

Melisa Stone Wentworth Fellowship Profile
Amelia Beamer

Melissa Stone isn't your typical undergraduate student. She has already graduated from UNCW once, in 2008, with a degree in Communication Studies. After a few years of working in law offices, she realized that her unhappiness was spawning from her career, and returned to school to pursue an English major. She's also currently in the process of applying for English masters programs, which she's extremely excited about.

"It feels good to be back in the academic world," she said.

For Melissa, applying for the Wentworth Fellowship to study J.D. Salinger and his work seemed like a no brainer: "I can go on this trip and immerse myself in Salinger and all [that] I have to do, is [that which] I do best, which is read and write," she said. "Why would I *not* do that?"

Melissa will begin her trip exploring Cornish, New Hampshire, where Salinger lived for most of his life. By a stroke of luck, Melissa's best works as a curator at a museum in Cornish. Melissa hopes that she might be able to track down and interview someone who actually knew Salinger.

After her time in Cornish, Melissa will travel to New York City, where she will follow the path that Holden Caulfield took around the city in Salinger's first work, *Catcher in the Rye*.

Catcher in the Rye isn't Melissa's favorite Salinger piece (*Nine Stories* is her top pick), but said that "It just seems right. It's how most of us discovered Salinger, it's definitely how I discovered him and it was his first novel. It just seems right to start with it."

"I loved Salinger's young and precocious characters. They are all so smart and curious about things like literature, religion, philosophy—but in this really unpretentious and genuine way and I just love that," she explained.

"It just all seem to fit," she said, speaking of her Wentworth proposal.

In addition to literature, Melissa loves to travel, but like most college students (especially those who also work full-time jobs like she does), time and money are luxuries that aren't always easy to come by.

"It's not something that I get to do as often as I'd like," she said, and is thrilled at the opportunity that the Wentworth Fellowship has given her. In addition to her literary studies, Melissa will also be using the chance to explore graduate programs in Boston.