2018 AUPresses Residency Program Summary

For more than twenty years, the Association of University Presses Residency Program has provided opportunities for individuals at Association member presses to advance their own professional knowledge, strengthen the operations at their home presses, and foster professional collegiality throughout the UP community. Administered by the Association’s Professional Development Committee, the Program offers staff intensive, hands-on residencies of up to one week at other member presses. Experiencing the inner-workings of University Presses outside of their home institutions, refining and building on their own skills, and developing a collaborative community of knowledge and ideas, grantees find the program one of Association’s most effective professional development initiatives, benefitting both host and home presses alike.

The 2018 Residency Program was funded in part with a generous grant from Johns Hopkins University Press in honor of its director Kathleen Keane who retired in 2017. This grant will help to support the program through 2021. In 2018, 9 individuals were awarded grants to participate in this unique and invaluable program. Residents were asked to provide reports on their experiences.

Splitting her residency between the rights departments at Northwestern University Press and the University of Chicago Press, Angela Burton, Rights and Permissions/Awards Manager at the University of Illinois Press, had several goals in mind, including evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of her home press’s procedures, and exploring how Illinois might create a more developed rights marketing program. Needless to say, Burton met those goals. Through her time at Northwestern, Burton discovered ways to streamline procedures, and has already started implementing these changes. Using Chicago’s robust rights marketing program as her model, Burton took home specific steps on how to prepare for rights conference meetings, and now looks forward to a successful Frankfurt Book Fair. Grateful for the opportunity to learn from colleagues, Burton noted, “I expect that I will be using my residency notes for ideas in the future.”

Leslie Eager, Director of Publishing Services for Project Euclid at Duke University Press, spent her residence with Project MUSE at Johns Hopkins University Press. With Project Euclid “entering a period of major transition that will require careful planning and broad institutional support,” Eager felt it was a
crucial time “to learn from experienced colleagues about how to manage change in our corner of the industry, both strategically and practically.” Meeting with staff across the organization in dedicated one-on-one or small group conversations, and observing day-to-day meetings as “a fly on the wall”, Eager discussed technology development, open access, publisher relations, finances, and leadership with the staff at Project MUSE. Spending time with Project Euclid’s closest peer in the university press community, Eager found their perspective “both immediately relevant and aspirational. I very much appreciate MUSE’s generosity in being willing to host me and the generosity of AUPresses in funding this experience.” “I learned a ton,” Eager explained, “and left feeling challenged, reassured, and energized. I am currently developing the agendas for Euclid’s annual board meeting, and I know that our conversation will be enriched by some very helpful and specific lessons from MUSE.”

**Parneshia Jones**, Sales and Community Outreach Manager, and Poetry Editor, TriQuarterly Books, Northwestern University Press, selected Princeton University Press—“The Stradivarius of University Presses”—for her residency. “Since I work in several departments at Northwestern University Press…I was keen to speak with members from all departments at Princeton,” explained Jones, “Christie (Henry) opened the doors to the press and left no stone unturned in preparing an exceptional residency.” In addition to host of meetings, Jones shadowed Director Christie Henry, attended an Editorial Board meeting, and enjoyed extracurricular activities including a conversation with Ta-Nehisi Coates and Dr. Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor as a part of the Princeton University Public Lecture Series. “It would be simple enough to conclude that Princeton University Press is a successful leader in academic publishing because of its valuable literary collections and the incredible amount of resources it has available…However, there is something equally important,” Jones surmised, “The people who work for Princeton University Press are truly the key to its success.” Concluded Jones, “This worldly and curious team of thinkers and innovators, assembled in every department, and anchored by engaged and proficient leadership is the magnum opus of a press that resonates an important rhapsody throughout its walls and deep within the pages of every Princeton book.”

University Press Week 2018 coincided with **Katie Keene**’s residency at Wayne State University Press. Keene is an acquisitions editor at the University Press of Mississippi, and her main objective was to learn how the staff at WSUP implemented Biblio as a part of their routine workflow. Spending time with the marketing, acquisitions, and editorial, design, and production departments, Keene came away with insights on exhibit planning, endorsements, how Biblio can feed a website, conference approaches, and the Impression Level Schedule (ILS). Keene also attended one of WSUP’s events at the Detroit Public Library. “They excel at celebrating local books with launches and events in a way that feels very special,” Keene noted. “The event definitely reinforced for me the
significance of regional books and the value of local authors, supporters, customers.” Summing up her residency, Keene concluded, “In all, I only regret I did not have more time to spend in Detroit.”

Ann Olson, Production Coordinator at the MIT Press, arranged to complete her residency at the University of Chicago Press. With the help of Sarah Gardiner, the journals design and production manager at Chicago, Olson immersed herself in the “nitty gritty details of production and technology work,” taking tangible tools and information about workflow procedures and journals publishing technology back to her home press. What’s more, Olson’s meetings with the journals production team and managers across the journals division influenced how she views her work in a broader sense. As Olson explained, “these conversations shaped how I think about how production interacts with the big question of publishing: how to best preserve and disseminate knowledge? These new perspectives have shaped how I think about the way my own work fits into the big picture of publishing.” In addition to all that she learned during her residency, Olson noted, “I highly valued the new connections I made to others in journals publishing… As a production coordinator who doesn’t often have the opportunity to travel to publishing events and conferences, these kinds of connections are sometimes hard to make, especially for journals professionals…I am so grateful that I had this opportunity.”

“I have only worked for Duke University Press so I was really looking forward to the opportunity to visit another Press for a week,” explained Julie Thomson, Direct Marketing Manager and Sales Associate at Duke University Press, who “selected the University of Texas Press because of the distinct ways they express their brand.” Working closely with Bailey Morrison, Web and Digital Media Coordinator, Thomson learned about Texas’s direct digital and course adoption marketing, and the promotions materials they create to be used in emails, by bookstores, and on social media. Meeting with David Hamrick, director of the Press, Thomson noted his philosophy of seeing the Press’s catalog as a narrative from season to season, as well as a way to convey the Press’s identity. Thomson had time for a few additional events including a First Look meeting, where various departments have their first look at forthcoming books; with Dustin Kilgore, Design and Production Manager, about their process for cover art; and with William Bishel, Assistant Director, Information and Business Systems Manager, about the redesign of their website.

With her residency, Wynona McCormick, Business Operations Manager at Texas A&M University Press, hoped “to be able to visit another Press that distributed for other Presses and to bring back ideas” to meet her goals of “streamlining and maximizing efficiencies” in her department “without losing our excellent customer service”. “Visiting the University of Chicago Press’s distribution center, CDC, was everything I hoped for and more,” affirmed
McCormick. Explained McCormick, “Being able to see how a much larger University Press distributor handles daily operations has helped me to put the stressors of our business operations in perspective.” Arriving at CDC with some changes for her home Press already in mind, McCormick stopped second-guessing the changes her Press needs. “Actually seeing the procedures in place and hearing the importance of the changes from staff has given me a confidence boost in that regard,” McCormick reported. Of her residency, McCormick concluded, “This opportunity for professional exchange allowed a different look at how we do business and I am excited to help our business operations department move forward to streamline, maximize our efficiencies, and have tighter controls while using our skills to the fullest.”

With the University of Pittsburgh Press shifting to use of BiblioLIVE, a cloud-based, presswide title management software system, Amy Sherman, Managing Editor at the University of Pittsburgh Press, was eager “to learn from the workflow management and scheduling at a university press” that already uses the software. To this end, Sherman spent her residency with the manuscript editorial, production, and acquisitions department at Columbia University Press, which has already implemented the system, “with the objective of getting a complete picture of the manuscript’s life cycle in Biblio, from pre-acquisitions through copyediting.” While already trained on the title management software, Sherman found this “residency program provided me with the kind of intensive, hands-on experience that is necessary for understanding how it can be put to real-world use within the demands of what a press needs to accomplish.”

“Visiting Columbia University Press has better equipped me to play an active role in reforming our editorial workflow at Pittsburgh,” Sherman explained. “I am immensely grateful to the staff of Columbia for their generosity as hosts—each person that I spoke to was very patient and generous with their time and did their best to make sure I understood their role and responsibilities within the system so that I could bring this information back with me to share with my colleagues.”

Applications for the 2019 Residency Program will be available in April 2019.