indie Retailing at HarperCollins (he is now executive director of World Book Night USA). For this workshop, we read another manuscript and prepared a marketing plan for the book. In the afternoons and the remaining two weeks we heard from representatives from all over the industry. We had lectures from industry leaders on all aspects of publishing: editorial, marketing, publicity, literary agencies, subsidiary rights, printing, design, e-books, book packaging, finance, copyright law and bookselling. In addition to our formal lessons, there was a great emphasis on breaking into the publishing industry and finding an entry-level job. The director of human resources at Scholastic talked to us about what he is looking for in an entry-level candidate and how to structure our resumes. DPI arranged for each of us to have a mock interview with representatives from companies in both New York and Colorado, and there were briefings and even some real interviews during the last days of the program. But if there was anything I learned on DPI, it was the importance of networking. A month of lunches and Thursday picnics gave me plenty of time to learn how to approach strangers and promote myself, not just on a resume, but personally. I wrote down names and took business cards. After each productive conversation, I would run back to my computer and write an email to the person, thanking him or her for our chat. In the end, this really gave off! On the day that Roth Wilkofsky (chairman, at the time, of Pearson Higher Education English, communication, political science lists) came to talk about textbook publication, I offered to escort him as we went to lunch. We discussed my past achievements, as well as my hopes for my professional future. He told me to get in touch after I graduated from Denver, and I did just that. As soon as I got home, I applied for every editorial assistant position that Pearson had to offer. I emailed Roth to ask him for advice, and before I knew he had personally passed my resume to HR with his compliments. A few weeks later, I moved to New York to start my job as EA in Roth's own division, and I'm sure his recommendation made a difference. The other thing I learned at DPI is that publishing is a business. This may seem like an obvious statement, but I, like many bibliophiles, had come to dpi an idealist. I wanted to revolutionize the industry, to publishing books of high literary merits, raising the standard of reading material so that the reading public would to enhance their taste as well. (No more Fifty Shades of Grey in my marketplace!) But what I quickly discovered is that publishing, like all other companies, is run by its consumers... and people will read anything. The important thing is that they read. This newfound business savvy has served me well in the textbook world, which is entirely due to market reviews and customer feedback. Yes. The Denver Publishing Institute was just the right choice for me. I learned a lot about the industry; made contacts, not only with our lecturers but also with my fellow students; and, of course, I got a job out of it! Also, I mentioned ALL THE FREE BOOKS?! \* \* \* If you are interested in applying for the Denver Publishing Institute, the application will soon be available on dpi's website. Deadlines are Feb. 25, 2013 for early acceptance and March 20, 2013 for general admission. If you're going to be in central Pennsylvania on February 5, 2013, I'll be leading an information session at Dickinson College in Carlisle. Please feel free to email me at [email protected] for information about the information session or with general questions about DPI. Dpi.