

University Press Committee
Minutes of Meeting of October 1, 2004
Convened at 2:00 p.m. in Room 804-08, Campus Center

Attending the meeting were chair McFarland, members Brigham, Golowich, Goodenough, Harris, Tymoczko, and Wise, director Wilcox, and editors Dougan and Wright. Copies of nine recently published titles were on display. McFarland was reelected as chair of the committee and Wilcox was reelected as secretary. The minutes of the meeting of June 4, 2004, were approved with some discussion of subventions that had been secured for specific titles.

Wilcox reported on the successful move of the Press offices to the East Experiment Station and on plans for an October 15 celebration—a colloquium and book exhibit to be produced in cooperation with the UMass Amherst Libraries, followed by an Open House at the new offices.

Commenting on financial matters, Wilcox reported that sales were on target for the first three months of the fiscal year and expenses had been kept to a minimum, but that the Press still needed to find additional sources of support to ensure long-term financial stability. He circulated an article from the Chronicle of Higher Education reporting that the University of Iowa Press (comparable in size to the UMass Press) was fighting a proposed cut in its subsidy from \$521,000 to \$321,000. By comparison, the UMass Press received \$134,118 for FY05 and was required to return roughly \$64,000 to cover the University's "administrative overhead fee."

Turning to more positive news, Wilcox cited several notable developments:

Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney's Captors and Captives won the New England Historical Association Book Award, as well as an Award of Merit from the American Association for State and Local History.

More than 900 people attended a publication party at Trinity Church in Boston for James O'Gorman's The Makers of Trinity Church.

Robin Karson, author of Fletcher Steele, Landscape Architect, received a "Distinguished Member Award" from the national honor society in the field of landscape architecture.

The Antioch Review presented a "Distinguished Writing Award" to Tom Cottle, author of Hardest Times and, most recently, A Sense of Self.

Roberta Price's Huerfano was selected by Foreword magazine as one of the "top ten" books of the year published by a university press.

Doreen Baingana's Tropical Fish was chosen by Barnes & Noble to be one of its "Featured New Releases" at 81 stores on publication in January 2005, with a guaranteed initial purchase of 1,700 copies.

The Juniper Prize for Fiction was launched with a series of ads announcing the competition. Over 300 manuscripts have been received thus far. The winner is to be selected by the faculty of the UMass Amherst MFA Program in English.

The Press intends to run a series of “underwriting” advertisements on WFCR in November, as it did the previous year.

Wilcox reported that one aftereffect of last year’s budget crisis is that the Press’s catalog of new publications for Spring/Summer 2005 will be significantly smaller than in previous seasons, but should return to its usual size in Fall/Winter 2005-2006. The Press editors continue to seek promising manuscripts and to spread the word that the Press has recovered from the worst of the budget cuts. In October the Press will mount a book display at the New England Booksellers Association convention, in November at the American Studies Association meeting, and in January at the American Historical Association meeting.

Turning to the manuscripts on the agenda, the committee approved all ten projects under consideration:

In considering Christopher Benfey and Karen Remmler’s A Violence Within: The Pontigney Encounters at Mount Holyoke College, 1942-1944, members noted the superb reviews and discussed whether it would be advantageous or disadvantageous to emphasize the book’s connection to Mount Holyoke. On the one hand, Mount Holyoke would help in promoting the volume; on the other hand, one member argued that the intellectual excitement of the project transcended the college and shouldn’t be presented too narrowly.

With respect to Christine Bold’s Writers, Plumbers, and Anarchists: The WPA Writers’ Project in Massachusetts, the committee approved the project with the expectation that the author would revise the manuscript in light of the readers’ reports and in consultation with editor Wright. One member urged him “to hold her feet to the fire.”

Joseph Cronin’s Reforming Boston’s Schools was conditionally accepted, subject to satisfactory revision, further peer review, and reconsideration by the committee chair acting on the committee’s behalf.

In view of the strong support of the outsider readers and the general success of the Press’s publications on Emily Dickinson, the committee approved Páraic Finnerty’s Emily Dickinson’s Shakespeare.

In the case of Carol Grove’s Henry Shaw’s Victorian Landscapes: The Missouri Botanical Garden and Tower Grove Park, the committee expressed support for the Press’s continuing association with the Library of American Landscape History and for this project in particular. But one member urged the author to be sure to address the political dimensions of her subject and to “locate the work in contemporary critical discourse.”

Noting the remarkable success of Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney’s Captors and Captives, the committee was quick to approve their new work, Captive Histories: Captivity Narratives and Native Stories of the 1704 Deerfield Raid. There was some discussion of

the controversy at the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association over the presentation of historical materials that reproduced racist terminology.

Glenn Jacobs' The Sociologist as Belletrist: Charles Horton Cooley was conditionally approved, subject to a process of satisfactory revision to address the substantive issues raised by the readers. The committee also urged a change of title.

In accepting Cathy Stanton's The Lowell Experiment: Public History in a Postindustrial City, the committee expressed enthusiasm for the manuscript, describing it as a sophisticated and valuable case study.

Sarah Wadsworth's Reading the Marketplace: Literature and the American Reading Public, 1830-1900 was approved with the suggestion that the title be revised to more clearly reflect the subject. One member commented that there seemed to be growing scholarly interest in the study of print culture and the commodification of books.

The last project on the agenda, Patricia Campbell Warner's When the Girls Came Out to Play: Clothing the American Woman for Sport and Physical Education, 1820 to 1940 was readily approved. There was a brief discussion of how to handle the illustrations and whether to include a link to a website where additional illustrations could be displayed. The committee also recommended that the title be shortened.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:54 p.m. No date was set for the next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Wilcox
Secretary

cc: Faculty Senate office