

# THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Kristen Elias Rowley, Editor-in-Chief, The Ohio State University Press, (614) 292-8256 / [eliasrowley.1@osu.edu](mailto:eliasrowley.1@osu.edu)

\$1,205,000 Mellon grant to expand the University Press Diversity Fellowship Program.

The Ohio State University Press, The University of Washington Press, the MIT Press, Cornell University Press, University of Chicago Press, Northwestern University Press, and the Association of University Presses (AUPresses) join forces to expand the University Press Diversity Fellowship Program.

COLUMBUS, OH—A four-year, \$1,205,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has been awarded to the University of Washington Press to support the continued development and expansion of the pipeline program designed to diversify academic publishing by offering apprenticeships in acquisitions departments. This new grant will provide for three annual cycles of editorial fellows at six university presses: the Ohio State University Press, the University of Washington Press, the MIT Press, Cornell University Press, University of Chicago Press, and Northwestern University Press.

This new grant builds on the success of the initial 2016 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which funded the first cross-press initiative of its kind in the United States to address the marked lack of diversity in the academic publishing industry. Graduates of the first fellowship program hold professional positions at university presses across the country, including at Columbia University Press, the MIT Press, University of Virginia Press, the Ohio State University Press, and the University of Washington Press. Additionally, for the four participating presses, the initial grant expanded applicant pools, improved outreach to underrepresented communities, created more equitable preliminary screening practices in hiring, and enabled dedicated attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion overall.

The 2016 grant also served as a catalyst for broader changes at the partner presses and within the AUPresses as a larger organization. “Diversity is one of AUPresses’ core values. As such, we are proud to partner in the expansion of this significant program,” says AUPresses Executive Director Peter Berkery. “Our participation in the original initiative over the last three years has led, not only to more inclusive programming choices at our annual conferences and webinars, but also to the formation of a Diversity and Inclusion Task Force, which will evolve into a Standing Committee to help us sustain momentum in this area of vital importance to our community, higher education, and the entire publishing industry.”

This new grant offers opportunities for more sustained engagement with issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion among the new partner presses and the university press community more broadly. “Continuing the fellowship program will enable us to focus on longer-term issues of retention and leadership development among the program’s participants,” says Larin McLaughlin, Editor in Chief of the University of Washington Press and principal investigator on the grant. “With this new grant, we want to provide the opportunity for new presses to participate in the program while benefitting from the experience of the original partner presses.”

Gita Manaktala, Editorial Director of the MIT Press, comments, “The fellows have inspired a strong sense of responsibility among partner presses, which have demonstrated this in several ways: by developing more inclusive press environments, by opening processes to welcome the fellows’ perspectives and input into the daily work of acquisitions, and by providing fellows with focused career advice for job placement and professional development.”

The first and second grants combined provide for a total of 30 fellows in six years, which will generate marked shifts in acquisitions staff across university presses not possible without this kind of dedicated funding.

Peter Hahn, Divisional Dean of Arts & Humanities at The Ohio State University, says, “University presses continue to play a vital role in sustaining the scholarship expectations of the nation's institutions of higher learning. I am delighted that the Ohio State University Press was selected to collaborate in this important initiative to invest in diverse early career professionals in this enterprise.”

Frederick Luis Aldama, Arts & Humanities Distinguished Professor, University Distinguished Scholar, and Director of the award-winning Latinx Space for Enrichment & Research (LASER) at The Ohio State University, says, “This proactive initiative will create the pipelines necessary for the deep systemic change necessary to reflect the diversity demographics that make up our world today and tomorrow.”