

**ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
UNIVERSITY PRESS COMMITTEE
FOR
ACADEMIC YEAR 2006–2007**

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Executive summary

These are challenging times for university presses. Libraries are buying fewer monographs, new digital modes of scholarly communication are emerging, and new economic models are being discussed. At the same time, printed books remain the coin of the realm for faculty in many fields. The UMass Press continues to publish a strong list of books in print form, while exploring new opportunities created by the digital revolution. The Press has digitized more than 800 of its titles through alliances with Google, Amazon, netLibrary, and other Internet-based companies. In partnership with the W.E.B. Du Bois Library it has placed a small selection of titles in the ScholarWorks digital repository on an open-access basis. It has maintained good relationships with authors, faculty, and customers. And it continues to publish books that receive significant awards and excellent reviews.

Background

Founded in 1963, the University of Massachusetts Press serves as the book-publishing arm of the University. Its mission is to support and enhance the University's stature as a major research institution by publishing outstanding works of scholarship. The Press staff also provides general advice to faculty and graduate students on a wide range of publishing questions. Since its inception, the Press has sold over 2,000,000 individual volumes. Today it has more than 950 titles in print. Seven employees, along with student assistants and outside sales representatives, produce and market 25 to 35 new books annually. The offices of the Press are located in the East Experiment Station. For eighteen years, the Press maintained a satellite office at UMass Boston staffed by editor Paul Wright, but when he retired in December 2006 that office was closed.

For administrative, financial, and personnel matters, the Press reports to the Vice Provost for Research. Editorially, the Press reports to the University Press Committee.

FY07 statistical summary

During FY07, 36 new books were published (8 in hardback, 10 in paperback, and 18 simultaneously in hardback and paperback editions), 72 titles were reprinted (in many cases using print-on-demand technology), and 67,583 individual volumes were shipped to customers in the United States and abroad. Net sales for the year amounted to \$921,047. The Press ended the year with a revenue trust fund balance of \$152,250, reflecting an operating surplus of \$26,884 over the course of the year.

Another way to look at the Press's finances is to use the comparative data compiled each year by the Association of American University Presses in its statistical survey. In the UMass Press peer group, which consists of 24 presses with annual sales of up to \$1.5 million, the average figure for annual sales per employee was \$98,000. The UMass Press figure was \$131,578. Similarly, for titles published per employee, the average was 4.2, and the UMass Press figure was 5.1. The inventory ratio (the value of inventory as a percentage of annual net sales) at the UMass Press was 20%, which is much better than the peer group average of 47% (which means the UMass Press is not overprinting and sitting on a lot of unsalable books). Perhaps most significantly, the level of total "parent institution financial support" for the UMass Press was less than half the average of its group. All of this suggests a lean, efficient operation.

Press Committee activities during FY07

The University Press Committee, chaired by Professor Gerald McFarland, met three times—in October, February, and June—to discuss projects under consideration and review the publishing program. Twenty-eight new manuscripts were approved, along with the winners of the Juniper Prizes for Fiction and Poetry and the Grace Paley Prize in Short Fiction. Also approved was a new series to be edited by Professor Marla Miller titled “Public History in Historical Perspective,” designed to explore how representations of the past have been mobilized to serve a variety of political, cultural, and social ends. In addition, the committee endorsed an arrangement by which the Press would distribute books developed by the Warring States Project under the direction of Professor E. Bruce Brooks in a series to be titled “Ancient China in Context.” And the committee gave conditional approval to a new series of digital critical editions of classic short works in the humanities being developed by Professor Susan Gallagher with foundation support.

The committee based each of its decisions on the recommendations of the Press director and editors and on the written reports of at least two scholars in the field. In selecting projects to be brought before the committee, the Press editors reviewed hundreds of proposals and manuscripts, evaluating them in terms of quality, audience, financial viability, and appropriateness for the UMass Press list. As always, the editors were looking for disciplinary rigor, interdisciplinary synthesis, incisive analysis, clear writing, and wide accessibility.

At each meeting, director Bruce Wilcox reported on significant developments at the Press. Senior editor Clark Dougan described conferences attended and editorial initiatives undertaken. During FY07, the Press had its own booth at the annual meetings of the American Studies Association (October), American Historical Association (January), and Organization of American Historians (April), and displayed books at many other conferences via cooperative exhibit services. The Press also mounted exhibits at the New England Booksellers Association convention (September) and the AWP Bookfair (March) and was represented in cooperative displays at the London Book Fair (April), Book Expo America (May), and the Frankfurt Book Fair (October).

The committee noted the success of the Press staff in securing grant support on a title-by-title basis. According to OGCA records, in FY07 the Press received 11 grants from a range of sources, including foundations, cooperating organizations, and other universities. But the committee also expressed concern about whether the Press could maintain its financial equilibrium without a higher level of financial support from UMass Amherst. Specifically, the committee asked whether the administration might restore funding for a third staff position—funding that had been cut during the massive budget crunch in 2003. In October, committee chair McFarland met with Vice Provost Paul KostECKI to discuss this question and received a positive response.

The committee also approved various partnerships and co-publishing arrangements. During FY07 the Press published titles in association with the Library of American Landscape History, the American Antiquarian Society, the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, the Association of Writers and Writing Programs, the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, the National Park Service, and the Penobscot Indian Nation.

Digital publishing

As scholarship continues to shift to the digital environment, the Press has taken steps to ensure that its books are accessible via online search engines and online booksellers. It has also gradually increased the number of titles that are offered for sale in e-book form, working with outside vendors such as netLibrary/OCLC, Questia, and Ebrary. The goal is to make the books available as widely as possible, while still providing an adequate revenue stream.

In FY07, the Press staff continued to monitor and participate in discussions concerning the evolution of the system of scholarly communication. In December Wilcox served as one of three UMass Amherst representatives at an Institute on Scholarly Communication in Durham, North Carolina, sponsored by the Association of Research Libraries. His written response to the issues raised at the Institute was published in *Choice*, the journal of the Association of College and Research Libraries, and later republished in the *Journal of Scholarly Publishing*.

The Press continues to cooperate with the W.E.B. Du Bois Library in the creation of ScholarWorks@UMassAmherst and has offered six titles by UMass Amherst faculty for inclusion in this digital repository.

Notable awards and honors in FY07

* Cathy Stanton's *The Lowell Experiment: Public History in a Postindustrial City* was selected as winner of the 2007 Book Award of the National Council on Public History. The award goes to the best work published about or growing out of public history. The selection committee commended the author for making "an outstanding contribution in the subfield of public history and memory." The award was presented at the NCPH Presidential Luncheon in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in April 2007.

* Marla Miller's *The Needle's Eye: Women and Work in the Age of Revolution* received the 2007 Millia Davenport Publication Award sponsored by the Costume Society of America for the best book in the field. According to Kristina Haugland of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, who served as chair of the award committee, this year the jury had "a particularly strong group of nine short-listed books representing many aspects of dress scholarship." (One of those short-listed titles was another UMass Press title, Patricia Campbell Warner's *When the Girls Came Out to Play: The Birth of American Sportswear*.) One juror described Miller's book as "a great contribution to women's history, economic history, community studies, and colonial studies." The committee commended Miller for her integrative approach, weaving "an engaging story that challenges much of what was previously believed about clothing production in eighteenth-century New England." The award was announced at the Annual Symposium of the Costume Society of America in San Diego in May 2007.

* Carl Ostrowski's *Books, Maps, and Politics: A Cultural History of the Library of Congress, 1783-1861* was named winner of the 2007 Eliza Atkins Gleason Book Award sponsored by The Library History Round Table of the American Library Association. This award is presented every third year to recognize the best book written in English in the field of library history, including the history of libraries, librarianship, and book culture. The award bears the name of Eliza Atkins Gleason, the first African American to receive a PhD from the Graduate Library School of the University of

Chicago. According to the *Journal of American History*, Ostrowski “offers an exacting, readable account, placing the history and evolution of the Library of Congress in the context of an emerging and rapidly expanding book culture in the nineteenth-century United States.” The book is a volume in the series *Studies in Print Culture and the History of the Book*.

* Roger Reed’s *Building Victorian Boston: The Architecture of J. F. Gridley Bryant* was named to the list of *Choice* “Outstanding Academic Books for 2007.” The *Choice* reviewer described the book as “eloquently written, well researched and documented, and laced with historical black-and-white illustrations, all a refreshing change from the recent meatless coffee-table books on local architecture. . . . In the arena of architectural biographies, this book stands at the top. It is a pleasure to see superb research on previously unknown or local architects and their historic architecture. . . . Highly recommended.”

* Carole Gaunt’s *Hungry Hill* received the inaugural Anne Bancroft Memorial Memoir Award from the Southampton Writers Conference and was widely reviewed. *Booklist* commented that Gaunt “breaks the silence of an alcoholic’s daughter in this remarkably moving memoir, which begins when her mother dies of cancer in 1959. . . . it is a family history deftly, candidly told.” The book was described by *Publishers Weekly* as “a poignant, heart-wrenching memoir.” *Kirkus* noted “not only does the author write movingly of her dysfunctional family life, she provides an achingly honest picture of a teenager hungrily seeking at school the approval she does not receive at home.” According to the *Boston Globe*, “what readers will take away from it, besides Gaunt’s skillful wielding of language and narrative structure, is a sense of this Irish-Catholic teenager as a survivor who pushes back against the terrible tide of loss to seek her footing in the wider world.”

* Nona Caspers’s collection of short stories, *Heavier Than Air*, was selected as an “Editor’s Choice” by the *New York Times Book Review*. The reviewer wrote, “Throughout this collection, which was plucked from a pile of 300 manuscripts and awarded the Grace Paley Prize in short fiction, Caspers details the many ways reality can interfere with our dreams. . . . Caspers’s people—it’s difficult to consider some of them mere characters—question the decisions they’ve made or the ones they refuse to make. There’s nothing flashy about Caspers’s prose; like the beauty of the prairie itself, its attraction lies in details seen up close.”

* In January at the meeting of the American Historical Association, the Press co-hosted a well-attended reception in honor of the publication of *The Problem of Evil: Slavery, Freedom, and the Ambiguities of American Reform*, edited by Steven Mintz and John Stauffer. Described in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* as “a provocative collection of original essays,” this volume brought together leading scholars to discuss the moral issues raised by American history—in particular, the problem of slavery and its legacies of racism, racial exclusion, and racial inequality. *H-Net Reviews* described the essays as “uniformly thoughtful and well-written. They will be a useful starting point for students investigating the subjects with which they deal.”

* Over the course of the year, books from the Press were favorably reviewed in the *Boston Globe*, *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, and other newspapers around the country, as well as a host of scholarly journals.