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From the University Presses-Consorting and Collaborating at the AAUP Meeting

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on these and a host of other related issues will be invaluable for both libraries and publishers, since in the absence of modern guidelines, each group has developed definitions that work well for them but perhaps work less well for their counterparts. Given all the confusion, publishers themselves have a vexed job in advising their own authors about the proper (and legal) use of illustrations and quoted material. Congress is finally making serious rumblings about taking up copyright reform, and it's high time. But **Charlesworth** warned us not to get too giddy about this prospect, as she reminded the audience that the last time copyright reform was undertaken in Congress, it took 20 years to pass new legislation.

The plenary's final speaker was **Michael Schrage**, research fellow at the MIT Sloan School's Center for Digital Business. **Schrage** spoke briefly about the monumental changes taking place in the business of publishing, and he then said, "You need to stop calling yourselves publishers." I suppose this might be the equivalent of a keynote speaker at **ALA** or **Charleston** telling the room, "Quit calling yourselves librarians. It's not working for you." A noticeable chill swept the room (also felt by **Schrage** himself, as I found out while chatting with him after the session), and many listeners tuned out (or started Tweeting) at that point.

In situations such as this, I try to ask myself: what is it about what I'm hearing that challenges my worldview? What is it about this statement that makes me uncomfortable? Through past experience, I have come to

understand that these moments are often huge opportunities for learning and reframing. Often, if something gets your hackles up, it's because there's a small grain of truth somewhere in the statement or situation that you really do not want to see. In the case of **Schrage's** statement, I was intrigued by what he was saying, perhaps in large part because it reminded me of a similar moment during a plenary session in **Charleston** several years ago. A presenter from **Highwire** said something to the effect of "publishers are good book publishers, but right now they're not good content publishers." Hearing that set off alarm bells in my head and gave me shallow breathing and a rapid pulse for the next hour, partly because it was a scary prospect (publishers needing to take on a new skill set and identity) and partly because I knew it was to a great extent true.

While I was making these connections in my head and wondering where **Schrage** was going with this argument, he went on to talk about the decline of **Kodak**, once the king of the photography companies. **Schrage** noted that **Kodak** lost sight of how people wanted to interact with photography, and that's when **Apple** essentially stole the market for pictures. This is, of course, a great simplification (and only one interpretation) of what humbled the mighty **Kodak**. But I found this to be a brilliant analogy, the root message of which I've tied to the struggle of modern publishers before. It's not that people suddenly stopped caring about or wanting pictures. The point was that consumers wanted to engage with pictures in ways that **Kodak** was not facilitating or providing. The same message might be applied to scholarly publishers. The issue is (thankfully) not that no one wants or cares about scholarly content. The

struggle for us as publishers is that we are in the process of rethinking how we engage readers and researchers. We are rediscovering where we meet them and how they want to find, read, and use what it is that we offer.

For me at least, that was the big idea. The crucial reminder that we as scholarly publishers need to be more nimble than **Kodak**, more attuned to how our books and content get used and where they get discovered and shared. Rather than making an attack on our identities, perhaps **Schrage** was making a call for us to think of ourselves in broader terms, as facilitators of knowledge, rather than organizations with only one defined product path. The types of institutional and workflow flexibility and ingenuity I believe he was advocating are certainly not easy (and they're also not cheap to develop), but we as publishers will be better and stronger for taking up the challenge.

In the end, I take heart in the fact that university presses, at our very best, are also reflections of what we publish. Scholarship is our mission and our guiding star, and scholarship is not static. It constantly changes and evolves, exchanging outmoded ideas and interpretations for ones that meet and exemplify current knowledge. In what we publish, we seek to communicate ideas that push beyond accepted discussions and break new ground. Sometimes we even give the world a glimpse of what lies ahead. We are good at doing this for the men and women we publish, and we can be good at doing this for ourselves as well. So I'll take the position that there is nothing wrong with being a publisher, and I'm proud to call myself one. The key is defining "publisher" in a broad, dynamic, and forward looking way that allows us to continually engage with those big ideas and to give them life. 🌱

From the University Presses — Consorting and Collaborating at the AAUP Meeting

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The AAUP held its annual gathering in Boston this past June, with a near-record number of folks exchanging tips, swapping stories, and just getting caught up. **Leila Salisbury** has a good summary of the atmospherics and other issues in her piece for this issue, so I'll focus on a couple of themes that kept coming up again and again.

Specifically, discussions of collaboration with other institutions within the university — primarily but not exclusively libraries — and ways university presses could collaborate and act consortially within our own community were scheduled into every time slot at the meeting.

Let's begin with the area most relevant to *Against the Grain* readers: library relations. As more presses report directly into libraries (including Temple, where I hang my hat), it's apt to at least begin a preliminary assessment of how it's going. This was precisely the subject in "University Press & Library Cohabitation and Collaboration: Challenges and Opportunities." Three of the four participants (all university press people, though librarians had plenty of chance to voice their own views in other sessions) told of their experiences when their press physically moved into the respective libraries at **Georgia**, **Arizona**, and **Purdue**.

Not surprisingly, the results are related to the way the decision to move the presses was

reached. Where there was consultation with all parties the move seemed to go more smoothly; where there was not, it was for one side like being shunted to a new foster home and for the other like taking on a boarder. Plenty of potential, but some getting used to each other required.

Still, the takeaway from this session for me was **Charles Watkinson's** account of how fully **Purdue University Press** and the **Purdue Libraries** are working together. It is perhaps not coincidental that **Charles** is both Scholarly Communications and Press Director, thereby tearing down a wall that could easily keep librarians and professional publishers apart. His division provides scholarly publishing services, from the depositing of unreviewed materials like conference proceedings, technical reports, and databases into the institutional repository

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to the publication, marketing, and distribution of peer-reviewed journals and books. His unit has used the former to help develop the latter, which seems like a very promising development. Most importantly, as was made clear by **Charles** and by **Purdue** Dean of the Libraries **James Mullins** in another session, the **Press** and library are working collaboratively with the utmost mutual respect for each other's talents and expertise. It is a true partnership.

Purdue's Mullins spoke at a lively session entitled "Press Library Coalition Forum." Much of this panel was devoted to describing the new **Library Publishing Coalition** (http://educopia.org/lpc/index.php/Main_Page). This is another collaboration, among libraries to share collectively what they learn from their individual publishing efforts. A lively exchange occurred when **University of Nebraska Press** Director **Donna Shear**, responding to comments offered by both **Jim Mullins** and **Rush Holt**, the Director of the **University of Pittsburgh Library** system, noted that some of what the **LPC** planned seemed, intentionally or not, to usurp rather than complement what university presses already do well. What followed provided a good example of why we need to talk with each other. Misunderstandings began to be addressed, collaborative opportunities began to be seen, and all agreed cooperation was needed and wanted on all sides. The session ended in comity.

Librarians populated other panels as well, and, indeed, I suspect there were more librarians at this year's **AAUP** than at any previous one. In addition, the need to work with librarians was stressed at any number of sessions, from a gathering of press directors on the first day of the meeting to sessions on selling backlist, altmetrics, and creating quality metadata (where university presses must fulfill the very different needs of libraries and retail stores).

Other panels touched on the university press's role throughout the university and on various collaborations that have been unfolding. In a session on conveying our role to the entire scholarly communications community (full disclosure—I chaired) **Becky Brasington Clark** told how **Johns Hopkins University Press**, working with the Center for Gun Policy Research and the Bloomberg School of Public Health at **Hopkins**, published the proceedings of a symposium on gun violence held in the wake of the Newtown shootings in a mind-boggling three weeks. We can do wondrous things when we work together.

Still other panels involved discussions about how presses can work together. What functions might we team up on to win the same kinds of advantages library consortia gain when they work together and buy together? For instance, can we get better deals on materials by buying in bulk? Can we collaborate to fight piracy, which is terribly expensive to monitor on a press-by-press basis? Are there ways we as a group can work with an organization like the **National Information Standards Organization (NISO)** to help create metadata standards and to further the work already done to create epub standards? To explore open-access models? To experiment with multi-media forms of scholarship? To address the free rider issue in university press publishing?

Individual and small-group conversations involving collaboration—with each other, with libraries, with others in the university—especially faculty—filled the hallways and the coffee breaks as well. How might some of what we learned from various projects

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sponsored by the **Andrew W. Mellon Foundation** be broadened out to other fields? For instance, the **American Literatures Initiative** has decreased both time and cost from putting a book into production to producing a bound print or completed eBook volume. Can that be leveraged to other areas of publication? The **University Press Content Consortium (UPCC)**, **Oxford Scholarship Online (OSO)**, and **Books at JSTOR** have all helped presses sell more books internationally as well as more eBooks to the library community. These are all collaborative efforts, and they are all helping to disseminate scholarship as inexpensively as possible, whether through a traditional purchase model or in some cases via open access experiments. Open access for books and for the humanities and social sciences remain a work in progress, but at this year's **AAUP** almost everybody seemed willing to take part in some controlled experiments.

So what's the takeaway for *Against the Grain* readers? I think it's this. Presses and libraries benefit when we work together and are both hurt when we don't. The harm to presses may be more immediate and more immediately evident, especially for small- and medium-sized ones. Their budgets will continue to be cut as higher education budgets struggle, and without collaboration they will be left largely unable to experiment. Some could die.

But the consequences of going it alone will be great for libraries as well, though perhaps delayed. Libraries are unlikely by themselves to efficiently take on the responsibilities presses now assume for disseminating

scholarship globally, for making its existence known (I do not think metadata alone will ever replace marketing), for helping to manage the promotion and tenure system, for putting together lists of the highest quality scholarship in so many fields. Even if they do manage all that, will they then be able to recover the eighty to ninety percent of cost that university presses do? And if that's not their goal, how will they explain that to administrators?

Together, though, we can reinvent scholarly communications. We have a remarkable blending of skills, and this seems the time to put aside old grievances, not by either of our communities giving up their interests, but by finding the places where we can cooperate to provide new forms of and new ways to deliver both new and old forms of scholarship. Not incidentally, we can also together help show administrators the schizophrenic nature of what they now tell us each separately. Librarians are told to find ways to spend less on scholarship while prices increase; presses are told they must earn more revenue. Nobody seems to see the contradiction.

So let libraries and presses at the same universities work ever more closely together, whatever the model—direct report, constant collaboration, gathering under a broader scholarly communications umbrella. And let our two communities work more closely, as both new **AAUP** executive director **Peter Berkery** and new **ARL** executive director **Elliott Shore**, who was kind enough to attend the meeting, have pledged to do. May the collaborations at the association level, at the university level, and everywhere in between thrive! 🌱