

University Press Committee
Minutes of Meeting of May 12, 2006
Convened at 1:30 p.m. in Room 904-08, Campus Center

Attending the meeting were chair McFarland, members Cox, Fong, Goodenough, Harris, Jones, Paradiso, and Wise, director Wilcox, and editors Dougan and Wright. Copies of six recently published titles were on display, along with new catalogs and press releases. The minutes of the meeting of February 17 were approved after amending the first sentence on the third page to read, "One member asked if the author's use of cultural studies was oversimplified" (removing the words, "and perhaps ideologically slanted"). Wilcox thanked Paradiso for her excellent help as a consulting editor on Carole Gaunt's manuscript, which had now been approved for publication.

Commenting on financial matters, Wilcox noted that net sales for the fiscal year remained slightly above the equivalent period in the previous year, but that returns from booksellers had been unusually high in April and that other university presses were also reporting high returns. Having heard no further news from UMass Boston regarding the request to reinstate funding for a Boston-based editor, Wilcox said that the Press editors were considering the establishment of several new series as a way to take up some of the slack that would result from editor Wright's retirement in December 2006. The committee discussed possible series topics. It was proposed that one or more brainstorming sessions be arranged with faculty members to solicit ideas and identify emerging fields. Dougan described the genesis of the "Culture, Politics, and the Cold War" series. It was suggested that a graduate student might be enlisted to go through conference proceedings and other materials to uncover promising leads.

Under "Other Business," it was reported that the Faculty Senate had confirmed a change in the bylaws concerning the composition of the University Press Committee. Following the committee's recommendation, the Faculty Senate eliminated the seats for the Lowell, Worcester, and Dartmouth campuses and increased the UMass Boston representation from one to "up to two" faculty members or librarians.

Several recent awards were cited:

(1) Bernard Bell's *The Contemporary African American Novel: Its Folk Roots and Modern Literary Branches* won the 2006 Distinguished Scholarship Award of the College Language Association. The author was presented with the award at the Association's 66th annual convention in Birmingham, Alabama.

(2) For her book, *Huerfano: A Memoir of Life in the Counterculture*, Roberta Price received the 2006 Zia Award from the New Mexico Press Women, an affiliate of the National Federation of Press Women. The Zia Award celebrates an outstanding New Mexico woman author of fiction, nonfiction, or children's literature. *Huerfano* was selected as the best work of nonfiction published in 2003, 2004, or 2005.

(3) The American Library Association selected 27 titles as "The Best of the Best from the University Presses: Books You Should Know About." Among the selected titles were two from the UMass Press—Bernard Bell's *The Contemporary African American Novel* and Priscilla Coit Murphy's *What a Book Can Do: The Publication and Reception of Silent Spring*. The selected titles were to be the subject of a two-hour program at the American Library Association conference in New Orleans on June 25.

A number of articles and favorable reviews were circulated, including a long interview in *CommonWealth* magazine with Thomas O'Connor, author of *The Athens of America*; a feature on Glendyne Wergland's *One Shaker Life* in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*; a starred review of Allan Peterson's poetry collection, *All the Lavish in Common*, in *Publishers Weekly*; and a starred review of Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney's edited volume, *Captive Histories*, in *Library Journal*. Also circulated were several documents from the American Antiquarian Society commenting favorably on AAS co-publications with the UMass Press, and a press release announcing the winners of the 2006 Juniper Prizes for Poetry (Michael Dumanis) and Fiction (Katherine Arnoldi).

Dougan and Wright described the recent meeting of the Organization of American Historians, which they attended along with series editor Christian Appy. Business was brisk and, as always, visitors commented on the high quality of design of the books on display at the UMass Press booth.

Turning to the manuscripts on the agenda, the committee considered eight projects, presented in alphabetical order by author. All were approved.

The first project was a work of history by E. John B. Allen entitled *The Culture and Sport of Skiing, BC-1940*. Committee members asked about the expense of the volume and discussed whether it would be helpful to change the title to read *from Antiquity to 1940*.

Next up was Beverly K. Brandt's *The Craftsman and the Critic: Defining Usefulness and Beauty in Arts-and-Crafts Era Boston*. The committee looked favorably on the project but suggested that the title be modified, replacing *Era* with dates that more clearly convey the time period.

In considering Richard H. Gassan's *The Birth of American Tourism: New York, The Hudson Valley, and American Culture, 1790-1835*, the committee reviewed the history of the manuscript submission process. The author preferred to publish with the UMass Press in part because of Reader C's insightful and helpful report. It was agreed that Reader C would serve as a consulting editor, reviewing and commenting on the final draft.

In the case of *Millennial Praises: A Shaker Hymnal*, edited by Christian Goodwillie and Jane Crosthwaite, the chief question was whether the editors should follow Reader A's advice and create a much-expanded critical edition. Given cost considerations and the intended audience, it seemed prudent for them to stick with their present plan for a facsimile edition with introductory essays. They agreed to make minor revisions and corrections in response to the two readers' reports.

Dougan pointed out that he had been tracking Patrick Hagopian's *The Social Memory of the Vietnam War* for more than a decade. Although several other university presses had also been pursuing the manuscript, the author was won over by the opportunity to work with series editor Appy. Calling this "a coup" for the Press, the committee commended Appy and Dougan and expressed great enthusiasm for the project.

Gregory M. Pfitzer's *Popular History and the Literary Marketplace* presented the committee with a quandary in that Reader B's report had not yet arrived. But in view of the written comments of five scholars who reviewed the original proposal, along with Reader A's report on the first draft of the manuscript, the committee agreed to extend conditional acceptance, pending a favorable report from Reader B and a satisfactory response from the author. [Reader B's very positive report arrived shortly after the meeting.]

Described by Wright as a scrupulous work of scholarship, Alan Rogers's *Murder and the Death Penalty in Massachusetts* was quickly approved. Wright was congratulated for recruiting this outstanding manuscript.

The last item on the agenda was Robert E. Surbrug Jr.'s *Thinking Globally: Political Movements on the Left in Massachusetts, 1974–1990*. The committee discussed the substance and tone of Reader B's criticisms, as well as the question of whether women's contributions to these political movements had been fully acknowledged. The manuscript was approved with the understanding that the revised version would be evaluated by series editor Appy and committee member Cox.

There being no other business, Wilcox thanked the committee members for their service and support over the past year and expressed special gratitude to chair McFarland for his essential contributions. The meeting was adjourned at 3:06 p.m. No date was set for the next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Wilcox
Secretary

cc: Faculty Senate office