

## Director of the Amherst College Press

Amherst College seeks a director to launch and run a new academic press, committed to publishing compelling scholarship in innovative ways. See [www.amherstcollegepress.org](http://www.amherstcollegepress.org).

### Settled Commitments

- *Identity.* The press will integrate itself fully with the campus at large and the library in particular, especially with the library's commitment to provide high-quality information to everybody, everywhere, regardless of means. The director reports to the librarian of the college.
- *Open Access.* The press will distribute all of its work on the web, free of charge, to everyone with an Internet connection. All publications will bear a Creative Commons license, although which CC variant remains to be determined.
- *Scrupulous Editing.* Editors will *edit*, treating manuscripts not as nearly finished products, but as raw material from which better products can emerge. Editors will evaluate arguments, question structure, demand clarifications, call for trims, and massage prose. Quality will trump quantity.
- *Broad Audience.* The press will pursue manuscripts that appeal to a broad swath of educated readers. It will eschew manuscripts of interest to only a few specialists. The press will not compete with Norton, Knopf, Oxford, Harvard, et. al. for manuscripts with the potential to earn significant revenue for authors; but neither will it consider manuscripts of interest only to narrow constituencies.
- *Appealing Narratives.* The press will publish good writing with narrative drive and sympathy for readers.
- *Credibility.* All publications will enjoy complete credibility with scholars and T&P committees.
- *Small Lists.* The press will publish exclusively in the liberal arts, in a limited and yet-to-be-identified number of fields for which Amherst College is well known.
- *No Sales.* Since the press will make its work freely available, it will employ no sales agents, marketing managers, publicists, bookkeepers, shipping clerks, or inventory managers.
- *Creative Publicity.* The press faces an intriguing question: What does it mean to advertise freely available work? The director will devise a creative and effective promotion strategy, incorporating new media and social media, to help publications find their readers. N.B. The press will not devote funds to sales catalogs or to advertisements in journals and magazines; it *will* ensure that its publications receive reviews in academic journals.
- *Positions.* The library will cover the director's salary until an endowment is secured for the directorship. Raising philanthropic gifts for this position is among the College's top fundraising priorities and will be overseen by the Amherst Advancement Office. Once the endowment is realized, the library will free funds currently devoted to the director's salary to hire a managing editor (full time) and editor (half-time). The director will be the sole employee until fundraising is complete.
- *Other Resources.* Earnings from existing endowments will be available to hire freelance copy editors. Amherst's Public Affairs office will provide assistance designing templates to be used across multiple publications.

## Unsettled Details

- *Platform.* The director will work with Amherst's IT department and the library to select and implement a publishing platform.
- *Formats.* The director will work with the library and IT to choose the formats in which it will produce and distribute work.
- *Innovation.* The director will determine how—and to what extent—the press can produce work that incorporates data, images, video, and other media. Which experiments are now viable, and which may be viable in the future? How can the press work with the library to ensure the preservation of such work?
- *Review.* Should the press experiment with crowd-sourcing as a supplement to traditional peer review? Is the work of Kathleen Fitzpatrick relevant or useful? (See <http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org/mcpress/plannedobsolescence>) Can we honor our commitment to credibility and rigor with such supplementary work?
- *Publications Board.* How should an advisory board be structured, and how should its members be selected?
- *Print Copies.* The press will not produce or sell print copies. But should it forge relationships with print-on-demand publishers? Is there enough demand for print versions to justify the work of converting electronic publications to print? Will a commitment to print versions limit experimentation with other media?

## Qualities Sought

- *Chutzpah.* Convincing authors that an untested enterprise merits their work will likely prove to be the most challenging aspect of the job. The director must prove dogged and resourceful in pursuing good manuscripts.
- *Commitment to Innovation and Efficiency.* The director should sympathize with Clayton Christensen's theories of disruptive innovation and be willing to dispense with traditions and assumptions (even assumptions in this document) that hamper better and more-efficient ways of reaching new markets.
- *Social Intelligence and Kindness.* An ability to get along with everyone, a good sense of humor, and a commitment to helping others succeed.
- *Minimum educational requirement:* B.A.

In a cover letter of no more than four, single-spaced pages, please describe your career, your accomplishments, and your commitments, and how they (a) have prepared you to fulfill the goals and ideals we've established, and (b) have equipped you to lead the press in formulating answers to unsettled details. Please submit your letter, c.v., and list of references here:

<https://jobs.amherst.edu/view/opportunity/id/529>.

You are welcome to contact Bryn Geffert, Librarian of the College, to discuss the position: [bgeffert@amherst.edu](mailto:bgeffert@amherst.edu); 413-542-2212.

Amherst College is an equal opportunity employer and encourages women, persons of color, and persons with disabilities to apply. The College is committed to enriching its educational experience and its culture through the diversity of its faculty, administration, and staff.