



[Paisley Rekdal](#) – Poetry, memoirs, essays, experimental books, and nonfiction

[Hokulani Aikau](#) - University press books – sole author and edited anthologies

[Marie Sarita Gaytán](#) – University press book – sole author and scholarly journals

Moderator: [Annie Isabel Fukushima](#)

Finding a press

How did you pick a publisher? What was surprising?
Challenging?

- If you submitted a proposal, what is one advice/tips you would like to pass on for WoCAs to consider when submitting to a press? When's a good timeline for submitting book proposals? What do you submit?
- What advice would you offer based on what you wish you had known before you started?
- If you have relationships with presses or are invited to submit, how did you build those relationships?

- **Consider: What kind of book you want to produce.**
- **Choosing a press**
 - For some it is polyamorous in the beginning. Once you sign the contract its monogamous. Depending on the agent, if you have a relationship with the press, some authors would not feel comfortable going to five presses. Talk through this with peers and colleagues.
 - Think about existing series and special collections: How might your book fit into the trajectory of the press's priorities.

- Different presses have different styles / formats – some are theory heavy, some narrative form. Consider your own priorities, voice, and authorial goals.
- Know the audience of a press – some might be well educated, but not “geeky”/knowledgeable in the depths of your particular genre. Therefore, consider the tone the reader would be reading in.
- There is a need to be tactical about writing the proposal – about how you do this. Cold call to editors. It may just sit on their desk. Building relationships with editors, they see the name. They can associate the name with a person. Connections matter
- Acquisitions editors have signing goals that include expanding book lists and developing new series. For them, being your advocate is also key to their promotion and career trajectory.
- Flexibility -because you won’t stay with the same press. Every single press is a different kind of experience.
- **Editors & Agents**
 - Editors are friends with each other. Consider these relationships are important.
 - Agent – they work as primary editors. Sometimes the agent will want to see the first draft, and they will then pass it off to an editor. Big houses editors depend on agents.
- **How to write a proposal** link: <https://theprofessorisin.com/2015/07/02/how-to-write-a-book-proposal/>
 - Everyone get close friends to read your proposal. The folks you are going to be reading your proposal are going to be looking for clarity.
 - Timing to submit, it’s less important the time of the year. You should get chunks of time off to write. If you have come in and you are year 1 on the TT it is possible to get time off, and have it coincide to get writing done for the book.
 - The Proposal is difficult to do. If you are in the middle of the project, you don’t know what that end is. If you have a germ of an idea, not a good time to pitch a book. What makes your book different than other books in the field? Make that argument.
- **Book versus journal**
 - Book may come from the dissertation project. In the book process of changing a dissertation into a book, is a lot freeing than the journal article process. There was more control creativity with the book. Readers can be wide: Imagine: NYTimes audience.
- **Resources**
 - Subvention – If you are on the market or currently in transition to get offers, include subventions as part of your package. This can cover high costs associated with the book including indexing, images, and copyrights. Consider what are the financial opportunities to help with excessive copyright costs or photographs. \$300 to reprint a single poem.
 - Mellon foundation has opportunities
 - VPR at U of Utah also offers funding opportunities, with rolling application dates. You can apply for up to 6K in research funding for projects, which includes subvention fees.

You have a publisher, now what?

- Any tips on writing and getting that final draft of the book in before copy-editing stage?
 - What are the things you did to get yourself to that finish line of submitting the book?
 - How do you switch modes of style of writing (intro, literature review, methods, etc.?)
 - Books appear to cite less in the introduction, how do you make decisions about how much you cite and where?
 - How many chapters can you publish in journals?
-
- When you are hired, folks want you get **tenure**, so ideally you have a supportive department. If you do not, then consider how you surround yourself with resources to be successful
 - You need to know what the processes look like for your **promotion**
 - **Writing** – you just do it. You sit you're @\$\$ down and you just write. You get feedback and you revise. Two rounds maybe three, depending on the difficulty of the subject.
 - Treat writing like **exercise**. Like a yoga practice, if you set a certain amount of time to writing.
 - Fly in or work with your institution to have people talk about writing in different way or to offer insight into your manuscript in progress.
 - We need to write in ways that we were not trained to write. Difficulty fetishized. Wing flapping to get the sentence off the ground. Know your argument. They get all tangled up and it's getting 5 minutes up. Instead, write succinctly and powerfully stating your argument.
 - Even if your book needs to be relevant, you should **write the book you want to write**.
 - Don't be afraid of **editing**.
 - You finish a book just by writing. You have to **meet the deadlines**. You have to have the book available by a certain date. The other book deadline was based on tenure timeline.
 - **Already published content**. Most editors don't want to see more than 2 chapters published elsewhere
 - **On titles**. Don't get hungup on your titles. Editors need to make money – they are about selling books. It's not outside of capitalism. Words, images.
 - **Transitioning dissertation in to a book**
 - The book is not a dissertation. The dissertation does very specific work that you will never have to do again: demonstrate command of the literature. You are now the expert for the book. And you have to speak through that authorial voice. Sometimes there is the graduate student voice. Deferring to other experts in the field. Finding your own voice as an author is key.

- Recommended that you not submit your dissertation as is to the press.
- Your voice needs to drive it. The other thing about the dissertation to the book – there is a lot going on in the dissertation that does not need to be in the book.
- **Anonymous readers** – can be really helpful.
- **Writing with criteria in mind**
 - 100,000 is the cap.
 - Think about the organizational structure.
 - Need to be willing to let go of stuff.
- **The field of book publishing is changing**
 - Publishing is changing – the books from the library 15 years ago are not the same 5 years ago. Unprecedented times are changing publishing world.
 - Online books and books that have everyday people appeal.
- **Cover art**
 - Some presses will only work with their in-house artist, therefore, may not use art by folks you might suggest. This will be spelled out in the contract.
- **Professional ethics and working with a press.** Professionalism. Editors talk. But everyone talks. You can lose book projects. Therefore, be kind, stay connected.
- **Timelines**
 - Presses will provide a timeline as to when things will occur. Review the timeline and if something is missing from the timeline, query the press to understand where and how this thing happens (for example, promoting the book).
 - If the press does not provide you a timeline after contracting, query them for one.

Promoting the book

Book publishing includes a range of things folks never think about as authors - artwork for books covers, promoting the book, and so forth. Beyond the actual writing of the book itself, share any reflections of an experience you had with regards to marketing, promoting, and getting book into the hands of readers.

- **1 - 2 months before the book comes out is where you want to start promoting**, not any earlier.
- Promoting the book – the reality of publication. You are on your own. Presses are strapped. They don't have a ton of resources.
- You have to take on a split publicist personality – so you can promote book. **Cross-over appeal in mainstream media. Write some op-eds.** Pitch an article to the trib. Small podcasts around the nation are hungry for content. You can be that content.

- **Think outside of the box.** Go to the Atlantic or slate. Pitch them. Your publicist will take you open up to anything. Social media account.
- Try to **get your book reviewed**
- Have a **mentor or colleague organize an author meets critique.**
- Reach out to colleagues to **give talks** to other colleagues for earlier career scholars.
- Consider **swag** that can promote your book – some presses may produce this, but many won't (postcards are popular).
- Make Calculation – whether or not that **press** you are consider is **at the exhibition halls at the conferences you attend.** They will promote your book. If they are not, then they will not be at the conferences you attend to promote your book.
- Interviews with journalists.
- **Keep a running list of folks on file: You will need to fill out an “Author Questionnaire”** for each book you publish, in which you list the places that might review your book, people who might blurb your book, conferences that might feature your book, prizes that might consider your book. As you write/research, gather names for all these things and keep a list that you can then add to your Author Questionnaire and share with your publicist. Very helpful.