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Monograph Costing Tool: A User's Guide

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MONOGRAPH COSTING TOOL
A USER'S GUIDE



ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN
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Monograph Costing Tool: A User's Guide

Nancy Maron and Kim Schmelzinger

2016

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A USER'S GUIDE

MONOGRAPH COSTING TOOL

INTRODUCTION

This tool is designed to help presses of all sizes determine the full costs of publishing monographs. It may be useful if you are preparing to apply for a subvention to publish a monograph and need an itemized cost statement. Or, it might just be information you need to have in order to better assess and run your business.

The process described below will be easiest if centrally coordinated, whether by the press director, business manager, or the Chief Financial Officer. It will almost certainly require some time for departmental heads. Whether or not you choose to involve more staff in the process is up to you. Those who have done so have found that the process can have benefits well beyond the numbers.

Wherever possible, we have indicated where there are some time-saving short-cuts you might want to take. In some cases, you can use data you have already gathered for the AAUP Annual Statistics. In this case, you need just copy and paste the entire column (values only!). Where the AAUP stats require some data fields we are not using here (think: sales) you'll see that we have grayed out those fields that will not figure in the final calculations. And of course, if you do not have your own AAUP Statistics to start from, just disregard those grayed out fields.¹

This project would not have been possible without the support of our advisory board and an array of intrepid and generous testers who explored earlier versions of the Costing Tool and provided invaluable feedback. We'd like to thank Charles Watkinson (Associate University Librarian for Publishing/Director, University of Michigan Press), Tom Hellenberg (Chief Financial Officer, University of Washington Press), Meredith Morris-Babb (Director, University Press of Florida), Mark Edington (Director, Amherst College Press), Ellen Chodosh (Director, NYU Press), and Karla Garrett (Deputy Director/Director of Finance & Operations, Baylor University Press) for serving on the advisory board. We'd especially like to thank Darrin Pratt, Director of the University Press of Colorado and current AAUP President, and AAUP executive staff, particularly Executive Director Peter Berkery, Director of Marketing and Communications Brenna McLaughlin, and Assistant Director and Controller Tim Muench for offering invaluable insights and support throughout the process.

We hope you find this useful and the results enlightening, as you venture forth to conduct these analyses. We look forward to hearing from those who use this tool in the months ahead.

Happy data gathering,

Nancy Maron and Kim Schmelzinger
August 2016

¹ If an AAUP member press wishes to participate in the AAUP Annual Statistics program, please contact Susan Patton in the AAUP Central Office: spatton@aaupnet.org.

A Note on Customizing the Workbook

The Monograph Costing Tool is essentially one large Excel workbook with a summary sheet that draws the data into a comprehensive view. The workbook includes many tabs, whose data is linked throughout the workbook; when you enter data on one page, it often feeds to other cells on that page and other pages. The Tool's authors have tried to make the math behind the calculations as simple and transparent as possible. One need just look on the formula line in Excel to see how data is aggregated on a given page, or how data is pulled from the tabs into the dashboard.

People have asked if it can be used for gathering data on other sorts of publications, aside from monographs, and the answer is yes! The categories of cost included here are wide-ranging enough to apply to many types of publications. The most important thing is to define up front what the category you are studying will be. Once that is established, the formulas can be used whether considering your entire books program, monographs only, or some other type of work. Should you choose to explore some type of work other than "monographs," you would want to replace the notion of "monograph" with your desired category consistently throughout the tool.

Before customizing the tool, you will notice that certain tabs and cells have been protected. Any of these can be easily "unprotected" by simply going to TOOLS, then PROTECTION, and choosing UNPROTECT.

For those of you who may want to tinker, we encourage you to do so whether you plan to adjust the names of some cost categories, or replace the word "monograph" with something else. The tool, after all, will be more valuable the more people shape it to fit their needs. That said, once you unprotect the sheet, take your time before making changes. Changing the wording of a line is unlikely to cause any trouble; adding rows or altering formulas might.

Fair warning: once you have unprotected the sheet and started making changes, there is a risk that your changes may cause the calculations to no longer work as intended. Never fear! If anything goes awry, you can always download a new copy and start afresh.

GETTING STARTED

You will have to determine a few things before you start:

1. *How will you define monographs for your study?*

The original study was based on gathering costs for a specific type of monograph: single-authored volumes, not including works in translation. Some presses might define monographs differently, which is fine. The original study also encouraged presses to choose a range of types of books: some that were deemed “complex” in either production or editorial work required; some that were deemed “simple.” This meant that the study included some monographs with a large number of images and complex tables, as well as some that were almost all text-only.

When you consider this exercise, you may want to choose the titles to study based on how you want to use the data. For example, if you want to take a broad look at all of your monograph publishing and to see a range of costs, you may want to select titles that represent that range, or select a large number of titles to be a representative sample of a year’s worth of publishing.

If, however, you are undertaking this assessment specifically because you want to determine how to set fees for Open Access subvention programs, you might consider a more targeted approach. If you know that you would only consider a certain type of book for an open access subvention program – say, single volume, single-author works that you feel may have very narrow readership – you may want to use “titles like this” when doing this study for yourself.

Some elements you may want to consider might be whether the book is:

- single authored? Or include collected works?
- a work in translation?
- likely to have limited reach?
- with a short discount only?
- any single-authored, scholarly work?

2. *Which and how many titles should you choose?*

In the original study, presses selected 20 titles, a sample size intended to be representative of the press’s practices and to offer enough data across the full sample to offer useful generalizations. If your press already has a good idea of which sort of titles you feel you want to focus on, you may want to keep the number quite a bit lower. We recommend trying 10 titles; if you can pinpoint a more precise profile of the titles you feel you need to understand, you may be fine with even fewer.

3. *What time-frame are you studying?*

The original study assessed costs for the Fiscal Year 2014. We recommend that you capture costs for the most recent fiscal year for which data is available. When you select titles to study, they should be titles published within that same fiscal year. When you gather press-level data, it will be based on that fiscal year.

Approaches to Measuring Staff Time

There are two different methods for gathering the needed data on staff time. Both are outlined below.

In both cases, you will be gathering data on staff in each of the five departments:

- acquisitions
- manuscript editorial
- design
- production
- marketing

It does not matter if your press has one EDP group, three separate departments, or some other arrangement. For each staffer, you will need salary data and benefits data (or a benefit rate). If the person only worked for a portion of the year, you will need the percentage of time that person worked (the Full Time Equivalent, or FTE) in the year you are focusing on.

In order to accurately allocate costs to just the monograph list, you will need to determine what share of someone's time is devoted to monographs.

Estimating the way one spends one's time is difficult, period. Most people do not do this and most publishers do not require it of staff. It may feel irrelevant to some staff, or even a bit threatening. During the original study, some staffers wondered if the data was being collected in order to make judgements of how they choose to use their time. Other staffers felt that the practice of estimating did not feel precise enough. They did not feel comfortable guessing at their time spent and feared they were offering inaccurate answers.

These are all legitimate responses, and it is important to acknowledge them. But it does not mean that you must give up on ever knowing how staff time – by far the costliest asset the press deploys in making books— is used. Among the larger presses, CFO's reported using their own estimates of time spent to arrive at ways of allocating staff time. Some choose to divide staff salaries and benefits by number of books; proportionally by units sold, or something similar. ***But this is essentially estimating, too***, and at a macro level that does not often take into consideration the different roles and salary levels of staffers in each department.

In other words, while having staff develop their own individual estimates is not easy, it may well be **more accurate** than having someone else develop an estimate of their time for them.

You may find that some people are more comfortable than others with the act of estimating. Business managers and salespeople get very good at this, and tend to be comfortable developing estimates for costs, sales, and the like, based on certain relevant parameters, guidelines, and past history. Staff in editorial production, however, are accustomed to careful tracking and may find estimating a challenge. If you are planning to encourage staff to self-report time-spent, we encourage you to offer them a few ways to think about the estimates they will be developing. If time allows, you might consider having staff track time in these categories using an online tool like BaseCamp or Toggl over a 1 or 2-week period.

See instructions below for **Individual Staff Worksheet** and **Tab 6 Staff_All** for further discussion of the **Timesaver method** (where CFO or department head does the estimating), as well as the **Staff Input method** (where staff are asked to estimate time).

See the **Discussion Guide** for suggestions on hosting staff meetings and encouraging staff to develop time allocations.

[How We Use Time Estimates to Arrive at a Cost-Per-Staffer](#)

The “cost of staff time” is developed based on a few key questions. The description below outlines how staff time estimates are used to build up the staff cost. As elsewhere in the workbook, you are free to adjust some assumptions, as needed.

Essentially, staffers are asked how much of their time is spent on monographs, as opposed to other things. The resulting amount of their time is then further broken down – in a subsequent question – into time spent on monographs that publish in that same year, versus in other years (or not at all). Each time a question is asked, the staffer is asked to respond based on 100%. First, staffers are asked to divvy up 100% of their time overall; then of the time they spend on monographs, they are asked how they would further split up their time among monographs in different stages of publishing.

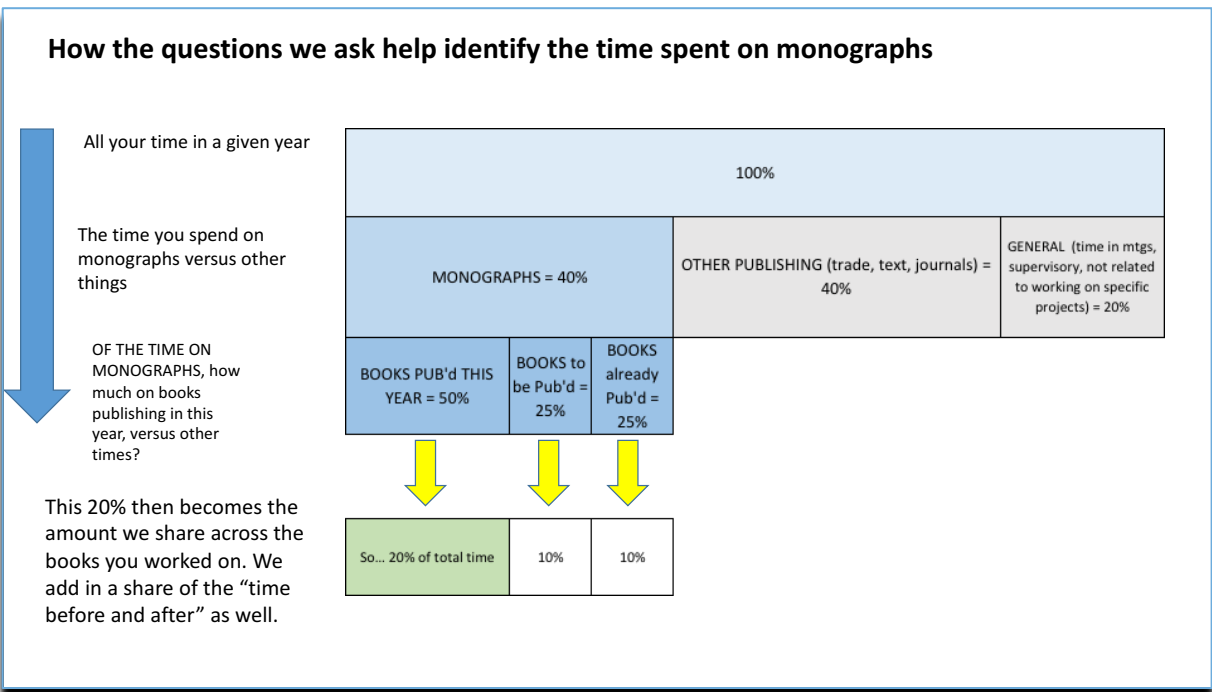


Figure 1 This chart illustrates how a series of questions helps to identify the portion of time that a staffer works on monographs in a given year. These questions are found on Tab 6: Staff Individual

Time spent on monographs = 40%

Time spent on monographs this year = 50%

Overall time spent on monographs publishing this year = 20% of total time/year

Then to this 20% (in this case) we add back in time spent on target year books... in years before and after. For this, we use the averages developed in the Ithaka study.

Finally, what we call "staff overhead (time)" is a combination of two things:

- (1) the time people designate as time spent on "other activities" is allocated between "monographs" and "non-monographs" according to the same ratio of time spent on those two areas; and
- (2) the time staff report spending on "books never published"

THE WORKBOOK: A Step-by-Step Guide

The Excel workbook includes all the information you need to complete this exercise. The tabs are arranged in the order, left to right, that you will work through them. On each sheet, only some fields require data entry. Generally, the fields that do not require data entry are protected, and fields that do require data entry are designated by color.

Below are instructions for each tab in the workbook.

Tab 1. TITLES

- Use this tab to create a list of all monographs (or whatever category of book you plan to study) in the FY year you are studying.
- For each, include title, author, and publication date.
- Include the titles you will be studying on lines 1-10. If you are gathering data on fewer than 10 titles, leave the remaining lines in this section blank.
- Starting with “Title 11,” enter the rest of the monograph titles published in the FY year you have chosen. The reason for including ALL titles published in the FY will become clearer later on: by having people consider the full list of books they worked on, it is easier to identify the portion of time spent on the target titles.
- We have included lines for up to 60 titles in total.
 - This title listing is mostly important in permitting staff to gain a complete view of all the books they may have worked on. For those presses with more than 60 monographs per year, it may be easier to use the “Time Saver” method, or another means of estimating time spent on the monograph list.

NOTE: Start with this tab. This data will populate other sheets in the workbook.

Tab 2. PRESS INFORMATION

- Enter the total FTE (full-time equivalent) employees in the books division. Also enter the total number of books published in the study year and the number of monographs.
- You may also want to complete the lines showing revenue, subsidy, and impact of backlist. This data is not used in the workbook calculations, so is optional.

Tab 3. PRESS GENERAL & ADMINISTRATIVE (G&A)

- Enter information concerning press-wide G&A expenses here.

- Enter, if you can, the estimated costs for in-kind contributions from your institution. These are not included in the per-book calculation, but are important to be aware of.
- Data from Schedule 6 of your press's AAUP Annual Statistics report (do not use data from the aggregated report) can be copied and pasted for lines 20-42. **Please paste values only.** Grayed out fields are not included in the calculations in this workbook.
- Remember: Only include staff and costs that ought to be included for a digital monograph. Sales, printing, and warehousing are not to be included here.

NOTE: If your director is also planning to report time as an editor (or other role), make sure to only include the remaining portion of her or his time here to avoid double counting.

Tab 4. DIRECT EXPENSES

- The titles and authors' names on this page will populate automatically from your entries on the "TITLES" tab.
- Enter the direct (book-specific) expenses for each of these titles.
- Make every effort to determine title-based costs for all the categories you can, including marketing and advertising. If for certain activities, it is too difficult to determine what a per-title cost would be, leave that line blank on this sheet. Instead, when you complete Tab 5. Departmental Expenses, you will include the entire departmental cost of that activity. Calculations in the worksheet will then determine an estimated per-book allocation.
- Avoid double counting! Do not enter both direct ("book-specific") and departmental costs for the same item.
- Fields on discipline, page count, and illustration count are provided for you, as you may want to examine these variables. These are optional.

Tab 5. DEPARTMENTAL EXPENSES

- Enter overhead costs at the Departmental level.
- Be careful to not double count anything; **if you have already arrived at a title-based cost for advertising, do not also include dollar amounts in the "advertising" section of the departmental budget.**
- If your press does not have departments with these exact names, decide where best to include the costs.
- For purposes of efficiency, these fields are configured to mirror the categories used in the AAUP Annual Statistics, on Schedule 4. That said, we will **not be using** all of the categories in the calculation of costs. Some, like "sales commission" will

not be included at all; others, like “staff salary and benefits” will be included elsewhere (see tab for Staff All).

- See the tab called Definitions for descriptions of each item.

INDIVIDUAL STAFF WORKSHEET

THIS TAB IS A SEPARATE WORKSHEET, TO HELP STAFFERS CALCULATE THEIR TIME ALLOCATIONS. CFO's MAY ALSO WANT TO USE THIS TO GENERATE THEIR STAFF TIME ESTIMATES, AS IT INCLUDES SOME USEFUL METHODS FOR DOING THIS.

NOTE: THIS SHEET DOES NOT FEED INTO ANY OTHER FORMS. ANY DATA ENTERED HERE WILL STILL NEED TO BE PASTED INTO the STAFF_ALL tab.

- The titles entered on Tab 1 “TITLES” will populate this form.
- Make a copy of this tab in a new workbook. This single tab can then be distributed electronically to all staff who are participating.
- You may wish to print this tab and distribute the hard copies to all staff who are participating. It should print so that each of the main questions is on a separate page (so, 3 pages total).
- This sheet includes three sections, which should be completed in the order below.
- It is strongly recommended to meet with staffers – by department – to brief them on this process and to walk through the questions with them together. (See the Discussion Guide below to help facilitate these discussions.)
- Staffers should return their completed forms to whomever is compiling the data.

The form includes three sections, as described below:

Part ONE: STAFF TIME ALLOCATIONS: GENERAL

- Staffers fill out top section of form, answering questions about time allocations and entering data in the green boxes in column O.
- The workbook will then automatically calculate the percentages that appear in **column O, rows 26-30**.

Part TWO: STAFF TIME ALLOCATIONS: BY TITLE

- Staff will review the full list of titles published and identify the monographs they worked on over the course of the specified time period by entering a “1” in column G.
- For each title they worked on, staff will then indicate the “relative amount of effort” spent on each title they worked on, using a drop-down menu.
- The workbook will then automatically calculate the percentages that appear in **column O, rows 40-99**.

Part THREE: STAFF TIME ALLOCATIONS: BY ACTIVITY

- Staff will indicate which activities they engage with in their day-to-day work on all monographs.
- Using the drop-down menu provided, staffers will identify the activities that take up an “average” amount of time, as well as the activities that were – relatively speaking – more time-consuming and less time-consuming.
- The workbook scales the responses appropriately and determines estimated percentages of time spent on each activity.
- The workbook will then automatically calculate the percentages that appear in **column AF, rows 40-81**.

Once staffers have completed all three sections, the completed worksheets should be sent to whomever is coordinating the data gathering. That person will then copy and paste the data (values only!) onto the “Staff_All” page as follows:

Part 1:

Column O, rows 26-30 → Tab 6 STAFF_ALL: [The staffer’s column], rows 23-27

Part 2:

Column O, rows 40-99 → Tab 6 STAFF_ALL: [The staffer’s column], rows 47-106

Part 3:

Column AF, rows 40-81 → Tab 6 STAFF_ALL: [The staffer’s column], row 110 - 151

Tab 6. STAFF_ALL

NOTE: This page is required for all, whether using the “TIME SAVER” or “STAFF INPUT” method.

This form aggregates all the staff data that feeds into the final dashboard.

- It is a good idea to designate one person to manage the data entry on this sheet, often that will be the business manager or CFO.
- First, enter names, salaries, benefits, and department name for all staff in acquisitions, EDP, and marketing roles who will be completing time allocations (that is, all who work with monographs).
- TIME SAVER METHOD:
 - The business manager or CFO, working with department heads, will estimate the responses for all staff.

- This can be done person by person, or by estimating costs and time allocations in aggregated form at the departmental level.
- STAFF INPUT METHOD:
 - Here, individual staff will have completed the sheet derived from the Staff_Individual worksheet.
 - The CFO/business manager will take the responses from the individual sheets and copy & paste them into the Tab 6 Staff_All sheet. The formatting is such that it is possible to copy and paste the entire response column from one document to the other.

Below are some tips for completing each version:

TIME SAVER METHOD

STEP ONE: Salary data

- Enter all staffers' data on **rows 6-10**
 - Only include staffers who do some work on monographs. (That said, only include staffers whose work ought to be included for the sort of model you are examining: if you are examining an OA model, you most likely do not want to include staff whose roles are solely sales, warehousing, pricing of print, and so forth.)

STEP TWO: Basic Time Allocation for work on monographs

- Enter time allocations on **rows 12-14** and on **rows 17-20**. Business managers can either copy and paste this from the Staff_Individual sheet, or enter their own estimates here.

STEP THREE: Check!

- At this stage, the responses above are used to calculate a “pool” of cost attached to that staffer, that includes time spent on monographs published in the FY year being studied as well as a share of time spent on work done on those titles in years before and after the year of publication. (The figures used to represent time spent on books before and after the fiscal year was derived from the original study. Feel free to replace this with your own figures, as needed.) An allocation of time spent by the staffer on other non-monograph publishing activities is included, as well as time spent on books that will never be published.
- If any of those do not seem right, this is the time to change it! You can review the other inputs, or overwrite this cell.
- This figure will be used to develop a “per book” cost for this staffer, that is then further split into costs per activity for this staffer.

STEP FOUR: ALLOCATION BY TITLE

- Choose “timesaver” method on **row 35**.

- For the timesaver, you need to know how many of the total titles published the staffer worked on. Enter this number on **row 37**.

STEP FIVE: ALLOCATION BY ACTIVITY

- Starting on **row 110**, enter percentages next to each activity the staffer performs in a typical week.
- This might be best done with input from department heads.

STAFF_INPUT METHOD

STEP ONE: Salary data

- Enter all staffers' data on **rows 6-10**.
 - Only staffers who do some work on monographs should be included. (Only include staffers whose work ought to be included for the sort of model you are examining: if you are examining an OA model, you most likely do not want to include staff whose roles are solely sales, warehousing, pricing of print, and so forth.)

STEP TWO: Basic Time Allocation for work on monographs

- Check to be sure you have received all Staff_Individual sheets back
- For each Staff_Individual sheet, copy and paste cells O11-O13 and O18-O21 into **rows 12-14** and **rows 17-20** in the appropriate column for that staffer on Tab 6 Staff_All.

STEP THREE: Check!

- As above, verify that the total pool for each staffer's cost seems reasonable. If not, double-check as needed.

STEP FOUR: ALLOCATION BY TITLE

- Choose "Staff Input" method on **row 35 of the Staff_All sheet**
- Copy and paste cells O40-O99 from the Staff_Individual sheet into the column for this staffer on Staff_All.

STEP FIVE: ALLOCATION BY ACTIVITY

- Copy and paste cells AF40-AF84 from the Staff_Individual sheet into the column for this staffer on Staff_All.

Tab 7 OVERHEAD_SELECTION

Every press has its own way of thinking about overhead costs, those costs that are needed to run the publishing operation: office space, legal support, accounting, and so forth. A full costing model takes these “overheads” into account, and comes up with a reasonable way to attribute a share of those costs to the products the company produces—in this case, books.

The overhead worksheet is arranged to allow you to choose your method of allocating overhead. This is a useful exercise as a matter of course, as it allows you to determine if your product line is indeed covering its costs and contributing back to the overhead expenses. But it is also worth considering including some of the overhead costs in a subsidy model. This will permit you to come up with a way to do that.

NOTE: For quick reference, we have included a snapshot of your overhead costs (column G) as you reported them on other worksheets.

For 1 & 2 below, the totals are calculated for you, using the following methods:

- **Method 1: Even distribution, across all books**

This method takes all overhead costs, including press-wide overheads and departmental costs (only those NOT attributed to specific titles. Check to make sure there is no overlap!) and divides it by the total number of books published in the Fiscal Year. This figure is then the per-book overhead allocation. It will be the same for **all books** published, whether trade, text, or monograph.

- **Method 2: Distribution by “effort spent” on monographs**

This method attempts to more fairly allocate the cost of overhead based on the amount of staff time the press spends on monograph publishing. Using staff time allocations, we determine the portion of total staff time spent in the Fiscal Year. This then becomes the “pool” of overhead attributed to the **monograph** list. The pool is then divided by the number of monographs published in the Fiscal Year.

- **Method 3: Your own customized version of allocations, item by item**

Many business managers will recognize that not all overhead is created equal. In other words, some elements, like “HR” might be used pretty much the same on all books: staff are hired in all departments, most have pretty similar needs from an HR staffer. It seems fair to evenly share the cost of this function across all books. But other elements – like legal – might disproportionately be spent on just certain books: art books with complicated rights issues; trade titles with delicate contracts to negotiate,

and so forth. This customizable column permits business managers to choose the allocation they think best represents the reality at their press.

Other methods of assigning overhead include

- monograph revenue as a share of total revenue
- frontlist sales as a percentage of total sales

THE DASHBOARD: Viewing the Data

As you enter data throughout the workbook, certain fields will start to populate on the main summary page, the DASHBOARD. You can check your progress as you go. Once the data has all been input, the dashboard offers views of your data in a few ways:

- The main view offers detail on each functional area of the press (Acquisitions, Editorial, Design, Production and Marketing), breaking out staff costs, direct expenses, and in-kind costs.
- Pie and bar charts illustrate the share of cost devoted to different press activities and share of costs with certain departments.
- Data is included from the original study to offer a comparison to other AAUP presses in Groups 1 – 3. (Data from some Group 4 presses was gathered at the department level only, so is not included here.)

TITLE-BASED VIEW

Now that you have entered all the data, the Cost Statement sheet offers you a single-title view of all the costs associated with a single title. This can be used as a way to develop a Cost Statement for a new or existing title, or to retrospectively analyze costs of a book that has already been published.

The fields on this sheet are aligned with those in the Costing Tool workbook, and the data is pulled from the sheets where data was originally entered.

In order to view the full Cost Statement on a given title, simply choose the title you are interested in from the drop down menu at the top right of the page. To retain copies of different title views, choose MOVE or COPY; select COPY; and either save as a new tab in the workbook or to a new workbook.

DEFINITIONS

This tab includes definitions for terms and expressions used on each tab.

TROUBLESHOOTING

This tab includes a short list of issues that may come up when you are using the Costing Tool, specifically concerning the methods for creating and entering staff time allocations.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Whether or not you plan to have staffers actually develop their own estimates for the tool, there are real benefits for getting staff involved in this process. One way of doing this is to host group meetings, where staff can talk about the work they do, how it relates to other departments, and what they perceive as the main cost drivers in their work.

The guide below is based on the 20 press sessions held in 2015 as part of the Costs of Monographs Study, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and carried out by Ithaka S+R. Nancy Maron and Kim Schmelzinger, authors of the study, led discussion at each of the participating presses. The guide below is a modified outline of the discussions hosted there

Logistics

Setting	In-person meeting at the press.
Materials	Attendees should have printed copies of <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The final list of books published in the year you are studying▪ An indication of which titles you will be gathering data on▪ Printed copies of the “staff_individual” sections (three sheets)
Attendees	All those who actively work to publish monographs should attend the session. We recommend structuring this into three meetings, one with Acquisitions, one with the combined EDP functions, and one with Marketing.
Timings	The meeting should last no longer than 90 minutes.

Agenda

- 0:00** **Welcome and Introduction**
- 0:10** **Discussion: Work processes.** *How we do what we do.*
- 0:30** **Discussion: What elements are most time-consuming?**
- 0:45** **Discussion: What elements bring greatest value?**
- 1:00** **Filling out the Allocations**

0:00 Welcome and Introduction

This offers a chance to remind or introduce the larger context to the group. Editors may be well aware of the environment of open access debate, but others may be less so.

In short:

There have been some pressures and incentives for scholarly presses to consider open access models. There are benefits: it may be that subsidies become available to support book publication. Books with limited sales/circulation may circulate more widely as a result. There are also real challenges, the main one being that presses may face a real trade-off in seeing sales decline once an open access copy is readily available. Understanding the full costs of creating and disseminating a monograph is important, if we are going to be in a position to ask that those costs be underwritten.

This session is intended to encourage us to talk candidly about the work we do, and the aspects that tend to drive costs. This will help us to more accurately consider how much staff time to allocate to the books we publish.

0:10 Discussion: Work processes. How we do what we do.

ASK: *Let's talk through all the steps involved in producing a digital monograph. Starting in chronological order, what happens first? Next?*

[Note: The discussion can start with one person but then goes around the room, with people in different roles filling in as needed. The point of this section is to get people to describe the process in some detail. Both staff and directors are likely to learn some interesting things about just how certain functions are performed.]

0:30 Discussion: What elements are most time-consuming?

ASK: *Now, thinking about all those steps we just discussed, which tend to be the most time-consuming? Why? What sort of things can happen to make something become more time-consuming?*

[Note: Here is where staff can be encouraged to talk about 'time' in terms of two elements: the typical work involved that is by its nature time-consuming; and – sometimes more interesting – the unexpected elements that can crop up and cause problems. In many discussions, this was the time when staffers noted 'author relations' as one of the main reasons that otherwise 'simple' projects can quickly become very time consuming.]

0:45 Discussion: What elements bring greatest value?

ASK: *When you think about all the things you do in publishing a monograph, which activities do you think are the most critical to the ultimate quality of the book?*

1:00 Filling out the Allocations

- 1. Time spent on monographs.** Encourage staff in each department or group of departments to discuss share of time spent on monographs, versus other types of work. “Time on monographs” should include anything done to produce monographs, including time emailing the author, sitting in book-related meetings, and so forth. Time on other things like HR meetings, general administration, should be put into “other.”
- 2. Time spent in FY on monographs at different stages of work.** Here, encourage staff to consider in general, what time they spend on books that publish in that year, versus books that will publish in future years or prior years. Typically, acquisitions editors spend very little time in a given year working on books that will publish in that year; rather, their time is on books publishing in later years. EDP staff often work much closer to publication dates, so their percentages here will be higher.
- 3. Relative effort on actual titles published.** Here, staff are asked to consider the relative effort they invested in a book, by indicating whether it took more time, less time, or a “normal” or “average” amount of time. They should consider all work done on the book across the full time they worked on it, even if that covers multiple years.
- 4. Allocation of time by activity.** Staff are asked to consider all the possible activities involved in producing a digital monograph. For the activities that they engage in, they are asked to use a drop down menu to assign a weight, indicating if they generally spend more, less or an average amount of time on this activity, compare to other activities. Calculations are built into the sheet, so staffers need only make their choice, and percentages will be automatically calculated.