The Challenges of Open Access for University Presses
Pennsylvania Library Association Meeting, October 16, 2007

In a recent talk titled “University Research Publishing or Distribution Strategies?” to a meeting of the ARL, the Vice President for Academic Affairs of NASULGC, David Shulenburger, formerly Provost at the University of Kansas and long a leader in discussions of scholarly communication, had this to say about university presses as part of an overall approach in higher education as a response to the Ithaka Report’s call for universities to adopt formal publishing strategies for themselves: “Strategies would include university presses where they exist, but I do not warm to the notion of building such strategies around university presses. Presses are relatively few in number and cannot therefore be a core element for all universities. In addition, presses, at least judged by the positions taken by their association, the American Association of University Presses, is extremely hostile to the notions of open access that librarians embrace. Making the key to university research distribution strategy would involve convincing them to alter this stance.”

Whatever one may think about Shulenburger’s larger point about the role of university presses in research universities’ publishing strategies—and I don’t entirely disagree with it—I hope to persuade you this afternoon, as the President of the AAUP and author of the AAUP’s Statement on Open Access, that he is profoundly wrong about our Association’s position on open access. As one of my fellow press directors put it in commenting on Shulenburger’s remark, our stance is best characterized as “pragmatic,” not “hostile” at all.

The last time I made a presentation to a meeting of this Association when it met in State College was back in April 1991, less than two years after I came to the Penn State Press as director. My topic then was “the crisis in scholarly communication”: some things never change!

And indeed they don’t. I started that talk by citing a Faxon Company planning report for that year suggesting that now more than ever before librarians and publishers seemed ready to cooperate with each other in working towards solutions to the problems all of us in the knowledge industry face. I also quoted Patricia Battin, who said in a 1984 article in College & Research Libraries titled “The Library: Center of the Restructured University”: “The electronic revolution provides the potential
for developing university-controlled publishing enterprises through scholarly networks supported either by individual institutions or consortia." This could have come right out of the Ithaka Report on “University Publishing in the Digital Age” released this past July. One is tempted to repeat the French quip: "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose."

But of course things do change, and I reviewed some of the major changes that had affected university press publishing in the preceding couple of decades: including the consolidation of commercial publishing into a handful of major multinational conglomerates; the growth in title output from university presses, increasing competition among them for high-profile trade books, the professionalization of their staffs, and the diversification of their lists (even into fiction and poetry); the decline in monograph purchases by libraries; and not least the use of new technology by presses to bring about greater efficiencies and higher productivity.

As it turned out, this was only the beginning of a process of sweeping change that would revolutionize the business of publishing in ways only dimly foreseen back in 1991 when Amazon and Google were not yet part of our everyday lexicon. But even then there were glimpses of the challenges to come. In my 1991 talk I identified this as one of them: “For those who have visions of a brave new world of scholarly communication that sees electronic technology as making possible direct scholar-to-scholar exchange of information, perhaps with the library at the center in between as the repository of electronically stored bibliographical and textual databases, this question of gatekeeping becomes crucial. In traditional scholarly publishing it is the university press that has performed this function, through its careful screening of submitted proposals and manuscripts and the elaborate review procedures it undertakes to make sure that what is published has been validated as a genuinely significant contribution to knowledge. If technology is viewed as cost-saving because it makes possible elimination of the role of the traditional publisher, then how does one take care of the problem of separating what is worth disseminating from what is merely disseminated? As Kenneth Boulding has said, ‘We must be careful not to confuse information with knowledge. In many respects, information is the enemy of knowledge. Piling information on information merely produces noise’.”

Direct scholar-to-scholar communication, freed from the inhibiting copyright controls exercised by publishers, has become the rallying cry of what we now know as the “open access” movement. Probably no idea has
been the subject of more lively debate and controversy over the past few years within both library and publishing circles than open access. It may well be the single most-discussed topic on liblicense, the listserv operated by Ann Okerson out of Yale’s library. That forum proved to be an invaluable resource for me, along with SPARC’s Open Access Newsletter written by philosopher Peter Suber, when I was seeking more background on the topic in preparation for drafting the AAUP’s Statement on Open Access, the link to which I understand was provided to all of you attending this session.

The debate has intensified over the past two years as legislation known as the Federal Research Public Access Act has been proposed in Congress mandating deposit of articles in medical research funded by the NIH in an open-access repository managed by the government. Many public-interest groups and library associations have voiced their strong support for this legislation, and some segments of the publishing community have been vociferously opposed. The PSP Division of the AAP recently started waging a lobbying campaign under the acronym PRISM, which stands for The Partnership for Research Integrity in Science and Medicine. A major thrust of PRISM has been to characterize FRPAA as potentially undermining the whole gatekeeping process of peer review, hence the emphasis on “integrity.” University presses, objecting especially to this hype about the threat to peer review and PSP claims that First Amendment freedoms are at stake from government intervention and its “chilling effect,” have not endorsed the PRISM initiative, but do continue to have some concerns about open access and its implications for change in the system of scholarly communication.

Before I go on to talk about those concerns and also the opportunities that we scholarly publishers see in open access, I’d like to rehearse some of the history of university press publishing in this country that will help you understand better where we are coming from on this issue. To begin, I’d like to remind you all that the oldest continuously operating press in the country, at The Johns Hopkins University, got started by publishing STM journals in chemistry and mathematics. (Its chemistry journal later morphed into the flagship journal of the American Chemical Society.) Only almost a decade later did it become a book publisher. Why is this a significant fact? To my mind, it suggests the missed opportunity universities had in the wake of World War II, when the federal government began investing heavily in scientific research, to capture the STM journal publishing market for themselves. By the end of the war there were already 37 American
university presses in existence, constituting a substantial publishing infrastructure that could have been developed further to accommodate the need for more STM journals. Instead, as we all know, private entrepreneurs like Robert Maxwell, who founded Pergamon Press, saw a potential gold mine in the new growth of R&D and were savvy enough to marshal the capital to build the commercial STM publishing business that has come to dominate the sector, initially to the benefit and later to the detriment of the academic community as rising prices outstripped the budgets of university libraries to sustain their subscriptions to the ever-increasing numbers of highly specialized STM journals. (I have an e-mail message from Herbert Bailey, who was probably the first science editor at a university press and then director at Princeton for almost forty years, giving his explanation for why presses let this opportunity pass; and he also tells a good story about Robert Maxwell. I'll be happy to share these with the audience if anyone is interested during the Q&A part of this session.)

Maxwell revealed his publishing strategy in an interview printed in College & Research Libraries in 1988: “I set up a perpetual financing machine through advance subscriptions as well as the profits on the sales themselves. It is a cash generator twice over…. If Pergamon could win the trust of scientists, it could establish the standard journal in each specialization, and that would give it a series of publishing monopolies…. [S]cientists are not generally price-conscious as other professionals, mainly because they are not spending their own money.” Maxwell, who once treated me and some university press colleagues to a very expensive lunch in a fancy New York restaurant, was a publishing genius, no doubt, but nothing he accomplished was in theory beyond the reach of the academic community itself using the services of its already existing network of presses. If universities had had the vision of budding capitalists like Maxwell in the immediate postwar period, we might not even be talking about open access today!

Instead, while commercial publishers began to enrich themselves at the feeding trough of STM research, university presses generally avoided publishing in the sciences, and when they did, as at my previous employer, Princeton, they concentrated on theoretical rather than applied sciences and published journals that did not greatly benefit from the new federal research dollars, such as Princeton’s Annals of Mathematics. Though beginning to develop broader and better programs in the social sciences, presses remained dedicated to what had always been their core strength, the humanities. But
scholarly publishing in the humanities has never been easy. One of its most respected practitioners, Chester Kerr of Yale University Press, summed up the challenges when he said in 1949: "We publish the smallest editions at the greatest cost, and on these we place the highest prices and then we try to market them to people who can least afford them. This is madness." A contemporary of Kerr's who directed Harvard University Press, Thomas Wilson, had a similar view: "A university press exists to publish as many good scholarly books as possible short of bankruptcy," the implication being that presses operate very close to the margin, if they do not actually operate on life support most of the time through subsidies from their parent universities. When one realizes that many nowadays consider the 1950s and 1960s the golden age of scholarly publishing, during which a university press could print a first edition of 3,000 copies in hardback and expect to sell them all, more than half to libraries, Kerr's statement applies with even more force to the business today. One of the keenest modern observers of scholarly publishing, Cathy Davidson, Vice Provost for Interdisciplinary Studies at Duke University, remarked in 2003: "If scholarship paid, we wouldn't need university presses. Without a subsidy of one kind or another, scholarly publishing cannot exist."

The golden age for scholarly book publishing was indeed the 1960s. Research funding was plentiful from foundations like Ford and Rockefeller, many countries welcomed scholars from the United States doing field work in the social sciences, libraries had large budgets for buying books, and university presses could count on selling 1,000 or more copies of every book to libraries. But as the decade wore on, clouds began appearing on the horizon. Some senior librarians in this audience may remember a now classic NSF-funded study by Bernard Fry and Herbert White published in 1975 that found, for the period 1969-1973, that the ratio of book to journal expenditures in the largest academic libraries had dropped over that five-year period from better than 2 to 1 to 1.16 to 1, with every expectation that this trend would only get worse—as, indeed, it did. (ARL statistics show the decline in monograph purchases in the decade following 1986 among these libraries to have been nearly 25%). Fry and White's prognosis for university presses was particularly gloomy: their situation, they said, "can be described, without exaggeration, as disastrous. Already heavily encumbered by operating deficits..., university presses appear...to be sliding even more rapidly toward financial imbalance."
This precarious situation was viewed with alarm by university presses themselves at this time. A series of articles appeared in the journal, *Scholarly Publishing*, in April 1972, July 1973, and April 1974 based on successive surveys of presses covering the years 1970-1974. The first article, entitled "The Impending Crisis in University Publishing," "clearly indicated that presses were in the midst of a period of extraordinary financial stress, which posed a serious threat to the continuing survival of many of them."
The next two articles bore the titles "The Crisis—One Year Later" and "The Crisis—Is It Over?" The somewhat encouraging conclusion of the last article in this series was that, "except for the smaller ones, presses for the most part have managed to survive their financial difficulties quite well by making a host of adjustments, including radically increased book prices, substantially lower discounts, economies achieved in book production costs, slashing staffs, publishing more books with sales potential and fewer which cannot pay their own way, special inventory sales, and so forth." But, the author wondered, how much more can such methods be used without becoming at some point self-defeating. Ominously and—as we can now see with the wisdom of hindsight—presciently, he ended by pointing to "the increasing danger that presses will turn more and more to publishing books on the basis of saleability rather than scholarly merit." And, while noting the temporary mitigating effects that a generous grant from the Mellon Foundation to presses for publishing books in the humanities might have, he asked: "But what then?"

What then, indeed! Bill Becker, the chief financial officer of Princeton University Press who co-authored the first of these articles with the press's director, Herbert Bailey, and wrote the other two articles himself, had reason to be concerned. I was an editor at Princeton then and began in the early 1970s to build a list in Latin American studies. Over time it became a very distinguished list, but the evidence became clearer with every passing year that it was a field fraught with economic pitfalls. As I wrote in an article I published in the *LASA Forum* in 1993 under the title "Latin American Studies and the Crisis in Scholarly Communication," "back in the early 1970s...one could still count on selling between 1,000 and 1,500 copies of most new monographs in the field. By the early 1980s this average had dropped to less than 1,000, and by the end of the decade it was moving closer to 500." In that article I gave many examples of the sales of specific books to illustrate the trend, noting in particular the increasing divergence between scholarly value (as measured by book awards) and market value (as measured by sales) and also the growing inequities across subfields, with
history being the lowest in sales and modern political economy the highest. Worried about the fate of Latin American history especially, Herb Bailey and I tried to persuade the Mellon Foundation to offer a substantial grant to help subsidize publications in that field, but the Foundation, while receptive, decided it didn't then want to support any one area studies field in this way. Interestingly, the Mellon Foundation last May announced a pilot project aimed at helping the publication of monographs in "endangered" fields, and four groups of presses have been selected out of more than thirty original applications to be considered for funding in the initial round of grants. None of these includes Latin American studies, however; rather, they cover American literature; ethnomusicology; Slavic, Central European, and Central Asian studies; and South Asian studies.

Once I became a press director in 1989, I had to be even more concerned about "the bottom line" and therefore felt compelled to make some tough decisions about what kinds of books to publish. In March 1995 in an article for *The Chronicle of Higher Education* titled, yet again, "The Crisis in Scholarly Communication" I announced that at Penn State we had decided to curtail our publishing in the field of literary criticism. My analysis of ten years of our sales experience in literature, further supported by a survey I did of our authors in this field, persuaded me that we couldn't viably continue our program despite the high recognition it had attained. Of the 150 books we had published since 1985, 91% had sold fewer than 800 copies and 65% had sold fewer than 500. Experience at Penn State also has confirmed for me the sharp disjunction between market value and scholarly value. There is hardly any correlation between the number of copies a book sells and its importance for scholarship, as confirmed by prizes awarded and reception in the field revealed through book reviews. Since then I have conducted similar analyses of other areas of our list in comparative politics, political theory, and political science in general and published the results. They confirmed the existence of similar trends in those fields and the prospect for more "endangered species" of publishing in the future.

How have scholarly publishers adapted to all this bad news? Over time, since the 1960s, university presses have managed to survive not only by becoming better publishers but also by strategically changing the "mix" of their lists—doing more regional books, reference books, the trade books that formerly constituted the "midlist" of commercial houses, even fiction, and of course paperbacks for the course-adoption market. (The latter, however, has been significantly impacted by the popularity of printed coursepacks and
more recently e-reserve and course-management systems on which book chapters are posted.) A study conducted by Herb Bailey for the AAUP and ACLS on "The Rate of Publication of Scholarly Monographs in the Humanities and Social Sciences: 1978-1988" showed, contrary to expectation, that there had been no decline in the number of monographs published by presses during this period; in fact, the number had increased by 51%, principally because most presses had to grow significantly in annual title output in order to achieve operating economies of scale and other efficiencies. But that study came too early to pick up what by 1990 had become more noticeable, that presses were no longer expanding at that rate or—as I determined from a survey of the top largest presses in that year—planning to expand in the future, which meant that as the changes in commercial publishing continued to offer opportunities for presses to pick up "midlist" titles, their shifting priorities would inevitably lead to some erosion in publishing of monographs in fields where sales were known to be low. That erosion has now developed to the point where it has finally become noticeable, to many junior and even senior scholars in these fields, that outlets for their scholarly works are hard to find. And acquiring editors at presses, under pressure from their directors who are themselves concerned by declining subsidies from parent universities (or, what amounts to the same thing, increasing administrative levies), are ever more anxious to focus on getting the most saleable books, not necessarily the best contributions to scholarship (though we continue to hope against hope that there will be some correlation between the two). If students planning academic careers were to take such evidence seriously, as "rational actors" doing expected utility calculations, then hardly any would want to take the risk of entering fields of scholarship that are being increasingly underserved by university presses. Not only is this not fair to individual scholars experiencing such difficulties today, but it augurs ill for the healthy and balanced development of scholarship in the future. Universities are accustomed to some departments and programs being less able than others to generate revenue and have made the necessary adjustments. It is time to figure out a way to make these adjustments for scholarly publishing, too.

This is where technology may save the day, at least partially and temporarily. Already, from the early 1980s, presses had begun to take advantage of innovations and improvements in computer hardware and software to achieve considerable gains in efficiency and productivity, which helped keep the prices of books from rising more than they otherwise would have as a result of shrinking markets. These changes were internal to press
operations for the most part, however, and the external environment of publishing remained pretty much the same as it had been for a century or more. But the advent of chain superstores like Barnes & Noble first, then online retailers like Amazon.com, and finally search engines like Google with everything else they brought in their wake changed the environment of publishing dramatically in a few short years. Publishing in 2005 was very different from what it had been in 1995.

Some of these changes proved to be mixed blessings. For example, while superstores provided a huge increase in shelf space for displaying new books and university presses benefited initially from the greater exposure their books got, the chains' discount and inventory turnover policies ended up financially squeezing many presses and producing a sharp increase in their returns. Amazon.com, too, while bringing university press books to the attention of a much wider potential audience worldwide and offering browsing capabilities through its innovative “Search Inside the Book” program, later on offered its own competition to presses by selling used books on its site. And Google, which was greeted enthusiastically by most presses when it set up its Google Print (later called Book Search) program, bit the hand that fed it when it teamed up with libraries to offer the Google project to scan massive numbers of books in library collections, including many from presses still in print and under copyright, without seeking permission under a dubious theory of “fair use,” which is currently under challenge from publishers and authors in court. Finally, the new technology created new problems for junior faculty and the presses they approached about publishing their revised dissertations. The growth of ProQuest as an electronic vendor of dissertations resulted in many libraries subscribing to the database—and then questioning whether they should bother to spend their diminishing book budget on buying monographs derived from dissertations. Enough libraries made the decision to exclude revised dissertations from their approval plans that Yankee Book Peddler estimated the sales of these books to be 25% less than other monographs. Presses, in turn, became aware of this change in library practices and began thinking twice about publishing revised dissertations. Meanwhile, promotion-and-tenure committees relentlessly continued demanding at least one book, and sometimes two, from junior faculty as what the recent MLA Report called the “gold standard” for professional advancement. Each of the parties involved—librarians, publishers, and P&T committees—made a “rational” decision narrowly construed in terms of its own best interests, but the result was dysfunctionality in the system as a whole.
Despite such untoward effects, though, I am confident that if you asked most press directors, the majority would agree that, on balance, these changes have had more positive than negative outcomes. But even more important than any of these changes in the system for selling and distributing books was the technological revolution in printing. John Thompson, Cambridge sociologist and co-director of Polity Press, identified this as the “hidden revolution” in his insightful analysis of the academic publishing system in *Books in the Digital Age* (Polity, 2005). Not much known or discussed outside the hermetic community of scholarly publishing, this revolution introduced digital printing as the solution to one of the most nagging and financially disabling problems of the business: inventory management. Traditional offset printing created perverse incentives for publishers to be overly optimistic about potential sales: the unit cost of manufacturing dropped sharply as more copies of a book were printed. The result was warehouses full of unsold books—and also a whole new parasitical business of selling remainders. University presses felt the effects even more severely than did other publishers, since print runs for their monographs were declining to levels that made offset printing almost economically unfeasible. Then, just as presses began to wonder how they could continue to publish monographs at all, digital printing arrived as an outgrowth of the same technology that made Xerox a household name. Not only did digital printing allow for smaller print runs (in what the industry now calls short-run digital printing, or SRDP) than possible in offset printing, but it even made possible print-on-demand (POD) production, where a book can be printed one copy at a time as ordered by a customer. In the late 1990s, Lightning Print (later Lightning Source), a subsidiary of Ingram, the largest book wholesaler in the country, started providing just such a service and, even more crucial, integrated it into Ingram’s entire book distribution system.

This innovation immediately solved two problems for university presses. Backlist titles that were about to go out of print and that could not be reprinted by offset in any financially feasible way thenceforth could remain in print indefinitely as POD titles through Lightning Source. They would thus continue to provide a small but steady stream of revenue and, with their existence made known through Google searching, collectively would create the “long tail” that has been identified as the secret of economic success for publishing and other industries in the future. At the same time, digital printing in the form of SRDP gave presses the ability to print small quantities economically, keeping supply more closely related to current
demand and eliminating the speculation about long-term demand that had earlier led to large inventories, which ended up having to be written off and pulped or sold into the remainder market at prices often below unit cost. SRDP allowed presses to keep much smaller inventories on hand and hence decreased the need for ever-expanding warehouse space, which had been the bane of many presses for a century. Some publishers, like Chicago and Rowman and Littlefield, entered into agreements with SRDP vendors to operate digital printing machines right in their own warehouses, resulting in even more savings as the freshly printed books did not have to be shipped to a distant location.

This was a complete solution for monographs in almost all fields except art history, which requires very high-quality reproduction of illustrations in halftone, duotone, and color that digital technology has not yet managed to provide in competition with traditional offset printing. Competition from SRDP vendors has, however, brought a decrease in prices for low runs from offset printers; it is now possible to print 400 copies of an unillustrated monograph by offset, all while maintaining offset’s higher-quality production capabilities. This further benefit of digital printing has led to a new model for scholarly publishing at some presses. Penn State Press, for example, initially publishes monographs in hardback in runs of 400 or 500; paperbacks are issued later by SRDP in small runs of 200, 100, or even 50 iteratively; when the book’s life-cycle reaches the point at which it makes sense, it is produced purely by POD through Lightning Source. This model was a rational response also to the trend of libraries to order paperbacks instead of hardbacks whenever books were published in the dual formats; in that way, SRDP facilitated a new strategy for delayed publication of paperbacks that was becoming a necessity anyway. Not here yet, but coming soon, is the capability of digital printing to economically produce internal color reproductions of, for example, graphs and figures and maps; authors will not have to see the wonderfully colored charts they have produced on their computers converted to black and white in their books.

This “hidden revolution” has already transformed the business of scholarly publishing in major ways—and spared press directors from a long bout of depression. It has enabled university presses, and commercial academic publishers as well, to continue operating in a largely market-based economy. But change of an even more sweeping sort is on the horizon.

And now we finally come to open access. I assume most of you have some basic familiarity with the concept. It has a multiplicity of meanings, though,
and unless one is steeped in the history of its development, the idea can be misleading and confusing. Open access, indeed, exists in many flavors. Or perhaps I should say colors, since much of the debate has come to adopt Stevan Harnad’s terminology of Green OA and Gold OA. For Harnad, Green OA signifies scholars’ “self-archiving” their own research papers, either on their personal web sites or their universities’ institutional repositories. Harnad believes that if enough universities and funding bodies mandate Green OA, the revolution to bring about open access will inevitably follow. This will result in libraries canceling subscriptions to commercially published STM journals, the savings from which he believes should then “logically” be applied to funding new or existing open-access journals, which would usher in the Gold OA era where STM journal publishing would virtually all be done by publishers providing peer-review and other services that would be paid by fees up front, with the contents completely free to end users. This is an elegantly simple vision, perhaps reflecting Harnad’s own penchant for elegant simplicity as a mathematician. But its simplicity is deceptive.

There are, in fact, many versions of open access that do not go the full distance toward the Budapest Open Access Initiative’s ideal of “permitting any users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of these articles, crawl them for indexing, pass them as data to software, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself.” This ideal pushes the limit toward a full-blown “gift economy” where no income is expected from sales to support the costs of publishing and all those costs will have to be covered by either fees charged to authors or grants from institutions or the agencies funding the research. Harnad thinks the reallocation of savings from library subscriptions to paying such author fees is so compelling in its logic that it will inevitably come to pass. Administrators like Provost James O’Donnell of Georgetown have retorted on liblicense that universities don’t work in that straightforward or rational a way. Harnad also focuses his attention solely on journal publishing in the sciences. Yet the logic of intellectual investigation cannot long tolerate a separation of the sciences from the social sciences and humanities, which I take to be part of the reason that many librarians are objecting to the AAAS’s decision to withdraw Science from JSTOR. Nor does it make sense to allow a “digital divide” to grow between what is published in journals and what is published in books. Thus the debate on
open access needs to be widened beyond its initial concentration in the STM arena to encompass journals in the liberal arts and books, too.

Significantly, the AAUP Statement on Open Access does not confine its attention to just journals but instead calls for experimentation and dialogue on open access for books as well. This is in part an affirmation of the basic mission of presses to “disseminate knowledge far and wide” using whatever business models can support this overriding goal; but it is also a reflection of experiments already under way at presses such as those at the University of California, the University of Michigan, Oxford University, and Penn State University. These presses are building on the pioneering approach of the National Academies Press, which has digitized its entire catalogue of books for free, full-text online browsing as an incentive to visit the press’s web site, where visitors can order books in POD or PDF form. This type of open-access publishing is compatible with a market-based approach to publishing, but the AAUP is not opposed to models that would move toward a full “gift economy” where funding would come not from sales, but from fees and subsidies up front, and where the books would be free to the end user and completely unrestricted technologically. Indeed, we recognize that open access would be a boon to the underdeveloped areas of the world, where it is far more likely that access to computers will gradually spread (stimulated perhaps by Nicholas Negroponte’s scheme to distribute $100 laptops to Third World countries in his “One Laptop Per Child” program) than it is that an infrastructure for the publication and distribution of print journals and books will ever be established.

The AAUP Statement, which was initially prompted by our concern that the dialogue between publishers and the academic community had become too polarized in the highly politicized climate created by FRPAA, includes a number of caveats about the challenges that lie ahead for achieving such a transition to full open access. They can be briefly summarized in these points:

1) The shift from sales to subsidies as the economic basis for publishing may result in solving some inequities among users but may create new inequities among those seeking to be published.

2) Costs will likely not decrease overall but simply be shifted from some parts of universities to others; and the research centers of commercial companies will get a “free ride” they do not enjoy today.
3) Some already existing services that are highly valued in the academic community, like Project Muse and JSTOR, may well be undermined by a shift to full open access.

4) Universities with their own presses would experience sharply increased costs for funding their presses under this new model, or else other universities would need to step up to the plate and provide many more subsidies for their own faculty than they do now.

5) If commercial publishers opted to exit from the business, universities would be faced with major decisions about which journals to support in open-access mode and how much more to invest in their own presses sufficient to enable them to take over the publishing of some of these journals. The fates of professional societies would also hang in the balance as they would need to seek out other sources of income to support their activities now funded largely from journal revenues.

Another point not included in the official AAUP Statement, but mentioned in my essay in Learned Publishing, is that change in the marketplace may well not come gradually, as many supporters of open access like Harnad believe, but suddenly, as a result of the “tipping point” (which the FRPAA could be for society and especially commercial STM journal publishers), leaving the system of scholarly communication in at least a temporary state of chaos. Universities should prepare themselves as best they can for this “worst-case” scenario and not just assume that change will be slow and steady.

The “hidden revolution” of digital printing has bought time for university presses to engage in experiments with open access, both for the type that is compatible with a market economy and for the type that goes beyond to a full-fledged gift economy. Needless to say, it is difficult to predict what the future holds for commercial academic publishers as the open-access movement gains momentum. They could survive, presumably, with open access based on a market economy; it is less likely that universities and funding agencies would be willing to support their existence in a gift economy, unless they are clever enough to provide value-adding services that are truly worth their cost. And such a full-fledged gift economy for books may never come to pass; it is one thing to come up with a few thousand dollars to pay for publication of an article, quite another to underwrite ten times that amount to get a book published. Such fee-based monograph publishing would require system-wide changes within universities on a scale that has seldom been seen in this tradition-encrusted
environment. Old habits die hard. Evidence of this resistance to change comes from the recent survey of faculty at the University of California, which revealed a lot of skepticism about the value of an institutional repository for journal articles at the university as a whole, especially if it were to be structured on an “opt out” basis. Interestingly, though, and somewhat contrary to expectation, it was senior faculty and faculty in the humanities, rather than junior faculty and faculty in the sciences, who were most receptive to change in the system, suggesting that there are opportunities for development of new models of publishing in the very areas where university presses have built their core strengths. At any rate, the vision underlying this most fully developed form of open access as the “gift economy” may eventually prove irresistible as it embodies the ambition of scholars everywhere to engage in the fully unfettered, “free” exchange of ideas among themselves and beyond to the public at large—a noble vision indeed.