ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
UNIVERSITY PRESS COMMITTEE
FOR
ACADEMIC YEAR 2013–2014

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FY2014 summary

The University of Massachusetts Press celebrated its 50th anniversary this year and continued to publish an excellent list of peer-reviewed books in print form, while also making many titles available as e-books. During FY14, the Press published 33 new titles (in hardcover and paperback), reprinted an additional 45 titles, and released 25 titles as e-books.

The University Press Committee met three times—in October, February, and May—and approved 31 new manuscripts for publication, in addition to the winners of the Juniper and Grace Paley Prize competitions. At each meeting, the director described notable developments at the Press and in the larger world of scholarly publishing, and the editors commented on editorial initiatives undertaken and on academic conferences where they attended sessions, met with authors, and mounted displays of new titles.

In October, the Press was reviewed by an external committee, comprised of three very distinguished University Press Directors. Their report begins:

Within University Press circles, the UMass Press is widely considered a high-quality publisher with a national reputation that far exceeds its modest size and resources. Its longtime Director is a past president of the AAUP and its managerial staff is active and highly respected within our association. Those of us whose publication programs overlap with UMass Press recognize it as a strong competitor for top scholarly manuscripts and as a press with a loyal and satisfied author base. UMass Press’ quality of staff, editorial program, internal procedures and production standards are consistent with those of presses several times larger and better funded.

The committee concluded its report with a number of recommendations to sustain the Press’s editorial strengths, to expand its digital publishing initiatives, and to prepare for a new director. In all, the highly favorable report commended the high quality and overall professionalism of the Press.

After 32 years as Director, Bruce Wilcox retired at the end of May, and many members of the university community celebrated his long and distinguished tenure. Throughout the months of June and July, Senior Editor Clark Dougan took the lead as Interim Director. In late July, Mary Dougherty became the third Director of the Press, coming to Amherst from Bedford/St. Martin’s in Boston, where she served as the Publisher for History for 11 years.

Throughout the year, the Press has made good use of new technology to produce its books efficiently and to promote them through a variety of channels, including social media. It has sought out new partnerships to assist in the process of distribution. Most notably, it has participated with more than 90 other university presses in the University Press Content Consortium (UPCC), which makes collections of e-book editions available in reasonably priced collections to academic libraries in the U.S. and abroad.

The Press met its sales and spending targets for the year and maintained high standards of editorial content and design. Despite careful fiscal management, the Press ended FY 2014 with a deficit of just over $7,000. This shortfall was due to the unanticipated charge of one half of one payroll period against FY 2014 as opposed to FY 2015, as had been planned for. The shortfall was immediately covered from the Press’s reserve account. The University Press Committee commends the staff for its excellent performance during this transitional year.
FY2014 statistical summary

During FY2014, 33 new books were published—1 in hardback, 4 in paperback, and 28 simultaneously in hardback and paperback editions. In addition, 45 titles were reprinted, in many cases using highly efficient and cost-effective print-on-demand technology, and 25 titles were released in a variety of e-book formats. All told, more than 37,000 volumes were shipped to customers in the United States and abroad. Net sales for the year amounted to just over $769,000 and authors earned more than $89,000 in royalties. For FY2014, the Press ended the fiscal year with a shortfall, as explained in the previous paragraph, and a revenue trust fund balance of $91,000.

Press Committee activities during FY2014

The University Press Committee met three times to discuss projects under consideration and review the publishing program. Following a rigorous process of peer review, 31 new manuscripts were approved, along with the winners of the Juniper Prizes for Fiction and Poetry (selected by faculty in the English Department’s MFA program from 928 entries) and the Grace Paley Prize in Short Fiction (published in cooperation with the Association of Writers and Writing Programs).

Prior to each meeting, committee members reviewed 200 to 300 pages of supporting materials, which described and evaluated the manuscripts under consideration and documented the process of peer review. The committee then discussed each project thoroughly, evaluating the scholarly merit of the proposed publications. In making its decisions, the committee took into consideration the recommendations of the acquisitions editors and series editors and 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 University of Massachusetts Press list.

In recent years, the Press has focused primarily on books in the field of American Studies broadly defined—books that explore the history, politics, culture, and environment of the United States—as well as works with a transnational perspective. It has benefited greatly from the contributions of series editors, and currently has thirteen active series, ranging from “American Popular Music” to “Public History in Historical Perspective” to “Science/ Technology/Culture.”

At each committee meeting, editors Clark Dougan and Brian Halley reported on conferences attended and editorial initiatives undertaken. During FY2014, they staffed Press exhibits at numerous academic conferences, where they met with current and prospective authors and displayed an array of recent titles. Among these conferences were the annual meetings of the Society for the History of Technology, American Studies Association, American Historical Association, Modern Language Association, Association of Writers and Writing Programs, American Society for Environmental History, and Organization of American Historians. The Press also mounted a display at the New England Independent Booksellers Association convention and was represented in a cooperative displays at Book Expo America.

Many author events were held during the course of the year, including book launches, readings, media appearances, and symposia. Among the more notable gatherings were the Press’s 50th anniversary celebration at the Fine Arts Center in November and a reception at the Organization of American Historians meeting in Atlanta in honor of the Culture, Politics, and the Cold War series. Ed Martini, Professor of History, Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Western Michigan University and noteworthy historian of Viet Nam and Foreign Policy has joined Christian Appy as Series Editor for the Culture Politics and the Cold War Series.
The committee also noted the success of the Press staff in securing grant support on a title-by-title basis. These grants came from a range of sources, including foundations, cooperating organizations, individuals, and other universities and colleges. Securing funding for titles is a matter of conversation at Research One universities and their Presses, and the editors at UMass Press are particularly adept at helping authors to pursue this new business model.

**Awards and honors in FY2014**

Books from the Press were favorably reviewed in a wide range of newspapers and scholarly journals. These reviews attest to the high quality of the publishing program and help to enhance the reputation of the University as a leader in research and scholarship. In addition, the following awards and prizes were received during the course of FY2014:

* For her book *Exhibiting Blackness: African Americans and the American Art Museum*, Bridget R. Cooks was named the inaugural winner of the James A. Porter and David C. Driskell Book Award in African American Art History.

* Frank Kowsky’s *The Best Planned City in the World: Olmsted, Vaux, and the Buffalo Park System* received the J. B. Jackson Book Prize of the Foundation for Landscape Studies. The book was published in association with the Library of American Landscape History (LALH).

* Community by Design: The Olmsted Firm and the Development of Brookline, Massachusetts*, written by Keith N. Morgan, Elizabeth Hope Cushing, and Roger G. Reed, won the 2014 Ruth Emery Award of the Victorian Society in America. The award goes to books that “best advance an understanding or appreciation of the decorative arts or architecture of the 19th Century.” This book also was published in association with LALH.

* Peter Benes’s *Meetinghouses of Early New England* was named winner of the 2014 Vernacular Architecture Forum’s Abbott Lowell Cummings Prize—awarded annually to the book that “has made the most significant contribution to the study of vernacular architecture and cultural landscapes.” Previously the book won the Kniffen Award of the Pioneer America Society and was named to *Choice* magazine’s annual list of “Outstanding Academic Titles.”

* Sue Rainey’s *Creating a World on Paper: Harry Fenn’s Career in Art* received the 2014 Ewell L. Newman Award of the American Historical Print Collectors Society. The award is given “to recognize and encourage outstanding publications enhancing appreciation of American prints that are 100 or more years old.”

* John Dougan’s *The Mistakes of Yesterday, the Hopes of Tomorrow: The Story of the Prisonaires* was named “Best Music Book of 2013” by the *Nashville Scene*.

* Writing the Record: The Village Voice and the Birth of Rock Criticism* by Devon Powers was selected by *Spin Magazine* for its list of the Best Music Books of 2013.

* Daniel Gilbert, author of *Expanding the Strike Zone: Baseball in the Age of Free Agency*, was one of three winners of the Society for American Baseball Research’s 2014 SABR Award, which honors “outstanding research projects completed during the preceding calendar year which have significantly expanded our knowledge or understanding of baseball.”

* Michelle Coughlin’s *One Colonial Woman's World: The Life and Writings of Mehetabel Chandler Coit* won honorable mention for the 2014 Penny Kanner Prize of the Western Association of Women Historians, which recognizes outstanding books that “use a particular set of primary sources, such as a diary.”
* Jennifer Schell’s “A Bold and Hardy Race of Men”: The Lives and Literature of American Whalemens was awarded the John Lyman Book Award honorable mention in the category of “U.S. Maritime History.”

* The Juniper Prizes for Poetry and Fiction, sponsored by the UMass Press, were awarded in April 2014 to David Kutz-Marks of Dunmore, PA (his poetry collection was selected by James Tate, Dara Wier, and James Haug) and Sean Bernard of Laverne, CA (selected by Edie Meidev). The judges were assisted by graduate student screeners. All told, 928 manuscripts were submitted for the two competitions—up from 667 submitted the previous year. The increase was due largely to fact that the Press can now accept submissions electronically. This is the 39th year of the poetry prize and the 10th year of the fiction prize.

**Background**

Founded in 1963, the University of Massachusetts Press seeks to enhance the University’s stature as a top-tier research institution by publishing outstanding works of peer-reviewed scholarship. The 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 1,100 titles in print. Eight employees, along with student interns and outside sales representatives, produce and market 35 to 40 new titles annually. The main offices of the Press are located in the East Experiment Station on the Amherst campus. There is also a satellite office at the University of Massachusetts Boston, staffed by an editor whose salary is funded by that campus.

For administrative, financial, and personnel matters, the Press reports to the Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Editorially, it reports to the University Press Committee, which includes a faculty representative from the University of Massachusetts Boston.

The Press has developed a number of partnerships to assist with marketing and distribution. Its sales representatives include the Columbia Consortium (for bookstores in the continental United States), Scholarly Book Services (Canada), the Eurospan Group (United Kingdom and Europe), and East-West Export Books (Asia, the Pacific, and Hawaii). Warehousing and order fulfillment functions are handled on a contract basis by Hopkins Fulfillment Services, a subsidiary of Johns Hopkins University Press.

In an effort to make its books more widely available through libraries, the Press joined in the formation of the University Press Content Consortium (UPCC), which now provides participating institutions with unrestricted access to more than 21,000 titles from more than 90 academic publishers via Project MUSE (http://muse.jhu.edu), administered by Johns Hopkins University Press. The Press also signed a new partnership with JSTOR to reach an even broader selection of academic libraries. In addition, the Press has ongoing partnerships with ebrary, EBSCO (formerly netLibrary), and MyiLibrary, all of which supply e-books to libraries.

In partnership with Google, the Press has made more than 800 backlist titles available in e-book editions for purchase by individuals. These e-books are priced at least 20% lower than the paperback editions. Selected titles are also available in e-book editions from Amazon Kindle, Apple iBookstore, Barnes & Noble, Kobo, and other e-book retailers.