



University of Nairobi Press

Scholarly Publishers Since 1990

Presentation made during the RPE Division retreat at Maanzoni Lodge on 28th November 2014 by J.K. Kirimania. Ag. Managing Editor, University of Nairobi Press

Introduction: Scholarly Publishing

- Scholarly publishing is an important function of universities across the world.
- Scholarly publishing has benefits for individual authors and their affiliated institutions. For example:
 - It is used by researchers and academic staff to share their work and to improve it through feedback from peers and other readers.
 - Publications are useful in assessing the quality and academic standards of a university, its researchers, and academic staff.

Introduction: university presses

- The publishing function in the university may be carried out by:
 - rudimentary publishing departments that operate on small budgets and only publish intermittently;
 - well-established, sophisticated, and independent publishing outfits operating on huge budgets and publishing hundreds of books, journal articles and other materials annually;
 - various establishments between these two extremes.

... university presses

- A university press is the most common publishing unit of many universities.
- A university press makes very important contributions to:
 - scholarship within and outside the parent institution;
 - the university community;
 - society at large.

FUNCTIONS OF A UNIVERSITY PRESS

Contribution to Scholarship

- A university press promotes scholarship by publishing works that do not have the broad levels of readership needed to attract commercial publishers.
- A university press, through the peer review process, helps to maintain high standards for academic publication.
- A university press adds value to scholarly work through:
 - rigorous editorial development;
 - professional copy-editing and design;
 - local, regional and worldwide dissemination.

FUNCTIONS OF A UNIVERSITY PRESS

Contribution to the University Community

- A university press extends the reach and influence of its parent institution by demonstrating the university's commitment to knowledge and ideas and its support of research.
- A university press helps connect the university to the surrounding community by publishing books of local interest by local authors.
- The staff of a university press act as local experts for faculty and administrators, providing guidance on intellectual property, scholarly communication, and the publishing process.

FUNCTIONS OF A UNIVERSITY PRESS

Contribution to Society

- A university press makes available to the broader public the full range and value of research generated by university faculty.
- A university press helps to preserve the distinctiveness of local cultures through publication of works on the states and regions where they are based.

ABOUT UON PRESS

- Incorporated on 29th March 1984 as a company limited by guarantee under the name Nairobi University Press (NUP).
- Started full operations in 1990 under the office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs).
- On 24th May 2002, the name of the company was changed to University of Nairobi Press (UONP) to reflect ownership.
- Placed under the office of the deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research, Production and Extension) in 2012.

MANDATE

- ❖ To provide and supplement reading materials to faculty and students by transforming lecture notes and other manuscripts into published text books.
- ❖ To promote the publishing of scholarly content of local relevance by local researchers.
- ❖ To help the country save on foreign exchange used to import not-so-relevant books.

GOVERNANCE

The UONP is a unique entity in three ways:

1. It is an **administrative unit** of the University of Nairobi under the RPE Division.
2. It is a **registered company** of the University of Nairobi under Cap. 486 of the laws of Kenya.
3. It has been recommended to be a **purely commercial state corporation** in the Education, Science, and Technology Sector by Presidential Task Force on Parastatal Reforms.

GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

UONP is subjected to the policies, rules, and regulations governing

- Departments of the UON
- Limited companies under the Companies Act Cap. 486.

This kind of set-up comes with numerous challenges

- The significance of classifying UONP as a purely commercial state corporation is not clear yet, but it is an important matter to consider in charting the way forward for the unit.

GOVERNANCE: CURRENT STATUS

UONP is governed by (i) Board of Directors, and (ii) Editorial Committee.

UONP Board of Directors consists of:

Chairman – University of Nairobi Council Chairman

Director – VC (University of Nairobi)

Director – DVC (Administration and Finance)

Director – DVC (Research, Production and Extension)

Director – DVC (Academic Affairs)

Director – DVC (Student Affairs)

Director – Managing Director – UNES

Secretary – Legal Officer – UON

Member – Managing Editor – UONP

In attendance:

Finance Officer – UON

Registrar Administration – UON

Chief Internal Auditor – UONP

Governance: current status (Cont)

UONP Editorial Committee consists of:

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research, Production and Extension) - Chairman

College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences - Member

College of Architecture and Engineering - Member

College of Biological and Physical Sciences - Member

College of Education and External Studies - Member

College of Health Sciences - Member

College of Humanities and Social Sciences – Member

Dept of Linguistics and African Languages (Kiswahili) – Co-opted Member

African Urban Quarterly – Member

Academic Registrar - Member

Bookshop Manager - Member

University Librarian - Member

Vice-Chancellor's Office - Member

Managing Editor - Secretary

Principle functions of the UONP Editorial Committee include:

- a) To consider all manuscripts submitted to and/or commissioned by UONP.
- b) To advise the Board of Directors on all matters related to editorial scope and policy, and to forward their recommendations to the Board for approval and implementation.
- c) To arrange for the referring of manuscripts.
- d) To oversee the quality of all publications produced under the imprint of UONP with regard to editing, book design, artwork, printing and binding and to advise the Board of Directors accordingly.
- e) To co-opt members whenever the committee feels that the expertise so gained would help the committee in assessing various manuscripts.
- f) Any other matters that the Board of Directors and the members of the University of Nairobi Press may refer to it from time to time.

STAFF COMPOSITION

UONP has 13 members of staff:

- Managing Editor (1)
- Editors:
 - Humanities and Social sciences (3)
 - Physical & Biological Sciences (1)
- Typesetters (3)
- Marketing Manager (1)
- Marketing Officer (1)
- Accountant (1)
- Administrative support (2)
- We interviewed for a secretary recently

PROGRESS

- a) Books published - over 100 covering diverse disciplines by authors from UON and other local and international institutions.
- b) Average annual output = 6 books (All manuscripts are unsolicited)
- c) Average annual reprints = 5 books
- d) Financing
 - Administration and staff emoluments – UoN support
 - Book production – Sales revenue and author subsidies
- g) Marketing & distribution - institutional libraries and bookshops
 - commercial bookshops
 - online platforms

BACK LIST

The backlist has over 100 publications in various disciplines, e.g.

Humanities and Social Sciences

- A Time for Harvest by W. Kabira
- Malaria and Poverty in Africa by A. Fosu and G. Mwabu

Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences

- Metabolic and Nutritional Diseases of Food Animals by P.M. Mbithi *et. al.*
- Veterinary Pathology in the Tropics by G.M. Mugeru

Education

- Educational Management: Theory and Practice by J.A. Okumbe
- Fundamentals of Sociology of Education by L.W. Kibera

Health Sciences

- Cancer of the Cervix and Uterine Body by N.A.O. Abinya *et. al.*
- Hydatid Disease: With Special Reference to Kenya by G.B.A. Okello *et. al.*

Research reports

- Efficiency of Health System Units in Africa by J.M. Kirigia
- Poverty and Policy in Kenya by Jane K. Mariara

Lecture Notes and Manuals - (A Manual on Microscopic Anatomy by J.K. Kimani)

CHALLENGES

1. Establishing an effective balance between the demands of both a university department and a registered company . The government classification of UONP as a “purely commercial state corporation” should also be considered.
2. High demand for book publishing services versus low capacity of the Press to provide efficient services.
3. The need to attain financial sustainability.
4. Low financial capacity lack of adequate skills to acquire and effectively utilize modern publishing technologies.
5. Absence of staff development options.

Challenges caused by:-

- a) Budgetary constraints
- b) Reliance on scholarly books that have limited commercial value.
- c) Low investment in the marketing function.
- d) Under-staffing in the sales and marketing section.
- e) Low investment in publishing technologies.
- f) Poor investment in staff training.
- g) Absence of relevant staff career progression path.
- h) Non-complimentary expectations of the Press as a university department and at the same time a registered commercial company.

WAY FORWARD

1. Clear definition of the departmental and registered company roles of the UON Press. The government thinking on the role of the UON Press must also be interrogated.

Some factors to consider on this issue:

- Alignment of the operations of the entity to suit the dual roles of being both a non-commercial and a commercial entity
- Review of the funding mechanisms in view of the two roles

WAY FORWARD

2. Other related proposals include:
 - a. Support publishing at UON Press through implementation of relevant provisions in the UON Research Policy.
 - b. Expand the publishing mandate of UONP to cover non-scholarly publications of commercial value.
 - c. Increased investment in the marketing function.
 - d. Focus on staff motivation and development.
 - e. Investment in modern publishing technologies.

END