

GWJEP Staff Interview: Claire Bianchi

Acquisitions Committee Lead



Biography

Claire Bianchi is a second-year student in the Master of Professional Studies in Publishing program at George Washington University. In her first year, she served on the Strategy & Sustainability Committee and now leads Acquisitions for the George Washington University Press (GWUP) initiative. She earned her bachelor's degrees in Economics and Spanish from the University of Virginia and brings

a decade of experience across finance, marketing, and content strategy. She currently works at Amazon Web Services (AWS) as a Content Manager and Field Engagement Lead, combining her analytical background with a passion for literature and publishing innovation.

Can you describe your role in the Press Acquisition Committee and what your key responsibilities are?

Until the press has established an editorial board and takes further steps toward implementation, my focus is on identifying opportunities among the scholarly publishing community, which involves activities like assisting with

society membership applications, speaking with faculty, and collaborating on presentations about publishing best practices.

What drew you to join this particular department of the journal?

As a second-year in the MPS in Publishing program, I've found throughout my coursework that I am especially interested in the editorial side of publishing. I find the concept of building a list of books, creating a brand for oneself as an editor, and establishing that trust with your readers as to what they can expect from your publications, particularly compelling. I was curious to understand how this might work for a newly formed press and saw this department as a great learning opportunity to apply what I've learned in this program by giving back to GW's publishing initiatives.

What are your hopes for the future of ethics in publishing, and how do you see your committee contributing to that vision?

My hopes for the future of ethics in publishing revolve around two key themes: transparency and community. I believe with the threat of AI-generated content – from manuscripts to peer reviews to editing – publishers need to be increasingly transparent with their editorial standards and practices around AI usage. While I think it is unreasonable to imagine a future with zero AI involved in publishing (in fact, I think publishers may be able to benefit in certain business areas if used mindfully), I would like to see a future where the combination of human-AI involvement that went into publications is clearly disclosed. I believe this level of transparency is the only way we can move forward with full confidence in the long-standing integrity of the publishing industry. Secondly, I believe the power of community to uphold ethical standards is often underestimated. Organizations must hold one another accountable for ethical practices around not only AI usage, but in areas of accessibility, peer review, data privacy, and bias. I believe the acquisitions committee of GWUP can help contribute to this community effort uniquely in our capacity as a teaching press by offering forums for peers in the industry to discuss their solutions to and challenges with ethical issues, and to help develop these standards over time.

How do you think the Press Acquisition Committee contributes to the larger conversation around ethics in academic publishing?

Acquisitions play a critical role in the conversation around ethics in academic publishing, as we must face complicated ethical questions throughout the

entire editorial process, from considering manuscripts and other content for submission, to managing peer review, to positioning the content in the market. We must ask tough questions around whether content aligns with our mission and vision for an ethical publication, and determine whether to be the amplifier of this content. It is critical that the acquisitions committee understand the impact of our decisions and actions on the industry - by upholding ethical standards in our acquisitions process, we are ensuring reliable, trustworthy contributions to the greater scholarly community.

Do you think there are areas of publishing ethics where personal opinions should have more influence? If so, where?

This is a complicated question and, as it goes with most discussions around ethics, I don't think there is a simple answer. However, at the heart of ethics is one major imperative: do no harm. Thinking about publishing ethics in the context of this key pillar, I believe certain practices are not at all subjective; publishers must not discriminate, published works should be truthful and properly attributed, scholarly works deserve unbiased peer review, and there should be transparency, accountability, and integrity in all aspects of the publishing process. I believe personal opinions can come into play in areas of editorial judgment like which stories to tell, how to approach messaging and audience targeting, or decisions around a publisher's mission and vision and how to align that to their content. But personal opinions should have no influence when it comes to universally objective ethical standards.

What are you hoping to accomplish in your role in the Press Acquisition Committee?

I would like to leave the press, which is, of course, still in development, in an even better position than when I started. I truly believe the GWUP and GWJEP have a bright future ahead, and I hope my contributions as the first Press Acquisitions Committee Lead will enable future leaders to continue to grow the press and the GWJEP in a way that is both innovative and ethical, continuously raising the bar for student-run publications.