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Publicly available, transparent, and explicit: An analysis of academic publishing policy and procedure documents

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ABSTRACT

This article forwards a document analysis of the University Press of Colorado's publicly available academic and scholarly publishing policies and procedure materials. This analysis utilizes the online heuristic "Anti-Racist Scholarly Reviewing Practices: A Heuristic for Editors, Reviewers, and Authors," (ARRH) and a framework developed by the author that works to pinpoint places within publishing policy and process documents that may allow for discriminatory and oppressive practice. To conclude, this article forwards tangible changes to academic publishing process documents to ensure that inclusion remains an important consideration in the drafting of publishing policy and guideline documents.

CCS Concepts

Social and professional topics

Keywords

Inclusion, Social justice, Editing, Academic publishing, Policy analysis

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INTRODUCTION¹

Despite an increased awareness of the ways in which humanities and social sciences as an academic pursuit could continue communicating about how the publication process can be more inclusive, there is a gap that remains regarding the academic publishing process and the policies and regulations that dictate the process. Moreover, there is a disconnect between the role of an editor, the role of reviewers, and the role of the author, which directly represents a policy issue. Technical and Professional Communication (TPC) is uniquely positioned to rethink the ways that we communicate about what publishing is, and what the various roles consist of. Moreover, it's important that technical communicators consider the dual roles of an editor as both a guide to an author through this process and ultimately an interpreter of the policy, which can be particularly problematic when we consider inclusion² in the publishing process.

The primary goal of this research was to better understand the objectives and procedures of the academic publishing process through a partnership with the University Press of Colorado (UPC), which allowed me to explore and analyze their policies and processes. In particular, I worked to identify specific policy documentation that allows for (or perhaps veils) oppressive and discriminatory systems that specifically work against the career and overall advancement of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and multiply marginalized and underrepresented (MMU) authors and scholars. Leaders at UPC have approved the publishing of this research, as they recognize this move to be one toward accountability and another inclusive move forward. The following research questions guided my analysis and gathering of data.

¹ Content warning: In the section titled "Analysis Based on the Framework" this article quotes examples of language that mentions oppressive publishing structures and specific terminology. These instances have been placed in footnotes, so readers can choose whether or not to read them.

² In this article, I adopt Walton, Moore, and Jones's (2019) explanation of inclusion, which stated "inclusion exists where everyone's contributions are sought and valued and where difference is preserved, not assimilated" (p. 9).

RQ1: How and in what ways do University Press of Colorado’s author guideline documents (e.g., style guide, formatting guidelines, submission guidelines, etc.) and peer review guidelines address issues of inclusion, oppression, and discrimination in academic publishing?

RQ2: In what ways can these publishing documents/process/policies be revised and rebuilt to avoid discriminatory practice moving forward?

This article offers a brief literature review with a focus on the disparities that are ever present in academic publishing. Additionally, I give a brief overview of university presses (UPs), including the inner workings of UPC, and how UPs overall differ from other sectors of academic publishing.

In the “Methodology” section, I describe the document analysis performed of UPC’s publicly available academic and scholarly publishing policies and procedure materials (i.e., submission guidelines; author materials; reviewer guidelines; diversity statements, etc.). This analysis utilizes the online resource “Anti-Racist Scholarly Reviewing Practices: A Heuristic for Editors, Reviewers, and Authors,” (ARRH) and a proposed framework (which I explicate in the framework section below) that works to pinpoint places within publishing policy and process documents that may allow for discriminatory and oppressive practice.

Within the “Assessment based on the framework” section of this article, I offer actionable, tangible changes to UPC’s documentation to better address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in their policies and procedures. At the close of the analysis, it’s made apparent that UPC has made multiple inclusive moves in their publicly available documents.

In the conclusion, I reiterate that though UPC has enacted many of the tactics as per the framework, there is still work to be done, particularly as it relates to acknowledging how academic publishing reinscribes racism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Policy has been an important research topic in technical and professional communication (TPC) particularly relating to specific public policy issues such as sexual harassment policy or environmental policy (Cargile-Cook, 2000; Moore, 2017; Ranney, 2000; Sackey, 2019; Spoel et al., 2008), public policy in pedagogy (Martin & Sanders, 1994; Moore, 2013; Smith, 2000), and public policy discourse (Knievel, 2008; Petersen & Moeller, 2016; Sidler & Jones, 2008). However, there is a gap that remains regarding the academic publishing process and the policies and regulations that dictate the publishing process. Moreover, research into issues of racism and discrimination in the publication process, and the policies that allow for, or perhaps veil, racist and discriminatory action remains undertheorized.

Racial Disparities in Academic Publishing

In 2018, *The Scholarly Kitchen* published two posts under the title “On Being Excluded: Testimonies by People of Color in Scholarly Publishing,” which included anonymous testimonials and stories from individuals who work, engage, and/or position themselves within the scholarly publishing industry (Coggins et al., 2020).

These stories made it clear that racism is pervasive within the scholarly publishing industry and the need for change is urgent. In other words, academic publishing has existing exclusionary and oppressive practices “grounded in white ignorance and a white epistemology” (Buggs et al., 2020) that limit the publishing and overall career enhancement of particularly Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and multiply marginalized and underrepresented (MMU) scholars that need to be reassessed, illuminated, and rebuilt.

Regarding inclusion and equity in academic publishing, research has shown that there are tremendous racial disparities in the publication process as many characteristics of white supremacy culture — or “the widespread ideology...that whiteness holds value, whiteness is value... [the] defining [of other races/racial groups] as inferior to the white group” (Okun, 2021)— and white male epistemologies (Buggs et al., 2020) continue to be the default. BIPOC, particularly women of color, face disparities in the publication process in multiple ways including exceedingly more white author’s publishing on racial issues and uneven citation patterns (Buggs et al., 2020; Krayden, 2017; Ray, 2018; Roberts et al., 2020), repeated desk rejections of publishable work (Williams, 2020), and the gatekeeping of what constitutes academic research (Buchanan, 2019; Delgado, 1984; Selfe & Hawisher, 2012). Keeping these disparities in mind, academic publishing, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the upheaval of academic processes, is in a unique position to recognize, reveal, reject, and replace (Walton et al., 2019) inequity and injustice in the publishing process.

As the field TPC upholds advocacy as a core tenet (Jones, 2016) technical communicators have a responsibility to insert themselves into issues of oppression and injustice, especially issues that directly revolve around written policy and processes. Technical communicators have a responsibility to revise and replace oppressive practices, which often appear in written texts, particularly regarding academic publishing.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS OF COLORADO

Founded in 1965, the University Press of Colorado is a nonprofit cooperative publishing enterprise with four total imprints³: University Press of Colorado, Utah State University Press, University of Wyoming Press, and University of Alaska Press. UPC is a refereed scholarly publishing entity that publishes forty to forty-five new titles each year. A University Press (UP), at its most basic level performs the same tasks as any other publisher including acquiring, developing, designing, producing, marketing, and selling books and journals. Darrin Pratt, the Director of the University Press of Colorado (UPC), relayed that what distinguishes UPs from more commercial presses (such as Simon and Schuster) is the peer review process. The rigorousness of peer review is more at an UP and UPs generally are highly regarded for the veracity and impact of the information that they publish. Pratt emphasized a couple points that a UP considers when publishing a manuscript including: is this new? It is moving the field forward? And overall, what is the contribution? At the end of the day, UPs are generally

³ An imprint (in publishing) represents what’s called a trade name that is used to publish a book. Different imprints are often used to appeal to different demographics and market different books to different audiences or areas. So, Utah State University Press is the imprint under University Press of Colorado, the publisher.

considered the “gold standard” of peer review when it comes to academic publishing.

According to the “about us” page, “Vital also to our mission is publication for a broader community, including students, who use our books in their studies, and general readers, who find in them enjoyment as well as enlightenment” (para. 4). Darrin Pratt, the Director of the UPC, relayed that the mission of the Press would be important to emphasize in any sort of introduction to “who we are.” The UPC’s mission is “To advance and disseminate knowledge globally by publishing significant scholarly works and making them accessible” (para. 1), and they are a proud member of the Association of University Presses and share a commitment to the core values of the Association, which are diversity & inclusion, integrity, intellectual freedom, and stewardship” (Our core values, 2020).

FRAMEWORK

The framework used to assess the inclusivity of UPC’s documentation has been adapted from the ARRH and works as a checklist⁴ to search for if this particular information is available publicly and in what form. Though this framework works as the basis for my analysis of the UPC publicly available documents, it’s important to note the different contexts for the ARRH and UPC as I would be doing a disservice to the scholars of the document and the heuristic itself if I didn’t. First, the ARRH was developed by technical communication scholars⁵ and is thus written for this specific context (academic publishing primarily as well as reviewing promotion and tenure materials) by technical communication scholars. The authors of the ARRH note that “As scholars of technical communication, our perspectives are connected to that field’s history and contemporary practices” (para. 5).

Additionally, the heuristic emerged directly from challenges made by three scholars of technical communication, Angela Haas in her 2020 ATTW “Call to Action to Redress Anti-Blackness and White Supremacy,” and Natasha Jones and Miriam Williams’s 2020 blog post “A Just Use of Imagination.” However, the contexts described here are similar in that both the UPC and the ARRH are entities that exist in unique structures within the same broad context (i.e., academic publishing). To this end, I utilize Haas (2020) and Jones and Williams’s (2020) text and enact and engage with the tenets of the ARRH in a way that works to shift perspective and “ensure the realization of justice and equality” (para. 5) with the context of the UPC. Thus, despite the different contexts, the ARRH can apply to a broad range of professional publication situations, including

4 As Oswal and Melonçon (2017) note regarding Universal Design and accessibility, “While checklists are meant to help...by providing faculty a starting place on issues where they may not have a lot of experience, unfortunately they [checklists] are often both the starting and ending place for accessible course design” (p. 63). With this consideration in mind, it’s important to note that I do not intend for this “checklist” to be a one and done type of inclusive work; throughout my research it will be made explicit that this process is iterative and should be revisited often by editors and publishing groups in order to refrain from falling into a checklist mindset that may “perpetuates an ideology of normalcy” (Oswal & Melonçon, 2017, p. 61).

5 Contributors include Lauren E. Cagle, Michelle F. Eble, Laura Gonzales, Meredith A. Johnson, Nathan R. Johnson, Natasha N. Jones, Liz Lane, Temptuous Mckoy, Kristen R. Moore, Ricky Reynoso, Emma J. Rose, GPat Patterson, Fernando Sánchez, Ann Shivers-McNair, Michele Simmons, Erica M. Stone, Jason Tham, Rebecca Walton, and Miriam F. Williams.

policies and process documents. The ideas, stories, and scenarios expressed in the heuristic are applicable to many publishing situations, which is perhaps best shown by the author’s citing of Ibram X Kendi and utilizing of Kendi’s definitions of racist policies vs. Anti-racist policies, racist ideas vs. anti-racist ideas, and racism vs. antiracism.

The heuristic guide is split into six different themes:

- a. Recognize a range of expertise and encourage citation practices that represent diverse canons, epistemological foundations, and ways of knowing;
- b. Recognize, intervene in and/or prevent harmful scholarly work—both in publication processes and in published scholarship;
- c. Establish and state clear but flexible contingency plans for review processes that prioritize humanity over production;
- d. Make the review process transparent;
- e. Value the labor of those involved in the review process;
- f. Editors commit to inclusivity among reviewers and in editorial board makeup.

Extending this research, I analyzed UPC’s public policy documents looking for explicit inclusion of equity-based policy and procedure, based on a modified 6-tactic framework that works to address the themes of the ARRH. It is worth noting that I did not include tactics related to theme f, as editorial board makeup for UP’s may differ from the context of the ARRH (i.e., academic journals). To replicate this analysis in an academic journal context, it would be important to include tactics related to theme f and commitments to inclusivity among reviewers and editorial board makeup. Below, the framework is introduced, noting the theme(s) from the ARRH to which each tactic relates:

1. Explicitly acknowledge in public policy and procedure materials that publishing processes reinscribe racism (theme b).
2. Explicitly state in public policy and procedure materials the recognition of the range of expertise and citation practices that represent diverse canons, epistemological foundations, and ways of knowing (theme a).
3. Clearly state flexible contingency plans for review processes that prioritize humanity over production (theme c);
4. Publicly describe review processes and timelines to increase transparency around the peer review process (theme d);
5. Document and recognize the labor of those involved in the review process throughout publication policies and procedure documents (theme e);
6. Clearly state in publicly available materials the requirement of inclusive language use (including preferred terms, particularly for marginalized identities) (theme b).

METHODOLOGY

To further contextualize the methodology for this study, I made the following moves to code, analyze, and offer suggestions to the documents in question. I showcase this methodology for the benefit of academics moving forward (particularly those involved in publishing) to further analyze publicly available process and procedure documents.

First, I worked with UPC, particularly my contact at the USU Press imprint Rachael Levay, who indicated webpages⁶ that would be particularly important to my analysis. From this initial conversation, the following were chosen based on their location on the website (as their own drop-down links under “publish with us” and “about us”) as well as the perceived importance of the information included on each page (e.g., the “submissions” page includes the only button to submit a manuscript, and is thus a highly visited, important page):

- Submissions: The webpage titled “Submissions” is split up into three sections that includes the following: Information about specific areas of interest to each imprint (which is included in an accordion menu); General Guidelines (including word counts and what a book prospectus should include); Information on images (how many are allowed, when to use images); Timeline for when the Press will respond to book prospectus submissions; and a brief discussion of manuscript review.
- Author Materials: This webpage is split into two sections: “Solicited Manuscripts for Peer Review,” which includes information for authors who have had their manuscript solicited by an editor, and “Final and Contracted Manuscripts,” which includes information for authors submitting a final, contracted manuscript, including 10 additional Microsoft Word, PDF, and Excel documents with information on figures, permissions, and formatting.
- Our Publication Processes and Timelines: This webpage is one long section highlighting a “Successful path to publication,” which includes information hidden by five accordion menus with the headers: proposal submission (up to 6 weeks), peer review (~8-12 weeks), Faculty editorial committee approval (~2-3 weeks), Contract (~1-2 weeks), and Publication (~12-14 months from submittal of final manuscript to publication).
- Our Commitment to Diversity: This webpage is a short paragraph highlighting UPC’s commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Though Levay directed me toward these documents, it was important to me as a researcher to try to approach this analysis much like a potential UPC author would (with little to no context) for a couple of reasons. 1) I am positioned as an early career scholar whose field is a focus of the Press. Thus, it benefits UPC as well as myself to approach the documents as a potential author would as I represent a member of the target audience for these documents (i.e., a potential author who has never published with UPC before). 2) approaching the documents with little to no context allowed me to further prevent researcher bias. It was important to me and the Press to have as well-rounded an analysis as possible, so approaching the documents without any sort of Press influence, as much as possible, was key. To do this, I set a scenario for myself each time I approached a document (e.g., reading through the “Our Publication Processes and Timelines” document I situated myself as an author publishing a book for the first time and weighing the pros and cons of publishing with UPC).

After choosing the documents under analysis, I read through each document two times to make sure I understood the document. From there, I began to explore the idea of content analysis. As stated above, I wanted to approach each document as a prospective author would. Throughout this analysis, I worked to balance

⁶ It’s important to note that each webpage was consulted from July 2022 to August 2022.

being an advocate for potential authors as well as giving the press credit for work they’ve done, and it would do a disservice to the Press to imply that a tactic had not been enacted if it had been, and the information was just in a location I was not expecting. Thus, I decided to perform preliminary work to help focus my reading of my analysis through the concordance tool, AntConc. Rather than analyze this dataset, it worked as a starting place to the rest of my analysis.

To produce a content analysis of the UPC documentation, I first saved each webpage as a PDF, including five different iterations of the “Our Publications Processes and Timelines” page with each of the five dropdown menus showing⁷. All documents were read and downloaded initially on August 15th, 2022. From there, the documents were input into AntConc software to search directly for phrases within the documents that would be of interest to this research including Anti-racism, diversity, racism, commitment, labor, Black (both capitalized and not), Indigenous, BIPOC, marginalized, MMU⁸. For example, when “diversity” was input in the “collocate” tab the words “respect,” “preserve,” “broad,” “range,” “encourage,” and “language,” were given as collocate words with their rank, frequency, range, and likelihood.

A collocate, “reveals the words most closely associated with a particular keyword” (Friess & Lam, 2018, p. 336). Thus, this collocate not only indicated to me that diversity would appear in the documents under analysis but revealed that “diversity” would appear next to (left or right) of these words above, which appear in six of the files (range). With this information, I could then look at the word in context. Through this data, I was able to analyze more accurately based on the framework and be positive whether the tactic was explicitly represented in UPC’s documentation and in what context.

From this content analysis, I then more explicitly analyzed based on the framework looking first for explicit inclusion based on each tactic (i.e., an explicit acknowledgement that publishing reinscribes racism). I read through each document twice and memo-ed information (utilizing direct quotes) that I was noticing that may be related to the framework. I also took note of information that I felt was surprising in certain locations (such as style information included on the webpage “Our Publication Processes and Timelines”). From there, I categorized and coded the information I highlighted and made note of which tactic it would fall under and why or why not. Based on whether or not each framework was enacted, I then worked to provide tangible, clear, and actionable revisions to the publishing process and policy documents.

⁷ It was not possible to have all five dropdown menus appear at once on the webpage. In other words, once you click on one drop down menu, another closes, which is why I saved multiple versions of the webpage for each drop down to accurately code this particular page.

⁸ I chose these particular words over other possibilities (Person of Color, African American, etc.) primarily because they appear in the ARRH, as well as have gained traction in conversations of guidelines for inclusive language (refer to APA, Conscious Style Guide, etc.).

ANALYSIS BASED ON THE FRAMEWORK

The following analysis reports on whether each tactic has been enacted (assessment), includes a description as it relates to the framework (interpretation), and offers tangible ways for UPC to enact, or further enact, each tactic (recommendations).

1) Explicitly acknowledge in public policy and procedure materials that publishing processes reinscribe racism;

Assessment

Across the website and publicly available materials there are many different inclusive statements made by UPC, which is where, as a reader, I would have expected to read a statement acknowledging that publishing reinscribes racism, as the tactic implies.

Interpretation

However, without an explicit acknowledgement of publishing reinscribing racism, as per the framework, this tactic has not been enacted.

UPC makes a few strong statements. For instance:

We also ask our peer reviewers to read manuscripts inclusively, meaning that we as a Press respect language diversity, require equitable citational practices and accessible texts, and reject the idea that manuscripts must always adhere to long-standing expectations of what disciplinary bounds or practices should be (Our Publication Processes and Timelines).

This statement is a good move that begins the work of addressing disparities particularly in citational practices (i.e., uneven citation patterns; Buggs et al., 2020; Krayden, 2017; Ray, 2018; Roberts et al., 2020). However, without a specific identification of a specific facet of oppression (i.e., racism), this statement does not represent an explicit inclusive move.

The statement below works similarly:

We invite critiques on ways in which these processes, timelines, and efforts could be improved and acknowledge that, as a publisher, we have long participated in systems and structures that have not always welcomed⁹ MMU scholars or made publication accessible to them (Our Publication Processes and Timelines).

Though this statement makes a strong move toward recognizing ways in which publishing is oppressive, a specific facet of

⁹ It's important to recognize the implications of the idea of "welcoming" in this context. As Sara Ahmed (2012) stated, "to be made welcome by an explicit act of address works to reveal what is implicit: those who are already given a place are the ones who are welcoming rather than welcomed... to be welcomed is to be positioned as the one who is not at home" (p. 42–43). Though welcoming may seem like a strong move toward inclusion, it's important to note the inherent hierarchies within the idea. Not only the term, but the idea may need to be rethought in a publishing context.

oppression is not included, and thus has not been enacted as per the framework.

It should also be noted that further in the diversity statement, the Press indicates that it strives for transparent and equitable peer review, a step toward recognizing some of the issues with peer review and forwarding actionable moves: "As part of our commitment to transparent and equitable peer review and publication processes, we have included guidance for current and prospective authors regarding those processes and our publication timelines on our website here" (para. 2).

Recommendations

My strongest recommendation to UPC regarding this tactic is to push for a more actionable diversity statement that includes an acknowledgement of the pitfalls of the publishing process, and ways to be more anti-racist. Carnes et al. (2019) has recommended framing a diversity statement around "aspirations" and further recommended an organization "Emphasize that the organization and its members recognize and are working hard to overcome stereotype-based bias and that the institution is striving to provide a nondiscriminatory, fair, and equitable work and learning environment for all its members" (Carnes et al., 2019, p. 21). Many of the statements in the table above begin this work. However, beyond aspirations, UPC might consider following the lead of some of the journals in TPC who have adopted anti-racist policies. For example, though this statement appears in a different context (i.e., an academic journal), UPC might consider adapting some of the statements of the academic journal Kairos, particularly their "Inclusivity Action Plan."¹⁰

Throughout this statement, Kairos addresses specific anti-racist moves including mentoring during the submission and peer review process, asking all authors to ensure they are drawing from MMU scholars in their methodologies, inviting and training editorial board members from diverse backgrounds, and overall supporting Black linguistic justice. All of these moves represent actionable moves toward redressing some of the oppressive moves that are embedded into the publishing process.

Furthermore, though the Press acknowledges and thanks Cagle et al.'s (2021) article "Participatory Coalition Building: Creating an Anti-Racist Scholarly Reviewing Practices Heuristic," I recommend that the Press also develops a specific statement adopting the Anti-Racist Scholarly Reviewing Practices: A Heuristic for Editors, Reviewers, and Authors and adds the organization to the commitment page, much like acquisitions editor, Levay, has done. Adding UPC to this public document adds another layer of acknowledgment that UPC is recognizes racist and oppressive publishing processes.

¹⁰ "Kairos recognizes that scholarly publishing traditionally functions within white supremacy and works to actively reject those systems of oppression by creating anti-racist publishing practices that are inclusive and equitable for authors, staff, and peer reviewers. For Kairos, anti-racism interrupts systemic racial injustice that dismisses the capacious view of who can be a scholar-expert, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender identity, ability, sexual identity, and other identity markers. That is, anti-racism is intersectional in its approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion" (Ball, 2022, para., 1).

2) Explicitly state in public policy and procedure materials the recognition of the range of expertise and citation practices that represent diverse canons, epistemological foundations, and ways of knowing;

Assessment

Across its webpages, UPC successfully points potential authors to information that relates to citation practices, as well as information that relates particularly to style guides (refer to table 2).

Webpage/ location	Data (quote)
“Our Publication Processes and Timelines”	University Press of Colorado, Utah State University Press... are committed to transparent and equitable peer review and publication processes. In both processes, we require the usage of inclusive language, meaning our house style precludes the use of ableist language in our books; we capitalize Black, Indigenous, and related terms and use self-identified descriptors for multiply marginalized and/or underrepresented (MMU) scholars and groups of people; we respect and will preserve language diversity; we encourage a broad range of writing styles; we require the usage of alt-text and transcriptions of any multimodal projects; and we require respectful engagement and inclusive citational usage in our reviews and publications. Reviews that engage in hostile language or reinforce stereotypes in citations or identities will be redacted or rejected and will not be used in the evaluation of a work for publication.
“Our Publication Processes and Timelines”	We also ask our peer reviewers to read manuscripts inclusively, meaning that we as a Press respect language diversity, require equitable citational practices and accessible texts, and reject the idea that manuscripts must always adhere to long-standing expectations of what disciplinary bounds or practices should be.

Table 2: Assessment of tactic 2.

Both statements are actionable, clear, and explicit, so as per the framework this tactic has been enacted.

Interpretation

All three statements are clear, and explicit, giving examples of styles (i.e., capitalizing Black, using alt text), as well as stating explicitly that UPC “respect[s] and will preserve language diversity; we encourage a broad range of writing styles.”

Recommendations

One of the strongest pieces of the first statement is, “Reviews that engage in hostile language or reinforce stereotypes in citations or identities will be redacted or rejected and will not be used in the evaluation of a work for publication.” One recommendation I have is to be more specific when it comes to “hostile language,” and “reinforc[ing] stereotypes in citations or identities.” For example, in the ARRH it states, “Reviewers resist requiring the existing canon be cited and recognize that some canonical work may be purposefully uncited because of oppressive and harmful actions taken by those authors” (para. 34). As an outsider looking in, I identify the idea of resisting requiring harmful canonical works to be a bit more specific than “reinforce stereotypes in citations.”

In addition, UPC might consider further “recognizing problematic reviewers, resisting the use of scholarly reputation and other excuses as justification for racist review comments. Editors trust BIPOC authors who identify a review as racist,” and implementing a contingency plan (refer to tactic 3) for authors who identify problematic reviews/reviewers, which may move beyond, editors “censor[ing] or redact[ing] parts [of the review] that could be harmful or are not constructive” (“Our publication process and timelines,” para. 6). For example, would authors be able to appeal a particular review and request another reviewer? What could that process look like?

3) Clearly state flexible contingency plans for review processes that prioritize humanity over production;

Assessment

Under “Peer Review (~8-12 weeks),” UPC begins the work of prioritizing humanity throughout the publishing process (refer to table 3).

Webpage/ location	Data (quote)
“Our Publication Processes and Timelines”	Because we value the labor of both our authors and editors and the scholars who review our work, our timelines are often flexible. While we strive to move projects forward as quickly as possible, we recognize that the labor involved in reading and evaluating work can be in conflict with institutional labor, caretaking responsibilities, and unforeseen complications and, as such, acknowledge that timelines can extend. If there are external pressures, such as job market needs and tenure and promotion deadlines that we should be aware of, please communicate this to your editor and we’ll do our best to assist with the timing in whatever ways we can.

Table 3: Assessment of tactic 3.

Interpretation

This statement is clear, and transparent in that it shows a glimpse into that fact that peer reviewers and authors are people, who have

other priorities in their lives. As such, this tactic, based on the framework, has been enacted.

The strength in this particular statement is “while we strive to move projects forward as quickly as possible, we recognize that the labor involved in reading and evaluating work can be in conflict with institutional labor, caretaking responsibilities, and unforeseen complications and, as such, acknowledge that timelines can extend,” which prioritizes both the timeline of the author (in considering institutional structures that depend upon and prioritize publishing like promotion and tenure), as well as peer reviewers’ timelines, who, as the statement says, may be disrupted by a variety of factors.

Recommendations

One of the most significant recommendations I have for UPC is to be more transparent with the statement “we’ll do our best to assist with the timing in whatever ways we can.” For instance, if an author were to voice their concerns about deadlines, would the peer review process be expedited? What would that look like for the peer reviewer? Answers to these questions, or a brief example of how an editor would assist with timing, would enact this tactic that much further.

In addition, it’s important to note the ways in which transparent statements such as the recommended ones above could put the Press in a position of promising something it may not be able to deliver. For instance, expediting peer reviews. It’s important to be as clear as possible with policy related statements, such as peer review process policies, and to be as transparent as possible about the inner workings of processes that UPC engages in. An important move might be to emphasize speaking with editors and the people involved in production every step of the way. This emphasis on communication will surely place more labor on those involved in book production, but transparency and clarity in these processes is such an important move toward inclusive publishing processes.

4) Publicly describe review processes and timelines to increase transparency around the peer review process;

Assessment

UPC includes a page on “our publication processes and timelines,” which offers two paragraphs of relevant information on the review process, five bullet points about timeline for review, which is “~8-12 weeks,” and information on guidelines for peer reviewers (refer to table 4).

Interpretation

This information is clear and transparent. As such, this tactic has been enacted.

One of the strongest examples of this tactic is the first statement, particularly as it relates to describing the potential for flexibility in timelines. Potential authors are given an estimated timeline for peer review (~8-12 weeks) but are also given a glimpse into the ways that UPC prioritizes the fact that peer reviewers are humans, and thus timelines necessitate flexibility. This is a great balancing of transparency and being realistic. All of the information included in the table is particularly important to relay to early-career scholars, first-generation scholars, and scholars who may be unfamiliar with the peer review process.

Recommendations

To enact this tactic further, UPC could be more specific as it relates to “our internal review” under “proposal submission (up to 6 weeks).” What specifically does that internal review look like? What information might be relevant for authors to know beyond “Once submitted, manuscripts are reviewed by the press editor or by an appropriate series editor” (“Submissions,” para. 8). What specifically would an editor look for? Is it more contextual? What specifically could be shared? Answers to these questions would enact this tactic that much further.

Webpage/ location	Data (quote)
“Our Publication Processes and Timelines”	Because we value the labor of both our authors and editors and the scholars who review our work, our timelines are often flexible. While we strive to move projects forward as quickly as possible, we recognize that the labor involved in reading and evaluating work can be in conflict with institutional labor, caretaking responsibilities, and unforeseen complications and, as such, acknowledge that timelines can extend. If there are external pressures, such as job market needs and tenure and promotion deadlines that we should be aware of, please communicate this to your editor and we’ll do our best to assist with the timing in whatever ways we can.
“Our Publication Processes and Timelines”	We view peer review as a generative and constructive process, not a means of gatekeeping or enforcing canonical ideas or ideals of disciplines. We invite scholars and scholarship to move and grow and become more inclusive. Your editor will share your peer reviews with you but may censor or redact parts that could be harmful or are not constructive. We also ask our peer reviewers to read manuscripts inclusively, meaning that we as a Press respect language diversity, require equitable citational practices and accessible texts, and reject the idea that manuscripts must always adhere to long-standing expectations of what disciplinary bounds or practices should be. We ask our peer reviewers to join us in setting new expectations for this work.
“Our Publication Processes and Timelines”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UPC USUP UWP UAP peer reviews full manuscripts and enlists a minimum of two anonymous readers for each project (with a suggested 6-8-week review period). • Authors/editors are welcome to suggest possible appropriate reviewers for their projects (please don’t include mentors, mentees, colleagues within your department, or scholars with whom you have closely collaborated on previous publishing projects) although we are under no obligation to query those scholars. We also encourage authors/editors to share scholars with whom they would not want their work shared and we will not query those scholars. • Your editor will share an anticipated timeline with you and will make every effort to contact you proactively if the timeline changes substantially (more than one week beyond). • Each reviewer is provided a set of guidelines and a checklist, along with a set of expectations for inclusive approaches to reviewing. Our editors commit to ensuring that these expectations are followed and, in the event of bias, will redact harmful comments and/or reject the review. • When reviews are split, i.e. one reviewer supports publication and another does not or suggests a revision and resubmission, editors will likely seek a third review to provide clarity on revision needs, either before or after manuscript revisions.

Table 4: Assessment of tactic 4.

5) Document and recognize the labor of those involved in the review process throughout publication policies and procedure documents;

Assessment

Under “our publication processes and timelines,” UPC includes a statement regarding the labor involved in the peer review process (refer to table 5).

Webpage/ location	Data (quote)
“Our Publication Processes and Timelines”	<p>Because we value the labor of both our authors and editors and the scholars who review our work, our timelines are often flexible.</p> <p>While we strive to move projects forward as quickly as possible, we recognize that the labor involved in reading and evaluating work can be in conflict with institutional labor, caretaking responsibilities, and unforeseen complications and, as such, acknowledge that timelines can extend. If there are external pressures, such as job market needs and tenure and promotion deadlines that we should be aware of, please communicate this to your editor and we’ll do our best to assist with the timing in whatever ways we can.</p>

Table 5: Assessment of tactic 5.

Interpretation

As discussed under tactic 3, recognition of the humanity of peer reviewers is an excellent inclusive move. As such, this tactic has been enacted.

This particular statement makes clear that UPC values the time and labor of peer reviewers as well as authors and those who work for the Press. This is an excellent move toward humanizing the publishing process and making transparent the values of the Press.

Recommendations

To enact this tactic further, I recommend that UPC draft a sample statement to be placed more prominently on their website that states similar to what is already included on the page. For example, like the “Our Commitment to Diversity” section on the website, UPC could include an “Acknowledgement of Labor” or something of the like that further illustrates the Press’ acknowledgement of the labor required throughout the publication process.

6) Clearly state in publicly available materials the requirement of inclusive language use (including preferred terms, particularly for marginalized identities).

Assessment

As referenced under tactic 1, UPC gives potential authors a glimpse into the internal style guide of the Press (refer to table 6).

Webpage/ location	Data (quote)
“Our Publication Processes and Timelines”	In both processes, we require the usage of inclusive language, meaning our house style precludes the use of ableist language in our books; we capitalize Black, Indigenous, and related terms and use self-identified descriptors for multiply marginalized and/or underrepresented (MMU) scholars and groups of people; we respect and will preserve language diversity; we encourage a broad range of writing styles; we require the usage of alt-text and transcriptions of any multimodal projects; and we require respectful engagement and inclusive citational usage in our reviews and publication.

Table 6: Assessment of tactic 6.

Interpretation

This statement does a good job of giving potential authors a preview into the internal style guide of the Press and includes moves toward indicating specific, inclusive, anti-racist language (such as capitalizing Black and Indigenous) and has thus enacted this tactic.

To take this tactic a step further, the Press might consider a broad statement about not publishing slurs or other derogatory language, as well as the recommendations below.

Recommendations

My strongest recommendation for UPC is to draft a more explicit statement and presenting specific guidelines for language usage¹¹.

Moreover, UPC might include further resources on why anti-racist language use is important. For example, the “Racial Equity Tools Glossary” states, “Language can be used deliberately to engage and support community anti-racism coalitions and initiatives, or to inflame and divide them” (n.d., para. 2). Hardy (2016) further stated, “In such an occasion where inexperience is the predecessor to using insensitive language, it is necessary to make people aware of the appropriate vocabulary. Otherwise, ignorance will continue to breed intolerance” (para. 4). In a publishing context where words are practically permanent, it’s important to discuss why words matter.

Furthermore, regarding “a statement welcoming a broad range of writing styles” it might be helpful to take the lead of Kairos, and their “Inclusivity Action Plan.”¹² UPC might overall choose to also support Black linguistic justice and be more specific about preferred terms for marginalized identities.

FURTHER INCLUSIVE MOVES

Supporting MMU and BIPOC scholars

One important consideration for Press’s beyond policy and procedure is the recruitment, retention, and overall support of MMU and BIPOC scholars particularly throughout the publishing process. One way to support MMU and BIPOC scholars is to cite underrepresented scholars in research. Citing MMU and BIPOC scholars not only helps scholars get the recognition they deserve, but it also makes research and writing more comprehensive, well-rounded, and resists highlighting selective views of a field (Ahmed, 2013).

One option for UPC would be to include more specificity about the citation practices they are hoping to forward within the reviewer guidelines. UPC asks in their reviewer guidelines “Do you feel the manuscript has engaged diverse voices and considered perspectives beyond a limited view?,” however, they could take it a step further and be explicit about how to engage diverse voices and consider perspectives beyond a limited view. For example, Technical Communication Quarterly states, “Suggest additional sources--especially by multiply marginalized or underrepresented scholars--that could inform and improve the manuscript.” This statement indicates what type of sources could inform and improve the manuscript and offers explicit direction for reviewers and authors.

11 For example, The University of Arizona library includes an “anti-racist language guide” that discusses example language with racist roots or connotations and provides further sources for information, such as the “The University of British Columbia Indigenous Peoples: Language Guideline” developed in collaboration with the University of British Columbia and the First Nations House of Learning.

12 “In the peer-review and copy-editing process, Kairos supports Black linguistic justice and other cultural knowledge enactments. Where editorial work in English has historically attempted perfection in its publications, we have come to recognize that perfection is part of a white supremacist agenda. Our copyediting attends to grammar and usage issues insofar as the author’s meaning needs to be made clear, as we recognize the plurality of styles and welcome that in submissions” (para. 4).

UPC could take this conversation about citation practices a step further and include relevant lists of MMU and BIPOC scholars such as Cana Uluak Itchuaqiyay's MMU Scholar List. I imagine that UPC could develop their own list of relevant MMU and BIPOC scholars that have published with them not only as a way to highlight underrepresented scholars, but to prompt the citing of UPC authors and texts. Furthermore, if UPC is asking for specific demographic information from authors they might also explain why, and further cite research on why citing MMU scholars is important. As Itchuaqiyay and Frith (2022) stated, "university machines, whose infrastructures...are based on colonial...white supremacist, structures... are also sites of resistance whose smallest parts, such as academic citational practices, can be repurposed and reconfigured to disrupt and dismantle structures based on white supremacy" (p. 11). Being aware of and working to change traditional citation practices is a step toward redressing oppressive publishing (and academic) processes.

Additionally, developing a program to directly support MMU and BIPOC scholars would be helpful with not only retention but perhaps overall satisfaction with the publishing process. As an example, the University of California Press has a "FirstGen Program," which supports, "the work of first-generation scholars... [who] often confront a range of intersecting inequalities across race, class, immigration status, and more" (para. 2). This program includes financial support, publishing workshops/webinars, online resources, and an email list to encourage regular communication with first generational scholars navigating the publication process.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the framework, tactics 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 have been enacted, where tactic 1 has yet to be enacted. Though UPC has produced inclusive documentation for many of their processes and procedures, there is still work to be done, particularly as it relates to acknowledging how publishing reinscribes racism. Moreover, there are ways in which UPC could take each tactic they have enacted a step further and be that much more inclusive.

As Stevens (2022) stated, "policy documents cannot fully resolve implicit and explicit discrimination" (p. 115), and particularly as it relates to publishing, more work is needed. However, there are important moves that all publishing entities can include in their publicly available policies and procedures that improve the inclusivity of the publishing process including:

- Including publicly available and explicit timelines for both authors and peer reviewers that balances valuing the labor of peer reviewers as well as the timeline of authors.
- Making style guides, reviewer guidelines, and other relevant documents publicly available to increase transparency.
- Drafting an "inclusivity action plan" that highlights explicitly what the Press, journal, etc., is doing to increase inclusivity (refer to Ball, 2022).
- Adding the journal, Press, etc. to the Anti-Racist Reviewing Heuristic's "Signaling Your Commitment" page to "signal your commitment to engage in anti-racist academic reviewing practices" (ARRH) and adding this commitment to publicly available materials.

One important concluding point is that much of this inclusive work must be iterative and requires annual (at the very least) revision, which can often be performed by someone knowledgeable in DEI

work. It isn't enough to draft the documents once and move on; inclusive work is a continuous process.

ADDENDUM

As of the writing of this article, UPC has made specific anti-racist changes to their publicly available policy and procedure materials. Perhaps of most note are the changes made to the webpage previously titled "Our Commitment to Diversity," which has been retitled to "Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice." Within this page, UPC has included multiple strong inclusive moves, many of which are discussed in this article including: "Establish a new and dedicated funding program to support publications by MMU scholars," "Produce and publish externally facing process documentation that align with antiracist and antiableist priorities," and "Meet the Association of University Presses best practices for accessibility with our website, social media, and all our publications."

It is worth noting that UPC has continued to prioritize inclusion within their public policy and procedure documents. I commend and call others to emulate their example.

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