

Homework is key to finding a publisher

A succinct query is key to finding a publisher, but homework first is even more critical, said **Micah Kleit, director of Rutgers University Press.**

Kleit offered a number of insider publishing tips during an informal lunchtime discussion with Rutgers faculty as part of the November 2020 Writing Retreat hosted by the *Office for Faculty Development.*

Homework is the first step, advised Kleit. Narrow your search by finding a university press that's a good fit. Review a publisher's list, and zero in on three or four publishers that specialize in your area of expertise.

As for the query itself, be succinct. A good query is one that begins the conversation, said Kleit. A good query should be an invitation to talk more. Offer a succinct summary of your book and remind the publisher that your work is a good fit, part of a larger field. Don't overwhelm a publisher with numerous attachments.

Kleit noted that more than 11,000 books are published in America each month. Rutgers University Press receives more than 17,000 submissions annually. Every author is competing against all that noise. By doing your homework, by figuring out how your book fits into a publisher's list, you are making the work of the publisher easier.

"I'm always grateful when I talk to an author who knows a little bit about publishing."

Remember, too, that as you seek a publisher, the publisher is seeking you as well. "Publish or perish" applies also to the publisher.

Rutgers University Press publishes 150 books each year, and Kleit was pleased to announce that the press is continuing that pace even through the pandemic. He is grateful for the level of support at Rutgers. Other university presses may not be so fortunate. Covid, he said, has changed the landscape of scholarship. "How many of those university presses will exist after 2021, 2022?"

At the end of the discussion, Kleit addressed a number of faculty questions: "*How do I know the manuscript is ready?*" "*How best to advocate for an unconventional approach?*" He also analyzed one faculty member's specific project, and offered to help her connect to the right publisher, the right editor.

This kind of one-on-one support is available to all Rutgers faculty, Kleit said. "Please take advantage of our expertise. We are happy to refer you to other presses if we don't think your book is right for us. We are here to help our community."

Kleit has been in the publishing since he was 19. Here, he says, he is home.

"I've never loved a place like I love Rutgers."

*Note: The Rutgers **Office for Faculty Development** offers continuous writing support for full-time and part-time faculty.*