

ANNUAL REPORT
of the
UNIVERSITY PRESS COMMITTEE
for
Academic Year 2004-2005

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Executive summary

The University of Massachusetts Press continues to publish an excellent list of scholarly books. Having weathered the budget cuts of 2003-2004, it has emerged a leaner and more efficient organization. It has developed effective partnerships with Columbia University Press (for sales representation) and Johns Hopkins University Press (for warehousing and distribution). It has embraced new technology, digitizing more than 750 of its titles through alliances with Google, Amazon.com, netLibrary, and other Internet-based companies. It has become increasingly successful in raising grant support on a title-by-title basis. And it has received an impressive number of book awards in the past year. The committee is pleased with the progress and accomplishments of the Press during FY 2005.

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 1,000,000 individual volumes. Today it has more than 900 titles in print. Eight employees, along with student assistants and outside sales representatives, produce and market some 25 to 35 new books annually. The main offices of the Press are located in the East Experiment Station, and there is a satellite editorial office at UMass Boston.

For administrative, financial, and personnel matters, the Press reports to the Vice Provost for Research at UMass Amherst. The Boston office, established in 1988 and staffed by editor Paul Wright, comes under the Dean of Graduate Studies at UMass Boston. Editorially, the Press reports to the University Press Committee, which includes a representative from the Boston campus.

FY 2005 summary

During FY 2005, 30 new books were published (15 in hardback, 2 in paperback, and 13 simultaneously in hardback and paperback editions), 57 titles were reprinted (in some cases using print-on-demand technology), and 65,916 individual volumes were shipped to customers in the United States and abroad. Net sales for the year amounted to \$900,536. Several books won important awards (see "Notable awards and honors" section below) and a host of published reviews testify to the high quality of the new titles.

Press Committee activities during FY 2005

The University Press Committee, chaired by Professor Gerald McFarland of the History Department, met three times—in October, January, and June—to discuss projects under consideration and review the publishing program. Thirty-one new manuscripts were approved, along with the distribution of a volume for the UMass Amherst Fine Arts Center. The committee based each decision 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. Editors Clark Dougan and Paul Wright described conferences attended and editorial initiatives undertaken. During FY 2005, they traveled to key academic meetings to display recent titles and talk with prospective authors. The Press had its own booth at the annual meetings of the American Studies Association (November), American Historical Association (January), Organization of American Historians (April), and American Literature Association (May). It also mounted exhibits at the New England Booksellers Association convention (October) and the AWP Book Fair (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 approved the creation of an annual Juniper Prize for Fiction to go along with the Juniper Prize for Poetry, which has been awarded annually since 1976. Both prizes are administered in association with the MFA Program for Poets and Writers, whose faculty serve as judges with the help of graduate students serving as screeners. The inaugural fiction competition drew 367 submissions, while this year's poetry competition attracted 315 manuscripts.

Digital publishing and online marketing

Although faculty and students are increasingly turning to the Internet as a research tool, the market for electronic books ("e-books") has not yet developed to the point where it is economically viable for publishers to produce books exclusively in electronic form. The market for "born-digital" books is at present limited almost entirely to libraries. The Press has responded to this reality with a three-pronged approach. First, it has continued to produce print editions, sometimes using new short-run technologies to keep titles in print. It has marketed these editions through all the traditional channels, while expanding its direct-to-customer efforts with the use of electronic news releases, links to the Press website (www.umass.edu/umpress), and secure online ordering. Second, it has taken steps to ensure that its books are accessible via online search engines and online booksellers. It has enrolled 750 titles in the "Google Print" program and has expanded its participation in Amazon's "Search inside the Book" program. Both programs are essentially marketing tools, designed to make books more visible and to facilitate online browsing. Third, it has gradually increased the number of its titles that are offered for sale in e-book form, working in concert with outside vendors, such as netLibrary/OCLC, Questia, and Ebrary. The goal of these initiatives is to make the books as widely available as possible, while still providing an adequate revenue stream. As scholarship continues to shift to the digital environment, the Press will continue to explore new channels to ensure that its authors' voices are heard.

Notable awards and honors in FY 2005

* For the second year in a row, a book from the UMass Press won the Eugene M. Kayden Award for "the best book in the humanities published by an American university press." In 2004, the jury selected Joel Dinerstein's *Swinging the Machine: Modernity, Technology, and African American Culture between the Two World Wars*. In 2005, a new jury selected Daniel Horowitz's *The Anxieties of Affluence: Critiques of American Consumer Culture, 1939-1979*. Administered by the Office of the Chancellor at the University of Colorado at Boulder, the award is given annually and includes a \$5,000 prize for the winning author. Each American university press is invited to submit one entry for the competition. In addition to winning the Kayden Award, *The Anxieties of Affluence* was selected by *Choice* for its list of "Outstanding Academic Titles." The reviewer wrote, "How—and why—have Americans struggled to make sense of consumption, morality, democracy, and capitalism? Horowitz elegantly and insightfully explores America's preeminent 20th-century answers."

* Allen Guttman's *Sports: The First Five Millennia* won the annual Book Award of the North American Society for Sport History. The author was presented with the award, and a check for \$500, at the Society's 33rd annual conference in Green Bay, Wisconsin. The judging committee described the book as "an eloquent and grand synthesis of sport" and "one of the finest demonstrations of scholarship produced in our field." Drawing on a vast body of research in various languages, and informed by the "modernization" theory for which Guttman is well known, the book offers a comprehensive narrative of the history of world sports from antiquity to the present. It was also a History Book Club selection.

* Bernard Bell's *The Contemporary African American Novel: Its Folk Roots and Modern Literary Branches* received a 2005 American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation. It was also selected by *Choice* as one of the "Outstanding Academic Titles" of the year. The book builds on Bell's earlier work, *The Afro-American Novel and Its Tradition*, a comprehensive interpretive history of more than 150 novels written by African Americans from 1853 to 1983. That book, published in 1987, won the Distinguished Scholarship Award of the College Language Association and was reprinted five times. The new volume serves as a sequel and companion to the first book, expanding the coverage to 2001. Reviewing the new work, Trudier Harris of the University of North Carolina described it as "absolutely essential to the teaching of African American literature. . . . Bell is a rare scholar whose knowledge of authors, works, historical movements, social history, folk formations, and subgenres of fiction is strikingly impressive."

* John M. Sloop's *Disciplining Gender: Rhetorics of Sex Identity in Contemporary U.S. Culture* won the National Communication Association's 2005 Winans/Wichelns Award for Distinguished Scholarship in Rhetoric and Public Address. The award, which carries a \$1,000 prize for the author, has been given annually since 1966. The National Communication Association is the oldest and largest organization serving the academic discipline of communication.

* Bradford W. Martin was awarded the New England American Studies Association (NEASA) 2005 Lois P. Rudnick Book Prize for *The Theater Is in the Street: Politics and Public Performance in Sixties America*. The award was presented at the NEASA annual conference.

* Doreen Baingana, author of *Tropical Fish: Stories out of Entebbe*, was short-listed for the Caine Prize in African Writing for the second year in a row. The Caine Prize is awarded to an African writer for an outstanding short story published in English and includes a cash prize of \$15,000 for the winning author and a travel award to England for each of the five short-listed candidates. *Tropical Fish* had already won the AWP Grace Paley Award for Short Fiction and was among fifteen books recommended by Alan Cheuse in his roundup of the best summer reading on National Public Radio's "All Things Considered."

* Eric Jay Dolin's *Political Waters: The Long, Dirty, Contentious, Incredibly Expensive but Eventually Triumphant History of Boston Harbor—A Unique Environmental Success Story* was chosen by the American Library Association for its "Best of the Best from the University Presses: Books You Should Know About." Twenty-seven of the 11,000 titles published annually by university presses were selected by a panel of librarians as the "Best of the Best." They were displayed at the ALA summer conference in Chicago.

* Jack Tager, author of *Massachusetts at a Glance: A User's Guide to the Bay State*, received the Bay State Legacy Award in recognition of his contributions to the interpretation and presentation of Massachusetts history. Sponsored by the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities, the award was presented at a conference for Massachusetts history organizations in June 2005.