ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
UNIVERSITY PRESS COMMITTEE
FOR
ACADEMIC YEAR 2014-2015

Presented at the
755th Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate
February 18, 2016

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Maria Tymoczko, Chair
Briankle Chang
Carey Clouse
Sari Kawana (UMass Boston)
  James Kelly
Randall Knoper
  Albert Lloret
Elizabeth Porto
Sam Redman
James Smethurst
Banu Subramaniam (on leave)
  Joel Wolfe
Mary Dougherty (ex officio)
FY 2015 Summary

In FY 2015, the Press welcomed a new Director, the third in the Press’s fifty-one year history. Mary Dougherty began at the Press in July 2014, coming to UMass after fifteen years in textbook publishing and working most recently as the Publisher for History at Bedford/St. Martin’s. Prior to her career in publishing, she earned a Ph.D. in American literature at Rutgers University. In her first year at UMass, Dougherty set out to understand the Press’s established areas of strength, and she also made targeted improvements to internal workflow and overall marketing.

The Press Committee met twice over the course of the year, welcomed two new members, Sam Redman and Joel Wolfe, and approved 24 titles and 3 distributions.

Press Finances

The Press enjoyed a successful year financially, publishing and distributing 42 titles, earning $865,589 in net revenue, an increase of 11% over previous year sales, and outperforming 60% of other small university presses, according to AAUP data. Through the fulfillment services of Johns Hopkins University Press, the Press shipped a total of 42,537 print volumes, and individual users and library distribution services purchased $59,000 in e-books. The Press paid authors $91,000 in royalties. On a project-by-project basis, the editorial staff secured over $49,000 in subventions and grants. The Press ended FY 2015 with a surplus, to be reinvested into the Press for long overdue improvements to digital workflow. The Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement supported the Press with a salary subsidy and with additional funds for the upgrade to the digital workflow. Between strong sales and the University’s support, the Press’s finances are in very good order.

Activities of the Press Committee

The University Press Committee met twice to discuss projects under consideration and review the publishing program. Following a rigorous process of peer review, 24 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 512 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. In FY 2015, Dougherty reported to the Press Committee that the editorial staff of the Press will consider reasonable expansion into targeted subject areas, seeking to ensure that the Press’s scholarly focus reflects the strengths and interests of UMass faculty.

Digital Publishing

The Press continues to expand its distribution partnerships for e-books, joining forces with BiblioLabs to make selected titles available as e-books to community libraries throughout the Commonwealth. The Press also expanded our JSTOR and E-brary offerings as well.

The outside review committee that evaluated the Press in 2014 strongly urged updating and upgrading of the Press’s production capabilities. Production staff at the Press vetted a number of potential vendors to carry out needed upgrades to the process of both print and digital book production. The Press has chosen to work with Scribe, a company hired by many university presses nationwide, among them Princeton University Press, University of Nebraska Press, Northwestern University Press, and University of Virginia Press. Scribe will provide the tools and training necessary to accomplish three critical goals: first, to publish print books and e-books simultaneously; second, to publish enhanced e-books when scholarly content includes audio, video, or other digital material; and third to create digital-first content, or scholarly materials that are not created in and for print. This improvement in the processes of the Press will benefit scholars and readers as well as the Press’s sales and acquisitions efforts.

Awards and Honors

In FY 2015, UMass Press received a number of honors, among them scholarly awards and recognition from the popular press. The winners include:

- Keith Morgan, Elizabeth Hope Cushing, Roger Reed: Community by Design, 2014 Ruth Emery Award from the Victorian Society in America
- Sue Rainey: Creating a World on Paper, 2014 Ewell L. Newman Award of the American Historical Print Collectors Society
- Michelle Coughlin: One Colonial Woman’s World, Honorable Mention for Western Association of Women Historians 2014 Penny Kanner Prize
- Jennifer Schell: “A Bold and Hardy Race of Men,” 2014 Honorable Mention John Lyman Book Award in Maritime History
- Andrea Burns, From Storefront to Monument: Tracing the Public History of the Black Museum Movement, 2015 NCPH Book Award
- Susan Williams, Alice Morse Earle and the Domestic History of Early America, 2015 NCPH Honorable Mention
• Dana Roeser, *The Theme of Tonight’s Party Has Been Changed: Poems*, Top Ten Poetry Books of 2014 *Baltimore City Paper*
• John Bracey, Sonia Sanchez, and James Smethurst, *SOS—Calling All Black People*, *Essence* magazine Best Books of 2014

**Staff Updates**

At the end of February, Clark Dougan retired after twenty-five years of distinguished service to the Press and the university community. He leaves a legacy of outstanding titles and strong series. A search committee chaired by Maria Tymoczko, Department of Comparative Literature, and including Brian Halley, Senior Editor, University of Massachusetts Boston; Christian Appy, Professor of History; Nicholas Bromell, Professor of English; and Barbara Krauthamer, Associate Professor of History, reviewed a total of 39 applications, hosted four campus visits, and recommended three highly qualified finalists. From among the finalists, Dougherty chose Matt Becker as the Press’s new Executive Editor. Becker earned a Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Minnesota, and he comes to UMass after seven years in acquisitions at the University of Nevada Press. He brings a great deal of intellectual vitality and publishing savvy to the position. In other news related to the staff, the Press welcomed eight interns who worked in different departments, gaining skills and practical experience in each phase of the publishing process.

**Marketing Strategy**

Over the course of the past year, the Press made a number of changes in marketing, adopting a strategic and collaborative approach. The staff has undertaken more long-range planning, and acquisitions editors and the Promotion and Publicity Manager are working more closely with authors to create the marketing plans for our titles. The Press has increased attention to digital marketing, redesigning the Press’s website to foreground news related to our titles and our authors and to give the site a more dynamic look and feel. The staff continued to improve digital marketing overall; interns created and launched a blog for the Press, and its stories are re-posted on Facebook and Twitter. Press staff also implemented a new strategy for print marketing, in particular, placing advertisements in selected academic journals. In addition to these expanded efforts, the Press continued to produce two print catalogs, one for spring and summer 2015 and one for fall and winter 2015–2016.

**Conferences and Author Events**

Over the course of the year, the editors attended six academic conferences, among them the American Studies Association, the American Historical Association, the Organization of American Historians, Native American and Indigenous Studies Association, and the Associations of Writers and Writing Programs. At each of these meetings, the Press staff met with prospective authors to discuss new projects, conferred with current authors, and displayed and sold a wide range of titles. Brian Halley was invited to participate in the Ford Foundation’s annual Conference of Ford Fellows and present a publishing workshop to faculty at the University of Maryland.
Along with the Vice Chancellor’s office, the Press hosted an on-campus author event featuring the editors of *SOS: Calling All Black People*. John Bracey, Sonia Sanchez, and James Smethurst talked to a diverse crowd about the genesis of the book and the importance of this collection in gathering rare and previously unavailable materials. Poet Sonia Sanchez enthralled the crowd with her dramatic reading. The editors held a similar event at the UMass Boston campus, hosted by the Center for the Study of Humanities, Culture, and Society.

**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 million 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 UMass 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 continues to participate in 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 EBSCO (formerly netLibrary), and MyiLibrary, all of which supply e-books to libraries.

The Press continues to expand its e-book offerings for individuals. A number of recent titles are now available at major e-book retailers, including Amazon/Kindle and iBooks. Individuals may also access Press titles through Google Books.

All in all, it was an excellent year for the University of Massachusetts Press and a fine beginning for the new Director, Mary Dougherty.