

A Rational System for Funding Scholarly Monographs

A white paper prepared for the AAU-ARL
Task Force on Scholarly Communications

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1.1 Context

In early 2012, the Association of American Universities (AAU) and the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) formed a joint task force on scholarly communication. The Task Force’s charter indicates that AAU and ARL seek to harness the potential of digital publishing technologies and ubiquitous networking to increase access to scholarly research and reduce production and distribution costs. At the same, the Task Force seeks to ensure the long-term economic viability of the scholarly publishing system and continuity with critical elements of the current publishing model, while pursuing collaborative solutions that bring together key stakeholders.

To advance this charter, the Task Force commissioned two white papers—the present report, focusing on scholarly monographs, and another that will address scientific and scholarly journals—to frame critical problems and identify projects through which AAU-ARL members might constructively intercede. To that end, this report focuses on potential responses to the market failure for scholarly monographs; that is, the inability of a market model to adequately support research publication based solely on scholarly merit.

Scholarly monographs serve two principal functions: 1) they present original scholarship and provide the foundation for humanistic research, forming the basis for synthetic analyses,¹ and 2) they serve as a critical component of professional credentialing for the humanities and the interpretive social sciences.² First books by junior faculty represent a subset of scholarly monographs that is especially important in the tenure and promotion process.³

The first book “problem” is typically summarized as follows: Faculty in most humanistic disciplines and some social science fields must publish at least one monograph for tenure, with publication by a university press being the *de facto* standard. For a variety of reasons, largely but not exclusively budgetary, university libraries have curtailed their purchasing of such monographs. Due to lower sales, university presses can no longer cover the costs of publishing specialized monographs, forcing them to reduce the number they publish and making it difficult for scholars to publish first books with presses for tenure consideration.

While this description is broadly true, it camouflages the inherent cause of the market failure: that a primary external benefit of monographs—their use for professional credentialing—is not captured by a monograph’s price. Remediating the market failure for monographs, therefore, requires that we address the way in which monograph publishing is funded. Although this report examines the implications that a new funding model would have for university presses, the objective is not primarily to preserve the incumbent press publishing model. While implementing a rational funding model could stabilize the current system and provide continuity as new digitally enabled publishing models emerge, a supply-side funding approach could also promote change throughout the publishing value chain, accelerating digital distribution, encouraging the evolution of digital-specific research publication genres, and facilitating new forms of quality review and certification.

¹ See Chodorow (1999), p. 12 and Wissocker (1997). Scholarly monographs may be distinguished from academic “trade” titles, which synthesize prior research and aim for a more general audience.

² On the continuing relevance of monographs, see Harley *et al.* 2007, Cronin and LaBarre 2004, Estabrook and Warner 2003, and MLA 2005.

³ First books in the humanities tend to be specialized monographs, and an author’s subsequent works may target a more general audience and reach a larger market. However, it is not necessarily so, and a scholar’s subsequent works may also be specialized monographs.

1.2 Scope & Approach

The purpose, production, and use of monographs form part of an extensive web of scholarly, professional, and economic activities. This report provides neither a systematic review of the issues relating to scholarly monographs, nor a comprehensive analysis of the possible strategic futures of scholarly communications, university presses, or tenure and promotion policies.⁴ Although we necessarily touch on these issues for context, our purpose here is to identify specific critical problems amenable to immediate, actionable solutions and to provide a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of potential initiatives that the Task Force might endorse.

Given the Task Force charter, this report identifies projects with the potential to:

- Increase access to scholarly monographs and/or reduce the costs of producing them;
- Preserve functions critical to the legitimacy of the current system—including the communication of research and support for professional credentialing—without necessarily protecting the existing practices and systems delivering the functionality;
- Align with the values, practices, and behaviors of the scholars the system serves, both for communicating research and for professional advancement;
- Accommodate evolving practices for communicating scholarly research; and
- Maximize buy-in and participation across stakeholder groups.

Priority has been given to projects that build on critical elements of the current system while positioning the system—and the stakeholders acting within it—for innovation and change.

1.3 Report Structure

This report is structured as follows:

Section 2 summarizes the key issues contributing to the market failure for monographs and describes the limitations of the current scholarly monograph publishing model in serving the needs of college and university researchers, particularly junior faculty seeking to publish first books;

Section 3 describes the criteria for an AAU-ARL-sponsored initiative, identifies the principal economic and systemic constraints that prevent university presses and other stakeholders from overcoming those problems unilaterally, considers the benefits and implications of incremental and disruptive responses to critical issues, and evaluates specific solutions that might overcome the market failure for monographs; and

Section 4 describes a collective compact for funding first books via institutionally funded faculty book subsidies, reviews the economic implications of the model for authors, academic institutions, university presses, libraries, and other stakeholders; and identifies the next steps and critical planning elements that would need to be addressed by a pilot project.

⁴ Because it is not the purpose of this report to provide an exhaustive literature review, most of our citations are selective and illustrative.

2—THE MARKET FAILURE FOR SCHOLARLY MONOGRAPHS

2.1 Overview

The market failure for monographs—that is, the inability of a market model to supply an adequate supply of monographs without a subsidy—is not a recent development. It has long been recognized that the cost of producing specialized scholarly monographs cannot be recovered through a market model based solely on individual title sales. The very existence of North American university presses, represents, in large part, an attempt to provide an alternative to commercial publishing.⁵

A university press system subsidized by a small group of institutions functioned adequately as long as market sales were sufficient to minimize the financial support required from the host institutions. However, as library purchasing has declined, the financial commitment required of press institutions has increased. As institutional subsidies to presses reach their limits, presses face increasing pressure to consider commercial viability as well as scholarly merit in making publication decisions. Consequently, the effects of the inherent market failure are no longer hidden: the system cannot deliver an adequate supply of monographs, especially in narrow or specialized fields, thus constricting the communication of foundational scholarship and compromising the tenure and promotion system (see §2.4).

2.2 Contributing Causes, Compounding Effects & Solution Design Considerations

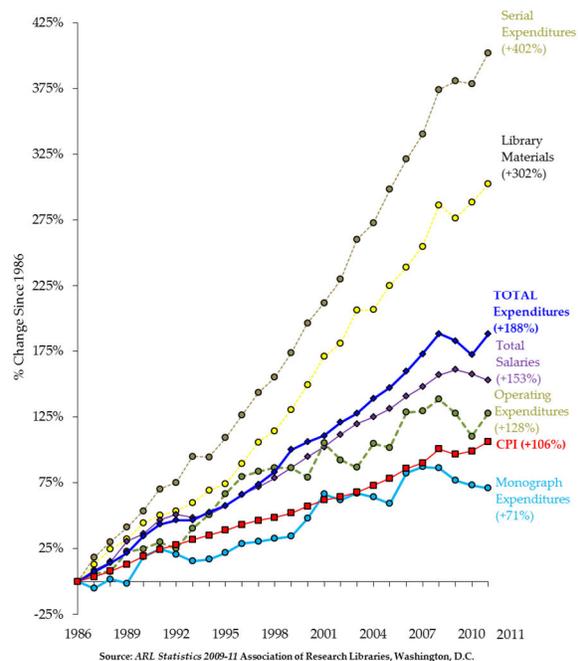
Various causes have been cited for the decline in monograph sales and the dysfunction in the market for scholarly monographs. Reviewing the market and environmental changes that have contributed to this market failure will help us identify specific problem areas that an AAU-ARL-sponsored initiative might be designed to target.

2.2.1 Library budget constraints

Until the mid-1970s, institutional funding of academic libraries was sufficient to keep pace with the title output of university presses and other scholarly publishers, and presses could depend on average sales of about 1,500 units per monograph.⁶ However, sales have now declined to the point where many presses report average sales of just 200 – 500 units per title.

Although library materials budgets increased by over 300% between 1986 and 2011 for the 125 largest North American research libraries (over 90% of which are university libraries), extraordinary increases in the subscription costs of STM journals absorbed a disproportionate percentage of library budgets (see Figure 1). Median monograph expenditures at large research libraries grew at 2.2% per year, below the rate of inflation, compared to 6.7% for serials. In 1986, research library spending on serials and monographs was split

Figure 1. Expenditure Trends in ARL Libraries, 1986-2011



⁵ See, e.g., Kerr 1949, Chapter 15.

⁶ Thompson 2005, Chapter 4 and Greco and Wharton 2008.

55%/45%; by 2011, the split was 75%/25%.⁷ Academic libraries, which once represented the largest market for most university presses, now represent less than 20% of total press net revenue.⁸ Without ample library budgets, the effects of an inherent market failure were no longer hidden.

2.2.2 Changing library purchasing practices

While the diversion of library resources to STM journals has driven academic library monograph sales to their current levels, ebook dissemination and patron-driven purchasing mechanisms will likely combine to reduce library purchases of monographs further. Although budget constraints are a critical factor, the softening library market for monographs can also be attributed to the relatively low use of monographs, and to the perception that they are an underperforming asset for many academic libraries.⁹

Further, the availability of scholarly monographs as ebooks relieves libraries from the time-constraint of an immediate purchase decision. In a print regime, a library committed to collecting in a given field had to make a purchase decision soon after a monograph was published, or—given the short print runs of most monographs—risk the title falling out of print. Availability as ebooks, coupled with patron-driven acquisition, allows libraries to defer monograph acquisitions until a local need has been demonstrated. As ebooks do not go out of print, and print-on-demand technologies make print copies perpetually available, a library can wait to acquire a monograph. Although patron-driven acquisition represents an economically rational response on the part of libraries, it is likely to have the collateral effect of reducing further the number of specialized monographs that university presses can afford to publish.¹⁰

2.2.3 Pricing

High monograph prices are sometimes cited as contributing to the decline in library monograph purchases.¹¹ However, as a matter of mission, most presses try to keep their prices as low as possible, and press prices for humanities monographs are, on average, over 20% lower than those for commercial monographs.¹² In any event, given evolving library purchasing practices, lower prices would be unlikely to stimulate significant additional sales to either libraries or consumers. Moreover, as university presses already lose money on most of the specialized titles they publish, lowering prices would further reduce the number of monographs presses could afford to publish.

2.2.4 Publication costs

The current monograph system is often criticized as being unnecessarily expensive, especially in an age of digital publishing and dissemination. Discussions about the cost of scholarly monographs must consider both their role in validating merit in the scholarly communication system and new opportunities for digital dissemination.

Regardless of business model or distribution medium, certain costs—including selective acquisition, peer review, and developmental editing—support the quality signaling required for professional credentialing. At the same time, some of the costs associated with the traditional production values of university monographs could be lowered, eliminated, or shifted. Cosmetic elements—such as book design, graphic and typographic refinements, hardcover bindings, and dust jackets—while important to

⁷ Kyrillidou and Brand 2009, Table 2, p. 10 and Kyrillidou, Morris and Roebuck 2012.

⁸ Greco, Wharton, and Sen 2011, Table 4. Also, UK academic library monograph purchases have not kept pace with the number of titles published. See Thompson 2005, pp. 105–107.

⁹ Several library studies suggest that only about half of monographs get used, even over extended periods. See Walker *et al.* 2010 and Levine-Clark *et al.* 2009.

¹⁰ Esposito, Walker, and Ehling 2012.

¹¹ See, e.g., Steele 2008.

¹² Greco, Wharton, and Sen 2011.

authors, are of little importance to libraries or individual consumers, and could be eliminated without weakening the certification function that publishers provide.¹³

2.2.5 Print & digital distribution

Some presses have made efforts to reduce costs by exploring new production and distribution approaches, including digital-first publication with print-on-demand. Still, a vestigial preference for print monographs in tenure and promotion decisions prevents presses from abandoning print altogether. Even were tenure policies to allow for digital-only distribution, simply eliminating print in favor of online distribution would not make monographs sustainable under a market model. There are compelling reasons for shifting emphasis to online dissemination, but significant cost reduction is not among them. Although eliminating a print edition would lower variable costs, ebook distribution to support a market model entails its own costs—including managing multiple agreements, metadata support, and digital file formats for a proliferating number of distribution channels—that can offset much of that savings.

The cost of digital-first publication could be reduced by presses acting collectively to share costs. For example, university presses could share a digital workflow, production, and distribution system, while retaining their own editorial acquisition, marketing programs, and digital channel management. There are several possible digital production platforms that might be considered for such a collective approach. These include: repurposing Rice University’s Connexions,¹⁴ a digital production facility designed to support open educational resources; collective participation in the University of Toronto’s P-Shift service,¹⁵ a scalable, fully integrated system for digital publication, from typesetting through distribution, designed for university presses; and the open source Open Monograph Press platform,¹⁶ offered by the Public Knowledge Project.

It is important to distinguish between passive digital access to a monograph, via an open access dissemination model, and active distribution through commercial ebook channels. Although the two delivery modes can coexist, the former serves the needs of libraries and many readers, while the latter addresses the expectations of authors and many other readers. A funding model that would align costs with the value being delivered would need to reflect the lower distribution costs of passive distribution, while a complementary market sales approach would need to cover the costs of pushing out value-added ebook editions via multiple sales channels. Of the digital production platforms noted above, Connexions and Open Monograph Press might provide cost effective solutions for passive dissemination of open-access editions, while Toronto’s P-Shift service could support digital production, asset management, and active distribution.

For most presses, transitioning to a digital-first publishing approach is inhibited by a lack of investment capital to reengineer their editorial, production, and distribution workflows. Given the current market model, and the financial pressures under which they operate, few presses can risk the financial uncertainty involved in implementing new digital production and distribution platforms. A new funding model could allow presses to act collectively to achieve scale economies in digital production, asset management, and distribution (see §4.3.3).

2.3 Press Sustainability Pressures

All of the issues discussed above contribute to the financial pressures under which many university presses operate. On average, university presses operate on a combination of earned revenue (80% – 90%

¹³ These costs represent a relatively small percentage of a title’s overall costs.

¹⁴ <http://cnx.org/>.

¹⁵ <http://www.utpshift.com/>.

¹⁶ <http://pkp.sfu.ca/omp>.

of total income) and institutional subsidies (5% – 15%), supplemented by title subsidies and endowment income (5%).¹⁷ As earned revenue supplies most of their operating budgets, presses must manage their publishing activities to balance mission fulfillment and revenue generation.

To break even on an operating basis, the frontlist titles a press publishes currently need to recover direct production costs, including first copy costs (such as composition/typesetting and copyediting) and variable costs (such as printing and distribution), and contribute enough revenue, on average, that the press can cover its indirect overhead costs. Typically, non-monographs—including course adoptions, regional trade books, textbooks, and some academic trade books—contribute to covering a press’s overhead, and presses with strong backlists can offset some of the losses from frontlist monographs. However, for about 80% of university presses, sales from other types of titles are not sufficient to offset the significant losses from scholarly monographs.¹⁸

To the extent that a press incurs an operating loss due to inefficiency or losses from trade titles, the responsibility for such losses lies with the press. However, a significant (if undocumented) proportion of the operating losses absorbed by university presses are attributable to losses incurred from publishing scholarly monographs. As such, these losses represent the collective social responsibility of all institutions with junior faculty for whom presses publish monographs. Now that library purchasing has slowed and no longer adequately distributes the financial burden, the deleterious effects of over 1,500 colleges and universities free riding on fewer than 100 university presses will become increasingly pronounced.¹⁹

2.4 The Undersupply of Monographs

Although there is no definitive data to indicate the effect financial considerations have on the volume of first books published, anecdotal evidence from press directors suggests that many presses are forced to turn away a significant number of manuscripts they would otherwise consider worthy of publication. The dimensions of this undersupply are difficult to gauge with any precision. Nor is it simply the absolute number of monographs published that is at issue. Because a market model requires publishers to make publishing decisions based on commercial viability, rather than solely on scholarly merit, some fields—including art history, literary criticism, non-Western history, and interdisciplinary studies—are underserved, while narrow and specialized fields can be effectively precluded from publication altogether.²⁰ This represents a less obvious, but more insidious effect of undersupply.

To estimate the extent to which the current system undersupplies monographs, we have analyzed below the number of humanities and social science first books published relative to the number of tenure-track, assistant-rank faculty seeking publication. A cursory analysis suggests that there are approximately 14,600 and 11,500 assistant-rank, tenure-track faculty in the humanities and social sciences respectively.²¹ Assuming that—

¹⁷ See Armato (2004), Givler (2004), and Brown, Griffiths, and Rascoff (2007).

¹⁸ AAUP 2012.

¹⁹ There are 1,608 public and private nonprofit research, master’s, and baccalaureate institutions, 92 of which have university presses. 2010 Carnegie Classification; National Center for Educational Statistics, IPEDS Institutional Characteristics.

²⁰ Thompson 2005, p. 97. The evidence here tends to be scattered and uneven. A study of publishing issues in art history found that publication rates have not kept up with the pace of growth in the discipline (Ballon and Westermann 2006), and a 2005 survey the American Historical Association indicated that almost a fifth of respondents knew of worthy scholarship that was unable to find a publisher (AHA Research Division 2005).

²¹ See Appendix A, notes 3 and 4.

- approximately two-thirds of those tenure-track humanities faculty are ultimately considered for tenure;²²
- 90% of humanities departments at doctoral and research universities and 60% of humanities departments at master’s and baccalaureate institutions require a monograph for tenure;²³
- 35% of social science departments at doctoral and research universities, 20% of social science departments at master’s institutions, and 10% of social science departments at baccalaureate institutions require a monograph for tenure;²⁴ and
- an average tenure window of six years—

there would be, in any given year, approximately 1,135 assistant-rank, tenure-track faculty in the humanities seeking to publish a first book, and approximately 310 such faculty in the social sciences seeking to publish a first book.

Each year, North American university presses publish about 4,000 humanities books and about 770 social science books.²⁵ Of these, 27%²⁶—or approximately 1,080 humanities titles and 210 social science titles— are estimated to be first books by junior faculty. Given these assumptions, 95% of assistant-rank humanities faculty seeking publication would get published by North American university presses in an average year, and 67% of assistant-rank social science faculty seeking publication would get published each year. (For the full analysis and documentation, see Appendix A.)

Although the analysis above suggests that the undersupply of monographs may not be as great as anecdotal evidence would sometimes suggest, it is necessarily approximate, and any conclusions about the actual extent of the undersupply of monographs must be drawn with caution.

The monograph supply analysis above does not take into account commercial publication of scholarly monographs, as the real and perceived differences between university press and commercial publication require that, for practical purposes, we treat press and commercial publication as distinct markets. The “market” of North American tenure committees recognizes a significant qualitative difference between commercial and press-published monographs, and, for the most part, devalues commercially published monographs as acceptable substitutes for credentialing purposes. As a result, there is no positive external benefit from the publication of monographs by commercial publishers as there is for university presses. The market failure, therefore, refers specifically to university press monographs.

Necessarily, this analysis uses the number of assistant-rank humanities faculty considered for tenure as a proxy for the optimum supply of monographs in an efficient market. Under the current hybrid model— where a small subset of institutions subsidizes monograph production to partially address the failure of a market model—it is difficult to establish the value to an institution of a press-published monograph for credentialing purposes, and thereby determine what the optimal production rate for monographs would be. Therefore, one of the critical criteria for improving the system would be to design a funding model capable of capturing the monograph’s value to institutions for use in the tenure and promotion process and of ensuring that the best scholarship gets published.

²² See Appendix A, note 5. The third of tenure-track hires that drop out before tenure consideration include faculty who produce manuscripts of insufficient scholarly merit to be published, irrespective of any financial considerations.

²³ See Appendix A, note 6.

²⁴ See Appendix A, note 7.

²⁵ See Appendix A, note 10.

²⁶ See Appendix A, note 11. The percentage of books published is consistent, regardless of press size, with most of the presses falling in the range of 22% - 28%.

2.5 Pressure on Institutional Funding

Over 75% of North American university presses receive some financial support from their host institution. In 2011, these subsidies totaled over \$28 million, an average of approximately \$475,000 per press. Because of scale economies, press dependence on such subsidies varies by press size, with subsidies averaging less than 2% of operating budget for presses with sales over \$6 million to 80% for presses with sales below \$750,000.²⁷

Although a title's profitability is typically a secondary issue in publication decisions, few presses enjoy sufficient institutional support to offset increasing losses from publishing monographs, especially as most of the value is not delivered to the host institution.²⁸ Over the past 30 years, press financial performance has come under increasing close scrutiny at many institutions.²⁹ From 2010 to 2011, over a quarter of reporting presses experienced decreased institutional support. Although presses at both public and private institutions appear to be affected, the largest decreases—sometimes exceeding 20%—appear to have hit presses at public institutions, themselves susceptible to the effects of state budget retrenchment.

Although this institutional pressure is sometimes seen as signaling a failure of university presses, this fatigue reflects the inequity and free riding inherent in the current monograph funding model rather than problems with the performance of presses themselves. As universities curtail their press subsidies, the cost to other institutions of free riding—in the form of diminished press publication opportunities—will increase. In this environment, a more equitable institutional funding model would help overcome the market failure and ensure stability.

²⁷ AAUP 2012, pp. 6–7. The AAUP statistics do not include data from Oxford University Press or Cambridge University Press.

²⁸ For most university presses, books by authors at the press's host institution represent less than 10% of the press's annual title output. AAUP 2009, p. 18.

²⁹ Thompson 2005, pp. 108–110.

3.1 Solution Design Criteria

Given the principal causes and effects of the market failure for monographs rehearsed above, we can now consider potential remedies. Based on the above review, the design of an alternative funding or publishing model capable of addressing the market failure would:

- Decouple monograph publishing decisions from commercial viability—

A supply-side funding model that ensures that worthy scholarship can get published irrespective of commercial viability would ensure an adequate supply of monographs, both for communicating scholarship and for professional credentialing.

- Align funding with the value delivered to individual institutions—

The current funding model is becoming less sustainable given the growing financial burden on some press-hosting institutions. A funding model that distributes costs equitably across all the institutions that benefit from monograph publishing would improve the stability of the system and preserve the integrity of professional credentialing in the humanities and social sciences.

- Retain quality signaling—

The academic credentialing process relies on peer review, and North American tenure and promotion committees continue to signal a strong preference for the quality associated with publication by a university press. An alternative funding model would need to sustain the press quality assurance process, at least for the near- and mid-term, while allowing for innovation in quality metrics for monographs, potentially including peer review processes that separate certification from publication entirely.³⁰

- Broaden publishing channels—

Although university presses and commercial scholarly publishers now represent the principal publication channels, an alternative funding model should encourage new channels—potentially including scholar-led editorial groups in partnership with academic libraries—as well. Even under a funding model that would effectively eliminate financial considerations from publishing decisions, university presses by themselves may not have the organizational capacity to make up the undersupply. Moreover, to ensure economic efficiency, a funding model would need to allow for innovative, and potentially disruptive, new publishing channels to complement and compete with incumbents in the existing system.

- Increase discoverability, functionality, and accessibility—

To increase the return on an institution's investment in publishing faculty monographs, a new model would increase the use and utility of individual titles and of the entire corpus of monographic literature. The system, therefore, would need to provide reliable digital access to the monographic content it funds. This would require a practical mechanism for maintaining an aggregation of the funded content, a requirement that could be supported collectively by academic libraries. Further, the digital aggregation would be available on an open-access basis, so that the content is free to end

³⁰ See Fitzpatrick 2012, especially Chapter 1.

users. Besides increasing use and visibility of the content, this would facilitate the development of new types of bibliometrics to complement peer review.

- Coexist with other models—

The scholarly publishing environment will remain pluralistic, and any new funding scheme for monographs (and other forms of research publication) should be able to complement other models, whether supply-side or market based.

The strength of a potential solution to the market failure for monographs would depend on the extent to which it satisfies the criteria outlined above. Additionally, practical considerations, such as stakeholder acceptance and transaction costs, would need to be taken into account to ensure that a potential solution is actionable.

3.2 Incremental & Transformative Change

Another consideration is whether a potential solution would alter the existing monograph system incrementally or seek to transform it more fundamentally. Not surprisingly, incumbent stakeholders tend to be constrained by existing operating structures and expectations, and less able to pursue radically transformative approaches. New entrants, on the other hand, have less invested in the current model and more latitude to experiment with disruptive approaches. Still, each type of change has advantages and risks.

Incremental change would leverage existing processes, workflows, and value chains, accommodate the inherent conservatism of academic culture, and lend legitimacy to innovations by accommodating them within existing structures and practice. However, incrementalism might also slow the pace of systemic change, or even camouflage temporizing, simply propping up outmoded models and vestigial practices.

Transformative approaches could introduce rational production models without reference to existing practice or deference to incumbent stakeholders. They could also provide an opportunity to modify behaviors and expectations that contribute to inefficiencies in the traditional monograph model and that constrain change. At the same time, disruptive approaches could, in their early stages, provide solutions considered inferior to the existing system. Initially they might not meet the expectations of all stakeholders and, without the legitimacy of the existing system, could have difficulty getting established.

On a practical level, visions for fundamentally reimagined scholarly publishing models often imply significant intermediate steps that would be required to effect a transition from the current system. Publishing models that selectively introduce innovative components into the existing system could promote change, while allowing the retained elements to lend legitimacy to the innovation and position other parts of the system for further change.

3.3 Alternative Funding Models

3.3.1 Focus on funding

The monograph system's current reliance on market revenue constrains meaningful innovation in virtually all other components of the publishing value chain. Transforming the publishing model for monographs, therefore, requires identifying an alternative funding model that frees the system from such constraints. Changing the funding model has the potential to accelerate digital distribution, encourage the evolution of digital-specific research publication genres, and facilitate new forms of quality review and certification. Moreover, a rational funding model would allow university presses, libraries, and other institutional stakeholders to form effective partnerships that would leverage the complementary

competencies of each. These collaborations could reduce duplicative activities and help align press and library publishing missions and strategies.

3.3.2 Funding Options

Figure 2 summarizes the range of funding options for monographs, including various hybrid combinations of subsidy and market models.

Figure 2: Funding Models

Income Model		Publisher Type					
		Commercial	Nonprofit	Society	University Press	Multiple Institutions	All Institutions
Market Revenue	Market revenue, title sales	[1] Existing peer review system; private goods; market model					
	Market revenue & host institution subsidy (also title & series subsidies)			[1] Existing peer review system; private goods; market & subsidy; subsidy motivation: legacy system	→		
	Market revenue, library purchasing cooperatives & ebook aggregations	[2] Existing peer review system; OA; assurance contract					
Subsidy	Cross-subsidy via value-added edition revenue		[3] Scholar-led peer review; OA	→			
	Host institution subsidy & title subsidies*				←	[4] Faculty-led peer review; OA; reciprocity	
	Host institution subsidy*						[5] Associative certification & peer review; OA; reciprocity
	Faculty title subsidy*		[6] Existing peer review system; OA; qualifying publishers could be expanded; assurance contract			←	→

*Could include incidental market revenue from sales of value-added editions. Gray areas indicate other publishers that could participate in funding model.

The diagram identifies major types within a range of potential funding models, some of which already exist and some of which are hypothetical.³¹ (The numbers in Figure 2 correspond to the numbered paragraphs below.)

- 1) The current business model for university presses has already been reviewed (see §2). Expanding the current model to launch university presses at more institutions could increase the volume of monographs published. However, without changing the market model, this approach would not

³¹ This list focuses on monographs and does not include initiatives designed specifically to address new-form digital research publications.

reduce the financial burden on existing press institutions nor address the market failure for monographs. Further, although other academic institutions could form new university presses under the existing funding model, the trend has been in the opposite direction.

- 2) Several new initiatives are implementing novel market-based models with the potential to reduce profitability pressures on presses. One project depends on a collective purchasing model and another relies on a content aggregation strategy.

A recently proposed initiative—Knowledge Unlatched³²—seeks to create a global consortium that would act, in practical terms, as a library purchasing cooperative that would benefit from scale economies in buying scholarly books from publishers. A publisher would set a title fee for each book, intended to cover first copy costs, with the effective price per library contingent on the number of participating libraries selecting the title. Publishers would set the title fee for each book independently, which would obviate the need for a negotiated title fee price point. For example, the price per library of a book with a title fee of \$15,000 would be \$30 if 500 libraries participated and \$15 per library if 1,000 libraries participated.

Publishers would make a basic digital version of each book available on an open access basis. Participating libraries would receive print and electronic editions of the titles they select at a discount as an incentive to participate in the scheme. Publishers would be free to pursue sales to other markets on their own terms. The initiative would accommodate both nonprofit and commercial publishers and all types of specialist books, including scholarly monographs (but excluding textbooks).

This initiative is scheduled to enter a pilot phase in 2013, and details of the operating model are in the process of being developed. Issues to be addressed include ensuring that the exclusive benefits to participating libraries (in the form of discounted print and value-added ebooks) are sufficient to overcome free riding on the open-access edition and developing a system for managing the title offering and selection process.

A collective undertaking by university presses to provide digital ebook collections—the University Press Content Consortium, administered by Johns Hopkins University Press and operating as part of Project Muse³³—offers subject-oriented aggregations designed to broaden user access to press monographs, while increasing average monograph revenue. The logic behind the initiative is that greater access to monographs will drive their increased use, thus benefiting researchers, authors, libraries, and presses.³⁴

Both Knowledge Unlatched and the university press ebook aggregations are predicated on libraries worldwide being motivated by lower prices for monographs, and both aim—through disparate tactics—to make monographs more affordable, while generating more average revenue per title for publishers. As such, both models relieve, to some extent, the profitability pressures of the current system, and thereby lessen the effects of the market failure.

- 3) Several independent open access monograph initiatives have launched over the past several years, including Re.Press, Open Humanities Press, and Open Book Publishers.³⁵ These presses publish

³² www.knowledgeunlatched.org. The concept is also discussed in Look and Pinter 2010.

³³ <http://muse.jhu.edu/>

³⁴ Other university press ebook aggregations include those from Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, and JSTOR.

³⁵ <http://re-press.org/>; <http://www.openhumanitiespress.org/>; and <http://www.openbookpublishers.com/>. Some initiatives, such as the recently announced California Classical Studies initiative (<http://calclassicalstudies.org/>) combine elements of this model and the university e-presses described below.

monographs, anthologies, and (in some instances) fiction or poetry. Although the details of the operations vary, they have several characteristics in common in that they:

- Enjoy low cost structures—The ventures tend to be scholar-led editorial operations, relying largely on volunteer labor, and sometimes partnering with university libraries for publishing platform support. As a result, they have relatively low infrastructure costs.
- Use traditional peer review and quality control—All of the initiatives claim rigorous editorial and peer review standards and most have international academic editorial boards.
- Operate on a relatively small scale—Not surprisingly, given their reliance on volunteer editors for acquisitions, the independent open access monograph presses publish relatively few titles per year.
- Fund their operations via cross subsidy—These initiatives assume that increased visibility due to open access, and preference for the affordances of print, will drive purchases of print editions, and they aim to cover their costs via sales of print-on-demand editions. As no information is publicly available about the financial operations of these presses, it is not clear whether the model succeeds in covering costs and generating a prudent operating surplus.

A commercial publisher, Bloomsbury Academic,³⁶ publishes open access academic monographs, primarily in the humanities, with a model and scale similar to that described above.³⁷ The business model cross subsidizes free digital access by selling print-on-demand and value-added ebook editions, selling ebook aggregations to libraries, and charging royalties for commercial use of the content (for example, in electronic reserve or student course packs).

As these ventures rely on revenue from print edition sales, however modest, logically they would also be susceptible to market failure. The salability of the print-on-demand and value-added editions would ultimately need to be considered in publication decisions, or the operation would become financially unsustainable. More significantly, the ability of such a model to cover the operating costs of larger, non-volunteer publishing operations remains unproven.

Unless open access availability actually has a significant positive effect on print or value-added ebook sales—an issue that remains unsettled³⁸—the value-added sales model may only work for small-scale, low-cost operations. Further, as already noted, the value-added cross subsidy model, even were it to prove viable, does not remedy the market failure for monographs.

- 4) Over the last decade, there has been an increase in university e-presses—library-based open access humanities and social science monograph initiatives.³⁹ In Australia and Europe, these e-presses focus largely, when not exclusively, on publishing books authored by faculty at the press's institution (examples include ANU E Press, Gottingen University Press, Monash University E Press, and Sydney University Press), and quality control is provided by editorial boards drawn primarily from the institution's faculty.⁴⁰ North American university e-presses publishing frontlist monographs include Athabasca University Press, University of Calgary Press, Newfound Press (University of Tennessee), digitalculturebooks (University of Michigan), and ETC Press (Carnegie Mellon University). The

³⁶ www.bloomsburyacademic.com. A division of Bloomsbury Publishing.

³⁷ Since launching the project in 2009, Bloomsbury Academic has published about 75 titles under the open access model, many of which appear to be academic monographs.

³⁸ See, e.g., Hilton and Wiley 2011.

³⁹ For a partial list, see the *Directory of Open Access Books* (<http://www.doabooks.org/doab>).

⁴⁰ For an overview of these programs, see Adema 2010.

North American e-presses tend to focus on specific subject areas and publish works from outside the host university.

As with the independent open access publishers described above, the university e-presses typically sell print editions of the books they publish. However, the operations are supported out of the institution's library budget, and any print revenue generated is incidental. As a result, publication via an e-press is not typically contingent on a title's potential to recover publication costs. Increasing the number of institutions providing monograph publication channels would reduce, but not eliminate, the effects of the free-rider problem. However, whether enough institutions would launch e-presses to have an effect, and the motivation for them to do so, remains an open question.

University e-presses broaden the available publishing channels for monographs, and with sufficient investment, could provide adequate editorial quality control. Although these initiatives do not have the level of active marketing and channel management of traditional publishers, concerted action by academic libraries—for this model and those described below—could increase the visibility and discoverability of their digital monographs.

- 5) Expanding the university e-press model just described could establish presses, or press-like publishing activities, at virtually all research institutions.⁴¹ The publishing programs could vary in type from traditional university presses to departmental and library-based operations. As with the university e-presses, editorial acquisition could focus on areas of institutional strength, be open to all submissions, and apply traditional peer review standards. Alternatively, the program might focus on publishing the research of an institution's faculty, using internal certification criteria. In either event, the reputation of the institution and the credentialing legitimacy of its publishing program would be mutually reinforcing.⁴²

This approach would distribute monograph production costs across a broad base of institutions, virtually eliminating the free-rider problem of the current system. (Although master's and baccalaureate institutions might continue to free ride, the financial burden would be distributed to such an extent that the financial effects would be negligible.) Such a system would decouple publication decisions from market considerations as publication would be wholly funded by institutional subsidies (perhaps supplemented by a cost recovery model for value-added distribution media), and collective digital distribution models (see (§4.2) could maximize visibility and discoverability.

New university-based publishing programs would require significant local investment to develop the editorial quality and reputation sufficient to attract authors and satisfy tenure and promotion requirements. While much of this cost might be subsumed under library budgets, the motivation for such investment would seem to extend the current system's reliance on institutional altruism. As a result, the growth of such a distributed system would likely be slow. However, an institutionally funded faculty book subsidy system, as described below, could distribute costs more equitably and stimulate the development of a diverse network of campus-based publishing programs.

- 6) As already noted, the principal cause of the market failure for monographs lies in the system's inability to capture the value delivered to the academic institutions that rely on monographs as a critical element of their professional assessment of tenure-track faculty. As publication is an essential component of scholarly work, supporting the dissemination of faculty research is central to the

⁴¹ As variously described by Lynch 2010, Esposito 2007, and Brown, Griffiths, and Rascoff 2007.

⁴² On the university presses as contributors to the prestige of their host institutions, see Gump 2011.

mission of universities. A model that would generate funding from the institutions that benefit most directly would address free riding and make the monograph publication system more equitable and stable in the long-term.

This could be achieved by covering the costs of publishing monographs through faculty book subsidies funded by authors' host institutions. Key elements of such a system, which could be effected by a formal compact, may be outlined as follows:

- North American colleges and universities would agree to pay a specified subsidy amount for each faculty monograph published. Institutions could limit their funding to first books or expand it to cover subsequent scholarly books.
- To qualify for an institution's subsidy, a book would have to be accepted by an eligible publisher. Manuscripts from faculty at participating institutions would have no advantage over those from faculty at other institutions. University presses and other qualifying publishers would apply the same editorial standards as they do currently, but without reference to a title's commercial viability. The program could be expanded beyond North American university presses to include other nonprofit publishers of sufficient editorial quality.
- The subsidy amount—which would cover first copy costs and a specified contribution to overhead—would be set, by negotiation or some other mechanism, at a level sufficient to remove publisher financial risk, while being acceptable to participating institutions.
- The subsidy would pay for open access provision of a basic digital edition. Although there are several mechanisms by which this open content could be distributed, it would seem logical for academic libraries to play an active role in aggregating, hosting, curating, and preserving the open-access content made available.
- Publishers would retain the right to sell print and value-added digital versions; however, the incremental cost of doing so would be at their own risk and expense. By retaining a proprietary interest in the sales of print and enhanced digital versions, publishers would remain motivated to maintain a title's visibility via marketing and metadata improvement and digital channel management. However, this would not require a publisher to maintain a proprietary interest in the content beyond value-added distribution rights.

The faculty book subsidy model would require universal (or near universal) participation on the part of university presses to ensure editorial legitimacy and dispel the perception of vanity publishing. Participation by academic institutions would also need to be extensive to encourage press participation and minimize free-riding.

University presses would participate because an institutional subsidy would reduce or eliminate the financial risk of publishing first books, without negatively affecting the quality or reputation of the press (see §4.2). Universities would benefit by curing the market failure for monographs, ensuring open access to a significant corpus of monographic literature, and preventing increased commercial control over research output. However, such benefits are non-excludable, and would be enjoyed by all institutions whether or not they participate in the collective solution. Although fair-mindedness and reciprocity might prove sufficient to motivate some universities to participate in such a collective solution, securing the level of institutional participation needed to address the market failure would require that institutions enjoy benefits sufficient to induce them to take part. Exclusive benefits for participating institutions might include:

- the right to provide print-on-demand and value-added digital versions for students, faculty, and staff;

- access to author-specific bibliometrics developed around the open-access aggregation of funded monographs;
- increased visibility for, and coherent presentation of, the research production of an institution's faculty;
- a role in setting the terms and policies for such a system, including defining the requirements for publishers qualifying for the subsidies; and
- a competitive advantage in competing for junior faculty in the humanities and social sciences.

This collective approach raises logical issues of moral hazard, collective action coordination, and free riding that must be practically addressed (see §4.2).

3.4 Summary

An institutionally funded faculty book subsidy would effectively decouple the evaluation of scholarly merit from market considerations, retain existing quality signaling, and increase discoverability and accessibility via open access dissemination. The model could facilitate key features and benefits of the other approaches described above, including the introduction of new publishing channels (for both traditional and new-form digital scholarship) and innovations in the research publication value chain, including new peer review regimes and a shift to digital-first editorial workflows, production, and dissemination—whether implemented by individual presses or collectively. The faculty book subsidy system could also coexist with, and even complement, other business models in a pluralistic publishing environment. That said, the faculty book subsidy would represent a significant innovation and would likely be a catalyst for positive change and for stimulating innovations such as those outlined above. Thus, it would represent a first step that would allow AAU-ARL to intervene immediately and significantly in the current scholarly publishing environment without overcoming the formidable hurdles to transformative change. In the long term, a faculty book subsidy would stimulate that transformative change.

From the perspective of the AAU-ARL Task Force charter to target actionable projects, the model can be defined and translated into a specific plan of action. A closer examination of how an institutional faculty book subsidy might be designed, and an overview of the subsequent planning that would be required, are provided in the following section.

4.1 Faculty Book Subsidy Costs

4.1.1 System Costs

Reviewing the costs of an institutionally funded faculty publishing subsidy will provide context for evaluating practical implementation issues. As discussed below (§4.3.3), the monograph subsidy would need to be set at a level sufficient to cover average first copy costs—that is, the fixed direct costs of producing a monograph before print or other distribution costs are taken into account—and to contribute equitably to covering a press’s overhead costs. For this analysis, we have assumed a hypothetical subsidy amount of \$20,000 per title. In practice, the subsidy for first books might well be lower, but using a high estimate allows us to demonstrate the program’s conceptual feasibility, even were the program to extend beyond first books to other scholarly monographs.

Given the estimated number of assistant-rank, tenure-track faculty seeking publication each year, the system-wide cost of a faculty book subsidy would be approximately \$28.9 million per year (1,445 titles at \$20,000 each).⁴³ Under the current university press funding model, 92 universities provide a total of at least \$29.7 million per year in subsidies to their presses.⁴⁴ Thus, at a system level, the cost of a faculty book subsidy would be about the same as the current system, but would be redistributed far more equitably.

The cost of a faculty book subsidy can also be compared to the annual cost to academic libraries of purchasing university press first books under the current market model. Sales of North American university press first books to academic libraries were approximately \$22.3 million in 2011,⁴⁵ and faculty research and publication subvention commitments total at least \$5.4 million per year,⁴⁶ for a total of \$27.7 million per year. Therefore, across all institutions, the cost of a faculty book subvention would be largely offset by the savings from academic library purchases and reduced faculty-support subsidies. The distribution of these savings across university types would be roughly proportional to the cost of the book subsidy, with research libraries enjoying the greatest potential savings.

4.1.2 Average Cost by Institution Type

While an institutionally funded faculty book subsidy would not increase costs on a system level, it would redistribute costs across all institutions, most of which have incurred little or no cost for their faculties’ publications previously. Estimating the average cost per institution will provide one indicator of how the system might be designed to induce institutions to participate.

Based on the preliminary planning assumptions described above, the average cost per year by institution type would range from approximately \$73,000 for the largest private research universities to \$2,400 per year for small private baccalaureate colleges (see Figure 4). These estimates represent annual averages, and the actual cost in any given year would vary. This variation could be mitigated by a flat fee structure designed to minimize or eliminate year-to-year cost fluctuations.

⁴³ See §2.4 and Appendix A. For convenience, we have based this analysis on a single year. In practice, the number of titles per year would increase, albeit a slow rate.

⁴⁴ AAUP 2012. This only takes into account the subsidies to 62 presses participating in the 2011 AAUP statistics program, 77% of which reported host institution subsidies.

⁴⁵ Assuming \$330 million in total North American university press net sales, 25% of which are sales to academic libraries and 27% of which represent first books.

⁴⁶ See Appendix B.

Figure 4: Average Annual Faculty Book Subsidy Cost by Institution Type

Carnegie Classification Description	Average Number of Faculty Subsidized Per Institution Per Year		Average Subsidy Per Institution Per Year	
	Public	Private, nonprofit	Public	Private, nonprofit
Research Universities (very high research activity)	3.41	3.67	\$ 68,100	\$ 73,300
Research Universities (high research activity)	2.25	3.44	\$ 45,100	\$ 68,800
Doctoral/Research Universities	2.55	0.81	\$ 51,100	\$ 16,100
Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)	1.30	0.54	\$ 25,900	\$ 10,800
Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs)	1.10	0.33	\$ 22,100	\$ 6,600
Master's Colleges and Universities (smaller programs)	0.88	0.28	\$ 17,600	\$ 5,600
Baccalaureate Colleges, Arts & Sciences	1.62	0.12	\$ 32,400	\$ 2,400
Baccalaureate Colleges, Diverse Fields	0.90	0.13	\$ 17,900	\$ 2,600
Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges	0.49	0.20	\$ 9,900	\$ 4,000

Across all types of academic institutions, the average cost per year of the book subsidy would be trivial relative to total expenditures for academic support in the humanities and social sciences. For perspective, the average annual book subsidy would represent less than 1.0% of current faculty support costs for all types of institutions (see Figure 5), and less than 2.0% of library expenditures for virtually all institution types.

Figure 5: Subsidy as Percentage of Academic Support Costs & Library Expenditures

Carnegie Classification Institution Type	Subsidy as % of—			
	Average Academic Support Costs*		Average Library Expenditures	
	Public	Private, nonprofit	Public	Private, nonprofit
Research Universities (very high research activity)	0.06%	0.06%	0.27%	0.29%
Research Universities (high research activity)	0.09%	0.14%	0.48%	0.73%
Doctoral/Research Universities	0.11%	0.03%	1.15%	0.36%
Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)	0.15%	0.06%	1.03%	0.43%
Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs)	0.30%	0.09%	1.71%	0.51%
Master's Colleges and Universities (smaller programs)	0.25%	0.08%	1.10%	0.35%
Baccalaureate Colleges, Arts & Sciences	0.55%	0.04%	1.97%	0.15%
Baccalaureate Colleges, Diverse Fields	0.57%	0.08%	3.18%	0.46%
Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges	0.13%	0.05%	1.87%	0.75%

* "Academic support cost" is a functional expense category reported by the National Center for Educational Statistics data. It includes expenses for "activities and services that support the institution's primary missions of instruction, research, and public service."

Many presses already seek subventions from authors' institutions, although the amounts secured are lower than what would be required for systemic faculty book subsidies,⁴⁷ and the analyses summarized in Figure 4 and Figure 5 do not take into account the savings that institutions would realize on the subventions that they already provide unsystematically.

Although the cost to individual institutions of a faculty book subsidy would be modest, the program would need to be designed to provide exclusive benefits sufficient to induce institutions to participate. Without such exclusive benefits, free riding would prevent the system from succeeding.

4.2 Stakeholder Constraints & Collective Action

Given the extensive interdependencies that characterize the monograph publishing system, scholarly, economic, and institutional constraints prevent the relevant stakeholders—including faculty, university administrations, university presses, academic libraries, and scholarly societies—from adopting alternative publishing strategies unilaterally. Understanding the constraints on various stakeholders will help clarify the need for a collective solution and inform the program design that such a solution would require to succeed.

Faculty—

Despite the already widespread, if unsystematic, use of book subventions, faculty attitudes sometimes reflect apprehensions that such subsidies represent vanity publishing.⁴⁸ A universal faculty book subsidy system could overcome this perception by being endorsed by university provosts and college deans and by ensuring the editorial independence of participating publishers. If a critical mass of presses and institutions publicly agree to participate in the system, no stigma would attach to the use of faculty book subsidies.

University Presses—

For the reasons already outlined, the participation of a critical mass of presses would help dispel the misapprehension that a book subsidy amounts to vanity publishing. Widespread press participation would also avoid putting participating presses at a competitive disadvantage vis-à-vis other presses. Presses could not lower production values or marketing support without reducing their ability to compete for authors. However, if authors *perceived* that applying the subsidy would result in lower production values, reduced editorial support, or limited marketing efforts, they might seek a non-participating publisher.

Extensive press and university participation would also be necessary to overcome a perceived moral hazard. Unlike individual title subventions, where the availability of a subsidy is not known until after the publication decision is made, authors at participating institutions could be easily identified. If some books were to come with subsidies while others did not, there would be the perception that presses might give publishing preference to subsidized titles.

In practice, however, the title subsidies would not induce university presses to publish substandard monographs. Presses depend on their reputations to attract top authors in the fields in which they publish, as well as to enhance the brand of their host universities. An acquisitions strategy that favored subsidies over quality would be ruinous to the reputation of a press, and, by damaging the press's ability to attract quality titles for a broader audience, would undermine the press financially as well. In any event, as university presses have a long history of favoring mission

⁴⁷ Some presses have reported securing subsidies for over 20% of the titles published (Jones 2011), and nearly one-quarter of faculty surveyed reported having been asked to provide a publication subsidy (Estabrook and Warner 2003).

⁴⁸ Estabrook and Warner 2003 and Harley *et al.* 2007.

over financial self-interest, apprehensions that they might chase subsidies to maximize profit seem misplaced.

Obtaining widespread participation by university presses would reinforce the legitimacy of the system by putting all presses on an equal footing and by insulating editorial decisions from the availability of a subsidy. As university presses themselves recognize the limitations of market models for monographs, and the need for supply-side support from content producers, it should be possible to design a program capable of attracting a critical mass of presses.⁴⁹

Colleges & University Administrations—

Although awarded locally, tenure represents a transinstitutional system that constrains individual institutions from adopting idiosyncratic credentialing requirements. The legitimacy of an institutionally funded faculty book subsidy would depend on active support from university provosts and college deans, whose support, in turn, would be validated by the collective participation of a critical mass of comparable institutions.

Moreover, while university administrators and faculty committees sometimes express willingness to accept digital-first monographs and new-form digital research publications for tenure consideration, this acceptance has not yet translated into consistent policies. A collateral benefit of widespread institutional participation in a monograph subsidy system would be to signal the acceptability of digital-first and open-access dissemination to authors, tenure committees, and other stakeholders.

The importance of extensive institutional participation to overcome the effects of free riding would require that the program design include adequate exclusive benefits and social incentives, as well as a mechanism to coordinate institutional participation.

Academic Libraries—

As described above (§3.3), academic libraries sometimes partner with scholar-led editorial groups—operating independently or organized within academic departments or research centers—to publish digital monographs. These partnerships can lend library-based publishing programs the editorial quality, peer review, and reputation required to make them attractive to faculty authors, both of which would be difficult for a library to establish on its own.

A faculty book subsidy model could increase the capacity of such scholar-library partnerships to provide monographs and other research publications. Although the digital production and hosting components of these programs tend to be subsidized via library standing budgets, faculty book subsidies could help finance and propagate scholar-led editorial operations.

Academic libraries would also be logical partners in aggregating, hosting, and curating the growing corpus of open access digital monographs that the system would provide. Although academic libraries would likely demand multiple hosting platforms for accessing the system's digital monographs, a collective approach to maintaining and preserving the content would seem the logical domain of research libraries. For example, a library or university consortium could provide access, bibliographic control, curation, usage analytics, and preservation services for the aggregated open access monographic content. Conceivably, such platforms could also manage

⁴⁹ AAUP 2011.

print-on-demand services and (perhaps less plausibly) administer the technical distribution of proprietary and value-added ebook formats to various sales channels on behalf of presses.

Scholarly Societies—

As professional credentialing standards in the humanities and social sciences are informed by individual disciplines and the scholarly societies that represent them, societies could play a critical role in signaling the legitimacy of a faculty book subsidy system. Additionally, some societies sponsor monograph publishing programs that might qualify for title subsidies under the system.

Although scholarly society endorsement of the faculty book subsidy system would not require the critical mass required of academic institutions and university presses, marshaling society support would prove important in legitimizing the model and accelerating the coordination of institutional participation.

For practical reasons, then, institutionally funded faculty book subsidies would need to be implemented collectively to:

- confer legitimacy on the model for faculty seeking tenure;
- preserve the value of the monograph for institutions credentialing faculty;
- signal institutional acceptance of digital-first, open-access distribution in tenure and promotion decisions; and
- protect the reputation and economic viability of university presses and other nonprofit publishers.

Such a collective action would need to be carefully designed to maximize the participation of publishers and institutions, and we have outlined key program design issues below.

4.3 Program Design & Planning Issues

The next step in assessing the viability of an institutionally funded book subsidy system would be to develop a feasibility analysis and implementation proposal. We have outlined below some of the critical elements that would need to be addressed by a plan, including program design, financial analyses, and collaboration with key stakeholders.

4.3.1 Administration & Governance

A feasibility analysis would need to determine the optimal level of administration and governance required for a book subsidy system. At its simplest, the program could be implemented as a compact, whereby institutions would pledge to remit a specified subsidy amount to a qualifying publisher upon publication of an eligible faculty title. While this approach would be low cost and relatively frictionless, it might not support some program components—such as a flat fee option or payment compliance policies—that might become necessary to induce institutional participation. Further, a virtual structure might not send a strong enough signal from institutions to faculty (both as authors and tenure committees) of the program’s acceptability and legitimacy.

Whatever the ongoing administrative requirements, the program would entail a significant initial effort to develop and implement operating policies. Some of the participation coordination issues that would need to be addressed in a feasibility analysis are outlined below.

4.3.2 Coordinating Participation

As described above, implementing a system of faculty publishing subsidies would require extensive participation by academic institutions and near universal participation on the part of presses.

Institutional Participation

Achieving the necessary level of participation by U.S. colleges and universities would require the identification of exclusive benefits sufficient to overcome the temptation to continue free riding. As already noted, these benefits could include the right to provide print-on-demand and value-added digital versions of monographs funded through the system; access to new bibliometrics for gauging research impact; input on the program's policies and governance, including qualifying publishers and subsidy levels; and increased visibility and impact for an institution's intellectual output via open access distribution.

Additionally, there are small group dynamics and social incentives that might be brought to bear by coordinating participation around discrete groups of institutions of similar types (potentially including the memberships of AAU, the Association of Public and Land-Grant Institutions, the Council of Independent Colleges, the Council of Colleges of Arts and Science, and others). Identifying target groups and subgroups (such as regional consortia, the Oberlin Group, etc.) might also provide insight into how the program could be designed to coordinate participation.

Extensive institutional participation would be needed to achieve the program's principal goal of decoupling publication from market considerations. However, if the non-participating institutions were low resource users, then the collaboration could still achieve its goal. As Figure 6 indicates, research universities and large master's institutions represent 75% of the faculty affected, and the participation of those institutions would be especially important to the success of the system.

Figure 6: Total Annual Subsidy by Institution Type

Carnegie Classification Description	Total Annual Subsidy Per Institution Type		Number of Institutions
	\$	%	
Research Universities (very high research activity)	\$ 7,536,800	26%	108
Research Universities (high research activity)	\$ 5,057,400	18%	99
Doctoral/Research Universities	\$ 2,321,900	8%	79
Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)	\$ 6,718,500	23%	383
Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs)	\$ 2,076,400	7%	169
Master's Colleges and Universities (smaller programs)	\$ 1,039,200	4%	102
Baccalaureate Colleges, Arts & Sciences	\$ 1,658,400	6%	266
Baccalaureate Colleges, Diverse Fields	\$ 2,054,600	7%	343
Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges	\$ 403,300	1%	61

Press Participation

Near universal participation in the program by university presses would be required to address the perception of vanity publishing. If all presses participate, then there would be no competitive disadvantage for participating presses. Securing press commitment to participate should prove less challenging than institutional participation given the smaller size of the initial target universe (the 92 North American presses publishing scholarly monographs), the extent to which the program supports the core mission of presses, and the potential economic benefit to press host institutions. Requiring a formal commitment to the system on the part of presses to qualify for the subsidies might prove sufficient. If the

program were to extend beyond first books to other scholarly monographs, then the registration system would need to accommodate the potential for various levels of participation.

4.3.3 Other Planning Elements

A program feasibility analysis would need to define criteria for identifying which publishers would qualify for the title subsidies, what types of books would be covered, what rights would convey with the open access editions, and how the subsidy level(s) would be set.

Qualifying Publishers

Initially, and at its simplest, the faculty book subsidy would likely target the North American university presses on which the system largely relies. However, as already noted, the book subsidy model could be applied to other publishers, including society publishers, campus-based publishing programs, and scholar-led initiatives. Managing the list of qualifying publishers would be critical to ensuring that institutions continue to perceive value in the quality certifying activities that their faculty book subsidies would cover. It would also be possible for the compact to legitimize new certification models that separate peer review from publication itself. At the same time, defining qualifying criteria that would allow for new entrants would be important to broaden publishing bandwidth, allow innovative publishing models to evolve, and encourage competition.

Defining publisher participation policies would also need to minimize inefficiencies or inequities in the system. For example, while many university presses would be able to shift existing resources to first books, few North American presses would be in a position to increase their overall publishing capacity by adding staff. However, the large Anglo-American university presses would be able to increase the volume of subsidized titles they publish significantly.⁵⁰ If further analysis were to indicate that this size disparity would lead to undesirable effects, appropriate program policies (such as publisher subsidy caps) would need to be crafted to counter them.

Scope of Coverage

The program description above focuses primarily on first books. However, the subsidy could be extended to include other scholarly monographs as well, and further analysis would be required to quantify the implications of a covering additional book types. Defining the types of works covered would need to take into account both demand from institutions and the needs of participating publishers. Beyond scholarly monographs, there may be other types of titles—for example, broader academic trade titles or books with course adoption potential—that presses would want to exclude, despite the opportunity to market and sell print and value-added editions.

Additionally, via participation in the system, institutions would be able to negotiate the level of service—in terms of rights, book design features, functionality, etc.—for which they would be willing to pay. Publishers might be willing to invest in additional design features; however, that investment would need to be recovered from sales of print and value-added editions. As already noted (§2.2.4), separating the activities critical for quality signaling from those important for market sales would help ensure that a new supply-side funding model would accurately assess the value monograph publication delivers to institutions.

⁵⁰ In terms of revenue, Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press are, respectively, 13 and four times larger than the largest U.S. university press. Thompson 2005, pp. 87-88.

Setting the Subsidy Level(s)

A supply-side funding approach would need to ensure that any faculty book subsidy would accurately reflect the value delivered to the institutions providing the funding. Therefore, identifying a mechanism by which to set the book subsidy amount(s) would represent a critical planning consideration. The process for establishing appropriate subsidy levels would need to be designed to ensure the economic efficiency of the system by stimulating competition, reducing system costs, and encouraging innovation. Additionally, setting the subsidy would need to accommodate possible cost differences across disciplines (for example, art history and other image-intensive disciplines may have higher production and permissions costs that need to be taken into account) and geographic locations.

For preliminary planning purposes, we have assumed that a book subsidy would cover first copy costs—including acquisition, developmental editing, copyediting, layout and composition, and indexing—and would exclude any costs associated with print or value-added ebook editions. The subsidy would thus cover the direct costs of producing a monograph, plus a reasonable contribution to covering a press's indirect operating costs.

First books typically do not require significant marketing or publicity spending, and first book authors typically require less maintenance by press staff than other authors. As a result, monographs place a lower burden on press resources than other types of books. Average direct first copy costs for university presses range from around \$4,000 to \$9,000 per title, and participation in a shared digital production, asset management, and channel administration platform would add an average of \$500 to \$700 per title,⁵¹ depending on book type and other variables. Assuming total direct first copy costs of \$7,000 per title, 65% of a \$20,000 subsidy would contribute to covering a press's indirect costs. As already noted (§4.1), we have assumed a relatively high book subsidy level for the preliminary financial estimates to demonstrate the program's feasibility under a worst-case scenario. In practice, the subsidy would likely be lower.

4.4 Summary & Next Steps

Adopting a rational and equitable model for funding scholarly monographs would preserve the essential elements of the current system, while facilitating innovations in communicating and certifying scholarly research. A system based on institutionally funded faculty book subsidies would:

- separate publishing decisions for scholarly monographs from market considerations, removing publishing constraints on specialized fields;
- increase the visibility, discovery, and use of scholarly research by providing open access dissemination, thus helping to accelerate changes in tenure publication policies and practices;
- signal the legitimacy of digital-first dissemination of monographs and of new forms of digital scholarship; and
- encourage the development of alternative publishing channels, including campus-based publishing initiatives, innovative quality certification regimes, and digital distribution systems.

Institutional faculty book subsidies would provide stability and continuity for the current university press system, without forgoing potentially transformative approaches. It would also establish a virtual mechanism for coordinating institutions in communicating the acceptability of evolving, and potentially transformative, modes of formal scholarly communication.

⁵¹ The University of Toronto Press has implemented an integrated digital publishing platform designed specifically for university presses (<http://www.utpshift.com/>). Press use of such a platform could be one of the criteria for participating in the subsidy system.

A logical next step in exploring a faculty book subsidy system would be to develop a detailed feasibility analysis comprising the planning components described above and incorporating feedback from key stakeholder groups in the design of the system. Such an analysis would yield a specific plan for how such a system could be coordinated and launched.

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Appendix A: Ratio Tenure-track Faculty to Humanities & Social Science Monographs

Tenure-track, assistant-rank faculty		#/Faculty					
Number of tenure-track, assistant rank faculty, public 4-year institutions: ¹		65,877					
Number of tenure-track, assistant rank faculty, private 4-year institutions: ²		34,007					
Total tenure-track, assistant-rank faculty:		99,884					
Tenure-track, assistant-rank faculty by institution type ³	Assistant Professors	Public	Private, nonprofit	Totals			
RU/VH: Research Universities (very high research activity)	23%	15,428	7,964				
RU/H: Research Universities (high research activity)	16%	10,344	5,340				
DRU: Doctoral/Research Universities	7%	4,753	2,454				
Master's L: Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)	25%	16,489	8,512				
Master's M: Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs)	8%	5,083	2,624				
Master's S: Master's Colleges and Universities (smaller programs)	4%	2,545	1,314				
Bac/A&S: Baccalaureate Colleges--Arts & Sciences	7%	4,528	2,338				
Bac/Diverse: Baccalaureate Colleges--Diverse Fields	9%	5,610	2,896				
Bac/Assoc: Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges	2%	1,095	565				
	100%	65,877	34,007	99,884			
Humanities, tenure-track, assistant-rank faculty by institution type ⁴	Humanities	Public	Private, nonprofit	Social Sciences	Public	Private, nonprofit	Totals
RU/VH: Research Universities (very high research activity)	12%	1,890	976	11%	1,697	876	
RU/H: Research Universities (high research activity)	12%	1,267	654	11%	1,138	587	
DRU: Doctoral/Research Universities	12%	582	301	11%	523	270	
Master's L: Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)	17%	2,754	1,421	12%	1,979	1,021	
Master's M: Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs)	17%	849	438	12%	610	315	
Master's S: Master's Colleges and Universities (smaller programs)	17%	425	219	12%	305	158	
Bac/A&S: Baccalaureate Colleges--Arts & Sciences	17%	756	390	12%	543	281	
Bac/Diverse: Baccalaureate Colleges--Diverse Fields	17%	937	484	12%	673	348	
Bac/Assoc: Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges	17%	183	94	12%	131	68	
Humanities:		9,643	4,978	SS:	7,600	3,923	26,144
% of assistant tenure-track faculty considered for tenure: ⁵	65%						
Tenure-track, assistant-rank humanities faculty considered for tenure by institution type	Humanities	Public	Private, nonprofit	Social Sciences	Public	Private, nonprofit	Totals
RU/VH: Research Universities (very high research activity)	65%	1,228	634	65%	1,103	569	
RU/H: Research Universities (high research activity)	65%	824	425	65%	740	382	
DRU: Doctoral/Research Universities	65%	378	195	65%	340	175	
Master's L: Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)	65%	1,790	924	65%	1,286	664	
Master's M: Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs)	65%	552	285	65%	397	205	
Master's S: Master's Colleges and Universities (smaller programs)	65%	276	143	65%	199	102	
Bac/A&S: Baccalaureate Colleges--Arts & Sciences	65%	492	254	65%	353	182	
Bac/Diverse: Baccalaureate Colleges--Diverse Fields	65%	609	314	65%	438	226	
Bac/Assoc: Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges	65%	119	61	65%	85	44	
Humanities:		6,268	3,236	SS:	4,940	2,550	16,994
Tenure-track, assistant-rank faculty considered for tenure, by institution type, in departments requiring monograph for tenure	Humanities ⁶	Public	Private, nonprofit	Social Sciences ⁷	Public	Private, nonprofit	Totals
RU/VH: Research Universities (very high research activity)	90%	1,106	571	35%	386	199	
RU/H: Research Universities (high research activity)	90%	741	383	35%	259	134	
DRU: Doctoral/Research Universities	90%	341	176	35%	119	61	
Master's L: Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)	60%	1,074	554	20%	257	133	
Master's M: Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs)	60%	331	171	20%	79	41	
Master's S: Master's Colleges and Universities (smaller programs)	60%	166	86	20%	40	20	
Bac/A&S: Baccalaureate Colleges--Arts & Sciences	60%	295	152	10%	35	18	
Bac/Diverse: Baccalaureate Colleges--Diverse Fields	60%	365	189	10%	44	23	
Bac/Assoc: Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges	60%	71	37	10%	9	4	
Humanities:		4,490	2,318	SS:	1,228	634	8,669
Average assistant rank tenure window (years): ⁸	6						
Tenure-track, assistant-rank faculty considered for tenure, by institution type, requiring monograph for tenure, seeking publisher in any given year	Humanities ⁹	Public	Private, nonprofit	Social Sciences ⁹	Public	Private, nonprofit	Totals
RU/VH: Research Universities (very high research activity)	17%	184	95	17%	64	33	
RU/H: Research Universities (high research activity)	17%	124	64	17%	43	22	
DRU: Doctoral/Research Universities	17%	57	29	17%	20	10	
Master's L: Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)	17%	179	92	17%	43	22	
Master's M: Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs)	17%	55	28	17%	13	7	
Master's S: Master's Colleges and Universities (smaller programs)	17%	28	14	17%	7	3	
Bac/A&S: Baccalaureate Colleges--Arts & Sciences	17%	49	25	17%	6	3	
Bac/Diverse: Baccalaureate Colleges--Diverse Fields	17%	61	31	17%	7	4	
Bac/Assoc: Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges	17%	12	6	17%	1	1	
Humanities:		748	386	SS:	205	106	1,445
Total Humanities:		1,135		Total Social Sciences:		310	
Humanities	Social Sciences						
University press titles published per year: ¹⁰	3995	769					
% university press books that are author first books: ¹¹	27%	27%					
University press first books, current model:	1,079	208					
% of assistant rank faculty able to get books published:	95%	67%					

Appendix A: Ratio Tenure-track Faculty to Humanities & Social Science Monographs, Notes

¹ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Winter 2009 -10, Human Resources component, Fall Staff Section. Table 21a.

² U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Winter 2009 -10, Human Resources component, Fall Staff Section. Table 21b.

³ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Winter 2009 -10, Human Resources component, Salaries Section. Table 36.

⁴ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, 2004 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF: 04). Table 11.

⁵ Dooris and Guidos 2006, Table 11 (studying tenure flow over time at a single institution) and MLA 2005 (surveying practices across English and Foreign Language departments) both reported that approximately 65% of faculty hired to tenure-track positions were considered for tenure at the institution where hired. The third of tenure-track hires that drop out before tenure consideration include faculty who produce manuscripts of insufficient scholarly merit to be published, irrespective of any financial considerations.

⁶ MLA 2005 reported that 89% of doctoral institutions, 44% of master's institutions, and 48% of baccalaureate institutions rated publication of a monograph as important for tenure. A survey of historians (Townsend 2004) indicated that history faculty at doctoral universities had at least one book at tenure, while three-quarters of the faculty at master's and baccalaureate institutions had published a book at tenure. The 60% assumption used here simply averages the four data points. See also Cronin and LeBarre 2004 and Estabrook 2003.

⁷ Departments requiring monographs for tenure, per Rothgeb and Burger 2009 (based on political science departments).

⁸ Assumed average tenure window.

⁹ Assumes even distribution of one-sixth of relevant faculty seeking publication in any given year.

¹⁰ Greco *et al.* 2007 definition of humanities consistent with IPEDS, Dept. of Education classifications. (See pp. 59 - 60.) Total humanities and social science titles published by university presses in 2000 (i.e., 3527 and 679, respectively; per Greco *et al.* 2007, Table 2.10p. 69, and 2.12, p. 73), projected to 2012 assuming an average annual growth rate of 1.04% per year (the CAGR for 2001 - 2007; per Greco and Wharton, 2007, Table 1).

¹¹ Per 2002 AAUP *First Books and Translations Survey* with 45 responding presses, representing about half of approximately 90 university-affiliated presses. Average of 16 first books (all disciplines) per press. The percentage of books published is consistent, regardless of press size, with most of the presses falling in the range of 22% - 28%.

Appendix B: Average Humanities Faculty Support by Institution

Institution Type by Carnegie Classification	Total*	% Offering Title Subventions§	Average Minimum Subvention§	Total
Research Universities (very high research activity)	108	52.6%	\$ 12,040	\$ 683,968
Research Universities (high research activity)	99	52.6%	\$ 12,040	\$ 626,971
Doctoral/Research Universities	79	52.6%	\$ 12,040	\$ 500,310
Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)	383	23.1%	\$ 7,770	\$ 687,435
Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs)	169	23.1%	\$ 7,770	\$ 303,333
Master's Colleges and Universities (smaller programs)	102	23.1%	\$ 7,770	\$ 183,077
Baccalaureate Colleges, Arts & Sciences	266	50.0%	\$ 7,160	\$ 952,280
Baccalaureate Colleges, Diverse Fields	343	50.0%	\$ 7,160	\$ 1,227,940
Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges	61	50.0%	\$ 7,160	\$ 218,380
			Total: \$	5,383,694

* Source: 2010 Carnegie Classification; National Center for Educational Statistics, IPEDS Institutional Characteristics

§ MLA 2005. Average minimum support reported.