

Introduction

by ERIC HERSHBERG | Simon Fraser University | eric_hershberg@sfu.ca

The *On the Profession* section of this issue of the *Forum* addresses a domain that, in my view, is of great importance to our membership, namely, trends in scholarly publishing in our field. Five prominent English-language publishers have provided pieces in response to our request to reflect on a series of issues specified below. The responses by publishers took various forms. Some, in keeping with the brief they were provided, offered item by item responses, and in my view these are quite informative. Others chose to approach the issues I presented in broader context, reflecting on the state of academic publishing and its evolution over time. Sandy Thatcher, of Penn State University Press, opens the section with an assessment of core issues facing the academic community, and does so building on an essay he presented in the *Forum* more than a decade ago (Winter 1993). Others, also insightfully, respond point by point to the queries posed by my invitation. I hope that their reflections, taken as a whole, will provide LASA members with a useful set of perspectives of issues that are pressing for our work. We are grateful to these publishers for taking the time to share their thoughts on questions that, given the importance of publication for scholarship and for performance evaluation and promotion, are of considerable interest to much of our membership.

- *What is your view toward publishing edited collections, and how, if at all, has this evolved in recent years?*
- *How important is prospective course adoption for determining whether a manuscript is accepted for publication?*
- *Under what if any conditions might you agree to review a manuscript that is also being sent for consideration by other publishers?*
- *How do you make decisions about cloth or paperback release of your books?*
- *What is your approach to online availability?*
- *What are some of the key issues on the horizon that will affect the future directions of scholarly publication in our field?*