When Universities Become Publishers

University presses play significant roles in American higher education which will diversify and grow.

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This article on the university press is part report, part critique, part sermon.

The purpose and function of a university press is often unknown to the layman or scholar or, at least, unclear. To the university press publisher, however, the purpose is clear, for the great joys of university press publishing arise from the academic environment—from publishers living vicariously the lives of their colleagues in classrooms, laboratories, and carrels and conveying this excitement and the intellectual achievement in book form to the appropriate audience, large or small. In this domain, bounded neither by subject nor by market, book publishing is always more idealized than realized, and in America the instrument of such publishing by universities remains, curiously, a narrowly developed and relatively untested device.

There are today more than 80 university owned and operated book publishing facilities on American university campuses in 29 states. Of these, 61 are called university presses. In 1962 these presses published over 1700 books (*1*), as well as 130 scholarly journals (*2*), for estimated total sales of over $18 million (*3*). Considered as part of the whole of American book publishing, these American university presses account for slightly more than 1 percent of the total dollar sales but publish nearly 8 percent of the new books (*4*). The presses are as diverse in size and development as in location. Six of them—California, Chicago, Columbia, Harvard, Princeton, and Yale—published 40 percent of the books and accounted for 40 percent of the sales of all American university press books published and sold last year. Of the rest, more than half published fewer than 20 books last year. Some presses belong to state, others to private, universities. Some are affluent, while most lead a financially restricted or even hazardous existence. Some not only serve as scholarly publishers but publish general titles for various levels of readership; others publish only scholarly works in limited subject areas. In spite of diversity, they have in common the function of extending their universities' contribution to research scholarship, to undergraduate and graduate instruction, and to general education. And they all publish carefully selected scholarly works, some of which would certainly not be published except by a university press and most of which serve significantly in one or another of the functions of the parent university.

Structure

Historically, a university press was a printing plant. Today eight university presses still operate printing plants (*5*), but the rest buy their printing from whatever source is available and concentrate their energies on the selection and editing of manuscripts, on book design and the managing of production, and on the promotion and sale of books and journals.

As university taste has dictated, some presses, such as Princeton University Press, are separately incorporated, not-for-profit entities governed by university-affiliated or appointed boards, while most presses are departments of their universities, responsible to an academic officer (or if they manage a printing plant, to a financial officer) of their universities.

All of these scholarly presses have formal editorial boards that act as guardians of their universities' imprints, and of course they draw in part upon the competence and expert advice of the resident faculties in judging manuscripts offered for publication. Through an editorial board, general as well as specific editorial control can be exercised, so that a publishing program moves in harmony with a university's development. Budgetary control is an appropriate result of university proprietorship of its press and determines policy for what most frequently is planned and executed as an unprofitable business venture. A few presses enjoy endowment, which enables them to publish a larger proportion of scholarly books with limited sales potential, but most must utilize income from some profitable books to support the unprofitable titles. Virtually all presses have been undercapitalized at their founding and have survived periods where annual deficits were met by borrowing money from the parent university, to be repaid from later operating surpluses, or, more frequently, were assumed and met from general university funds.

Royalties

Authors of university-press books are usually academic men and women rather than professional writers or editors. The financial rewards from the books they publish are both direct, in the form of royalties on sales, and indirect, in the form of professional advancement, scholarly prestige, and demand for the author's services as a consultant. Royalties bear close relationship to the salability of the book published. Publication, in book form, of a scholarly monograph of interest to a few hundred specialists will certainly require some subsidy, and this subsidy may take the form of suspension of royalties, at least until the press's costs have been recovered. On the other hand, authors of books with broad sales potential get the same royalties from a university press as from a commercial trade or educational publisher. In subject areas where strong competition for titles exists, such as the physical sciences, royalties for a monograph may be as high as for a textbook.

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Personal subsidies from authors to support publication of their books are rarely sought today, in part because the practice favored publication on the basis of considerations other than merit, but largely because the market for scholarly publications has grown and because subsidies, when still required, can be secured from sources other than the author.

Subsidization is a fact of life for all educational publishing today, not only for university presses. Research supported by private foundations and the federal government results in publishable books. Release from teaching commitments for the preparation of new textbooks is often granted by a college or university. The sale of reference books, textbooks, and scholarly works is supported at home by the National Defense Education Act and abroad by the Informational Media Guaranty programs. Teaching machines, testing materials, and audio-visual devices developed under Department of Defense grants are produced and sold. And curricular revisions undertaken through federal support yield good books for trade and educational publishers alike. Increase and dissemination of knowledge have been in the national interest, at least since Sputnik, and all publishers have in some measure benefited.

Staff

Time was when the staff of a university press, like its authors, were academic men and women, or had entered publishing through printing. Now most press employees regard publishing as their career, and some of the press directors have been trained exclusively in university-press publishing. Others have come from commercial publishing. There are evening and summer programs that offer training in publishing and production techniques and procedures, and at the University of Oklahoma Press—a press publishing three dozen books a year very well—there is a small but exemplary formal program of on-the-job training. There should be more training programs, but even the larger university presses are too small to support, with time and money, the larger programs that would yield larger numbers of trained workers ready to assume professional responsibilities in university-press publishing.

Growth in Numbers

At the turn of the century there were four university presses; by 1920 there were 12; by 1940, 27; and today there are over 50 presses publishing six or more books each year (*6*). To this number must be added a dozen or more university imprints guided or overseen by the university library or some other department. Growth in numbers is easy, because, as in general or trade publishing, initial capital and staff requirements are low, and in prospect the existence of a university press on campus appears convenient, prestigious, and relatively inexpensive. "There is no industry," wrote O. H. Cheney in 1931, "free from complaint that there are too many in it—and the excess are the new, according to the old, and the weak, according to the strong. . . . Because of the creative nature of publishing, there is no basis for deciding that there are 'too many' —any more than there would be for deciding that there are too many authors. The entire output of some publishers, like the entire output of some authors, would never be missed. It is equally true that too many books of 'good' publishers would never be missed. There are not too many good publishers just as there are not too many good books or good poets" (*7*). Cheney's judgment is worth remembering today in the face of the prospect that every university of dimension may want its own university press. Nonetheless, a university press is not a research and pedagogical necessity—as is, say, the university library—nor is it a useful device for marshaling alumni support, such as a winning football team. Thus some universities will forego the real and hypothetical advantages of having their own presses.

The consequence of rapid growth in numbers coupled with very limited initial capitalization has been the creation of many small university presses —presses too small, in fact, to provide the full range of publishing services themselves. The continued existence and substantial achievement of small presses over a considerable period has been made possible through cooperative endeavor. Long before the formal establishment of the Association of American University Presses (*8*), press directors gathered informally to plan joint enterprises while attending the instructive meetings of the (then) National Association of Book Publishers. These men produced their first joint catalog in 1928; sponsored during the 1930's a nationally distributed book-review column; began their own mutual instruction programs in 1937; and after World War II, burst forth with a variety of shared ventures of critical importance in the achievement of such success as they have since gained. Their Educational Directory was a pioneering academic mailing list, and it remains a major one. A program of joint exhibits of books of all presses at learned and professional society meetings was begun and is indispensable today. With publication of a manual on foreign trade, overseas distribution became a major and lasting concern of all university presses. Above all, the university presses became committed to a continuous program of professional education among themselves, each learning from, and teaching, the others (*9*).

That a formal secretariat was finally achieved was the result, chiefly, of a review (*10*) of the organizational and operating similarities and differences of university presses, undertaken in 1948 and reported for the American Council of Learned Societies by Chester Kerr, now director of the Yale University Press. This review revealed the concerns and activities shared, and communality in plan and function became the rule.

Functions and Procedures

What does a university press do? I will give the answer in some detail in order to inform fully those who are in doubt, those to whom employees of university publishers have been obliged to say, "No, we do not press pants!"

University presses cannot afford administrators; they overlay administrative with operating responsibilities. Thus, the director or assistant director of a press is usually also business manager or controller, occasionally production manager and designer, and frequently editor-in-chief. He may be all these things.

Editorial procurement of manuscripts is usually undertaken by someone who speaks for his press. This is, in part, because the individual who evaluates the manuscript must on many occasions be able to give an immediate if provisional indication of interest in publishing it; and in part because seeking the eminently publishable book is

for many the great fun of university press publishing. A university press will publish as many worth-while books as it can find, and afford. The amount of time spent on editorial procurement by a university press will depend on the productivity of its own faculty members and their choice of publisher. They may provide most of the books their press is able to publish, or they may choose to publish elsewhere, in which case the press will go elsewhere in search of good manuscripts. Such efforts necessarily place a given press in competition with other publishers, commercial and scholarly—increasingly with the former, occasionally with the latter. Commonsense rules of the road govern such competition, and more gain than harm accrues to the combatants and to the author. Commercial publishers tend to fight with money; university presses, with services and, occasionally, appeals to institutional loyalty or consanguinity.

University presses have a high investment in staff for the preparation and editing of manuscripts selected for publication. The average direct editorial costs incurred per manuscript by scholarly publishers are disproportionately high. Part of the difficulty is invited, since the competition that I have mentioned encourages the premature delivery of manuscripts—manuscripts carelessly or incompletely prepared. Part is inescapable, for a scholar expects higher standards in editing and proofreading from a university press. Expenditure for good editorial procedures and careful editing is worth while, in view of the cost to prestige and pride when editorial performance is deficient. But part of the burden must be borne by authors, whose prestige and pride are also at stake. It may be argued that time spent by a research scholar on editorial chores is misapplied; it may also be argued that thoughtful completion of a manuscript for publication reflects corresponding thought and care in the substantive contribution being reported.

Design and Production

Perhaps because their origins were in printing, university presses traditionally have been concerned about high standards of design and production. Good design is one of their proudest achievements, and it has become more important to them since they withdrew from doing their own printing. Most sizable printing plants on college and university campuses date from a time when good commercial printing was not available to those institutions, but no university press today requires a printing plant in order to exist. Where these on-campus plants survive, they are both advantageous and distracting. Schedules and production techniques must be adjusted to meet the requirements of a press's captive printing plant; yet, in quality, the work done will probably be equal to, or better than, commercial printing of the same job, and the price will be the same as that of the commercial printer, or even lower, especially for limited editions.

The average university-press book, reports Richard Underwood, now director of Syracuse University Press, may be described as follows (*11*): "2,367 copies printed, 1,979 copies bound, 285 pages, 6 by 9 inches trim size. Linotype composition, using 60 pound Warren's Olde Style paper, text printed letterpress from type, line illustrations printed letterpress with text, halftones printed letterpress separately and bound as tips or wraps, folded and Smyth sewn in 32 page signatures, casebound in B-grade starch-filled cloth over boards with head and tail bands and plain endsheets, and manufactured by commercial printers and binders."

Good design of a book always involves in part, suitability of materials, suitability of typographical process, and binding for the most efficient use of the book by its intended readers. But persistent dedication to monotype or linotype composition by university presses has led to the expectation, in some disciplines, that all books, regardless of their use or life expectancy, will be produced in accordance with the specifications that are given above. The result is that most university-press books are high-priced and that all are made to last several hundred years. Typewriter offset production generally, and "near-print" composition in particular, are loudly decried as lacking in prestige by the scholars who publish in the humanities (other than linguistics) and by those who publish in the social sciences, save where quantified treatments yield much tabular or mathematical material. Offset printing has been tolerated in the sciences and technology, though letterpress is still preferred, and in mathematics it has been accepted to the point where it does not carry a professional stigma.

The next decade will see more development in printing technology than has been recorded in the past four centuries. University presses should begin to devote as much energy to the investigation of alternative modes of composing and printing short-run editions as they have devoted to refining traditional methods to achieve high standards of production.

Promotion and Distribution

The author of a university-press book rightly is concerned about promotion and distribution. He is likely to find that a scholarly publisher sells a specialized book more effectively, and a general trade book less effectively, than an appropriate commercial publisher does. Not that the techniques are different. All publishers sell their paperback books through college, retail, and paperback outlets; their highly specialized reference and scholarly books through technical book departments of bookstores and by direct mail; their trade books through retail bookshops and through one or another of the specialized book clubs; and so on. Only a few presses enjoy sales representation by their own salaried salesmen; the rest relying on cooperative sales arrangements with other presses, or on salesmen who may serve many publishers on commission. No press needs college-textbook salesmen for its limited texts any more than it needs door-to-door salesmen.

Promotion and selling of specialized books by university presses has improved more sharply than any other publishing performance. In part this follows from the rapid growth in numbers and competence of the college and university bookstores during the past decade—stores which serve the major markets for university-press books. It also follows from a distinct improvement in and broader use of, direct-mail promotion, which, though increasingly expensive, is the only way to sell certain specialized books.

Promoting many books which may enjoy limited sales is necessarily a stylized performance, depending for success on the amount of money available and on how effectively it is spent. In such promotion one is faced with the problem of getting accurate information about a book to all its potential buyers. Thus, advance information sheets announcing forthcoming titles

go to booksellers all over the world, catalogs are widely distributed to booksellers and libraries, review copies of the book are mailed to all appropriate journals in the United States and Europe, and space advertising tells readers of these and other journals and periodicals that the book exists. Occasionally, for a book of high potential sales (many thousands of copies), a university press will undertake a major campaign of space advertising in major book media, being constantly aware that if the campaign fails or the book fails to sell in requisite quantity, the money spent for advertising would have been better spent in support of another specialized book or two.

The sale of subsidiary rights has for some years spelled the difference between profitable and unprofitable operations by general trade publishers in the United States. This source of revenue is becoming of more significance to the university presses through the sale of reprint rights for paperback editions and (it is pleasing to note) through the sale of translation rights. The translation of an important scholarly work into the languages of all the countries where the work is of interest is clearly desirable, and although commitments for the purchase of translation rights are costly to solicit and hard to conclude, now the tempo of translation and publication of American books abroad has greatly increased, to the satisfaction and profit of author and publisher.

At the turn of the century, university presses, notably the University of Chicago Press, played a major role in the publication of scholarly journals. The role was later seized by the learned and professional societies, and now they are losing it to commerical publishers of specialized journals, particularly in science and technology. Nonetheless, 28 university presses still support and publish scholarly journals; many are of great prominence in their fields, several of them serving the sciences.

Other Functions

In concluding this catalog of what university presses do, I should mention that the University of Toronto Press runs what many regard as the best bookstore in Canada, while the National University of Mexico Press, an affiliate member of the Association of American University Presses, runs several retail outlets. Either grudgingly or willingly, a number of university presses operate their university's lettershop or mailing service. A university alumni office finds it essential to have such a service on campus, and such a facility may serve a press's own direct-mail promotional and sales efforts.

The activities I have enumerated differ in measure as much as in kind from the publishing performance of many commercial publishers and are apt to be well known to scientists and engineers. An activity and relationship that few academic or professional men know much about is the financial operation and policy of a university press. Two generalizations are useful. Founded with slender capitalization, university presses have grown slowly, rarely through the retention of earned surpluses, more frequently through substantial financial transfusions in the form of capital for new publications. Further, what was once largely an industry budgeted at a deficit is rapidly becoming an industry budgeted at the break-even point, the change having been brought about by imposing specific budgetary requirements on the fiscal management of the presses, with the understanding that any future capital formation must be funded from earned surpluses.

Fiscal Planning and Control

A major success of American university presses, and one little recognized, has been their well-controlled fiscal performance. One myth that dies slowly is that all businesses that operate at budgeted deficit are sloppily run; this is, of course, nonsense, for it requires quite as much control and fiscal responsibility to plan for, and stay within, a budgeted deficit of $30,000 as it does to plan for and produce a budgeted surplus of the same dimension. Many university press directors and business managers qualified long ago as cost-conscious penny-watchers. And as an industry, the university presses contrived to publish highly specialized, scholarly books of value and to distribute them widely, at no cost to the author and at relatively little cost to his institution (particularly if that institution did not support a press of its own), all at a very nominal overhead and in spite of the inefficiencies which result from very-small-scale operation. The overall efficiency of the system has proved very high.

However, the growth of university presses compares favorably with the growth of book publishing in general in only one respect—multiplication. In individual growth, virtually all university presses have paid the price for lack of solid long-range fiscal planning on the part of the press staff or of the university. The older presses operated under the handicap of undercapitalization, bootstrap financing, and editorial policies which tended to relate the prestige of the imprint with the number of "loss" books that could be published thereunder. Reference to the Kerr report of 1948 indicates that presses rarely managed to double their annual output of new books during their first decade and that many presses were publishing the same number of books, or half again as many, in the year of the survey as they had published each year during the previous decade (see *9*, p 42).

Some simple economics of book publishing apply to university presses but may be forgotten by their authors and friendly competitors among the commercial publishers. Without the prospect of continued funding by its university, a press exists on the income derived from the sale of its books. Only as it is able to publish new books of which a few will recover their costs rapidly will a press be able to stay in business; most of a press's books will go through only one printing. Growth, in the sense of publication of more titles, is possible only where several books recover their costs quickly, so that limited capital is turned over at an accelerated rate. I stress these obvious truths only because there are those who argue that a university press, by definition, ought never to publish a book when there is the slightest prospect of profit. Such an argument fails to recognize that, for most universities today, the needs of the university press cannot compete with other capital requirements, such as funds for radical upward adjustment of faculty salary scales or capital for new buildings or endowed professorial chairs. Moreover, enough university presses have demonstrated that slow but substantial growth can be achieved through maintaining a balance between what might be called revenue books and the many potential "loss" books that the press must pub-

lish in fulfilling its purpose. Therefore, university presses, with the consent and support of their universities, are more and more prone to publish *some* books which will recover more than their costs in a short time.

Even where growth of individual university presses is evident, the rate of growth is in stark contrast to the rate for any of the educational publishers that operate to make money. In 1948, total sales revenues for 35 American university presses were $4,160,000. Since that date, the number of new books published by these 35 presses has not yet doubled, nor have their sales trebled. These statistics suggest that inflation and higher prices account for some of the "growth." In the same period one of the largest publishers of textbooks and technical and reference books managed to increase its sales from $12 million in 1948 to over $160 million in 1962.

Five Questions

A useful review of university press achievement to date—of what has and has not been accomplished—may be given in answer to the blunt questions that are frequently asked about university presses.

1) *Are university presses a permanent part of the academic landscape?*

A line coach once said of his linemen, "My boys are not only very light but they are also exceedingly slow." University presses are not only very small, they are also very young, and young publishing houses are rarely secure. No one speaks for the presses that were disbanded, but the host of presses which survived to 1948 more as imprints than as fully matured publishing houses gives a measure of the instabilities that dogged the development of the university press. In too many cases, and despite the existence of two splendid British models, university presses permitted their universities to lose sight of the press's prospects and promise. Today one is shocked to learn—the defeat of the proposal by prompt faculty action notwithstanding —that it was soberly proposed in the 1940's that the Harvard University Press, then 30 years old and already one of the major scholarly imprints in the world, be abolished. A decade later, in a state where one university chose to underwrite part of its press's deficit with increments earned by the university athletic department, another university in the throes of budgetary indigestion made a full review of an earlier decision to found a press perilously soon after the press had been launched with appropriate pledges of eternal and substantial support. Here again the answer was "yes," but, as reported by a survivor, it was spoken softly and sounded a lot like "maybe." And so it is in answer to the question.

2) *What have university presses done well?*

In their major function of making available significant scholarship in permanent form, the American university presses have succeeded very well in the humanities and the social sciences (which they seem to favor) and distinctly less well in science and in technology. Let the tests of graduate training be applied. It is possible but extremely unlikely that a graduate degree in American literature or political science could be completed without almost constant reference to one of many works initially published by an American university press. It is probable that a graduate degree in chemistry or geology could be completed with only occasional reference to works from the same publishing source. A quantitative reference exists in the form of the American Association of University Presses' quarterly checklist, *Scholarly Books in America,* which has carried, in the course of its young life, notice of nearly all books published by members of the association. The numerical totals of books listed are conclusive: in the past 4 years, books in the broad range of science and technology, from agriculture and animal husbandry through the biological and physical sciences, mathematics, and engineering, never constituted as much as one-tenth of the total output of new books by university presses (1959, 8.5 percent; 1960, 9.7 percent; 1961, 9.2 percent; 1962, and 8.2 percent).

Why should this be so? Doctoral dissertations in the sciences and technology are more likely, it is said, to appear in article form than dissertations in other disciplines. The rapid growth in the numbers of journals in the sciences and technology contrasts with the much slower growth of journals in the humanities and supports this argument; the argument, so far as the many dissertations are concerned, is more descriptive than critically useful. Many dissertations in the sciences could be published *in extenso* in book form but are not; many dissertations in the humanities could be abridged to article form, but more often they are published as books. Worthy dissertations in both fields should be published as books.

Most monographs in science and technology today are published by commercial educational publishers, not by university presses. The funding of scientific research, it is pointed out, has now made it possible to price monographs at a figure that enables the publisher to break even on editions as small as 2000 copies; therefore, such monographs are now commercially attractive to large educational publishers. One wonders why competition among all educational publishers did not develop for attractive and worthy scientific and technical monographs. Where were the university presses as publishers of technical monographs before commercial break-even publishing became feasible, since university presses for decades have specialized in recovering costs from editions too small to be of commercial interest?

It is whispered that commercial textbook publishers subsidize monograph series in science. Documentation on this point is hard to come by, but it seems unlikely that continued predictable losses would be sustained in behalf of a discrete kind of publication, and be defended successfully, year after year, to banks, stockholders, and other fiscally interested parties, despite the opportunity to publish future profitable works by the same authors.

The inescapable general conclusion is that the university presses in America have throughout their history tended to serve the humanities and the social sciences first, and science and technology thereafter, an interesting commentary on the historic order of establishment of these disciplines. This tendency may reflect the relative strengths or concerns of those universities which created presses and the training of many former and present university governing boards. Whatever the reasons, a historic imbalance exists and must be redressed. At many presses this is being done.

3) *What does the university press do for its community?*

A considerable success achieved by some presses has been their definition and support of a regional identity. Commercial book publishing is so much a

New York City affair that the existence of book publishing in Madison, Wisconsin, or Norman, Oklahoma, or Chapel Hill, North Carolina, carries cultural responsibilities comparable to those of permanent theatre companies, museums, or historical societies. It is most appropriate for university presses located in widely differing regional settings to attempt to understand and explain and in some instances help preserve these differences, for in many states the best book-publishing institution is the university press. By performing regional publishing imaginatively—whether it is historical, biographical, pictorial, economic, political, geologic, or social, and whether the contributions are Western Americana, local history, or sprightly antiquarianism—the university presses have evoked a sense of place and have brought forth some first-rate books in the process.

As for other contributions to its community, particularly to its academic community, the record is less clear. The range of our American university-press publishing tends to be overwhelmingly monographic; the feeling is that it should not be so. Certainly the flexibility enjoyed by the Oxford and Cambridge University presses has value as well as charm: here lectures are published in book form; there occasional papers, pamphlets, and other cultural minutiae pepper the catalogs. To project the economics is dreary, but is there greater virtue in losing money on an unsalable monograph than on pamphlets? Then there is the matter of occasional publishing. Why not bring out picture books of university scenes, collections of students' creative writing, or journals of opinion as well as of scholarship? And are there, among the products of American presses, apart from the current total reconstruction of the literary endeavors of the founding fathers, enough bold multivolume series, histories, dictionaries, and other works of reference? American university presses may think they cannot afford, in their present undercapitalized state, to publish these, but the absence of readily available funds should not bind the editorial imagination.

The greatest error of omission in serving the community is the near-total neglect of textbook publication by the American university presses. A teacher ideally works with instructional materials of his own choice which may mean his own uniquely appropriate materials, developed especially for his students; only then can he be said to be teaching at his most effective level. A university press, if it aims to support the total educative endeavor of its university, must, by definition, be concerned about providing what is useful to achieving those ends. It is my contention that in failing to lend their resources to the construction of experimental, innovational, creative teaching materials, and by leaving their faculties to choose between the departmental mimeograph machine and the textbooks available from commercial publishers, the university presses have ignored an extremely important area of service.

Since curricula are being shaken apart and transformed today, and since the tempo of such activity will increase as the high school preparation of tomorrow's college students is altered and upgraded, the use of experimental texts at the undergraduate level is bound to expand rapidly. At a time when university presses might be bursting with locally produced experimental texts, most of which would in time pass from the scene but all of which would contribute to the emergence of stronger standard texts to serve for a decade, there is scarcely a token appearance of such volumes. At the graduate level, it should be said, the use of assigned textbooks is uncommon and selection of books for such use is difficult, and thus here the university presses march bravely in. But at the undergraduate level, if a textbook in early draft or provisional form were submitted, not at an institution with required enrollment of 2000 (such an enrollment would, in all probability, insure commercial publication somewhere) but at one with an enrollment of perhaps 200 a substantial number of university presses would hesitate to publish it, even though the text, in manuscript, appeared fresh, original, and worthy of publication.

The fear responsible for this hesitation is double-edged: not only may the demand be too little, it may be too great. If an experimental text happens to prove useful to 400 or 500 other institutions, it is argued, the original university-press publisher will (i) be accused of running a tax-sheltered business; (ii) find his business image, his public aspect, his scholarly imprint and the standards that uphold it compromised and undermined; and (iii) find himself at odds with the university lawyer.

These arguments must be answered seriously, because, insubstantial as each of them is, repetition has accorded each a kind of credibility. If the universities, as proprietors of their presses, after having invested thousands of dollars of their own money (along with many other thousands from federal or private sources) in curricular revision, cannot then lawfully engage in the production and distribution, through their university presses, of the textbooks that support that revision, the law should be changed. [The law, never to be interpreted by laymen, says that profits from businesses operated by tax-exempt institutions shall be taxed *unless the manner in which they are earned is substantially related to the purposes of the institution itself* (italics mine). It seems arguable that any university press which decided, on the advice of counsel, against publishing an experimental textbook written by a member of its faculty might usefully seek an opinion from another lawyer.] High standards for imaginative new texts can be set and imposed, so that standards need not be undermined. National sales promotion and distribution of a locally produced text might be more of a problem to university presses were it not for the fact that a textbook is rarely adopted for use without review by the potential user of the book itself, and that free copies of texts, rather than a hundred sales representatives on the road, are a firm's best textbook salesmen still.

If university presses were to publish only textbooks, and were to publish only those with high probabilities of national sales, their role as publishers to their universities would be contravened and their ultimate aim would be left unserved, much as it is left unserved when they are unwilling to venture publication of even provisional editions of texts.

In sum, the university press in any program of service to scholarship and pedagogy (and most of the parent universities still profess to serve both) can find it meritorious to publish, at a probable loss, a scholar's monograph but not his text.

4) *What is it that distinguishes a university press from any responsible commercial book publisher?*

I hope that some of the answers to this question will already have been

made clear. In general, the difference surely is comparable to the difference in purpose and aim between the university and the commercial educational enterprise; between California Institute of Technology and the Encyclopedia Britannica; between educational and commercial television. Both the university press and the commercial book publisher are anxious to publish, after certification, an important monograph by a distinguished scientific investigator. The difference is one of primary purpose and of the procedure that results from that purpose. "We want to see at least $30,000 in a project before getting involved" was the reasonable position stated by one of the very best commercial publishers. A commercial publisher and a university press both have a right to set requirements of high quality and sales potential; the critical difference lies not in the questions asked but in the order in which they are asked.

5) *What are the relationships of university presses to other educational publishers?*

When a segment of an industry does 1 percent of the business, even though it brings out 8 percent of the new products, there is a reasonable possibility that the activity of this small segment may go unnoticed. University presses, far from being unnoticed by their fellow educational publishers, have been well received and, in some instances, aided both by the trade associations of book publishing and by individual commercial firms, through contractual sales relationships, the liaisons of reprint editions, and the delights of editorial competition. Let it be clearly stated that—obvious frivolities, freaks, and entertainments aside—the essential burden of book publishing in America is in the broad sense educational; Machlup, for example, unhesitatingly consigns American book publishing to education (*12*).

There has been, and still is, a strong common bond of shared endeavor among trade publishers, encyclopedia publishers, paperback publishers, publishers of specialized and professional books, textbook publishers, and the university presses. Problems of development and management that others have faced are found in university press publishing, and solutions to these problems gained through commercial experience have, more often than not, been made known to the university presses, to their lasting benefit. Individual membership on industry-wide boards, associational membership in more than one of the trade associations, and hundreds of individual points of contact keep members of the publishing community aware of each other's activities, problems, and interests.

Some of the future concerns of book publishing in America must be faced by both commercial publishers and university presses. These questions are of profound consequence, particularly to the publishers of books that emerge from federally sponsored research. One such concern is copyright. The several publishers' trade associations worked well together in framing recommendations for the proposed revision of copyright statutes that is now before Congress. But the question of the right to copyright publications that emerge from research partially sponsored by the government has yet to be met squarely and resolved. The Federal Trade Commission has recommended that patents on inventions resulting from research financed by taxpayers be retained by the government (*13*), and it may well be argued that these same recommendations be applied to copyrights resulting from research which has been financed by public funds. Another area of future concern is the financially attractive publication of new textbooks to fit new curricula developed by commissions operating under federal support. If the Department of Defense can control, by renegotiation, the margin of profit on prime contracts let by it, the National Science Foundation may well ask why the same requirements should not apply to, say, the publication of textbooks created by one of the curricular revision commissions. These are not questions that affect commercial publishers only; they bear critically on the practice and performance of the university presses as well.

Conclusion

American university presses, despite a narrow view of their duties and serious undercapitalization, have survived and have grown significantly in performance and in number. Their future development rests heavily on their capacity for making changes in policy and for implementing these changes. Therefore, let us hope, (i) that university presses will serve all fiields of scholarly inquiry, including science and technology, responsively and equitably, (ii) that university presses will recognize their responsibilities for encouraging pedagogical, as well as scholarly, experimentation; (iii) that university pressses, with the support of their universities, will establish a firm policy of increasing their capitalization through earned surplus; and (iv) that university presses will maintain their strong affiliation with other educational publishers but will base their associational relationships on a clearly defined view of their own mission and then proudly defend their progress toward its achievement.

References and Notes

1. Unless otherwise specified, all statistics cited in this article are taken from *Publishers' Weekly*, the excellent trade journal serving the American book publishing industry. *Publishers' Weekly* runs annual statistical summaries of the previous year's output each January, and the figures cited here are derived from the 21 January 1963 issue. *Publishers' Weekly* for 21 January 1963 says that 80 university presses and departments published 2321 books in 1962. My figure of 61 presses was derived from a count of university presses whose 1962 output was reported by *Publishers' Weekly*, plus eight well-established presses not reporting to *PW*.
2. The Association of American University Presses, *Directory* for 1962–63.
3. The American Book Pulishers' Council's *Annual Trend Survey of the General Book Publishing Industry for* 1961 indicates that 57 university presses sold 6½ million books for dollar sales income of over $15 million.
4. D. Lacy, "The economics of publishing," *Daedalus* (Winter, 1963).
5. R. G. Underwood, *Production and Manufacturing Problems of American University Presses* (Association of American University Presses, New York, 1960).
6. R. W. Shugg, "The professors and their publishers," *Daedalus* (Winter, 1963).
7. O. H. Cheney, *Economic Survey of the Book Industry* (New York, 1930–31), revised and reissued (Bowker, New York, 1960), p. 155.
8. Most, but not all, university presses are members of the Association of American University Presses. The AAUP now lists 58 regular members, one Canadian member, and nine affiliated members (foreign university presses, museums, and learned societies.)
9. H. E. Ingle: "Scholarly publication and the Association of American University Presses: a story of cooperative enterprise," in *Transpacific Scholarly Publishing: A Symposium*, Thomas Nickerson, Ed. (University of Hawaii Press and East-West Center Press, Honolulu, in press).
10. C. Kerr: *A Report on American University Presses* (American Council of Learned Societies, Washington, D.C., 1949), now issued by the Association of American University Presses, New York; "American university publishing, 1955: a supplement to the *Report on American University Presses* (Association of American University Presses, New York, 1956).
11. R. G. Underwood, *Tentative Summary of the Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations for the Association of American University Presses' Manufacturing Study* (Association of American University Presses, Austin, Tex., 1959), p. 3.
12. F. Machlup, *The Production and Distribution of Knowledge in the United States* (Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton, 1962).
13. *New York Times*, West Coast edition, 8 March 1963, p. 9.