INTERSECTIONS

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN UNIVERSITY PRESSES AND ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

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INTRODUCTION

University presses and academic libraries are two important pieces of the scholarly communication chain. Over the past twenty years, a number of university presses have started reporting to their university libraries, and we have seen a growing number of collaborative projects, mainly around digital and open access scholarship. At the same time, the perspectives of presses and libraries concerning the future of scholarly publishing can differ substantially. While the vast majority of scholarly communication librarians work at institutions without a university press, all librarians must understand the role of the university press and how that role intersects with the work they do around collections, open access, and library publishing. This intersection will primarily focus on university presses and academic libraries in the United States, although other countries will be mentioned.

FROM PARTNER TO CUSTOMER TO COLLABORATOR

From the earliest days of academic publishing, in the late nineteenth century, university presses and libraries were closely connected. The first director of Cornell University Press,

Daniel Williard Fiske, for example, was also the university librarian. As university presses professionalized in the mid-twentieth century, however, and began to publish more and more research from scholars outside of their home institution, this relationship shifted. Libraries were no longer just partners or affiliates with their home press, they were customers. Indeed, for many years, academic libraries were university presses' primary customers when it came to monographs. This started to change in the 1970s, when libraries were forced to devote more and more of their collections budget to purchasing expensive journals, primarily in the sciences, leaving less money for the purchase of monographs. This trend continued to accelerate in the 1980s and 1990s. Today, less than 25 percent of print books and 20 percent of e-books that libraries purchase come from university presses.[1]

Beginning in the 1990s, the digital revolution made it possible for libraries and presses to work together in new ways. Project MUSE, for example, began as a joint project between Johns Hopkins University Press and Johns Hopkins University Libraries in 1995.[2] Most recently, the Association of Research Libraries and AUPresses collaborated to launch the TOME (Toward an Open Monograph Ecosystem) initiative, where colleges and universities fund the costs of producing a monograph up front, and the monograph is then published open access. The idea behind TOME is to provide a path for sustainable open access publishing.[3] As more and more academic libraries have launched library publishing programs, this has opened up even more opportunities for presses and libraries to find joint projects to support the research output of their university. For example, a handful of university presses have started working with their university libraries to publish open access textbooks written by their faculty.[4]

PRESSES REPORTING TO LIBRARIES

Another way that the university press and library relationship has evolved is that a number of university presses now report to their library. Academic libraries now run the majority of the university presses in Germany and Australia. Purdue University was the first example of this in the United States, with the press reporting to the libraries in 1992. Penn State University and University of Michigan soon followed.[5] However, what this reporting relationship actually looks like varies from institution to institution, and presses and libraries face real challenges when trying to work together. Perhaps the biggest challenge is that both organizations operate under different financial constraints—the library is a budgeted service of the university, whereas most presses receive only a small stipend from their university and are generally expected to recover their costs.

Only a few institutions, including New York University, Northwestern University, and Temple University, have shared staff. At Northwestern, for example, Liz Hamilton is both the copyright librarian for the libraries and the intellectual property specialist for the press. At other institutions, press directors hold roles in the library as well. For example, the director of University of Michigan Press is also associate university librarian for publishing. Another example of a unique library/press relationship can be seen at the University of Cincinnati. There, instead of starting a library publishing program, the library launched a new university press that is based in the library.

With more university presses reporting to academic libraries than ever before, librarians should be mindful that the university press community often feels misunderstood by academic libraries. In fact, recently, some in the university press community have begun to question whether having presses report to libraries is actually a mistake. Wayne State University Press, for example, began reporting to the libraries in 2019. In 2020, three of the top employees of the press were fired without notice or explanation by the dean of libraries.

The press editorial board, authors, and members of the university press community mounted a campaign to reinstate these employees. The university eventually relented and hired back the employees. It also moved the reporting of the press back to the provost.[6] This event provoked outrage in the university press community. Although this is an extreme example, it is important to remember that libraries and university presses are not always on the same page when it comes to the future of scholarly publishing.

CONCLUSION

What is the future of the scholarly monograph? Should all monographs be open access? Should they be digital only? And how do we preserve them? These are questions that university presses and academic libraries should be tackling together, even if they do not always agree on the answer.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which university presses do your faculty tend to publish with? What are these presses' policies when it comes to supporting open access?
2. Which university press books does your library order in print? Which are available only as e-books?
3. What are some new ways academic libraries and university presses could work together to advance scholarly communication?

NOTES

1. Katherine Daniel, Joseph J. Esposito, and Roger C. Schonfeld, *Library Acquisition Patterns* (New York: Ithaka S+R, January 29, 2019), https://doi.org/10.18665/sr.310937.
2. See Project MUSE, "The MUSE Story," https://about.muse.jhu.edu/about/story/.
3. See TOME, home page, https://www.openmonographs.org/.
4. See, for example, Shan C. Sutton and Faye Chadwell, "Open Textbooks at Oregon State University: A Case Study of New Opportunities for Academic Libraries and University Presses," *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication* 2, no. 4 (2014), https://doi.org/10.7710/2162-3309.1174.

5. See Charles Watkinson, "From Collaboration to Integration: University Presses and Libraries," *Getting the Word Out: Academic Libraries as Scholarly Publishers*, ed. Maria Bonn and Mike Furlough (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2015), 83–112, http://hdl.handle.net/2027.42/113231.
6. See Claire Kirch, "Wayne State University Press Fires Three Senior Employees," *Publishers Weekly*, February 10, 2020, https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/publisher-news/article/82387-wayne-state-university-press-fires-three-senior-employees.html; Claire Kirch, "Three Fired Employees Return to Work at Wayne State U Press," *Publishers Weekly*, February 24, 2020, https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/publisher-news/article/82509-three-fired-employees-return-to-work-at-wayne-state-u-press.html.

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