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4 July 2017

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**ACUP /APUC Statement in response to the Canadian Scholarly Publishing Working Group Final Report****Vice President**

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Over the past year, the Association of Canadian University Presses / Association des presses universitaires Canadiennes (ACUP / APUC) has been a participant in the Canadian Scholarly Publishing Working Group (CSPWG), in collaboration with a range of stakeholders in the Canadian scholarly enterprise. We support in principle the central concern of the group as expressed in the terms of reference: to establish a shared vision, principles and goals that can act as a framework for advanced, robust, sustainable, collaborative models for the widest dissemination of the Canadian scholarly record.

ACUP / APUC has valued the opportunity to contribute to this initiative, and participated in a spirit of information sharing and open dialogue. As the representative voice of Canadian scholarly monograph publishing, we collectively produce over 800 titles annually in both English and French, and support both indigenous languages and vital translation programmes. For over a century, our membership has been bridging the communities of universities and general readerships, supporting production of and access to high quality Canadian scholarship for the broadest national and international audiences. This work is central to all our missions.

The final report of the Working Group acknowledges significant points of disagreement during our meetings on how to reach our common objective. While it acknowledges the value of diverse business models and the 'solid foundation of excellent university presses in Canada,' the framework proposed is heavily focussed on open access solutions to the challenges of economic sustainability for scholarly publishing, at the expense of market-based or hybrid options. ACUP / APUC is issuing this response to make clear our position regarding sustainability of monograph and journal publishing excellence in Canada.

Our first priorities as mission-driven, non-profit scholarly publishers are quality of content and financial sustainability. The imprint of a university press carries an assurance of quality in the editorial development and review of the scholarship, high production values across a range of formats, distribution through market and non-market mechanisms, and substantive marketing to ensure discoverability across disparate readerships, both within and beyond the academy. ACUP / APUC member presses operate within a range of business models, from open access with substantive institutional support to complete cost recovery, but for every press a diversity of markets and financial models provides a necessary diversification of risk, as we are not solely dependent on one single model or source of revenue. Alongside editorial independence, these hybrid models support independent publishing voices, proven to professionally represent the fullness of Canadian scholarly expression and dialogue. Maintaining this diversity is a careful balance between funders with often contradictory measures of success, the volatility of markets and institutional support, and meeting the needs of the scholars we publish as well as their varied audiences, both domestic and global. Safeguarding that balance and diversification for ongoing stability is our primary concern, as it enables us to continue our mission to publish books which make a significant contribution to Canadian scholarly and cultural life.

Open access models as they have developed to date have not demonstrated this safeguard, nor evidence of continuing revenue streams to account for displaced income.

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A move towards increased openness for monograph publishing requires a full recognition of the status of publishers as necessary scholarly infrastructure fulfilling a public mandate, which will require substantive, continuing investment to support high quality publishing. The CSPWG final report proposes an experimental Canadian Knowledge Unlatched project, but as with many similar international projects, the subvention amounts do not account for the whole costs of open access publishing, nor the risks it poses to hybrid business models operating in a complex environment. This will require an engagement with the whole costs of publishing, which have been documented in recent studies such as the ITHAKA S&R *Costs of Monograph Publishing: Towards a Transparent Methodology* (<http://www.sr.ithaka.org/publications/the-costs-of-publishing-monographs/>), as well as the intricacies of book publishing support in Canada. The European context these models emerged from did not have a university press system as has developed in North America, where the engagement of hybrid models with both market forces and stakeholder needs exerted pressure on pricing. We encourage open engagement with alternative market-based solutions, such as supported consortial purchasing, which have been proven to reduce costs to users and provide stable income to publishers.

We support innovation, and actively seek and welcome opportunities to partner and experiment as we continue to adapt to an evolving scholarly communications and publishing environment, but we do so based on our experience and assessment of broad, long-term sustainability for our publishing programs and their unique role in Canadian intellectual and cultural dialogue. We affirm the importance of these ongoing discussions in our continued and shared investment in the goal of a vibrant, sustainable scholarly publishing infrastructure in Canada, value the recognition of our points of difference in perspective and approach, and look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with all stakeholders to strengthen and support Canadian scholarly publishing.