Insights – 33, 2020

Towards inclusivity: developments in the UP community | Niccole Leilanionapae'aina Coggins, et al.

Towards inclusive scholarly publishing: developments in the university press community

This article provides an overview of the ways in which the members of the Association of University Presses are working towards more inclusive practices in scholarly publishing. The authors consider the Mellon University Press Diversity Fellowship Program (now in its fourth year), the work of the Association's Diversity and Inclusion Task Force, the Gender, Equity and Cultures of Respect Task Force and the new Equity, Justice and Inclusion Committee. They also look at press-based working groups and several 'Toolkits for Equity' that are currently in development. The volunteers engaged in these and other efforts are working to document how bias has shaped universities and university presses, to propose actions to disrupt this powerful force and to share what they have learned with their colleagues as well as with the larger scholarly publishing and academic communities.

Keywords

Diversity; inclusion; equity; bias; university press; scholarly publishing

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The Association of University Presses (AUPresses, or 'the Association'), founded in 1937, today represents a global community of more than 150 mission-driven scholarly publishers dedicated to the advancement of knowledge. Each university press brings a distinctive vision to its work. Yet we all are guided by, and united in, core values – integrity, diversity, stewardship and intellectual freedom – that define who we are, the work we do and the goals to which we aspire.

AUPresses have taken recent steps to explore and advance our core value of diversity, with a goal of empowering inclusion, equity and, ultimately, justice. Bias is at the heart of many of the persistent inequalities we see across organizations, even progressive, well-intentioned

places like universities and university presses, so introspection and honest assessment of our practices, the interests they serve and the people and perspectives they exclude are essential components of this project. Armed with baseline information and critique as well as with continuing vigilance, we as leaders and colleagues can understand the scope of the problem and move to creatively disrupt the individual, structural and organizational barriers to equitable decision-making, power-sharing and community-building. We believe that this necessary work will contribute not only to our individual lives, workplaces and publications, but also to the network of stakeholders – the global knowledge ecosystem – that we as university presses serve.

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Beginnings

The Association's first diversity-conscious initiatives focused, not surprisingly, on recruitment, development and retention of early-career professionals in the scholarly publishing field, seeking to help our member presses diversify their staff. Its annual reports from the early 1990s mention the ways that the Association encouraged 'equal opportunity' and 'worked actively to promote the hiring of minorities and women for positions of responsibility in scholarly publishing'; this included securing and administering multi-year grants from the Metropolitan Life Foundation to fund summer publishing institute fellowships and from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation to support interns. Attendance by individuals who identify as a member of an under-represented group at our own Annual Meeting has also been supported by a longstanding 'Diversity Grant' program.
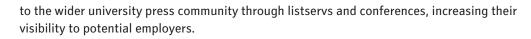
Every year since 2015 a mentorship program supported by our Professional Development Committee has linked those new to the profession with mid- and senior-level colleagues as all attend the Annual Meeting. Nearly 250 individuals have been matched with mentors in various departments at presses of different sizes and scopes since this program began. While not explicitly a diversity program, the mentorship matching recognizes the need to build professional relationships; when applying to the program, participants can request a match with mentors from a specific group, demographic or community. Mentors and mentees are introduced via e-mail prior to the meeting and pairs determine the amount of interaction prior to, during and after the meeting. Mentors advise mentees on getting the most value from the conference, introduce them to colleagues and discuss their career goals. Mentees are encouraged to talk with mentors about workplace challenges and opportunities. Last summer this program expanded to match virtual mentoring pairs of interested participants not able to attend the Annual Meeting.

> 'worked actively to promote the hiring of minorities and women for positions of responsibility in scholarly publishing'

Mellon University Press Diversity Fellowship Program

Our community's most recent effort to increase the recruitment and retention of those currently under-represented in publishing is the Mellon University Press Diversity Fellowship Program, led by the University of Washington Press. In 2016 Washington, along with the MIT Press, Duke University Press and the University of Georgia Press, received US$682,000 from the Andrew W Mellon Foundation to create a three-year program offering year-long acquisitions editorial apprenticeships to individuals with sustained personal engagement with low-income communities and/or communities within the US that are under-represented in publishing. Staff at partner presses have learned from and applied the fellows' perspectives and input and they have provided fellows not only with introductory experiences in scholarly publishing, but also with focused career and job-seeking advice and professional development opportunities, including attendance at the Association's Annual Meetings at the beginning and end of the fellowship. Program organizers and Association leadership have worked to introduce members of each cohort

to the wider university press community through listservs and conferences, increasing their visibility to potential employers.

The outcome so far of the program has been positive but also highlights where challenges of equity and inclusion remain. Ten of the 12 fellows of the first three grant cohorts received full-time job offers from around the community and nine accepted. However, two have since left their positions at university presses.

The program won renewed support from the Mellon Foundation in 2018 with US$1,205,000 to expand to six university presses for another three annual cycles. Editorial fellowships are currently offered at the University of Washington Press, the MIT Press, Cornell University Press, the Ohio State University Press, the University of Chicago Press and Northwestern University Press. The duration of fellowships has expanded from 12 to 14 months to allow fellows' terms to overlap. The second cycle of the fellowship is also attempting to apply early lessons to questions of longer-term retention. Together the two grant cycles will provide for a total of 30 fellows.

Participating in the fellowship program has also encouraged host presses to confront diversity and equity challenges in their overall practices. Individual presses have noted a number of changes made since joining the program, including:

- overhauling internship programs and creating new, more equitable entry-level opportunities, including paying interns and looking to less traditional recruitment channels when posting jobs

- being more aware of the limitations of institutional employment screening processes, which sometimes filter out highly qualified entry-level applicants with valuable non-publishing experience in favor of those with publishing experience (which our members of staff already have)

'the fellowship program has also encouraged host presses to confront diversity and equity challenges'

- incorporating considerations of diversity, equity and inclusion throughout the hiring process by improving interview practices, including regularly asking all candidates about their experiences with diverse communities or how they work towards equity and inclusion in their interactions with peers and colleagues

- establishing working groups focused on equity and inclusion to create space for staff discussions and activities. The existence of these internal networks, particularly when supported by leadership, can be an important signal of a press's commitment, willingness to examine all procedures with regard to equity and inclusion, and support for those who experience aggression or exclusion at work

- increasing scrutiny of author and peer reviewer networks and faculty board rosters to ensure that a diversity of perspectives, resulting from lived experience as well as professional expertise, informs a press's publishing decisions.

Other opportunities to encourage inclusion and equity

'recent Annual Meetings and webinars have been designed with greater inclusivity in mind'

AUPresses has also collaborated with other scholarly publishing groups to encourage inclusive practices. The Association was one of the ten co-founders – along with the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers, the Society for Scholarly Publishing (SSP) and UKSG – of the Coalition for Diversity and Inclusion in Scholarly Communications (C4DISC) in 2016 and adopted the C4DISC Joint Statement of Principles in 2017.[1] AUPresses continues to be centrally engaged with the C4DISC research and governance objectives.

AUPresses' recent Annual Meetings and webinars have been designed with greater inclusivity in mind as well. Recent conference keynoters have included publisher

Chris Jackson in 2016;[2] scholar Safiya Noble, author of *Algorithms of Oppression*, in 2018; and Desiree Cooper, community activist and author of *Know the Mother*, in 2019. AUPresses webinars have considered relevant topics, such as Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives in spring 2018.[3] Sessions at last summer's Annual Meeting also included such topics as 'Transforming Scholarly Publishing Through an Equity and Anti-Racism Framework',[4] 'Making the Invisible Visible: Creating New Career Paths for Experienced People of Color', 'Creating and Using Accessible Scholarly Ebooks: Tips from Those in the Trenches'[5] and 'Peer Review, Diversity and Inclusion' in addition to two interactive collaboration labs, one on building and sustaining cultures of gender equity and inclusion and the other on the future of diversity, equity and inclusion in internships.

With help from SSP, Association leadership also recently updated the code of conduct for the Association's Annual Meeting[6] along with better defined procedures for handling infractions.

Diversity and Inclusion Task Force

Although many conversations around equity in scholarly publishing have conveyed a clear sense of the problem through personal experience and anecdote, the need for baseline data on which to build assessment was acute. The Association's Diversity and Inclusion Task Force, formed in 2017, first moved to document and understand diversity and inclusion issues within our community by surveying AUPresses member directors about relevant perceptions, needs and efforts. Members of the task force, along with Association leadership, also worked with Lee and Low Books on the second iteration of their important Diversity Baseline Survey of the wider publishing industry in order to broaden the participation of university presses.[7]

'the need for baseline data on which to build assessment was acute'

The Diversity and Inclusion Task Force also gathered resources to share with AUPresses members. Among the ideas and samples inventoried by the Task Force in its 2018 report are: equity mission statements (e.g. University of North Carolina Press[8]), recruitment and job placement tools, information about mentorship programs and remote peer networks to assist with retention and support, and equity training resources.

The Task Force also documented how several university presses have established cross-departmental working groups to support equity and inclusion initiatives, which may serve as models within the community. Staff members who participate in these groups have frequently worked with press and university human resources departments to reassess and improve hiring procedures, to refine internship programs and to identify and promote local or conference-based equity training resources to their press colleagues. Working group members have also encouraged colleagues' awareness of relevant issues by hosting speakers and book-club-style discussions, organizing community volunteer projects and articulating ways to create and sustain a welcoming workplace. While similarities among these groups are apparent, each group also addresses challenges and opportunities unique to their presses, universities and home communities. For example, the Johns Hopkins University Press group reports that their efforts are 'intimately informed by the historic redlining and systemic racism that shapes Baltimore City'; the Duke University Press group has taken steps to increase intern- and employee-recruitment outreach to nearby historically black colleges and universities; and the Cambridge University Press group operates a global mentor program. By gathering and presenting these groups' ideas, the AUPresses Diversity and Inclusion Task Force seeks to facilitate employee-led inclusivity work at other presses. The Task Force's resource list is available publicly.[9]

Equity, Justice and Inclusion Committee

Diversity and inclusion work continue to be an organizational priority for the Association. Our Diversity and Inclusion Task Force transformed in 2019 into a standing Equity, Justice and Inclusion Committee, which continues to develop the resource list as well as an anti-racism statement drafted by the Task Force. The Committee is charged with:

- developing networking and mentorship opportunities for member-press staff from under-represented backgrounds, in co-ordination with the Professional Development and Annual Meeting Program Committees

- recommending professional development opportunities and tools throughout the year via Association discussion lists, in co-ordination with the Professional Development Committee

- developing best practices for creating inclusive environments at Association-sponsored events.

'Diversity and inclusion work continue to be an organizational priority for the Association'

At the time of writing the Committee is organizing a Community Read for our 2020 Annual Meeting to foster thoughtful and collective reading and discussion of equity and inclusion. They have invited nominations of relevant university press books from the membership, aiming to select two titles. They also intend to host in-person discussions in June 2020 in Seattle and are working to determine how best to support press-based or virtual conversations – perhaps even local collaborations with university, library or bookstore partners – for those who cannot attend that meeting.

Gender, Equity and Cultures of Respect Task Force

'policies, programs and resources that increase gender-equity, confront hostility and foster respect'

While the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force has investigated the challenges of racism and homogeneity in the AUPresses community, we have also sought to engage in similar self-assessment of the ways our community members experience gender bias, galvanized by the #MeToo movement. In 2018 the Association created the Gender, Equity and Cultures of Respect Task Force with the charge of assessing the full range of gender-related issues facing the community and its individual members and recommending policies, programs and resources that increase gender-equity, confront hostility and foster respect. Situating their work intersectionally and within the larger AUPresses project on equity, this group began by aiming to document the nature of the on-the-job gender-based harassment and discrimination qualitatively and quantitatively, devising a community survey to collect data. A critical first step was the group's decision to include all member press staff in this survey, making it possible to identify experiences of inequity and harassment that might not have been known by leadership.

'recommendations for individual presses to conduct compensation analyses for gender parity'

The Task Force also reviewed the Association's two most recent biennial compensation surveys, which illuminated gender imbalances in pay equity as well as in certain leadership positions and also suggested further research is needed on gender parity in career advancements and compensation. The surveys led to recommendations for individual presses to conduct compensation analyses for gender parity, ideally by external audit or in partnership with their universities. The Task Force's full report was distributed to the AUPresses membership in early 2020.

Having identified challenges that are unique to university press publishing – including author ethics and how to confront bad behavior; conference attendance and staff in the field; gender balance among staff, authors, peer reviewers, faculty committees and in marketing materials – this Task Force has recommended that the Association draft a model code of conduct or position paper to articulate the Association's values in this area. It also recommends the creation of a toolkit of resources to help members nurture cultures of

respect and to address gender-equity and sexual harassment issues which may fall outside the broad guidance issued by a member's parent institution.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that raised awareness is beginning to shape new organizational priorities. For example, the Task Force's report has begun to inform individual directors' efforts to create codes of conduct and salary reviews in support of equity at their presses and to implement more inclusive gender categories – among other important demographics – on author questionnaires and title management systems to better understand and document the composition of their lists. The Association has also responded to the report's request for more managerial training, particularly at the director level, by organizing a training session on equity and inclusion for directors at its upcoming Annual Meeting.

Much of the groundwork laid by this Task Force will be carried forward by the Equity, Justice and Inclusion Committee.

Toolkits for Equity: transforming scholarly publishing communities

In the latter half of 2019 several university press staff members spear-headed the development of anti-racism tools for scholarly publishing professionals. This team, led by Niccole Coggins (University of Virginia Press), Jocelyn Dawson (Duke University Press), Melanie Dolecheck (SSP) and Gisela Fosado (Duke University Press), is modeling its work on three toolkits developed by the American Alliance of Museums' LGBTQ + Alliance to address transgender inclusion.[10] The team's new Toolkits for Equity speak to three distinct audiences. The first toolkit aims to provide guidance to white co-workers on how to become allies, the second seeks to inspire leadership teams within organizations to foster inclusivity and the third undertakes to assist people of color who already work in scholarly publishing in successfully navigating 'white-supermajority' spaces.

'Toolkits for Equity will be made freely available to the scholarly publishing community'

Once finalized, the Toolkits for Equity will be made freely available to the scholarly publishing community via the C4DISC website. Members of the team will speak about the project at several industry conferences throughout 2020 and will work with AUPresses, SSP, C4DISC and other professional organizations to encourage widespread personal and organizational use.

Conclusion

All of these committees, task forces and working groups depend on the time and commitment of members who have many other obligations. This is both a remarkable testament to the individuals and a signpost of an ongoing challenge. Similarly, within our institutions, equity and inclusion work is often seen as extra-curricular – something that must be done on one's own time, over lunch hours or after hours. In addition, finding modes of collaboration that allow all voices to be heard, while conserving precious time and achieving measurable results, can be difficult. Collaboration tools – conferencing software, document-editing platforms and scheduling tools – have been helpful to our long-distance team work, but technology tools do not by themselves produce engagement or consensus. Our community needs to envision equity and inclusion as first-level organizational priorities, central to the work of developing and publishing high quality scholarship. Time spent to make our policies, practices and publications more inclusive should be valued appropriately through compensation or credit.

'Our community needs to envision equity and inclusion as first-level organizational priorities'

Our Association's leadership, member presses and their staff are only beginning to understand how bias – intentional and implicit – and historically derived power structures

have shaped our institutional environments and our own work. Led by the volunteers serving in groups and informed by the courageous witness of publishing professionals who have encountered bias, exclusion, harassment and discrimination, efforts to collect baseline data, to brainstorm solutions and to identify resources for action will help all to develop practices over the long term to support the work of inclusion in scholarly publishing, higher education and the entire knowledge industry.

American activist Pauli Murray (1910–1985) remarked that 'true community is based on equality, mutuality and reciprocity. It affirms the richness of individual diversity as well as the common human ties that bind us together'. That community is what we in the Association strive to build together.

Abbreviations and Acronyms
A list of the abbreviations and acronyms used in this and other *Insight*s articles can be accessed here – click on the URL below and then select the 'full list of industry A&As' link: **http://www.uksg.org/publications#aa**

Competing Interests
The authors have declared no competing interests.

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