

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE OPERATION
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA PRESS
WITH AN EMPHASIS ON SCHOLARLY EDITING**

by

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Abstract

This report presents a general model of the Canadian university press using UBC Press as an example, and is submitted as the project report requirement toward the Master of Publishing degree from Simon Fraser University.

The report consists of six chapters. Chapter one introduces the subject and sets up the organizational framework of the report. Chapter two discusses the university press in Canada, using UBC Press to exemplify its functions. Chapter three discusses the role of the scholarly editor based on information compiled from the literature on the subject and illustrates how the editors and the editorial process at UBC Press are exemplary of the descriptions found in the literature. Chapter four describes the production process at UBC Press and Chapter five, the other operations at the Press. Chapter six concludes with a summary of the report and final remarks.

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1. Introduction

1.1 *Organizational framework*

This report is an examination of the structure of a university press, with a specific focus on the situation in Canada and the role of the scholarly editor and the editorial process in particular. I have attempted, through the review and compilation of the literature on the subject, to present a general model of a university press that operates according to a mandate common to most university presses. This mandate is that the university press disseminate knowledge in the form of original, sound scholarship that makes a contribution to its field, and that is published whether or not it is financially viable. This mandate is fulfilled primarily by a continuing commitment to excellence in the editorial process. Throughout the report, it is my intention to show that the editorial process is not only an essential element to the operations of a university press, but also key to the fulfilment of and adherence to the general university press's mandate. The University of British Columbia Press (UBC Press) is presented as an example of a Canadian university press that is distinctive unto itself while operating according to the general guidelines set out by the various publications on the subject.

The report is divided into six chapters. Following this first introductory chapter is Chapter two, *Defining and Contextualizing the University Press*, which discusses the university press and the university press in Canada in particular. It outlines the press's purpose, functions and some of the challenges it faces, as well as attempts to place the university press in context. Scholarly publishing carried on by university presses differs from the trade publishing in significant ways, beginning with the specific funding

required to publish scholarly works and the formalized process of peer review, and continuing through to a difference in major revenue streams, and to the ways in which its books are marketed. It is important to make the distinction between scholarly publishing and trade publishing, as the university press functions under a distinct set of constraints, and the editorial process and the role the editor plays demand a skill set and organization that is particular to this form of publishing. To illustrate some of the functions of a university press, and the editor's role within these functions, UBC Press's funding strategies, its system of peer review and aspects of its production and marketing efforts have been used as examples of the publishing process at work within a well functioning Canadian scholarly press.

Chapter three, *The Role of the Scholarly Editor and the Editorial Process*, makes up the bulk of the report. In it, the responsibilities, duties and functions of a scholarly editor are described. It outlines the qualities an editor must possess, and discusses the role of the scholarly editor in relation to the author, the peer reviewers, the university advisory board and the rest of the departments and employees within the press. Throughout this chapter, UBC Press's editors and its editorial process are shown to perform their functions in a way that exemplifies the framework as described by the various publications on the subject of scholarly editing. Testimonies from authors who have published with UBC Press and who I have interviewed are introduced here.

Chapter four describes the production process at UBC Press. It reiterates and emphasizes the importance of an efficient and effective production process in order to fulfill a university press's mandate to disseminate research that makes an original

contribution to knowledge. It shows that optimal preparation and execution at the acquisitions stage aids this process immensely. Subsections within this chapter outline the procedure from the production department's receipt of the manuscript, passed on from the acquisitions department, to the final printed product. The subsections discuss the production editor's schedule for each book, and also outline other aspects of the production department such as new printing technologies, the decision to reprint manuscripts and the process this entails, and foreign rights sales.

Chapter five discusses other important operations at the press to provide an understanding of these operations, and how the editorial process is the catalyst that aids in making these other operations run smoothly. Subsections of this chapter deal with other operations including UBC Press's role as a distributor, its employee structure, decision-making, its deadline scheduling and its use of new publishing technologies.

The final chapter concludes the report by summarizing the operation of a university press and the role the scholarly editor plays within this operation. It reviews how UBC Press can be seen as an example of a well-functioning Canadian university press and discusses the future of UBC Press including some of the improvements and changes the staff members are anticipating.

Before embarking on the main body of the report, it is important to provide a brief explanation of the status of UBC Press as a Canadian university press – under what premise it was operating when it began, some of the challenges it faced and what it is undergoing today. The following section outlines a portion of this evolution.

1.2 *UBC Press: a Canadian university press*

UBC Press is a relatively successful medium-sized university press in Canada. This success has been derived from its steady growth – in title output, sales, number of staff and international recognition – since 1989, when a major restructuring of its operations was implemented. That restructuring came about from a standard procedure in many universities that has individual departments undergo periodic external reviews. In the 1989 review, a UBC President’s Committee found that the Press had not heeded the suggestions of a previous review by a managerial consultant in 1982, who remarked that there were some fundamental organizational problems and that the output of the Press was not at a level that was acceptable for the number of staff employed.¹ The Committee also concluded that the press still suffered numerous problems, mostly related to mismanagement, lack of communication between the then Director and other departments, and a list that was unfocused and small.² Several major recommendations were made, including the suggestion to completely reorganize the structure of its operations. Heeding these recommendations, an Acting Director shuffled positions within the firm and put in place a series of interim positions that were maintained until the current Director, Peter Milroy, was hired in 1990 and a solid employee structure was established. (There are currently three full-time acquisition editors and four full-time production editors, as well as a Publisher’s Assistant, a finance department and an active marketing team. See Figure 5.1 in Section 5.2, UBC Press staff for further details.)

¹ Review of UBC Press, April 1982. Unpublished report.

² Review of UBC Press, October 1989. Unpublished report.

Since its last review in 1989, by implementing some of the suggestions made in the report, as well as taking its own initiative to change, the firm has thrived. It is ready for its third review to be held early in 2005, and believes it is now in a position to warrant a positive and encouraging report. UBC Press plans to use the report to raise its profile as an important and integral department within the institution that gives it its name, and as a means of encouraging the University to provide increased financial support. Currently, the University provides only a small amount of funding to the Press. The Press hopes to gain some leverage with the University from what is expected to be a positive report from the committee and to demonstrate how far it has advanced since the previous unfavourable reviews.

From April to September 2004, I worked as an intern for UBC Press. Throughout this period, the Director and members of the staff were preparing for the upcoming review. The Director asked me to participate in this preparation by writing a descriptive narrative designed to form part of the Press's self-study on the editorial and production processes at the Press. This contribution to the self-study has been included in the documentation that will be presented to the review committee to familiarize committee members with the operations of the Press prior to their formal review when they will assess the operations and offer advice and recommendations to the Press.

Initial preparation for these reviews can be extremely revealing. While examining the editorial and production operations at the Press, and compiling the self-study, it became clear that the editorial and production processes of UBC Press operate efficiently and

effectively, and that, overall, has a promising future. It makes an appropriate example of a relatively successful medium-sized Canadian university press that has seen steady growth and international recognition since 1989.

2. Defining and Contextualizing the University Press

The publishing process of a university press is a unique and dynamic one that stands apart from the process carried out at a trade-publishing house. The university press is in the business of making available specialized, scholarly work that makes an original contribution to its field. Two common misconceptions of the university press are that it produces only those books that are used in the institution's courses, and that those books are written by the university's professors. In fact, while they hold the name of their academic institution, most presses function as independent entities³ with academics from across the country and abroad, working in a selected range of subject areas. This is the case with UBC Press. A university press forms a serious and important part of the publishing industry as a whole, but is distinct for several reasons, which will be outlined below.

There are many reasons why an author chooses to publish with a university press as opposed to with a trade-publishing house, for example. First, his/her work may be of a scholarly nature that will be of interest only to those in the same field, one in which the publisher specializes. A second reason is the common perception that an academic must have valid and original research to publish or face the possibility of a thwarted career,⁴ and an academic looks to the university press to publish this material. Third, they may fear that their work will be lost in the wide world of trade publishing and feel more

³ As of 1999, the University of British Columbia recognized UBC Press as a unit of the Office of the Vice-President of Research. It is considered a department of the university but relies on its own sales revenue and outside funding to survive. It receives no financial support from UBC.

⁴ Marcel Danesi, "From the (Ivory) Tower to the (Cold) Shower: a tongue-in-cheek comparison of academic versus commercial and trade publishing." *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 30, no. 2 (1999): 75.

secure and comfortable knowing that the business of a university press is to deal with books with a limited appeal. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the author is aware of the university press mandate and has an important, original contribution to make to his/her field. Knowing that the university press is dedicated to producing well-edited books, the author trusts that his/her research will be presented clearly and will be sold into the appropriate markets. This chapter aims to place the university press in context within the publishing industry as a whole and to differentiate the university press from the trade.

2.1 How the university press is driven by its mandate

The mandate of a university press is to publish works of outstanding editorial quality that contribute original scholarship to the press's areas of specialty. This excellence in editorial is the driving force behind any prestigious and reputable university press. An academic's published work is a necessary element in advancing his/her career toward full professorship and tenure, and in attaining the recognition that asserts authority in one's field by making this original contribution. The imprimatur of a university press on this work, especially a press with a good reputation, assures a certain legitimacy that allows for this advancement to take place. Marcel Danesi, professor of Semiotics and Communication Theory at the University of Toronto, discusses the adage "publish or perish" as the ultimatum in the world of academia, and states, "A book that appears bearing the copyright of a reputable university press on its cover is a virtual guarantee

that the author will not perish, making tenure and/or promotion a *fait accompli*.”⁵

Traditionally, scholarly publishing has been primarily driven by this mandate, which is to disseminate knowledge in a form that is accessible to and readable by the public. Because of its focus on authoritative, if at times esoteric subject matter, it must be dedicated to the clear expression of the scholarship in question. Given the importance of clarity and accessibility in scholarly publishing, the role of the editor is paramount to all other operations of a press. It is common that most of the energy, effort and budget of a university press are allocated to the editing and review process. This dedication to superior editing ensures the output of outstanding academic works; it is indeed this output of such well-edited books that make an original contribution to academia that is stated in the mandates of most major Canadian academic presses.⁶ However, before delving into the specific functions and elements of a scholarly press, and how the editorial process and the editors function within these operations, it is important to provide a background of UBC Press,⁷ as well as position it within the Canadian scholarly publishing industry as it stands today, as it will be used throughout as an example of a well-functioning Canadian university press.

⁵ Danesi, 75.

⁶ <http://www.utpress.utoronto.ca>, <http://www.mqup.mcgill.ca>, <http://www.uofcpress.com>, <http://www.uap.ualberta.ca>. All were visited on November 9, 2004.

⁷ This history, like much of the information relating to UBC Press in this report, is based in part on interviews held with employees of the Press during my internship from April to September 2004. The Director, the Associate Director, Editorial, the Assistant Director, Production, and a production editor were interviewed at the Press and were asked questions relating to general operations, their specific duties, the history of the Press and their expectations of the future. A senior editor, working remotely, answered a questionnaire of the same description. The interview questions for the Director, the Acquisitions Editor and the Production Editor can be found in Appendix A.

2.1.1 A short history of UBC Press

UBC Press began in 1971 as a scholarly book-publishing house, specializing in many disparate fields. Compared to other Canadian university presses such as the University of Toronto Press (UTP) it was small. (UTP was publishing 60 titles in 1971 as compared to the three published by UBC Press.) As mentioned in the Introduction, the Press has undergone two reviews since 1971, and experienced a major staff turnover at the firm in 1989-90. While the Press's list was still not well defined in 1990, it did have some natural strengths. The Press's senior management decided that UBC Press would no longer publish titles in literature or philosophy. Instead, they would focus on their stronger fields, which at the time were forestry, British Columbia history and Native studies. The President's Standing Committee had previously acted as an editorial board for the Press and worked in conjunction with the Publications Board, which is made up of senior scholars from the University of British Columbia and charged with governing the University's imprint. It was at this time that the President's Standing Committee was abolished, leaving the Publications Board as the Press's university advisory board and the final authority responsible for recommending publication. The Press then began acquiring and developing a more focused list. In its efforts to fulfil its mandate to disseminate original research, it needed to build up a stable of authors, so the Press started an aggressive acquisitions campaign. As it built up both expertise and presence, authors began to recognize it as a Canadian publisher strong in the social sciences⁸ and,

⁸ UBC Press: Aid to Publishers Business Plan 2004-2005, 1.

based on the authors it published and the growing expertise of the editors, it developed a variety of series.⁹

In 1995 the Press expanded its operations from the head office in Vancouver to include an office in Toronto, increasing its national reach and building contacts across the country. The Vancouver office also moved from four units spread over two floors, which impeded communication and collaboration among departments, to a one-floor, more open-concept space, which allowed for more contact among employees, thus resulting in better communication, more association and cooperation.

2.1.2 UBC Press today

Over the subsequent thirty years since its beginning, UBC Press has grown in size, quality and reputation and, while its output is still relatively low (50-55 titles per year) compared to other university presses (120-140 titles per year for UTP; 80-100 titles per year for McGill-Queens University Press),¹⁰ it now competes for authors and standing with those same university presses, which are the biggest in the country. Its authors come from BC and the rest of Canada, as well as from the US and the UK. Authors considering publication with UBC Press can be assured that editors at the Press not only offer insight into their chosen fields but also provide the world of academia with a fresh look at topical and timely ideas. Authors are drawn to the Press because of its reputation as a firm with outstanding editorial practice, a forceful marketing team and award-

⁹ A series arises when there are multiple volumes within the list that have a common subject matter. A series editor is required, who is frequently already a Press author. Series tend to sell well, prompting growth and recognition and ensuring library sales, and are advantageous from a marketing point of view, as the purchase of one often results in the purchase of many or all in the series.

¹⁰ <http://www.utpress.utoronto.ca>, <http://www.mqup.mcgill.ca>. Sites were visited on November 9, 2004.

winning simple and clean book design.¹¹ It specializes in Native studies, military history, British Columbia history and natural history, law, Canadian political science and environmental studies, and it is growing in fields such as Asian studies, gender studies, education and policy, anthropology and archaeology, and urban planning.

With UBC Press now placed in context within the Canadian industry as a whole, specific aspects of scholarly publishing in Canada, such as funding, the peer-review process, production and marketing, and the editor's role within these functions, will be examined.

2.2 The need for funding at a Canadian university press

Due to the state of the publishing industry in Canada, which must contend with small economies of scale, the threat of foreign ownership and the chain store monopoly governed by Chapters/Indigo, Canadian publishing houses – including Canadian university presses – cannot sustain their businesses by sales revenues alone. It is important to provide here an in-depth description of the funding that university presses receive, as without it, many books would not be published. At UBC Press, it is the editor's responsibility to apply for grants specific to scholarly works on behalf of his/her author. The Director is responsible for applying to the federal and provincial governments for block grants that help to support the overhead operations of the Press.

In 2003, UBC Press felt the financial effects common to the entire Canadian industry: the “sluggishness and uncertainty in the trade and demands for higher discounts and free

¹¹ See <http://www.ubcpres.ca> for a list of award-winning titles published by UBC Press.

shipping combined with the unpredictable and highhanded behaviour of Indigo.”¹² As a university press, however, it experienced the biggest financial impact when institutional libraries, both in Canada and the US, slashed their budgets. American public universities also cut their budgets, resulting in “severe reductions in buying” of texts used in academic courses.¹³ This circumstance, combined with the reality of small, specialized markets, makes supplementary funding for scholarly publishing imperative.

To publish regardless of the financial viability of certain books is what the university press mandate supports. It is for this reason that most Canadian university presses rely heavily on subsidies from external granting bodies to fund their publishing programs; however, many university presses also can rely on some funding from the universities that house them. In the case of UBC Press, the Press itself is an important part of the institution that houses it but receives only marginal overhead subsidies from the University, resulting in a somewhat reduced rate for occupancy costs such as rent. (At one time UBC, like most universities that have their own presses, provided significant funding to the Press, but this was terminated in the mid-nineties.) As a scholarly press, many UBC Press titles are eligible for project funding from the Aid to Scholarly Publishing Program (ASPP) and, as a Canadian-owned, Canada-based company it also qualifies for and receives most of its support from standard publishing grants from the Book Publishing Industry Development Program (BPIDP), Canada Council and BC Arts Council. While the Press is committed to publishing high-quality academic work, it will rarely publish anything that does not have at least some form of outside funding, as

¹² UBC Press: Aid to Publishers Business Plan 2004-2005. 2.

¹³ UBC Press: Aid to Publishers Business Plan 2004-2005. 2.

it is very difficult for such specialized subject matter to secure a wide enough market to sustain itself in sales only. Fortunately, these granting bodies and other private or external organizations dedicated to the advancement of their specific fields, recognize the need for these works to be disseminated and made public, and therefore put funds in place to make this possible. For the year 2003, 14% of all revenue for UBC Press came from grants.

2.2.1 Government block grants

As is the practice of most university presses in Canada, and indeed, most publishing houses in Canada, UBC Press applies annually to the Department of Canadian Heritage, which hosts the BPIDP, to request grants to fund its publishing program. The application is extensive and outlines all the operations of the Press, including human resources, long-term and short-term goals, and of course, its financial situation. The Press has continually been granted funding. This revenue goes directly toward operating costs of the Press and accounts for \$133,744 – or approximately 6% – of all revenue. Funding is also available from the British Columbia Arts Council on the provincial level, and the Canada Council on the federal level; funds received from the latter dictate the amount received from the former. UBC Press also receives block funding of approximately \$50,000 from the Association for the Export of Canadian Books (AECB), as well as funding to attend international book fairs. Altogether, the subsidies received from the government are essential for the viability of the firm and make up the biggest share of the Press's revenue from external grants.

2.2.2 Aid to Scholarly Publishing Program

Funding that is granted to a specific title, also called subvention money, comes from the Aid to Scholarly Publishing Program (ASPP), a program put in place by the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences and funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). The ASPP gives financial aid to academics who wish to publish scholarly works. Its mandate states that it provides funds for those manuscripts that deserve to be published, but due to their small and specialized audience, cannot hope to finance themselves. Criteria for obtaining one of these grants are much the same as the criteria for a university press in determining if a manuscript is eligible for publication: it must make a significant contribution to the field, it must be of sound scholarship and it must be original. Another consideration is whether the subject matter and/or the author are Canadian. A committee of the ASPP assesses the application compiled and submitted by the Press editor, which includes the author's name, the title of the work, a series of questions about the work (into which discipline[s] it falls, whether any portion of the manuscript has already been published, to what audience the work is targeted, etc.), as well as a brief description of the work itself. It also requests the two reports of the peer reviewers, as well as the author's response to these. It is not uncommon for the committee to choose its own peer reviewers to assess the manuscript if the application is received before the manuscript has reached this stage at the press. If this is the case, the author, in close collaboration with the editor, must write a response to these reviewers and submit this to the ASPP as well. If the work is approved, the ASPP provides a cheque for \$7,000, which, at UBC Press, goes directly toward reducing the production costs of the book.

The Press also seeks other forms of funding, which is especially necessary if the ASPP rejects a manuscript for funding. Depending on the subject matter of the manuscript, there are many private groups to which the author may turn for financial assistance. The Japan Foundation, for example, might decide that an author's book on the stories of Japanese immigrants arriving in British Columbia at the end of the nineteenth century is worthy of monetary support, or an author's department or faculty may provide the necessary resources in order that his/her important work may be published. The occasional exception, as was the case with one UBC Press book that was denied ASPP support, usually comes when the Press thinks a manuscript is sufficiently important despite financial concerns to warrant proceeding. Manuscripts that promise strong textbook adoption for courses or those with exceptional trade potential may also be exceptions to this general rule.

2.2.3 The University of British Columbia's K.D. Srivastava endowment

Until 1994, UBC Press received a grant from the university in the amount of \$250,000 annually, but in 1990 UBC gave notice that it would rescinded this arrangement leaving the Press four years to become "self-sufficient." UBC Press managed to negotiate an annual grant of \$50,000 in the name of K.D. Srivastava, who was the Vice-President of Student and Academic Services and a long-serving member of the Publications Board. The Press must apply annually for this grant from the current Vice-President. Once received, it sets aside \$1,000 to be awarded to the author of a book deserving of the K.D. Srivastava (KDS) Prize. To be eligible for this prize, the author must have done a

substantial amount of research for the manuscript at UBC or have been a permanent, adjunct or visiting professor at the University, or the manuscript's subject matter must be BC-related.

One of the motives for requesting the external review for UBC Press was to use the predicted positive report of the committee as leverage to convince the University that the Press is in fact a successful, essential department within the institution and thus deserving of more funds from UBC. The Press's claim to financial assistance from the institution that gives it its name is its contribution to the international reputation of the University. As it stands now, the Press remains on the periphery of the University's operations, and yet it is under its control administratively, as well as in terms of personnel, while the KDS Fund accounts for a mere 7% of its total annual revenue. Thus, while the UBC administration holds no direct editorial sway over the Press, bureaucratically the University can be an impediment, as the Press must, at times, work around rules developed for very different types of departments in order to run its operations.

The fact remains that very few scholarly presses can manage without some source of funding beyond sales revenues, whether it comes from funds from the host university and/or other external granting bodies. Indeed, it has been noted that the mandate of a scholarly publisher is to publish academic research "wherever this cannot be done commercially."¹⁴ This statement attests to the necessity of external financial aid in the

¹⁴ Quoted in Deborah Cooper. "The Scholarly Review Process at the University of Toronto Press." (Vancouver: Simon Fraser University, 2003) Unpublished report, 14.

business of scholarly publishing, but further speaks to the dedication of the scholarly editor and the importance of the editorial process in university presses. The editor is responsible for presenting these granting bodies articulate and convincing testimonies explaining why their manuscripts deserve funding. Their strongest rationale is that the manuscript deserves to be published; in order to prove this, an optimal and smoothly-run editorial operation must be in place that serves to present to the funding application committees a manuscript worthy of publication and therefore worthy of their support.

2.3 The peer-review system: a determining factor in the scholarly publishing process

While funding, and its procurement by the editors, is essential to the future of a scholarly manuscript, the manuscript cannot be granted this funding (specifically funds from the ASPP) until it has been approved for publication. An important distinction between the publishing process at a university press and a trade-publishing house is a formalized system of peer review. While peer review does exist in some facets of the trade business (for poetry and certain works of non-fiction, for example), its role in the process of scholarly publishing is salient to the authority of any given work, and applies to every manuscript under consideration at the press. It is an accepted and valued arrangement in academia, a collaboration between the press, the author and the reviewer, in which a manuscript is assessed by established scholars in the field of study and judged on its scholarship, its contribution to the field and its overall merit. Peer review is accepted in the academic world as the standard by which scholarly achievement is judged and validated. The system exists not only to ensure quality control over what a press publishes, but also to add to the reputation of an academic press in that it is the

reviewers who validate publication by their recommendation. The assessment of scholarly research by experts in the field aids the editor, who, while able to evaluate organization and writing quality, may not be aware of what is groundbreaking or valid scholarship in a particular subject. Where the editor is extremely useful, however, is in choosing readers from his/her network of academics who would be most appropriate for a given manuscript. (More on the importance of the editor's network is discussed in Section 3.2.) The endorsement of an author's work by fellow professional academics lends credibility to a university press's decision to publish it. By undergoing and surviving the review process, an author also increases his/her professional standing, and may be considered for academic promotion and salary increments within his/her department. Peer review is a rigorous and established system that, when combined with final decision making by the university's advisory board (the Publications Board in the case of UBC Press), ensures quality of scholarship in all that a university press produces.

2.4 Production, marketing and publicity at the university press

While this report deals primarily with the editorial processes of a university press and the role of the scholarly editor, it is important to note that production (which is discussed in depth in Chapter four) as well as marketing and publicity (which will be discussed briefly below) are integral parts of the publishing process. Once the manuscript has undergone an extremely detailed examination by the editor and has been accepted as a work worthy of publication, the process of producing this work begins. Production of a manuscript is an obvious continuation from the editorial/acquisitions stage of publishing. The efficient production of a manuscript is a key part of fulfilling the press's mandate, as the department is responsible for bringing the manuscript from its raw stages to the final

product of a printed book. Within this book is the finely edited knowledge and research of an academic who, because of the press's acquisition of his/her work, will soon be able to share this original contribution with the public. UBC Press follows a relatively standard production process while making use of the latest publishing technologies to aid in the efficient system it practices.

Once a well-edited manuscript has transformed into a nicely presented printed book, it is the responsibility of the marketing department, with the editor's advice, to find the appropriate readership for the book; to fulfil the university press mandate of disseminating original research, the book must reach the correct markets. Frequently expectations about marketing and publicity become points of contention between authors and scholarly presses. That academic books fail to register on the general public's radar once they have been published and placed in the bookstores, is one of these sensitive points. An author might fault the press for a poor marketing and publicity campaign for his/her book, but "shelving," which occurs when a book is lost among bookstore shelves or simply not displayed, is due at least in part to the very limited audience for a particular book. This may make it difficult to market to a wider audience of potential buyers. However, because of this very point, the university press must try to market its books as forcefully as possible. "[M]ost scholarly publishers bend over backward to find something tasty in the most erudite tome" in order that they may use this tidbit to market the book successfully.¹⁵ UBC Press has a dynamic and active marketing department, which, with input from Press editors, puts forth a tremendous

¹⁵ William Germano. *Getting It Published: A Guide for Scholars and Anyone Else Serious about Serious Books*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 15.

effort to ensure that its authors' books do not go unnoticed on the bookstore shelf. Through journal, magazine and newspaper reviews, awards submissions and journal ads, the marketing department quickly drains its discretionary budget of \$1,000 to \$1,500 per title to create awareness about books that might otherwise go unnoticed. This kind of money leaves little for author events or advertisements in major national media outlets such as the *Globe and Mail*.

An advantage of publishing with a university press, UBC Press included, is that there is little risk in projecting numbers of sales. Because the trade produces books aimed at a fickle general audience, it must put forth a consistent effort to market each book without knowing how successful it will be. The scholarly press, on the other hand, can fairly accurately predict a title's sales due once again to knowing its small, specialized audience and to its expertise in the areas in which it specializes, but also because it can rely on dependable course adoption as well as sales to institutional libraries.¹⁶ Therefore, the marketing department is better able to allocate a small budget effectively and responsibly. Yet despite this small advantage, marketing for scholarly monographs continues to be a challenge for the university press. UBC Press remains extremely competitive as a result of its rigorous editorial practice to ensure an excellent final product that can only benefit a book's marketing campaign.

Another difference between trade publishing and scholarly publishing is the size of their respective markets. Authors who publish with a trade house have sought out this house

¹⁶ Germano, 14.

because they feel their manuscript holds a certain amount of general mass appeal. The trade press recognizes that their subject is thus likely to have a sizeable audience of general readers, and the manuscript is edited with these readers in mind. The trade publisher and editor rely on their experience and expertise to judge whether the acquisition of a manuscript will result in positive financial results. The publisher and editors of a university press, however, understand that the audience for scholarly books is usually extremely specialized and usually small, making the potential for reaching a broader public much less likely. Hence, where the trade “depends upon reaching the greatest number of people quickly, [scholarly publishing] depends upon reaching enough of the right people over time.”¹⁷ The editor can be a key ally for the members of a press’s marketing department. S/he has the intense familiarity with the book that helps to pinpoint the appropriate readership. The editor is able to direct the marketing department to this audience and other potential markets because of the network s/he has built up within the community of his/her editorial field. The expertise the editor possesses in his/her specific fields makes him/her an invaluable asset to those responsible for getting the book to the right markets.

With the university press defined and distinguished from trade publishing, and some of its important functions highlighted, it is now time to move on to the editor’s role within the editorial process specifically. The subsequent chapter outlines the scholarly editor’s duties from the acquisition of a manuscript, to the role s/he plays in the peer-review process and the meeting of the university advisory board – UBC Press’s Publications

¹⁷ Germano, 6.

Board – to the specific qualities possessed by an editor, which are beneficial not only to his/her career, but also to the author and the other members of the press.

3. The Role of the Scholarly Editor and the Editorial Process

The role of the scholarly editor at a university press is a complex one that requires the multiple skills and talents possessed by any manuscript editor, as well as a consideration for the many steps in the scholarly publishing process. This chapter outlines these skills and talents and contextualizes the editor within the scholarly publishing process as a whole, while presenting the scholarly editor, using editors working at UBC Press, as a key player in the process of scholarly publishing. It is also intended to act as a précis of the literature on the subject after a perusal and review of the present research.

Currently, there are a limited number of published works dealing with what a scholarly editor does. The *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* has published several articles dedicated to outlining the editor's role at a university press, and the volume *Editors on Editing*, edited by Gerald Gross, includes one essay on the editor/author relationship, when the author is a scholar. There are numerous memoirs of editors; however, the majority is devoted to the trade editor. The canon of memoirs of scholarly editors is small but does include Marsh Jeanneret's *God and Mammon*, which details his years as the publisher for the University of Toronto Press. Roy MacSkimming devotes a chapter to the university press in *The Perilous Trade*, but this is essentially a synopsis of Jeanneret's anecdotes.

The scholarly editor performs many tasks; in fact, it is said that “[scholarly] manuscript editing is by nature a very task-oriented job. One task leads to another, which leads to another, and so on, all building toward the final product – a clearly written, consistent

manuscript with as few errors as possible.”¹⁸ Hoping to attain this perfection is, of course, the ideal for every editor, trade or scholarly, but the scholarly editor faces the challenge of having to gauge not only what the potential audience will want but also how other academics in the field, as well as the press’s advisory board, will receive the scholarship. The editor at a university press acquires a manuscript – either by the submission of an unsolicited proposal or through his/her own active pursuit of a promising academic known to be working on publishable research – and this acquisition is based on the editor’s skill as a seeker of works that will match the press’s list. However, there is more to the editor’s job than knowing what will adhere to the mandate of a press. S/he plays a significant role in the peer-review process and the within other operations of the press.

3.1 *The wearer of many hats*

Before discussing the editor’s role in the peer-review process and his/her relationship with the university advisory board, however, it important to lay out some of the qualities that a scholarly editor possesses. In his essay, “The ‘value added’ in editorial acquisitions,” Sanford Thatcher outlines an accurate job description of the scholarly editor. He calls the editor a hunter,¹⁹ on the lookout for new talent and fresh, original research that can be moulded into a published work. This moulding describes the task involved in another definition of the editor, the one of a shaper, the sculptor who sees a potential masterpiece in a slab of granite. The editor is the Janus figure, or what Thatcher

¹⁸ Pam Upton, Ron Maner. “Nature versus nurture in the making of a manuscript editor.” *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 28 no. 4 (1997): 198.

¹⁹ Sanford Thatcher. “The ‘value added’ in editorial acquisitions.” *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 30 no. 2 (1999): 59.

calls the ally,²⁰ at the door of the publishing house, looking into the press and out to the author, acting as the liaison between these two agencies. The editor is also a selector or gatekeeper,²¹ in that s/he is constantly pouring through manuscripts deciding which will fit the press's list, which will find a market, which have the potential to be financially successful. In the grand scheme of press operations, s/he has "the power and privilege of being the entry point for what ... will bear their press's imprint."²² Some of the other descriptors Thatcher uses on the role of the acquisitions editor are linker – that person who is able to see the bigger picture and identify opportunities for an author to branch out into new territory, or to initiate a series, for example. In this way the editor acts as a stimulator as well. S/he is a "reticulator," constantly building networks; a listbuilder, creating, defining and redefining the press's titles with the guidance of the publisher; and the promoter, working closely with the other departments within the press to ensure that everyone is as excited about the book as s/he is.²³ Ultimately, the editor is "the eyes and ears of a university press," who "has the broadest, most general responsibility for each book, from the time that it is signed to the time it is declared out of print ... from birth to death, so to speak."²⁴ The scholarly editor has a lengthy job description; s/he wears many hats.

3.2 *The nature of the scholarly editor*

These descriptions really only cover the functions the editor performs, what the role of the editor is. Delving deeper into these definitions, the qualities an editor must possess

²⁰ Thatcher.

²¹ Thatcher.

²² Thatcher.

²³ Thatcher.

²⁴ Thatcher.

are often innate to the individual. Skills such as knowledge of language, grammar and spelling can be learned. Sensitivity, modesty and patience²⁵ on the other hand, are virtues, as they say, and can be encouraged and explained, but tend to either be built in to a person's character or not. There may be nothing harder for a young academic than hearing that his/her manuscript has not been recommended for publication by the peer reviewers or has been rejected by the press's advisory board.²⁶ An editor must be able to break this news to the author with a certain amount of sensitivity and grace. Modesty comes with being an editor, as s/he is rarely acknowledged (except for perhaps briefly by the author) for the hard work and long hours devoted to an author's work. Moreover, the patience of an editor is constantly tried by the late submission of manuscripts or the busy schedules of academics. It could be argued that these qualities are necessary for any editor but the competitive nature of the world of academia combined with the fact that these authors are scholars first and authors second, make the job of the scholarly editor more dynamic. In order to present a practical example of a scholarly editor and the editorial process that fall into the definitions outlined above, the UBC Press editorial process and the editors who direct it will be discussed in the following sections.

Section 3.2.1, describes the acquisitions process at UBC Press, and uses testimonies from authors to illustrate the qualities the Press editors possess as outlined above. While working at the Press, I contacted seven UBC Press authors and asked them to reply to a questionnaire designed to gauge their experience in publishing with the Press. The seven were chosen based on the number of times they had published with the Press (four were

²⁵ Upton, Maner, 198.

²⁶ Danesi, 75.

first-time authors of the Press, three had published more than once with the Press) and based on a recommendation from an editor who felt that they represented a good cross-section of the authors who publish with UBC Press. Only three replied, resulting in a less-than-ideal sample; however, their testimony has been included. The author questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

3.2.1 Acquiring manuscripts at UBC Press

Because UBC Press is an academic press, most authors who publish with the Press are scholars – academics who are looking to establish or enhance their reputations in their respective fields, and who have original, scholarly work to contribute to the world of academe. Manuscripts are acquired by various methods. The Press will accept unsolicited work if it is in the proper format as directed by the author’s handbook. The handbook is distributed to authors and also posted on the UBC Press website. These guidelines state that anyone submitting work to the Press must do so as a formal proposal including an abstract of the work, an introduction, a table of contents and perhaps a sample chapter, as well as an outline of the reasons for writing it, the rationale for contacting UBC Press, and the ways in which the work will contribute to the scholarly field. Other avenues for acquiring manuscripts are discussed in more detail below.

3.2.1.1 Fitting the list

UBC Press’s list is known for its titles in political science, Native studies, military history, BC social and natural history, and law. It also has a strong presence in urban planning and environmental studies, and a burgeoning list in Asian studies and gender studies.

Proposals submitted to the Press must not only suit this list but must, of course, adhere to the mandate of the Press, already discussed in Chapter two. The editors bring forward only manuscripts appropriate to the Press's list, and if a proposal strays somewhat, the editor gives sound reasons why the Press should consider publishing something outside its areas of focus. As a press committed to remaining within its areas of expertise, it is rare that manuscripts will be considered that fall outside of this range. As the list grows, however, as it has significantly in the past year, the Press may consider venturing into new fields, as strong manuscripts in a similar vein are acquired. For the present, however, it will continue to publish in the social sciences, focusing on the areas with which it has had the most success so far.

Received proposals are discussed at bi-weekly acquisitions meetings. Here, the three editors and the Director discuss potential manuscripts and decide whether or not to proceed with the submitted proposals. While the Director has the final say, individual opinion is encouraged, and with three very experienced and qualified editors all working with the Press's mandate in mind, decisions are, more often than not, unanimous.

Because of their experience and their commitment to publishing works that fit the list, the editors are also more than capable of making initial autonomous decisions to decline certain manuscripts and only bring forward proposals that they think have original, scholarly worth and suit the Press's list. An editor usually makes an initial decision about the appropriateness of the manuscript before bringing it to an acquisitions meeting. If the manuscript is good but simply does not fit the list, s/he may recommend that the author seek another press that may be a better match. UBC Press editors often do this

because of their adherence to the Press's focused list; due to their recent growth and recognition, they have reached a point where they can be discerning in their choices. Editors may choose to reject a manuscript outright as well, if it does not represent the type and quality of work they expect.

At the acquisitions level, manuscripts are allotted – based on a discussion of the editors and the Director at the acquisitions meeting – according to the editor's expertise and interests, a division that has occurred naturally over the course of a few years, as their authors begin to publish second books with the Press and the editors become more comfortable with and knowledgeable about certain fields. The knowledge that the editors possess, while not as vast or in depth as the authors', can only be an asset to the manuscripts they edit. Their areas of expertise run parallel with the areas in which the Press publishes.

If the manuscript makes it to the acquisitions meeting, the decision to proceed is taken by all three editors and the Director. The editor who brings forward the proposal will have already developed a preliminary judgement about the manuscript yet s/he will try to present the proposal as objectively as possible to the others. At the acquisitions meeting they discuss the academic worth of the manuscript and touch on details about the author as well. At this stage, it may be decided that the proposal is a natural fit into one of the sixteen series UBC Press produces. (The Press has found that creating series is a good way to ensure certain kinds of sales, such as those to libraries. They provide a good vehicle for advertising as well.) Some decisions are straightforward: a solid, scholarly

monograph satisfying the criteria and requiring little complexity in terms of production and editing is sure to go through. Collections (derived from a series of papers, lectures or conferences), on the other hand, face a longer and more complex screening process. While collections can be valuable, they are more difficult to handle from a production point of view. The editors must deal with many different contributors, all with varying writing styles and often hectic schedules. Collections also frequently arise from conferences and the tone of the papers can be more like that of lectures than of essays. UBC Press is becoming more and more adamant that collections must be outstanding before it publishes them. While this is not to say that collections are not valued, they do require more of the production editors' time. Also, their potential for adoption in an academic course is less than that of a standard scholarly monograph.

3.2.1.2 The editor's active role in finding authors

Besides being submitted to the Press directly, manuscripts are also found through an editor's contact with scholars and academics at various venues where they congregate. Conferences, especially the well-attended Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, provide a forum for academics from around the country and the world to discuss fresh, possibly groundbreaking thoughts and to air new theories. Such gatherings also provide an ideal setting for publishers to showcase their lists. Seasoned authors alongside budding and prospective authors have the chance to see which publisher would make the best fit for their latest manuscripts. Through its colourful and impressive display of books, its two catalogues on hand and bound galleys of its soon-to-

be-published front list, UBC Press creates a strong presence and aims to attract hopeful authors at these conferences.

The editors are also extremely proactive in finding authors, even going on days-long road trips, literally knocking on people's office doors. They read academic journals and have access to list-serves that put them in touch with academics who are the authorities on the Press's fields of strength. The editors will often organize workshops and information sessions for scholars as well, detailing the process of publishing a title, from submitting a proposal, to peer review, to effective marketing.

In order to illustrate these qualities as pertaining to UBC Press editors, testimony from three UBC Press authors in interviews conducted in September 2004 are included here that contain outstanding praise for not only the publishing process at the Press, but also for the great care the editors provided during the process. One states that he received "brilliant author care" and that his relationship and the contact he had with the editor was "outstanding in all respects." Another author notes "everyone [at the Press] was ... prompt in answering my questions, efficient in their work and unfailingly courteous."²⁷ Building a healthy and respectful relationship between editor and author is not always easy: an author's vision can sometimes obscure the clear expression of his/her ideas and an editor can occasionally take for granted his/her authority over the manuscript, with the result that the author's voice is submerged by the editor's own. There are numerous reasons why an editor and an author might not mesh – disagreement over what will be

²⁷ From transcripts of UBC Press author interviews, August 31, 2004 and September 10, 2004.

included in the final product, differences in opinion and life philosophies, even the simple fact of a personality conflict – but good editors understand that their job requires them to be “managers, cheerleaders, artistic consultants, even therapists.”²⁸ Based on the statements of the three authors contacted, editors at UBC Press seem to fulfil this job description.

3.2.1.3 The legal business of publishing: creating and signing contracts

Because of the necessity of peer review and approval, advance contracts for authors are not the norm, but the Press does regularly offer them to secure authors who may otherwise be snapped up by another press. The Press adheres to a standard contract²⁹ to ensure equality among its authors and to guarantee that the Press itself is more able to consistently uphold its end of the bargain. Only very rarely will the Press engage in a bidding war or deal with an agent. Most academic writers publish to enhance their reputations in their field and are being subsidized by their university department and therefore are not expecting much financial compensation. UBC Press is very transparent about their mandate as a not-for-profit endeavour that aims to advance and promote original, quality scholarly works that make a significant contribution to the world of academe. There are no illusions of its being a commercial enterprise, although the Press

²⁸ Germano, 73.

²⁹ “The contract sets out the responsibilities of the Press and of the author. The author grants the Press an exclusive licence to publish the work. Copyright is usually registered in the Press’s name because it will be administering rights while the book is in print. Ownership of copyright, however, remains with the author, and all licences revert to the author on request once the title is out of print. The contract establishes the royalties, division of rights income, and stipulates requirements for financial subsidy.” From the UBC Press Author’s Handbook on the Press’s website: <http://www.ubcpres.ca>.

stresses that it is very business-like in the way it operates. While there is no clause in the contract establishing the Press's right to first refusal, authors regularly return to the Press because of a positive experience and strong bonds that are developed between editor and author.³⁰

3.3 *How an editor's academic network and expertise aids in choosing the appropriate readers for peer review*

Just as a university press specializes in certain fields of study, editors too usually have their areas of expertise, which means that academics may search out not only a particular press, but also a particular editor. By continually acquiring works in a certain field and becoming increasingly knowledgeable about it, an editor also widens his/her network – not only of potential authors, but also of potential peer-review readers. An editor, while expected to have a strategic and up-to-date knowledge of his/her areas of specialty, cannot be expected to have the same expertise as the authors who devote years of research to this one particular sub-field – the editors themselves are not scholars. It is for this reason that they cannot be the sole assessors of the manuscript and part of the reason why in the world of scholarly publishing the established practice of peer review exists. Thus, while editors at trade houses make all their acquisitions decisions in-house, the scholarly editor, making the *initial* decision in-house, must additionally receive the stamp of approval from other academics in the field before allowing the press's imprimatur to appear on the printed manuscript.³¹ It is the responsibility of an editor to

³⁰ From transcripts of three UBC Press author interviews, August 31, 2004 and September 10, 2004.

³¹ Judy Metro. "Is it publishable?" *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 26 no. 3 (1995): 168.

choose the reviewers for a given manuscript. Encapsulated in this duty is the ability to judge the appropriateness of a particular reader for a manuscript. The first thing to consider is the field of the chosen reader; s/he must have a certain amount of expertise in the subject area (usually greater than or at least on par with the author's). Beyond this consideration, however, is the editor's knowledge of the politics influencing the reader, and to what bias or leaning s/he is prone. The editor's ability to juggle and balance the current research and assess the competition is essential to his/her job. Not all books on the environment, for example, will advocate the same stance, and this is where this ability is tested. A good editor is not going to enlist a reader who has an opposing view from the author's, nor will s/he choose a reader who is in direct competition with the author. It is for these reasons that an editor must practice juggling sensitivities, politics and bias, and for these reasons that the greater his/her network, the more apropos the choice of reader will be.³² It is also important to know a certain amount about how the reader expresses him/herself in order to fully grasp the intended meaning: "A simple recommendation to publish might be an effusive statement coming from some scholars, whereas an effusive statement might be the middle of the road for others."³³ The following sections detail how the peer-review process operates at UBC Press to provide a hands-on description of this standard system.

3.3.1 The scholarly peer-review process at UBC Press

Generally, two reviewers are contacted to read a manuscript and their reports act as the evidence on which all other committees base their decisions. They are read by the

³² Metro.

³³ Metro.

Publications Board and they are the primary consideration of the ASPP. They make or break the future of a manuscript. Two unfavourable reviews essentially kill the project, two favourable ones allow it to reach the next phase in the publishing process. (If the two reviewers do not agree, a third may be asked to read the manuscript for another opinion.) However, a favourable report recommending publication is not necessarily a uniformly positive one, or free of suggestions for revision. Academic authors understand – and in fact count on the fact – that the reports will contain suggestions for improvement, whether it be through the highlighting of inconsistencies and inaccurate data or by indicating unclear communication of ideas. They trust that the reviewer is highly knowledgeable about the subject, and they understand that criticisms made at this stage are preferable to those received post-publication. Although at the time it may be embarrassing and difficult to accept these criticisms, the author eventually recognizes that the reviewer is in fact preventing embarrassment further down the road and offering the author a chance to correct the mistakes and make the manuscript stronger. Germano states that the readers are “there to struggle with arguments, pick nits, keep you from looking like a fool (a disaster of one), and keep the publishing house from looking like a group of fools (a disaster of many).”³⁴ A work of scholarship always carries with it the potential to become a course text and a resource for others in the field; it must be reliable, sound and accurate. Scholarly peer review ensures this.

UBC Press uses a single blind process (i.e., an anonymous reader knows the author’s identity); each manuscript is read by two reviewers (Reader A-1 and Reader A-2). The

³⁴ Germano, 80.

reviewers are in turn asked to answer a series of questions that are designed to assess the work of the author, such as “What are the strengths/weaknesses of this manuscript?” or “Who is the audience for this work?” or “Does this contribute significantly to the field?” (See Appendix C for the full list of questions.) Most readers understand that this is one of their duties – even privileges – as an academic, and take the job very seriously.

Occasionally, the Press receives a review that appears rushed and lacks relevant detail, but generally it is agreed, at UBC Press and most other academic institutions, that peer-review is an effective and valuable component of the process of academic publishing.

While it is the editor who decides whether the work will be suitable for the market, “[i]t’s an open secret that scholars are better at evaluating academic soundness than [they are at evaluating] the market.”³⁵

3.3.1.1 Finding the readers

Again, drawing on the advantages of specializing in only a few areas, the editors make many invaluable contacts in their fields, thereby providing them with a large and reliable stable of readers to approach for the assignment of peer-review responsibility. Of course, the author can always provide suggestions as to whom s/he feels would be an appropriate reader of the manuscript. Sometimes knowing who would be *unsuitable* as a reviewer for a particular manuscript proves particularly valuable, as often there are political or bias reasons for not wanting someone to review a work. However, even with the reader’s identity concealed, there is a high likelihood that the author will be able to identify one of the readers based on the tone or nature of the comments because of the specialized nature of so many works and the tightly-knit communities of academia.

³⁵ Germano, 83.

Despite this potential, it is still generally agreed that anonymity should nonetheless be maintained to diminish the risk of rifts or favouritism in the community. As mentioned, academics are usually happy to take on this responsibility as they have more than likely been in the same position at some point in their careers and understand that this is the path that leads to publication, and eventually promotion, in the form of tenure or other recognition. It is also a chance for them to keep up to date on the latest developments in their fields and reading the manuscripts informs them of the research of their colleagues. The process of peer review is lengthy, taking up to four months to complete depending on the schedule of the reviewer, and requiring the reader to give full attention to “three to five hundred pages of typescript, taking notes, and producing an analysis meant to be useful both to the publisher and to the writer.”³⁶ It is labour-intensive work done in the spirit of academia. If a sense of professional duty is not motivation enough, the press will usually offer the reviewer a cash honorarium in the amount of \$150 (as is the case at UBC Press) or twice that value in books from the Press.

3.3.1.2 The responsibility of reviewers

While reviewers understand that the peer review process is an integral, indeed mandatory, stage of the scholarly publishing process, the Press will sometimes receive less-than-adequate reviews that are either too short or, no matter how criticism-free, not at all constructive. A lazy assessment or inadequate review is problematic for the Press, as the scholarly worth of the manuscript cannot be as aptly judged by the Press editors. If this occurs, the manuscript could pass through this stage and on to the next with potential problems left unresolved. (In this case, the Publication Board, members of

³⁶ Germano, 86.

which assess it next, would identify the poor review and either request another reader for peer review or suggest that the author revise and resubmit the manuscript for another assessment.) It is the reviewer's responsibility to perform the review diligently and thoroughly, offering constructive criticism and thoughtful suggestions for amelioration.

A good reviewer gives the same amount of attention and scrutiny to the entire length of the manuscript, a challenge when faced with a poorly written or poorly constructed manuscript. A well-written work captivates its audience, making the reviewer's job a pleasure and ensuring this continuous concentration throughout. A reviewer should not be overly critical nor should s/he walk on eggshells with the fear of offending the author. The reader acts as both a coach and a judge.³⁷ The report, by addressing questions designed to provoke a proper evaluation, should be straightforward and helpful, a tool the author can exploit to make his/her work what it deserves and needs to be: a scholarly manuscript worthy of publication.

The peer-review system is designed to make the book stronger than the author's initial submission: with two academics pouring over the work of a scholar in their same field, and under the expert eye of the Press editor, the chance of inaccuracies appearing in the final draft are slim. Accepting the editor's request to be a reader and fulfilling the task professionally and constructively is a mark of academic integrity.

³⁷ Germano, 91.

3.3.1.3 Author response to readers' reports

After answering the questions detailed on the reader's report from the Press, the reviewer has one final consideration: should the manuscript be published or not? The reviewer has various options. S/he may strongly recommend publication if the work is in excellent condition and requires only minimal amendments. S/he may recommend publication with the proviso that certain issues be addressed and specific changes be made. S/he may recommend that the work not be published. If the last is the case and the manuscript has received an unfavourable report, the editor may decide to terminate the project at this juncture. The editor may, however, feel strongly that the manuscript has merit and wish for it to be published, either because s/he has identified a market for it or because s/he feels that it is a timely subject and could be beneficial to the Press. In this case, the editor will ask the author to revise and resubmit the manuscript: ideally, the same two readers will review the revised manuscript to assess it anew and be privy to the evolution of the work. If a positive recommendation is obtained, the manuscript enters the next phase of the publication process.

Once the readers' reports are in hand, the editor is responsible for aiding the author in writing a response to the readers' questions and criticisms. It is this response and the readers' reports that are the most valuable to the university advisory board, as their primary consideration is how other academics judge and assess the work based on scholarly worth and its contribution to the field.³⁸ This response is a detailed letter

³⁸ Metro.

addressed to the reviewers stating whether or not the author has accepted the suggestions given by the reviewers. Generally, each point is examined and the author writes a brief line if s/he is willing to make the recommended change, or, if not, a more detailed answer in defence of leaving it the way it was submitted. This is a very delicate procedure, as the author can sometimes feel quite defensive after having read the reports, even though what the readers are offering is constructive advice. The author is usually given a few weeks to write the response so that his/her emotions are not the influencing factor in the response, and to accumulate any necessary further research to address the concerns of the readers. With the editor's guidance, the author can compose a thoughtful and professional letter that takes each of the reviewers' remarks into consideration. This author response is included in the "Approval to Publish" package that is distributed to the members of the Publications Board, who make the final recommendation in the manuscript's lengthy and complex path to publication.

3.4 The scholarly editor and the university advisory board

The relationship between the acquisitions editor and the university advisory board³⁹ has been described as one of "affectionate antagonism."⁴⁰ As stated, the editors hold the privilege of deciding what gets through the press doors; nothing goes before the board that has not already passed the desks of the press's editors. Yet the authority held by the board, which is complete and non-negotiable, requires that the editors reserve their own opinions about the value and publication-worthiness of a manuscript. In conjunction

³⁹ University presses around the world and in Canada have various designations for this board. In the case of UBC Press, it is called the Publications Board.

⁴⁰ Quoted in Thatcher.

with peer review, this dynamic is the underlying factor of what differentiates scholarly publishing from any other form of publishing.

What is most crucial for understanding the uniqueness of the whole editorial process at university presses is the way that the editorial board and the acquisitions editors, engaged in this “affectionate antagonism,” manage to arrive at a synthesis of viewpoints that achieves a special kind of balance between tradition and innovation.⁴¹

The editor has a vested interest in publishing works that will be recognized as leading-edge scholarship, which leads to strengthening the reputation of the press. The board, on the other hand, exists as a measure of quality control and must ensure the legitimacy of a work. If a manuscript posits highly innovative conclusions or potentially controversial ones, these points of view may come into contention. Thatcher reminds us, however, that the advisory board, and specifically the members who serve on it, act solely as a committee in charge of deciding the fate of a manuscript based on the assessments of the readers who were asked to draw on their knowledge of their specialty. The members are not acting in their roles as specialists in this job; they are “operat[ing] within a broader intellectual framework where the general and overarching values and standards essential to the academic enterprise ... are the chief determinants of what is deemed to be of high quality and thus worthy of publication.”⁴² The following sections provide an in-depth look at how this process functions at UBC Press.

3.4.1 The UBC Press Publications Board

The UBC Press Publications Board, which is made up of senior scholars from the University of British Columbia, selected by the President of UBC based on their

⁴¹ Thatcher.

⁴² Thatcher.

expertise in the areas in which the Press concentrates, is charged with governing the University's imprint. Its role is to adjudicate manuscripts that the Press has taken under consideration and to sanction their publication. The committee was put in place by the Press to ensure quality control of every manuscript that passes through the acquisitions process. The Publications Board replaced the President's Standing Committee, following the 1989 review and restructuring. Currently there are eight members, including the Chair. Publications Board meetings usually occur every two months. Leading up to the meeting, the editors are responsible for preparing an "Approval to Publish" package, which is the compilation of the necessary documents for each manuscript under review. This includes an introduction to the manuscript under consideration, the bibliography, the table of contents, the two readers' reports and the author response. Present at the meetings are as many members as can attend. (As scholars, the members often have other duties and commitments so scheduling a meeting where all can attend is a difficult task. If a committee member cannot be present, usually s/he will email detailed notes and comments on the manuscript under consideration.) Also in attendance are the editors and the Director. The role of the Press employees is to observe and listen; they are permitted to make comments and, if asked a specific question, will certainly answer it, but the meeting is generally understood to be a forum for the committee members to discuss the reasons why a manuscript should be published or not.

3.4.1.1 The role of the Publications Board

In recent years, the process has run differently than in previous years. Now, one member is requested to speak to a specific manuscript, a job which entails reading the "Approval to Publish" package closely prior to the meeting, making detailed notes, presenting it to

the Board and then offering an informed and (as much as possible) objective opinion as to whether s/he recommends publication. Following this recommendation there is usually some discussion with the other members of the Board who, more often than not, have also read the complete package. A member with more expertise on the subject may have more to say than the presenter, and this can be advantageous or not. In previous years, every member read every package and there was an open table to discuss its merits and weaknesses. However, it was decided that by assigning the package to just one member, the potential for bias or for being swayed by more influential or perhaps more knowledgeable members was lessened. The current method seems to be working well and the experts' opinions are still highly valued.

The discussion is usually centred on the readers' reports: as the previous section outlines, it is the recommendations made by these scholars that carry the most weight in decisions on the outcome of the manuscript. The members of the Publications Board trust that the readers are the authorities on the subject; their job is to assess these reports and make the final recommendation. The Press's presence at these meetings is represented by the attendance of the Director and the editors, who are there to answer questions and in some cases to defend the manuscript: if the editor strongly believes in the manuscript and possesses two recommendations to publish but the Board is, for whatever reason, hesitant to approve publication, the advocacy of the editor can be crucial to the manuscript's future. The Board acknowledges the Press's expertise in the business of publishing: it is the Press that understands the market, that can predict trends and that can anticipate a profit. The Board is in place to offer the academic perspective and

represent the University of British Columbia of which the Press is a department. This collaboration ensures that any work published is not only of the utmost scholarship and makes a significant contribution to its field, but that, once published, it will speak to a specific audience and find its place in the market.

3.4.1.2 The procedure of the Publications Board

UBC Press has, over the past few years, tried to implement a formalized procedure for the Publications Board to follow. There was an initial intention that a member would serve on the Board for two years with the possibility of renewal after this appointed time, but this has not been the actual practice. The Board does lose members for various reasons, clearing positions for other members of university faculty to fill, and while there has been a 100% turnover rate since the group was formed (with the exception of the Chair who has held this seat since its inception in 1990), there remains an ill-defined overall structure to the Board and the two-year time limit has not been imposed for all members. A double-edged sword scenario is created in that the members truly enjoy being on this committee; it is a voluntary position, which they are often happy to fill, as it enhances academic stature and the final product produces tangible evidence of their contribution to the process. This results in a willingness to continue serving indefinitely and positing their professional opinions on scholarly work, and a reluctance to leave in order to make room for new professors and fresh ideas. It is a prestigious membership to hold and all members contribute valuable and intelligent commentary to the bi-

monthly sessions.⁴³ Despite the unresolved question of the time limit for membership, the process is highly effective and valued. The decision of the Board is the final authority on a work. The editor is present to defend any seemingly erroneous or misinformed decision of the author or to answer any questions of clarification the members may have, but ultimately, if the Board recommends that the work go no further, the Press must terminate the process at that point. The editor is responsible for informing the author of the decision.

3.4.1.3 Possible recommendations by the Publications Board

There are various options for the Publications Board in making a decision on a manuscript, similar to those available to peer reviewers. The first is a complete acceptance; this is straightforward – the decision is generally unanimous and the editor can proceed to the next stage of the publishing process. Another is a provisional acceptance, where the members recommend publication with the caveat that very specific changes be made by the author with the editor's help. Usually the Board will not see the manuscript again, knowing that the editor is in charge of ensuring that the changes are in fact made. A third option is to request that the manuscript must be revised and resubmitted (known as R&R), in which case the Board sees a strong potential in the manuscript but major changes, structurally or editorially or otherwise, need to occur before they can recommend its publication. The Board may also postpone its decision until the next meeting, perhaps because of an inadequate reader's report or

⁴³ This is based on my observations while in attendance at two Publications Board meetings on June 24 and September 15, 2004.

possibly to allow for more time to reflect on a decision that is not at once obvious. Finally, the Board can reject a manuscript completely. This is rare, as the editors generally bring forward only those manuscripts they are confident will be approved. Early in the Press's existence, editors would bring forward any manuscript they had, even if they knew that it stood little chance of being recommended for publication, in order to be certain that they were on the same page as the Board. Now, with time and experience, editors are more confident in their decisions and will only submit manuscripts to the Board that they think will be accepted. Furthermore, as the list grows along with the Press's reputation, editors can afford to be more selective about what they submit to the Board.

The UBC Press Publication Board exists solely to determine a manuscript's scholarly worth and make the final decision regarding its publication. There are absolutely no financial considerations influencing the members' decision to publish. The decision is based on the same characteristics weighed by the original acquisitions editor: quality, thoroughness, scholarly worth, excellence in its field, whether it is making an original contribution, whether there is a valid reason it needs to be published. The Board members' advice and expertise are highly valued and trusted.

3.5 Testimonies to the scholarly editor at UBC Press

As we have seen, a successful and productive author/editor relationship eases the often-harrowing process of publishing. Guaranteeing this kind of relationship is not always easy, but by fulfilling certain fundamental duties as an editor, author satisfaction can be obtained, and the editor's job made easier. While there are some authors who are

uninterested in the publishing process of their own books, most want to be abreast of the progress of their manuscript.⁴⁴ A good editor will be available (as is reasonable) to answer an author's questions and concerns about his/her book from submission to well after the book has been published. Interviews with three UBC Press authors suggest that this availability and author care at the Press is excellent, and that the authors were aware of the progress of their manuscripts throughout the entire process.⁴⁵ The testimonials of two different authors who published with the University of Toronto Press indicate less satisfaction with their experience with their editors at UTP. One author complained that "she was unaware of the status of her manuscript throughout the process. She called her [UTP] editor 'kind and helpful,' but also state[d] that he did not approach her of his own accord about her manuscript."⁴⁶ Another UTP author "expected a hands-on approach to publication and wanted a close relationship with her editor. She was disappointed that her editor did not take part in a personal process to develop her [manuscript into the] 'best book possible.'"⁴⁷ In the business of publishing, author satisfaction is key to holding on to authors who may evolve into more notable scholars with manuscripts that develop into titles with solid sales. If an author is unhappy with the process, s/he may decide to seek out another publisher for his/her next book, resulting in the loss of valued commodities in the form of sales revenues from potential books. Keeping the author happy begins with the editor. Providing a positive publishing experience is a

⁴⁴ Germano, 78.

⁴⁵ Based on the response to questionnaires sent to three UBC Press authors on August 31 and September 10, 2004.

⁴⁶ Cooper, 51.

⁴⁷ Cooper, 54.

publishing firm's first step in securing the loyalty of an author. When asked if the UBC Press authors would consider publishing with the Press again, one replied: "Absolutely," another had already submitted her second manuscript, and a third exclaimed: "I was so impressed I became a series editor!"⁴⁸

Overall, the editor at a university press clearly performs a dynamic role. S/he must not only possess the intellectual and professional skills required of the job, but also the interpersonal and soft skills that greatly ease the publication process. His/her capacity to juggle the various stages in the process and the people involved in and responsible for those stages, makes the scholarly editor a unique character who combines the serious professional with the nurturing guide.

Of course, the editorial process, while key to the fulfillment of a university press's mandate, is only the first stage of the development of a manuscript. Once it has been acquired, approved for publication and edited, it must be transformed into a format suitable for the public's consumption. This next stage is the production process and is the subject of the following chapter.

⁴⁸ From transcripts of three UBC Press author interviews, August 31, 2004 and September 10, 2004.

4. The Production Process at UBC Press

As the manuscript flows from the editorial department to the production department, the technical elements of the process start to take priority. The manuscript is undergoing a massive transition from computer typescript to a final, printed product. This process requires considerable planning and coordination to reach completion. Production at UBC Press is an extremely dynamic process and the sheer number of tasks and the precision with which these are undertaken requires that this process be finely tuned. That the manuscript is well edited and well organized can only ease this stage in a manuscript's publication. The following section details the production process at UBC Press.

4.1 *The process: from manuscript to printed book*

When the production department receives the manuscript, the work has already undergone major substantive editing, the peer-review process and the approval of the Publications Board. Similar to the editorial/acquisitions department, the organization of projects for the production editors⁴⁹ is also determined by an editor's interests and expertise, but because this stage of the process is so time-consuming and detail oriented, generally projects are allotted according to an editor's availability. The structure is vertical, meaning that each editor takes on the entire production of a manuscript, from deciding on the copyeditor and corresponding with the author, to arranging for proofing,

⁴⁹ For the remainder of this chapter, I will occasionally refer to the production editor as simply "editor," which should not be confused with the acquisitions editor. Any mention of an acquisitions editor will be thus named.

typesetting and jacket design, in other words, from bottom to top. This allows the editor to feel ownership of each project, and boosts employee morale.

The production editor assigned to the specific title receives all the digital files, any correspondence regarding the work and the predicted profit and loss statement created by the acquisitions editor. She⁵⁰ also receives a draft of the transmittal form, essentially a document that contains all the relevant information about the book that the acquisitions editor has previously compiled. She updates this form and then does some in-house “clean up” of the package. This clean-up involves stripping the digital file of any formatting, which makes it easier later on for the typesetter to properly lay out the book.

While it is unreasonable to expect that the production editor read every manuscript in its entirety, she does make a concerted effort to become as familiar with the work as possible; she will assess its complexity, contact the author, read sections, determine the style for citations and possibly determine a timeline. At this stage the production editors prefer (and are more frequently requiring) that all illustrations (figures, tables, photos, etc.) are included, as their insertion at a later date can cause many problems in terms of formatting and typesetting. Permission to use such illustrations must have been secured by the author prior to this stage. At this stage, the production editor will also commission any necessary maps.

⁵⁰ In this chapter I use gender-specific pronouns, as all the editors working in the production department are female.

The production department, in collaboration with the editorial department, is developing a strategic plan to rank each manuscript and using this ranking system to determine its priority and thus its timeline. The plan was conceived to cope with an increase in title output, as the production editors have realized that the production scheduling under which they currently work is insufficient to deal with the number of books they must produce. The department has previously worked with a relatively simplistic system of dual categorization – “fast and slow.” This resulted in books that were considered a priority passing through the process in six months or less, and those that were considered less of a priority or were more complex taking longer. This in turn resulted in blockages in the copyediting stage and the printing stage. The recently developed, more rigorous and detailed schematic prioritizes books on four levels; each priority level is assigned specific fall or spring publication dates for the books. The new method will see a book published within 8 months, 9 months, 10 months or 11+ months, depending on its importance, complexity and length (see Table 4.1). A manuscript is ranked as high complexity (Priority 3-4) if it has a large number of illustrations included (maps, photographs, tables and figures), if it is a collection (which is time-consuming and often difficult to coordinate because of numerous contributors), if it will require extensive editing, or if an author is unavailable for an extended period (because of illness, travel, family issues, etc.). A low complexity ranking (Priority 1-2) is given to those manuscripts that are straightforward, scholarly monographs, ones that do not require excessive attention at the production level, or ones that are exceptionally well written and do not require massive amounts of substantive editing or copyediting. At the early stages of

acquisitions, the acquisitions editors are now trying to determine these factors intrinsic to the manuscript to facilitate the production editors' scheduling and timelines.

Table 4.1: Manuscript due dates by priority

Priority		Manuscript Due Date	
		Spring List	Fall List
1	8 months	October 1st	April 1st
2	9 months	September 1st	March 1st
3	10 months	August 1st	February 1st
4	11+ months	July 1st	January 1st

Once the priority has been assigned, the production editor will decide which copyeditor from the Press's stable of freelancers would be best suited for the job. The copyeditor is given the stripped digital file and makes the edits on-screen (as has been the practice for over ten years now), after which s/he saves it and emails it back to the Press. Once the editor has received the copyedited manuscript, a computer-generated comparison is made between the original manuscript file and the edited one to show the copyediting changes. This is returned to the author for approval and any last-minute revisions or changes, either as a hard-copy printout or digitally as a pdf file. The changes and corrections to the edited manuscript file are implemented at the Press and the manuscript is then prepared and sent to one of two freelance typesetters the Press uses on a regular basis. The typesetter sends the proofs to the production editor (usually as a pdf file, which is printed out in the office) and a set of these proofs is sent to the author, a freelance proofreader, and a freelance indexer, if the author has decided not to do the index. When the author and the proofreader return the proofs, they are collated and returned to the typesetter to make the final corrections. When final approval has been

given, the typesetter prepares the digital files and other supporting materials, and these are sent to the printer. The files for the cover, which would have been prepared by a freelance graphic designer, are also sent to the printer at the same time. Books are usually ready five to six weeks after that.

The printer returns digital blue lines, which is a proof showing exactly how each printed page will appear (traditionally a blue print from exposed film but now produced from a digital image of the page), in order to check that all type and images are correctly positioned before the final printing. (More and more frequently the Press is moving toward remote proofing, a computer image that allows the editors to see what the final product will look like without the use of paper-based digital blue lines, which are expensive to produce and ship from the printer.) Any final minor changes now take place over the Press's ftp site. With the page proofs complete, the editor finalizes the cover copy and obtains bar codes, endorsements and the template specifications from the printer and sends all of this to the designer, also chosen from the Press's list of five freelancers.

Table 4.2: Typical production schedule for a Priority 4 title (11+ month schedule)

TEXT SCHEDULE	Projected	Actual
Manuscript transmitted		
Manuscript cleaned up	02-Feb-04	
Manuscript to copy-editor	03-Feb-04	
Manuscript from copy-editor	09-Mar-04	
Manuscript to author	19-Mar-04	
Manuscript from author	18-Apr-04	
Manuscript to typesetter	09-May-04	
1st proof from typesetter	26-May-04	
1st proof to auth/proof/index	29-May-04	
1st proof from auth/proof/index	22-Jun-04	
1st proof to typesetter	06-Jul-04	
2nd proof from typesetter	20-Jul-04	
CRC/disk to printer	03-Aug-04	
Blues from printer		
Finished books in	28-Sep-04	

4.2 *The transmittal and the production report*

The initial stage of the production process is the transmittal of the substantively edited manuscript from acquisitions to the production department. A form detailing important information about the book is finalized at this stage to aid the production editors in familiarizing themselves with the manuscript. The production editors, the acquisitions editors, the marketing manager (and other representatives from the marketing department) and the Director are all present at the transmittal meeting where they discuss pertinent issues regarding the book. Decisions are made concerning the book's title, its format, price-point, print-run, whether there are any significant problems, potential marketing plans, and its priority. With the new priority schedule, the Managing Editor, with the help of the manuscript's acquisitions editor, is planning to have the priority determined well before the transmittal meeting.

At the transmittal meeting the Production Report is usually reviewed and updated. This report – an extensive tracking system found in the Press’s database, Press Track – divides up the major stages of production from manuscripts pending to those at the printers. It also lists new paperback releases, potential buy-ins from other presses and reprints. This is extremely valuable information in that it clearly outlines the progress of each manuscript and helps to illustrate where bottlenecks in the process occur. It also goes hand in hand with determining the new priority timeline, which will eventually help to stagger the work and prevent a large volume of manuscripts from being held up in one stage.

4.3 *A production editor's contact with authors*

Because the production editors have a vertical organizational structure to handle the manuscripts, authors begin to feel comfortable with their specific editor, as they deal with the same person throughout the process. One author publishing with the Press for the first time was impressed by the sensitivity and consideration the editor had for the author, noting that his experience “may be as close to the ‘ideal’ as it is possible to achieve ... I also know that that level of achievement is very much dependent on the skills and personal qualities of the individual editor. (Sadly, I know this also from unfortunate experiences in my publishing past.) I was very fortunate in being able to work with this particular editor.”⁵¹ Rapport between the two players naturally varies with different personalities, but the editors try to maintain contact with the authors and must

⁵¹ From the transcripts of a UBC Press author interview, September 10, 2004.

check in with them at designated stages during the development of the manuscript: at the copyediting stage; at the proofing stage; and once the cover copy has been written. The author of a few lines above commented on his own contact with the editor: “Except for two rather brief meetings, all of our work was accomplished by email which I think is quite remarkable.”⁵² The author is also consulted on the jacket design and any of his/her ideas are taken into consideration.

The following three sections discuss operations external to the physical production of a manuscript but have been included in this chapter as they are functions for which the editors working in the production department are responsible.

4.4 *Reprints, print-on-demand and the advent of ebooks*

The Press will decide to reprint a title after the initial print run has sold out and they continue to receive orders for it. This often occurs if the book is used in courses. A reprint can be beneficial if the book has won an award, as this information can be added to the cover, as can be any other new endorsements the book has received. Any minor revisions can be made on reprints as well, mainly updating and amending obsolete information. If the Press plans to reprint on an off-set printer, then the run must be more than 500, the minimum the printer will handle. The growing popularity and efficiency of print-on-demand allows the Press to do short runs at a low cost, a significant benefit for a university press, which must frequently fill small orders for courses. Furthermore, because the readership of some very specialized books is often

⁵² From the transcripts of a UBC Press author interview, September 10, 2004.

quite small, short runs are required to supply this market. The Press must first assess course sales of a particular book to determine if POD is the best option. The use of this new printing technology, which the Press opts for about thirty times per year, has resulted in a decrease of the initial paperback print run from about 500 to about 300.

However, POD has not yet been perfected, and one of the production editors at the Press is monitoring its evolution closely to gauge its benefits and detriments. Quotes from multiple POD and off-set printers are still sought and compared, but as the technology evolves, the Press hopes to identify one POD printer on whom it can rely for a competitive price. There remain issues of quality that render POD less desirable currently for first runs than traditionally printed books. Because the individual pages of the books are bound with a strong glue, durability is not as assured as it is when signatures (sheets of paper folded and stitched up the seam) are produced. For the moment, however, POD remains a good solution for short-run reprints, and the Press intends to keep up to date with the latest developments in the new printing technology.

Recently, UBC Press produced 75 ebooks, which are currently available from YBP/Baker and Taylor, one of the largest US library wholesalers. The Press hopes to form similar distribution arrangements with Blackwell and Coutts, the other major wholesaler. It also has sixty titles in the Net Library catalogue, each selling at their hard cover price. After twelve months, few sales have been made, so it is difficult to assess how effective this will be or if it will continue. However, it is relatively safe investment for university presses at this stage, as it keeps their options open to the ever-changing

world of technology. While it requires some time to prepare the files to send to Baker and Taylor, the process is not very costly and presents a possible solution for those specialized books with an extremely small audience. As it intends with POD, the Press will continue to stay informed about the latest developments in ebook technology but does not plan on spending extensive resources on this project for the time being.

4.5 Co-publications and buy-ins

UBC Press sells on average one or two co-publications and a similar number of buy-ins per season. Co-publications are deals negotiated between publishers that state that the originating publisher will sell bound copies or will license its film or digital files to another publisher for a royalty with a guaranteed advance. The originating publisher will have assumed the responsibility and cost of all pre-print operations. Co-publications are usually undertaken to help off set production costs and to ensure wider distribution because the Press feels that another publishing house has better access to and more knowledge of its local market than UBC Press. These deals have had favourable results in terms of generating revenue and improving efficiency, as the joint imprint is easy with regards to production and shipping. Once the Press has worked with another publishing house with similar interests and a similar list, it is likely that more cooperative arrangements will occur in the future. Buy-ins are synonymous with co-publications except that, in this case UBC Press is buying the licences from the originating publisher, the latter having assumed the pre-print costs. These occur mostly when the Press feels that another publisher has a book with good sales potential that fits well with its own publishing and marketing strengths. They may also feel that UBC Press is better able to

market that imprint's title, due to its stronger presence in the Canadian market, or to UBC Press's specialization in a given subject.

The best venues for developing relationships and making deals with potential co-publishers are the major international book fairs in Frankfurt and London, where negotiations can also take place for foreign-language rights. (Some activity also occurs at the annual Association of American University Presses [AAUP] meetings where university presses from the US and Canada gather primarily for workshops and lectures.)

4.6 Translation and foreign rights sales

Rights sales account for a significant portion of revenue at UBC Press. The Director makes annual trips to the Frankfurt Book Fair and the London Book Fair where he can seek out English-language publishers for co-publishing agreements, which, as mentioned, are beneficial deals for both parties. Translations account for another revenue stream, and are usually negotiated through agents. Deals for French-language translations are frequently arranged with Les Editions de Boréal and Les Presses de l'université Laval, with whom UBC Press has developed good working relationships. The Press also plans to appoint a German-language rights agent in order to place some of its First Nations titles, popular in Germany, with German publishers.⁵³

⁵³ UBC Press: Aid to Publishers Business Plan 2004-2005, 6.

5. An Overview of Other Operations at UBC Press

While the majority of activity of a university press may occur in the editorial department, like any well functioning business, this activity is supported and supplemented by other operations within the firm. The following sections describe some of the other important facets of UBC Press, and explain how the good work of a scholarly editor is the mechanism that propels these concentric operations.

5.1 *UBC Press as distributor*

In the 1990s the Press became the distributor of titles from numerous other university presses in the US, the UK and Hong Kong. This decision was taken in anticipation of the elimination of UBC's operating grant. The relationships that have developed since the Press has become the marketing agent for these foreign publishers have yielded very positive results, both in terms of revenue and expansion. By becoming a Canadian supplier of foreign titles, UBC Press's imprint has more presence nationally, widening and strengthening its reputation among authors, readers and other booksellers.⁵⁴ The revenue generated from acting in this role has had a significant impact on the bottom line, accounting for 11% of gross revenue in 2003 (24% of domestic sales revenue). The connections made through the Press's role as a distributor have also aided in generating some co-publishing deals and buy-ins, which are beneficial to a press in terms of reducing costs and again, spreading its name.

⁵⁴ In the summer of 2004, UBC Press became the Canadian distribution and marketing agent for the University of Edinburgh Press, and in January 2005 for Paradigm Press and Cavendish Press, taking the total number of agencies to 16.

5.2 UBC Press staff

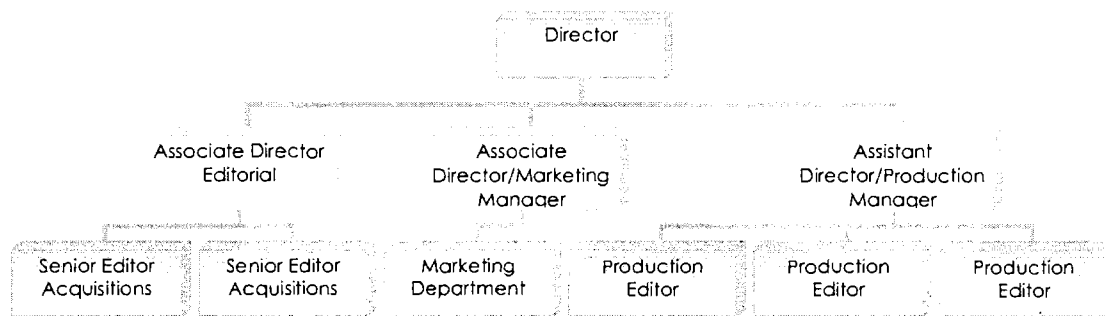
There are nineteen full-time staff at present, working in the editorial, production, marketing and finance departments, and several contracted freelancers for production and design work. UBC Press is progressive in its management, with the Director, while making the final decision, encouraging opinions among his staff and collaboration on decisions and ideas. At the senior management level, the Press has two Associate Directors (one Editorial and one Marketing) and two Assistant Directors (one Production and one Finance).⁵⁵ This structure ensures a consultative and democratic power structure, avoiding a one-person rule over all operations. As with any university press, the existence of a Publications Board and the use of peer review also ensure that decisions are being made not just on one level; the external, expert perspective of well-respected scholars adds to the dynamic publishing process practised at UBC Press.

Seven of the nineteen full-time staff are employed in the editorial and production departments. Three are full-time acquisition editors and four full-time production editors. Authors publishing with UBC Press are assured focused attention and commitment to their work. The Press out-sources most copyediting, as well as all proofreading, typesetting and design. Each acquisitions editor manages approximately 9-12 titles per season, which allows them to perform their duties to the best of their abilities, giving them the chance to nurture the authors and encourage them throughout the process, which in scholarly publishing, as we have seen, can be long and tedious.

⁵⁵ See Appendix D for detailed job descriptions of each position.

In the latest fall and spring seasons, the production department had to contend with an increase in title output, while relying on the same number of staff. The Press plans to re-evaluate the current “vertical” organization of the production staff. The Press is looking at “restructuring the activities of the editors toward more specialized roles supported by the appointment of [a] production manager”⁵⁶ to assess the efficiency of the two methods. Currently the structure of the Press is as follows:

Figure 5.1: Organization of UBC Press⁵⁷



5.3 Decision making

Within the firm, decisions regarding formatting and design, price point, print run, and priority are all made at a Press-wide level at transmittal meetings, held after manuscripts have been approved by the Publications Board, undergone substantive editing, and are at a point when they are ready to go to copyediting. While the acquisitions, production and marketing departments take lead responsibility for specific decisions relating to their departments – for example, a production editor commissions a designer and conveys the vision the Press has for the book jacket – there is a strong sense of collaboration among

⁵⁶ UBC Press: Aid to Publishers Business Plan 2004-2005, 7.

⁵⁷ I have not included all staff members in this organizational chart. Omitted are the individual employees of the marketing department, the finance department and the support staff.

departments. This is evidenced by the attendance of individual representatives from each department at the various meetings. However, the acquisitions editors, who have worked on development with the authors, and production editors who have worked in depth with the manuscript itself, are the Press's best advisors as to how to handle these authors and who the books' readership may be. From a management point of view, it is wise to have the staff aware of the different decisions being made in the other departments so that they are better able to understand how a manuscript is moving through the various stages of development, and can thus plan their own schedules according to a transparent overall process.

5.4 Timeline, scheduling and deadlines at the Press

Generally, a UBC Press book is published in eight months to one year of approval of publication, which is faster than its major competitors. This efficiency is due in part to its small size and the number of books the Press handles each year. Upon submission, the editor makes it clear to the author that the process will take some time, as peer review alone can take up to three or four months and the Publications Board meets usually only once every two months. The new scheduling system based on a manuscript's priority and discussed in Section 4.1, outlines the print dates for a manuscript according to its priority.

5.5 Technology

Particularly over the past few years, the publishing industry has faced many challenges in the face of changing technology, but like any business, it has found ways to adapt to the ever-evolving phenomenon and make it beneficial to its operations. Trying to ignore this

juggernaut or remaining ignorant of it would be an irresponsible business decision. UBC Press has embraced the latest developments in technology and has found that the results are positive in terms of efficiency, cost and productivity.

UBC Press was the first Canadian press, university or trade, to begin editing on-screen in about 1992, when most publishing houses were still marking up their manuscript pages in ink. Due purely to the physical construction of the original building, the staff were forced to communicate via email at a time when businesses were only just beginning to understand this new communication technology. From these beginnings, adoption of technology has progressed and accelerated, from exchanging digital files with authors, designers and printers on CD, to image setting, to the advent of PDFs, used to facilitate the sending of these files, to remote, on-screen proofing by the freelancers and the development of print-on-demand and ebooks. The exchange of digital files means that changes done at the typesetting stage can be directly accessed by the printer from the Press's ftp site, without the inefficiency and waste that results from printing hardcopy proofs.

6. Conclusion

6.1 *Revisiting UBC Press as a well-functioning Canadian university press*

As we have seen, UBC Press runs a dynamic publishing process that is appropriate to a well-functioning university press and distinct from trade publishing. It faces specific challenges and operates under constraints that are typical of scholarly publishing. Those constraints are imposed by the specialized nature of any university press's subject matter, the small market size and audience, the lengthy process of approving a manuscript for publication, as well as reduced library budgets. Except for the budget cuts to libraries over which the university press has no control, these other limitations are being surmounted by UBC Press's experienced and highly skilled acquisitions editors, whose role within the press is integral to the entire publishing process. The functions they carry out from acquiring a manuscript, to procuring funding, to finding readers for peer review, to encouraging and nurturing the author throughout the process, to acting as an advisor to the production and marketing departments, all attest to the indispensable nature of their job. This job is vital to the execution of the university press mandate to disseminate original research and make a contribution in the press's fields of expertise, whether or not those works are financially viable. It is as a result of the superb editorial process, which extends to an efficient production system, and moves through a marketing stream to an appropriate audience, that scholarly works of high quality are circulated among the reading public. The editorial process and the scholarly editors at work at a university press are the backbone of any successful and proficient scholarly publishing endeavour. A five-month examination of UBC Press and its operations,

including authorship of an in-depth description of these operations, has revealed a Canadian scholarly publishing enterprise, and an editorial process specifically, that operates well and efficiently.

6.2 Poised for a third review

Since its last review in 1989, UBC Press has demonstrated that it is a medium-sized university press that can compete successfully with such established firms as McGill-Queens University Presses and the University of Toronto Press, which publish more titles per year than UBC Press does. The production process of its manuscripts is efficient and makes use of the latest in publishing and printing technologies in order to run a smooth operation. Its marketing and publicity efforts are strong, and seek to highlight not only the valid research and ground-breaking study on which a university press mandate is based, but also the award-winning jacket design of its list. Overall operations of the Press are effective and well organized, but it is the work of the editors and the editorial process in general at the Press that continue to make the biggest impact on the work produced and published by UBC Press. By fulfilling the duties of a scholarly editor as outlined in Chapter three of this report, the Press editors are making a significant contribution to the running of the firm. The Press has come a long way since the critical reviews it received in 1982 and 1989. The current review committee should be able to recognize and appreciate the major improvements and growth undergone by the Press and that UBC Press has evolved into a well-functioning press and a significant and integral department within the University of British Columbia deserving of recognition and financial support.

The following concluding sections discuss some of the improvements and changes the staff members of UBC Press anticipate. From its inception in 1971, through its at times tumultuous childhood and maturing adolescence, to its now established mid-life, the employees of the Press look forward to solidifying its position in the industry in the coming years as it continues to grow in size, renown and reputation.

6.3 *A work in progress*

Now in its 33rd year, UBC Press has reached a stage in its existence where it is open to expansion and evolution and is not as yet burdened by tradition. It has established itself sufficiently in the world of academic publishing to be recognized nationally and internationally as a result of its award-winning titles by domestic and foreign authors and to its role as a distribution agent for scholarly publishing houses around the world.

Clearly it has undergone considerable change and is a much different creature from the small press it began as in the early 1970s. The innovative approach of the Director and staff and their willingness to embrace new ideas and new technologies, always keeping in mind the goal of expanding operations, helps to make UBC Press a natural choice for authors who wish to publish with a medium-sized press committed to editorial excellence and the pursuit of publishing sound, original scholarship.

6.4 *The future of UBC Press*

During interviews with staff members, the same two concluding questions were asked of each of them: What improvements have you witnessed over the past ten years that have significantly benefited the Press? What improvements do you hope to see in the near

future? Answers to both questions overwhelmingly centred on technology. The introduction to email communications, a system that already seems to be taken for granted in this wired (and increasingly wireless) world, was what all employees stated as the biggest improvement and innovation for the Press. Communicating with each other electronically, as well as with authors, freelancers, agencies, the warehouse, the sales representatives, and everyone remotely associated with the Press, has completely altered the way operations are conducted, allowing for almost immediate responses and the ability to maintain contact with the vital players in the process. It has also allowed for staff working across the country to operate as integral parts of the Press. Editing on-screen and the advancement of remote proofing were also identified as major ameliorations within the Press. Staff members look forward to lower costs as software becomes more popular, and they hope to see print-on-demand technology refined and made more practical than it is at present. One employee wanted to see a single large server for archiving Press files, as the current method of storing them on CD is not sufficient, and the life of software or formats like PDF is never certain; it is usually only a matter of a few years before certain software becomes obsolete.

On a more human level, employees wanted to see the addition of more personnel to handle tasks like data assessment and analysis, digital and ebook file preparation and compilation and the running of Press projects in general. Of course, with unlimited capital, luxuries like professional development workshops, more travel and better equipment would be on the wish list, but this remains unfeasible for the moment because of the inherent nature of a business that struggles to stay in the black. Everyone

noted that the process of publishing at UBC Press is constantly being refined and updated, and the Director foresees a possible expansion of fields of expertise in the next few years.

Overall, staff members seem satisfied with the current operations of the Press, but the ambition to improve and grow is always at issue. For now, an output of 50-55 titles per year is a nice plateau, according to the Director, as with a staff of the Press's size, the production of any more would run the risk of the editors losing touch with the books, potentially resulting in diminished quality. The book business is, after all, one that relies on the skills of people – authors, editors, managers, marketers, designers, printers – and authors can trust that when publishing with UBC Press, their books will receive the attention and care that every print-worthy work deserves.

Appendices

Appendix A: UBC Press employee interview questions and questionnaires

Questionnaire for Acquisitions Editor

General

How long have you been working at UBC Press?

Outline briefly what your duties and your fields of expertise are.

Editorial considerations

How efficiently do you think the process flows at UBC Press from acquisitions to the printed book?

How many books do you deal with per year? Do you find this too many? Too few?

How do you set up your timelines? How do you determine deadlines?

As an acquisitions editor, what amount of sway do you have to go ahead with a proposal? Do you bring every idea to the table or can you make an executive decision whether or not to go ahead? On what criteria do you base these decisions?

Author/Editor relationship

Where do you mostly find your contributors? What are the major venues/conferences where you make your contacts?

How do you attract your contributors?

How much contact do you have with the contributor?

How do you insure that the contributor continues to publish with the press?

How serious do you find the threat from trade publishers to lure your authors away?

What is the competition like among university presses?

What is the relationship to other university presses? How often do you refer manuscripts to other presses when they don't fit the list? Is this a reciprocal arrangement?

At the press

How much contact do you have with the other editors? With people in other departments?

What are the links between acquisition and production, acquisition and marketing?

Working from Toronto, do you feel isolated from the rest of the press's operations? More independent? What has been beneficial about opening a Toronto office? Detrimental?

Peer-review/Publications Board

How do you find your readers?

How important and valuable do you find the peer review process?

Have you ever encountered problems with the system, with a reviewer? How have you handled it?

How effective do you think the Publications Board is? Do you feel that it is an adequate assessment system?

What are the committee's merits? What would you change about the way it is run?

How much sway does the editor have with the Pub Board? Are the editors present just for issues of clarification or can they defend an author's choices for doing one thing or another?

Evolution

What technological innovations have you witnessed since you started here? Which have had the most impact on the press's operations?

What major changes, evolutions – editorially or otherwise – have you noticed since you started here?

What are the areas that you would like to see improved in the editorial process? At the press in general?

Questionnaire for Director

General

How long have you been working at UBC Press?

Outline briefly what your duties are.

What is the organizational structure of the press? Is there a Board of Directors? How much editorial say do they have? Are there any ideological, financial or other constraints imposed by this board?

Editorial considerations

How are manuscripts allotted among the editors?

What are the criteria that make a title appropriate to the list?

What makes collections less valuable?

Author/Editor relationship

Does the press have the right to first refusal?

How do you insure that the contributor continues to publish with the press?

How big is the threat from trade publishers to lure your authors away?

What is the competition like among university presses?

What is the relationship to other university presses? How often do you refer manuscripts to other presses when they don't fit your list? Is this a reciprocal arrangement?

Peer review and Publication Board

How is the Publication Board elected? What is their authority? How often is it refreshed?

How much does the Pub Board see of a manuscript? How are the manuscripts allotted among the members?

What about questions of loyalty to your author? How much is promised them before their work gets to the Pub Board stage? How defensive can you afford to be? Does this turn into time wasted if the work is rejected?

Financial considerations

Where do you generate the most revenue? Library sales, course adoptions, trade, independent sales, agency distribution?

How important are reprints and the backlist to the publishing process?

How do the rights sales work? What is UWP's role in this?

What are the criteria for obtaining an ASPP grant?

Who pays the author? How much do you rely on grants? Does the ASPP fund the author or the press? At what point does the ASPP decide to grant money? How complete does the manuscript have to be? What does the author use the money for? Publicity? Marketing?

Are there any financial limitations to publishing a manuscript? How weighty are the considerations about grants?

How do you decide on a price point?

What is your policy on returns?

Evolution

What technological innovations have you witnessed since you started here?

What major changes, evolutions have you noticed since you started here?

What are the areas that you would like to see improved in the process?

Questionnaire for Production Editor

General

How long have you been working at UBC Press?

Outline briefly what your duties are.

How effectively do you think the publishing process flows at the press?

Timelines, decision-making, priority

How do you set up your timelines? How do you determine deadlines?

What decisions are made within the department (ie, design, importance, format, etc.)

How do you determine a book's priority?

What are some of the problems you encounter with collecting images, figures, etc.?

Contact with author and other departments

How much contact do you have with the contributors? What input do they have in the decisions you make?

How much contact do you have with people from other departments?

What are the links between acquisition and production, production and marketing?

Process

Are the print runs accurate? What is the cost of reprinting? Is it worth it? How often does this happen? When do you use POD?

What goes into creating the "Production Report"? Who takes care of this?

How do you prepare for a transmittal? How valuable do you think these meetings are?

Evolution

What technological innovations have you witnessed and have had the most impact since you've been here?

What major evolutions have you noticed since you started here?

What are the areas that you would like to see improved in the process?

Appendix B: Questionnaire for UBC Press authors

Questionnaire for UBC Press author

Please complete and return to Alison Cairns at cairns@ubcpres.ca. Thank you for your time and contribution.

Submission

Why did you choose UBC Press to publish your work?

Did you ever consider publishing with a trade publisher?

Did you submit your manuscript to any other publishers while UBC Press was considering it?

Acquisition

How long did it take to hear back from your UBC Press editor after you had submitted your manuscript?

Were you asked to make any revisions before it was sent to peer review? Did you make those changes? If not, why?

Did the press/editor clearly explain to you what to expect when publishing with a university press?

Peer review and Publications Board

How did you feel about the peer review process as a standard for scholarly publishing? Did you find that the reviewers gave your work a fair assessment? Were their comments constructive and helpful?

What were their recommendations? In your author's response, did you agree to the suggested revisions? Was your response accepted by the reviewers and the Publications Board?

Did you have any contact with the Publications Board? Did they require that you make additional changes to the manuscript? Did you think these suggestions were fair and justified?

Funding

Was your manuscript eligible for ASPP funding? Other grants?

Did you search out funding on your own initiative?

What did the press require of you in terms of effort? Did you do your own indexing, illustration finding?

Post-publication

Were you satisfied with the efficiency of the publishing process? Why or why not?

Were you satisfied with the contract you signed? Were all the promises met?

Were you aware of the status of your manuscript at each stage of the publication process?

How much contact did you have with the press/editor? Was it sufficient?

Would you publish with UBC Press again?

What were some of the things concerning the publication of your book you felt could have been handled differently?

Please feel free to add any additional comments that you may have concerning your experience publishing with UBC Press.

**Appendix C:
Questionnaire for UBC Press peer reviewers**

- 1) What are the objectives and content of the manuscript? Are the objectives clear?
- 2) Is the scholarship sound? Is the author thoroughly acquainted with the literature on the subject? Does the manuscript as it stands make a significant original contribution to its field? How important is the subject?
- 3) To what audience is the manuscript directed? Would it serve only specialists in the field? Would you want this work in your personal library?
- 4) Do you have any suggestions for improvements of the manuscript relating to style, inaccuracies, omissions, or any other points, either substantive or editorial? Would this manuscript benefit by being shortened or lengthened?
- 5) Is the organization of the manuscript sound and presented in a readable style? Are the author's techniques for handling notes, systems of citation and bibliography sound? If included, do the illustrations, tables, graphs, charts, maps, photos and appendices add to the manuscript?
- 6) Is the manuscript as it stands suitable for publication?
- 7) How important is it that this work be published? Does the work duplicate or substantially recapitulate other works? What are the competing and comparable books in the field and how does this one relate to them?
- 8) What is your overall recommendation?

**Appendix D:
UBC Press employee job descriptions**

Job Title: Director

Job Summary: Responsible for strategic and operational planning, organizing, directing and controlling of the activities of the University of British Columbia Press. This involves ensuring the intellectual and financial success of works of scholarship published under the imprint of the University of British Columbia and ensuring that other activities undertaken by the Press in support of its primary goals are carried out in an effective, efficient and economically successful manner.

Organizational Status: Reporting to the Vice President, Research, the Director supervises a staff of fourteen professionals and five support staff. Responsible for the work of a variety of freelance editorial and design professionals and of commission sales representatives in Canada, the US, the UK, Europe and Asia. Acts as executive officer of the UBC Press Publications Board and chairs the UBC Press management, business and marketing committees.

Job Title: Associate Director, Editorial

Job Summary: Responsible, in conjunction with Director who acts as publisher and editor in chief, for the acquisition of publications for the University of British Columbia Press. This involves ensuring that works of scholarship published under the imprint of the University of British Columbia are of a high intellectual quality and contribute to the reputation of the University of British Columbia as a major international research university. Working with the Director, the Associate Director, Editorial is responsible for the ongoing development of the publishing programs of the Press. The Associate Director, Editorial is specifically responsible for the peer review processes of the Press, which ensure that only works that make a significant contribution to scholarship are published under its imprint. The Associate Director, Editorial acts as secretary to the Publications Board of the Press (a body appointed by the President), which is responsible for formal approval of all works published by the Press.

Organizational Status: Reporting to the Director, the Associate Director, Editorial is responsible for the acquisitions and peer review activities of the Press and acts as chair of the UBC Press Acquisitions Committee.

Job Title: Associate Director, Marketing & Operations

Job Summary: Responsible in conjunction with Director for strategic and operational planning, organizing, directing and controlling of the activities of the University of British Columbia Press. This involves ensuring the intellectual and financial success of works of scholarship published under the imprint of the University of British Columbia and ensuring that other activities undertaken by the Press in support of its primary goals are carried out in an effective, efficient and economically successful manner. The Associate Director, Marketing & Operations is specifically responsible for production, marketing and business operations (comprised of inventory management, order fulfillment, customer service, systems) of the Press.

Organizational Status: Reporting to the Director, the Associate Director,, Marketing & Operations is responsible either directly or through subordinate managers for the work of all marketing, production and business staff with the exception of the business manager for whom supervision is shared with the Director. This would include all staff within the areas of Production, Marketing and Operations as well as a variety of freelance design professionals and commission sales representatives in Canada, the US, the UK, Europe and Asia. Acts as chair of the UBC Press Management and Marketing Committees.

Job Title: Acquiring Editor

Job Summary: Responsible for acquisition, development and financial planning of new titles to be published by UBC Press in defined subject areas

Organizational Structure: Reports to Director/Associate Director - Editorial. Confers regularly with other members of the management committee, including acquisition

editors, director, associate director, other members of the editorial/production department, members of the marketing department, and Finance Manager.

Job Title: Managing Editor/Production Manager

Job Summary: Responsible for managing the production all book projects, from approved manuscript to final printed book. Provides input at the senior managerial level to matters concerning the direction of the Press.

Organizational Status: Reports to the Associate Director of Operations and the Director. Supervises three in-house production editors, and dozens of freelance copy-editors, proofreaders, technical artists, indexers, designers, typesetters and printers, as well as occasional student support staff. Confers on a regular basis with other members of the management committee, the directors, acquisition editors, members of the marketing department, and the finance manager.

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