

A Proposal to Establish

LEVER



PRESS

An Initiative of

The Oberlin Group

A Consortium of Liberal Arts College Libraries

In Partnership With

**The Amherst College Press
and Michigan Publishing**



The Amherst College Press and Michigan Publishing have joined in partnership to present this proposal to the Oberlin Group. We believe this three-way partnership model offers the most promising way to translate Oberlin's vision of a sustainable and innovative open access monograph imprint in the humanities into a practical reality.

As set out in the Request for Proposal, we provide in the pages that follow:

- Details about our respective presses and the strengths we each bring to this proposal;
- An outline of how we might collaborate to support the Lever Press initiative;
- The reasons why we believe a partnership between our three organizations offers Oberlin the most efficient way of maximizing the impact of its investment;
- The expectations we have for the program, platform, and partnership aspects of this initiative;
- A general financial plan relating Oberlin's proposed investments to commitments on the parts of Amherst College Press and Michigan Publishing to assure a long-term future for the Lever Press.

Summary Overview

We believe that rather than being a separate firm, the Lever Press should be expressed as an initiative of the Oberlin Group brought into realization by a joint effort of Amherst College Press and Michigan Publishing. One way to describe this is as a joint imprint of Amherst and Michigan, with each title published under this imprint giving explicit credit to the leadership of the Oberlin Group libraries supporting the initiative.

Through effective and intentional governance structures, we propose to link the particular strengths each of our three organizations brings to this work in an initiative uniquely positioned to create a significant, influential, and sustainable pathway for the publishing of new scholarship on an open-access basis. We see these as:

- The Oberlin Group's strong tradition in the encouragement and availability of scholarly knowledge, its devotion to the liberal arts, its close relationships with faculty and students on member campuses, the knowledge of the information professionals who form its staffs, and the significant impact of its leaders on the thinking of decision-makers in this uniquely American sector of higher education.
- The Amherst College Press's founding commitment to an exclusively open access pathway for the pursuit, development, and publication of scholarship in the humanities as understood from the perspective of the liberal arts college.
- Michigan Publishing's demonstrated accomplishment in developing the tools for digital scholarship that are a necessary condition of successful

open access publishing, and its emergence as a leading scholarly press situated within the library structure of a large public research university.

But we see the Lever Press as more than an isolated imprint. Our intention and desire is to use the work of the Lever Press to strengthen the capacity of Oberlin's member libraries for other independent library-based publishing in ways suited to the needs of their institutions. Recognizing that a number of members of the Group are already actively engaged in publishing (we recognize around ten Oberlin Group members in the latest *Directory of Library Publishing*), we aim for the Lever Press to develop a hub of new publishing workflows, systems, and approaches that can be adapted in local operations and offer a model of transparency in the way it works with the community.

We see as well the potential of even more significant and lasting accomplishments. As we consider the scale of the Oberlin Group's ambitions in the broader context of existing open access initiatives, we believe it may catalyze a fundamentally new partnership between libraries, scholarly publishers, and faculty. This is the critical piece lacking in existing efforts to develop an alternative mode for scholarly communication. We therefore propose to begin the Lever Press initiative by laying the foundation of this broader partnership, persuaded that it will be what sets this effort decisively apart on the landscape of other initiatives. We see the inherently interdisciplinary and collegial ethos of liberal arts institutions as uniquely poised to provide the ground on which to build. On this foundation we will achieve what has not yet been accomplished: an outlet that can successfully achieve librarians' interests, be sustainable in ways publishers can implement and embrace, and yield works accepted among scholars as the equivalent of traditional market-distributed, printed works.

[The Amherst College Press](#) was launched in January of 2014 by Amherst College as a response to what liberal arts colleges increasingly experience as an untenable ecosystem for scholarly communication producing work characterized by high cost, restricted access, and limited utility to faculty and students in a liberal arts setting. Accordingly, the Amherst College Press (situated in, and supported by, the Amherst College Library) seeks to create a sustainable alternative to the current system for scholarly communication by developing a non-market solution with outputs that will be digital-first, open access, and developed with a view to the curricular needs and research priorities of liberal arts colleges.

ACP sees the value of its contribution not in competing with established and successful scholarly presses, but rather in focusing on the encouragement and development of scholarly work of three basic types:

- Scholarship in the humanities better served by digital platforms than by the restrictions inherent in print, where we feel the acceptance of digital scholarship will be more quickly achieved;

Organizational Capabilities and Specialties

Our Presses

- Scholarship in fields characterized by an active and engaged community of researchers, the presence of courses taught in undergraduate and graduate settings, yet at a point in their development at which an increasingly market-driven publishing environment will not consider producing the work; and
- Works of “teachable research”—scholarship with high potential impact in the pedagogy of the undergraduate classroom, communicating basic ideas and research methods in ways characteristic of the unique strengths of liberal arts institutions.

Amherst’s faculty leadership has recently commissioned a committee of faculty to serve as the inaugural editorial board of the Press. Some of these colleagues have been selected on the basis of their initiative in proposing and developing series of works for the Press; others have been selected on the basis of their interests in, and support of, the emergence of an alternative publishing model offering the unique perspective of a liberal arts institution.

In addition, the Amherst College Press has recently entered into an agreement making the [New Books Network](#) part of its mission and organizational structure. NBN is a growing archive of interviews with the authors of new scholarly books in over a hundred fields, each available as a free download. Currently numbering more than 1,600 separate audio files, NBN provided 300,000 downloads of its interviews in the single month of October, 2014. We see the mission of NBN—making scholarly ideas available on open-access basis, and utilizing digital tools creatively for the purpose—as harmonious with that of the Amherst College Press. Moreover, this new partnership has given us an effective and no-cost means of alerting more than a thousand scholarly authors of the existence of the Amherst College Press, and our interest in helping them to explore the possibilities of digital publishing in their own work.

[Michigan Publishing](#) is the hub of scholarly publishing at the University of Michigan, and is a division of University of Michigan Library. Michigan Publishing supports the creation and distribution of scholarly and educational materials in a range of formats for wide dissemination and permanent preservation, provides publishing services to the University of Michigan community and beyond, and advocates for the broadest possible access to scholarship everywhere.

The flagship imprint of Michigan Publishing is the University of Michigan Press, founded in 1930, which produces around 100 books a year, many award-winning. The majority of these titles are scholarly monographs in the humanities and qualitative social sciences; the Press also publishes best-selling English Language Teaching (ELT) materials and has expertise in textbook development. There is also a regional list, focused on the history and culture of the Upper Midwest.

Major areas of disciplinary strength for the Press are theater and performance, classical studies, political science, and cultural studies. In 2006 editorial interest in the intersection of technology and culture led to the development of [Digital Culture Books](#) (DCB), a new imprint dedicated to publishing innovative work in new media and digital humanities. Almost forty books have been published and appear for free in HTML format under Creative Commons licenses, as well as in chargeable downloadable and digital print editions. The imprint provides an opportunity for the Press and its parent Library to experiment with new forms of peer review, digital workflows, and engagement tools (such as [hypothes.is](#), an online, browser-agnostic annotation tool). While DCB is not entirely self-sustaining through earned revenue (leading us to some concern about the “print subsidy” model of open access sustainability), the books show impressive usage. The imprint has provided a valuable proof of concept for the potential of open access books and a testing ground for new technology, intellectual property, and business models—some of which have been injected back into the rest of the Press.

As well as publishing under its own imprints, Michigan Publishing supports a number of other entities with goals aligned to the Lever Press initiative. We publish nearly 40 open access journals—over 650 articles a year—on behalf of faculty, societies, and centers outside the University. In the area of book publication we provide backbone production and technology platform services for three major content collections:

- The [ACLS Humanities E-Book collection](#) (HEB) is an online collection of approximately 3,700 books of high quality in the humanities, accessible through institutional and individual subscription. HEB titles are offered by the American Council of Learned Societies in collaboration with twenty-seven learned societies, 108 university presses, and Michigan Publishing which provides technology services including digitization, mark-up, and platform support. A renewal contract has just been signed.
- The [Open Humanities Press](#) (OHP) is an international, scholar-led open access publishing collective whose mission is to make leading works of contemporary critical thought available worldwide. A network of interlacing thematic scholarly communities provide editorial leadership for the imprint, while Michigan Publishing provides production, technology, and marketing and sales services. Much like Digital Culture Books, OHP provides online access for free while generating revenue from premium versions. Some of OHP’s titles have been very successful, providing income that cross-subsidizes other publications. However the collective nature of the editorial programming has led to some challenges in maintaining quality of content and focus. Because Michigan does not have an editorial stake in the series, we have recently decided to part company with OHP in a mutually amicable way and will produce the last books under their imprint in 2015.

- The [Text Creation Partnership](#) (TCP) is funded by a consortium of ca. 150 libraries worldwide dedicated to creating standardized, accurate XML/SGML encoded electronic text editions of early print books, and jointly run by the Universities of Michigan and Oxford. TCP editors transcribe and mark up the text from the millions of page images in ProQuest's Early English Books Online, Gale Cengage's Eighteenth Century Collections Online, and Readex's Evans Early American Imprints; TCP then releases these into the public domain for anyone to use. In 2015 the second phase of the Early English Books Online (EEBO) project will be complete, and around 70,000 titles will have been processed. This project is an example of how a consortium of libraries can come together to create freely-available materials for public benefit.

The ending of Michigan's relationship with OHP and the completion of phase 2 of the TCP EEBO project in 2015 will free us to engage in the next game-changing partnership, which we hope will be with the Oberlin Group. Michigan Publishing's reputation for innovation in the digital space arises in significant part from the fact that we have built and implemented our own publishing platform, rather than subcontracting to third parties with commoditized services. Through the development of our Digital Library Extension System (DLXS) almost a decade ago, Michigan Publishing took an early lead among university presses in building paths for moving scholarly work quickly and effectively to the web. Today, Michigan Publishing is leading a five-press consortium working to build a next-generation digital publishing platform based on the open-source Hydra/Fedora Commons digital asset management system. When realized, this platform promises the capacity to link a digital publishing infrastructure well-adapted for presenting multimodal scholarship to major digital repositories capable of preserving it via HathiTrust and the Digital Preservation Network (DPN).

Our Team

Each of the following members of our staff will dedicate a proportion of their time to the Lever Press initiative. The value of this cost share is indicated in the attached spreadsheet and further referenced where the financial plan is discussed below.

Mark D. W. Edington, Director of the Amherst College Press. Edington arrived at Amherst in January of this year as the founding director of the new Amherst College Press. Prior to this he served for fifteen years in a number of senior administrative roles in Harvard University, in the Divinity School, Central Administration, and the Kennedy School of Government. Edington's publishing experience encompasses directing the publications program of the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, an independent, non-partisan research institute in national security and foreign policy, and for five years acting as an editor at *Dædalus*, the journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Edington is a member of the committee on Copyright

and Intellectual Property of the Association of American University Presses, and a trustee of Adrian College in Adrian, Michigan. A *summa cum laude* graduate of Albion College (an Oberlin member,) Edington also holds the M.Div. from Harvard Divinity School and the M.A.L.D. from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University. Edington will provide strategic leadership for The Lever Press and will take the editorial lead.

Charles Watkinson, Associate University Librarian for Publishing at the University of Michigan and Director of University of Michigan Press. Watkinson is well known as a leader in the library publishing movement, serving as a co-PI on the pathbreaking IMLS-sponsored research report [Library Publishing Services: Strategies for Success](#) and an initiator of the Library Publishing Coalition. His presentation at the 2014 conference of the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association, "[Library-based Publishing in North America: Coming of Age](#)," sets out the challenges and opportunities ahead for library-based publishing initiatives in the broader ecosystem of scholarly communication. Prior to moving to Michigan in June 2014, Watkinson was Director of Purdue University Press and Head of Scholarly Publishing Services in Purdue Libraries for five years. He was previously Director of Publications at the American School of Classical Studies in Princeton, New Jersey, and prior to that ran a distribution services for small European academic publishers in Oakville, Connecticut. He holds a M.A. from the University of Cambridge, where he studied Archaeology and Anthropology at Pembroke College (a learning and residential community similar to a Liberal Arts institution), and an M.B.A. from Oxford Brookes University. Watkinson will provide strategic support to the initiative.

Aaron McCollough, Editorial Director, Michigan Publishing. McCollough acquires titles in technology, culture, media, and modernities for University of Michigan Press (approx. 25 titles per year). Additionally, he oversees the acquisitions editorial department of the press, including the review process from commissioning through development and formal peer review. McCollough has been actively engaged in shaping Michigan Publishing's increasing commitment to digital work and open access scholarly publishing since he began working in the U-M Library's Scholarly Publishing Office in 2009. He was the subject liaison librarian for English Literature at U-M from 2010-2012. He holds a Ph.D. in English from the University of Michigan, and an M.F.A. in creative writing from the Iowa Writers' Workshop. He did his undergraduate study at Sewanee, the University of the South—also an Oberlin member. McCollough will collaborate with Edington to provide editorial leadership for the initiative.

Jason Colman, Director of Michigan Publishing Services, Michigan Publishing. Colman is dedicated to improving the speed and efficiency of digital scholarly publishing in order to ensure its sustainability. Colman has managed the production of online journals and open access monographs at Michigan Publishing since 2012, and is continuing to develop a coher-

ent full-service publishing offering for scholars at Michigan. Previously, at the California Digital Library, he managed the digitization of more than a million books from the University of California's collections and their inclusion in a new Print on Demand service developed with Hewlett-Packard. He began his studies in Medieval European History at Kalamazoo College (an Oberlin member) and the University of Michigan, later returning to Michigan to earn a Master's in Information Science with a specialization in Digital Preservation. Colman will lead production support for the initiative.

Rebecca Welzenbach, Journals Coordinator, Michigan Publishing. Welzenbach coordinates Michigan Publishing's journals program, with a particular focus on acquiring new projects and developing new services. In this role, she works closely with faculty at Michigan and across North America and Europe who seek to establish new journals on the Michigan Publishing platform, maintaining relationships with the editors of almost 40 humanities and social science journals, with four to five new titles added to that list each year. She is also the outreach librarian for the Text Creation Partnership, a large consortial effort to fund the transcription of tens of thousands of early English books. Welzenbach earned a bachelor's degree in English from Illinois Wesleyan University and a Master's of Science in Information from the University of Michigan. Welzenbach will work with McCollough and Edington to provide editorial leadership for the initiative.

In addition to this team, the Amherst College Library is currently in the final stages of searching for a **Web Developer** to enhance its capacity to support the publicity and elements of the production aspects of the initiative.

Proposed Structures and Support Outcomes

We propose:

- To develop a new partnership, catalyzed by the Lever Press initiative, between librarians, publishers, and faculty;
- To build on the basis of this partnership an editorial plan capable of attracting high-quality work in the humanities of particular value to liberal arts institutions, guided by and with input from a standing Oversight Committee of Oberlin Group representatives;
- To acquire this work for the Lever Press imprint through the work of Oberlin's librarian representatives, faculty engaged in the initiative as series editors, and the work of the editorial leadership of Amherst and Michigan;
- To convene a Lever Press Editorial Board comprised of intellectual leaders from Oberlin Group institutions, nominated by Oberlin's leadership and capable of generating crucial credibility for this initiative through the weight of their own scholarly reputations;
- To provide the services of a title management system to works acquired for the Lever Press;

- To manage the progress of works through review by peers in traditional, peer-to-peer, and open systems;
- To implement capable developmental editing, strengthening and focusing arguments along with rigorous copyediting, assuring a consistent level of accessibility in language and approach;
- To provide design services for both digital (web and download) and printed outputs of Lever Press titles;
- To utilize Michigan Publishing's platforms for digital publishing—both the current DLXS system and an under-development system extending the Hydra/Fedora platform to this purpose—for the creation of web-accessible and downloadable digital versions of the works developed;
- To create and manage a pathway for the creation and distribution of printed outputs of titles sold at market rates to create an ancillary revenue stream;
- To ensure the broadest possible impact of works developed through the Lever Press initiative by means of traditional marketing programs, social media, and collaborative outreach initiatives with Oberlin Group institutions;
- To engage with interested Oberlin member libraries in order to help expand their capacities for engaging in publishing activities fit to the needs of their own institutions; and
- To ensure that works produced through the Lever Press initiative are conceived *ab initio* for inclusion in major repositories of digital scholarship, building on our team's founding relationship with HathiTrust.

This is an immense and ambitious agenda, and we cannot fully explore each aspect of it here. We outline below some details of the production process in the narrative that accompanies our financial plan below. For purposes of this proposal we wish to focus on the *governance structure* we see as best suited to achieving Oberlin's desired outcomes; the *phasing of the work* of the first five years of the Lever Press; general observations about *organization, author education, and outreach*; one set of ideas for how together we could give shape to an *editorial program of high value* to the needs of liberal arts institutions; and the *implementation of appropriate metrics* to measure the success of the work the initiative itself.

As we have indicated above, given that both partners in this proposal have existing capabilities and staff expertise dedicated to the development and production of open access scholarship in digital formats, we do not believe that the creation of another organizational structure with separate paid staff offers the Oberlin group an optimal way of translating committed resources to the highest possible realization of its objectives. (Said differently, this

Governance

proposal intends to describe fully an answer to “Option B” as envisaged in the RFP.) Instead, we believe that the members of the current Lever Press Steering Committee (responsible for the vision behind the RFP) should form the nucleus of a new **Oversight Committee** to take strategic leadership of the initiative. An **Editorial Board** will take responsibility for selecting individual titles and will be composed of disciplinary faculty nominated by library directors at individual Oberlin Group institutions.

The Oversight Committee

We see the responsibility of the Oversight Committee as encompassing an ongoing conversation around key questions shaping the trajectory of this initiative:

- What criteria characterize a work of value to liberal-arts institutions?
- How do we translate that criteria into an editorial program, and articulate that program compellingly on our campuses and among scholars everywhere?
- How do we translate the principled commitments of the initiative—open access scholarship, the utilization of Creative Commons licenses to facilitate first-and-following uses, the encouragement of innovative digital scholarship—into business practices, contract language, and policy guidance?
- What areas of study should we support? What sorts of series editors should be recruited and proposals solicited?

What will distinguish the Lever Press, and enable it to succeed where others have stumbled, will be *the maintenance of a sustained conversation between librarians, publishers, and disciplinary faculty on these questions* throughout the life of the initiative—and the translation of that conversation into practice by the Amherst-Michigan partnership.

In addition to the members of the current RFP steering committee, the Oversight Committee should, we believe, include the editorial leadership of the two presses (Aaron McCollough and Mark Edington), and two senior faculty members from among the institutions of the Oberlin Group. Ideally these would be members of the Editorial Board, of which more below.

The Editorial Board

Because the Lever Press initiative holds out the possibility of convening a fundamentally new conversation between librarians, publishers, and faculty, and because the acceptance of the work developed by this initiative will ultimately depend on the reputations of scholars associated with it, we believe the Editorial Board of the Lever Press should be composed of disciplinary faculty members from Oberlin Group institutions. These eight scholars would then be joined by the chair of the Oversight Committee *ex officio*, and by McCollough and Edington.

Again, with a view to assuring broad acceptance of the works produced by the Lever Press, the responsibilities of the Editorial Board will mirror those of similar boards in scholarly publishing. These may also be described in terms of the sorts of questions that will guide its work:

Figure 1
**Governance
 Organization and
 Responsibilities**

Proposed Governance Structure	
Oversight Committee	
<i>Responsibilities include:</i>	<i>Members:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions on subject area focus • Suggestions/recruitment of excellent series editors • Translation of principles into policies guiding the business model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use of Creative Copyright licenses ✓ Education of authors on contracts • Integration of Lever Press outputs with Oberlin member libraries and curricula • Nominates disciplinary faculty to serve on Editorial Board • Outreach efforts on behalf of the initiative and titles published through the Press in and beyond Oberlin Group institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives of Oberlin Group (<i>eight members</i>) • Editorial leadership from Amherst College Press and Michigan Publishing (<i>two members</i>) • Two faculty representatives nominated by Oberlin Group
Editorial Board	
<i>Responsibilities include:</i>	<i>Members:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews editorial process and content • Early involvement with authors, especially of “digital innovation” projects • Confer disciplinary credibility to the output of the press • Vote to accept or reject individual projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair of the Oversight Committee (<i>ex officio</i>) • Eight faculty representatives, nominated by members of the Oberlin Group • Editorial leadership from Amherst College Press and Michigan Publishing (<i>non-voting</i>)
Editorial leadership	
<i>Responsibilities include:</i>	<i>Members:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead responsibility for interfacing with series editors • Lead responsibility for identifying/acquiring work • Principal point of contact for authors sending queries and proposals • Implementation and monitoring of business plan • Monitoring of production process, including developmental editing, copy editing, and design • Outreach efforts and marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Edington <i>Amherst College Press</i> • Aaron McCollough and Rebecca Welzenbach <i>Michigan Publishing</i>

- How was this proposal received by the press? Why was it recruited?
- Has it been rigorously evaluated through a review process? What review processes were used, and why were they chosen? Has the desire of the author(s) for alternative review systems, if expressed, been supported?
- Has the author successfully responded to the concerns raised by reviewers?
- Does the work as proposed meet the guidelines described by the Oversight Committee as characterizing scholarship of high value to liberal arts institutions?

It is important to be clear that the overarching questions of business model, editorial program, and policies are *not* the responsibility of the Editorial Board. Those questions, in the model we propose, belong to the group where representation from the Oberlin Group is largest and most appropriate—in the Oversight Committee. The Editorial Board will be a working board; consistent with the role of editorial boards in all scholarly presses, the primary responsibility of this group will be to oversee the editorial process through which works developed by this initiative are proposed, reviewed, and produced. Importantly, it will not direct the policy choices of the initiative or assure clarity of expectations and performance by members of the partnership; these higher tasks are the responsibility of the Lever Press Oversight Committee.

Phasing the work

Translating the vision of the Oberlin Group into a successful, sustainable pathway for the development and publishing of new, open access scholarship in the humanities must begin, we are convinced, with an intentional approach toward building a solid foundation of understanding and common vision between Oberlin’s librarians, their publishing partners, and the scholars who must both commit their work to us as authors and receive it as the equal of traditional print scholarship as members of Promotion and Tenure Committees. With this in view, we propose:

Year 1

With an anticipated date of award in March of 2015, we would immediately take steps to plan and organize a gathering to be convened on the campus of Amherst College in early June, just after the season of commencements. We would gather at this meeting the initial members of the Oversight Committee along with six to eight faculty members from Oberlin Institutions, nominated by Oberlin Group library directors; we would hope to identify faculty members also willing to serve as the inaugural Editorial Board.

We have in mind a weekend retreat, beginning on a Friday evening and concluding with Sunday lunch, in which a partnership between librarians, publishers, and scholars can be built on the basis of candor, shared hopes, and a clear sense of engagement from all concerned. Our objective would be to derive from this meeting a mission statement for the Lever Press reflecting the themes of that conversation; the outlines of a proposed editorial program; initial guidance about desired publishing outcomes, licensing arrangements, and outreach efforts; and clear expectations about the roles of all participants in the effort.

Over the summer the findings of this gathering will be translated into a prospectus for the Lever Press, addressing questions of business model, editorial program, intellectual leadership, and publishing outcomes. This will be promulgated throughout the libraries of the Oberlin Group, and followed up in the autumn of 2015 with a series of presentations by a team from the initiative—representing the publishing, librarian, and scholarly partners in the effort—on Oberlin Group campuses. We anticipate three or four of these

events, regionally distributed and promoted among academic deans, department chairs, and faculty members with the assistance of Oberlin Group librarians.

The purpose of these gatherings will be not only to present the Lever Press initiative, but to gather feedback and identify needs and challenges not sufficiently addressed in the initial concept paper. The findings of these conversations will be compiled and presented at a first regular meeting of the Oversight Committee of the Lever Initiative, projected for December of 2015—a year from now. At this meeting a final version of the projected editorial program, business model, and author guidance will be established, and the names of faculty members of the projected Editorial Board finalized.

The second year of the Lever Press initiative will be marked by the launch of a website designed by the Web Developer at Amherst College Press in March of 2016. The website will have three primary audiences:

Year 2

- Authors of potential work, looking to learn more about the possibility of publishing through the Lever Press.
- Librarians of the Oberlin Group, as an aid to their efforts to spread word of the initiative among their faculty colleagues.
- Deans and department chairs, with a view to building the case for the scholarly merit of the work generated by the Press.

We will begin receiving proposals once the web site has been launched, with a view to developing and publishing ten titles by the end of year two, of which we anticipate two titles will be “digital innovation” projects pushing at the boundaries of the possibilities of multimodal scholarly communication. We have developed what we project to be an overall budget for the first five years of the initiative, found below in the financial plan; this represents what in our judgment are the necessary costs of attaining the high standards of editorial content, design, and impact to which the task force aspires.

With this number of anticipated projects in view for the first year of production, we do not believe a formal title-management system will need to be set in place initially. As a general rule, the Amherst College Press will have lead responsibility for organizing a workflow leading from submission to initial proposal review; identification of appropriate reviewers and review processes; convening and managing the work of the Editorial Board; and assuring appropriate contractual relationships with authors, expressing the vision of the Oberlin Group to create works conceived as open access resources. ACP will also take the lead in generating publicity and outreach for the published titles.

The eight titles expected to be of more traditional scholarship will be developed and published utilizing Michigan Publishing’s DLXS platform. Again, as a general rule, Michigan Publishing will have principal responsibility for the production of titles for the Lever Press, encompassing typesetting and markup, design, indexing, and then distribution and sales support for the

print versions. Coordination of the work of the two partners will be the responsibility of the editorial leadership of our two presses, enabled by regular communication and a shared digital space for monitoring workflow.

The two “digital innovation” titles will be somewhat more difficult to predict. It will be a matter for the Oversight Committee to determine how broadly to draw the compass of these projects, and how complex might be the projects the Lever Press can fully support. They might be of the nature of digital humanities projects, such as (for example) the [American Influenza Epidemic of 1918–1919: A Digital Archive](#), published by Michigan Publishing. This project has been instructive to us, indicating a trend toward digital projects that involve teams rather than single authors; a variety of media types and the technological requirements inherent in supporting them; and the need to engage at an early stage with project authors and leaders in order to understand fully the technological and design/user experience requirements of the envisaged project. The printed outcome of such a project will obviously be very different, and only partly suggestive, of the richness of the overall digital production; this will mean that the development of digital print/print-on-demand outcomes for these projects will impose a parallel design and production requirement.

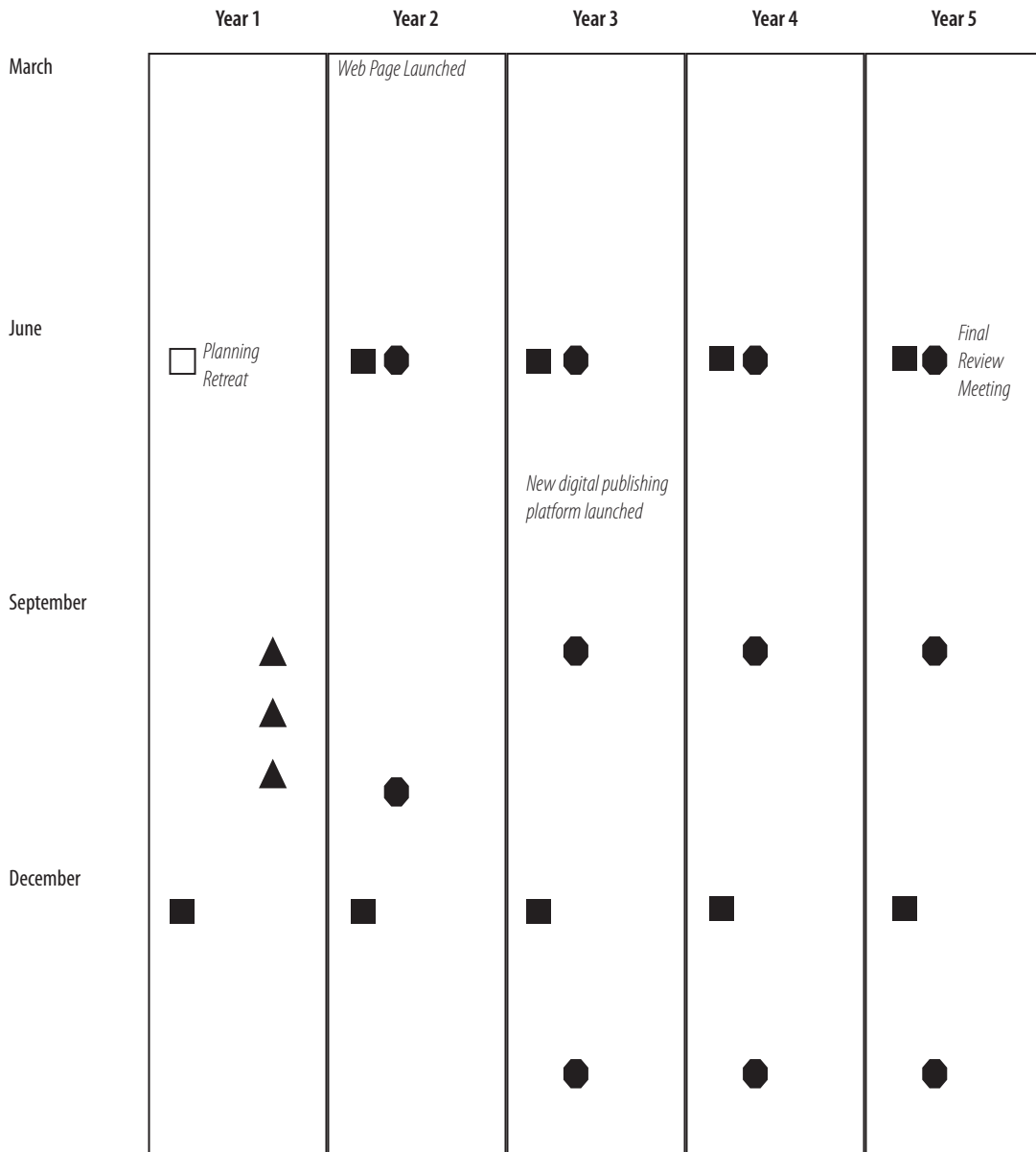
We anticipate establishing in Year 2 the practice of convening the Oversight Committee of the Lever Press on a twice-yearly basis. With the relatively small number of titles anticipated for this first year, it may be necessary to convene the Editorial Board formally only once; however, it would be advisable, we think, to work toward a joint Oversight Committee/Editorial Board meeting of some sort in the summer of 2015.

Year 3

A significant development in the initiative during Year 3 will be the anticipated rollout of a beta version of Michigan Publishing’s new digital publishing platform. Conceived as an extension of the widely implemented open-source Hydra/Fedora toolkit for digital asset management in research libraries, this new publishing platform will offer the possibility of tremendous progress toward the goal of seamlessly integrating the digital infrastructures on which research and publishing increasingly depend. Development of this platform will be based on anticipated support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and will support the digital publishing requirements of a number of well reputed scholarly presses, including the presses of Indiana University, University of Minnesota, Northwestern University, and Pennsylvania State University. Even if Mellon funding is not received, Michigan will be moving forward on the creation of a Hydra Fedora successor to DLXS.

In year three we anticipate producing a total of 15 titles, of which we hope three will be “digital innovation” projects. In these we will look to build from systems implemented in previous such projects to find ways of producing more complex digital works at scale. We will also hope to explore the im-

Figure 2
Phasing Plan



Titles	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
"Regular"		10	15	25	40
"Innovative"			3	5	5
Total:		10	25	50	90

Key: Oversight Committee Editorial Board Campus Visits

plementation of Michigan Publishing’s new digital publishing platform, as possible and appropriate, for these projects.

With the initial titles of the Lever Press initiative released, we feel this would also be an optimal time to broaden the base of support for the initiative through outreach to the Annapolis Group. Ultimately, the support of senior institutional leaders of the most influential liberal arts institutions will be

a significant factor in securing the broad acceptance of open-access, digital-first work as a standard for scholarship.

Finally, in Year 3 we will pilot an assessment of the success of titles in the project, focusing on quality, sustainability, and dissemination.

Year 4

Our target for Year 4 is twenty-five titles. This will be the year that sees the greatest year-on-year growth in the Lever Press, fully implementing both editorial and production pathways established and tested in the “shakedown cruise” phase of the project. We look for five of these titles to be “digital innovation” projects.

Year 5

We look to expand to a top-line production level of forty titles in the fifth year of the initiative. We note, however, our expectation that the rate of digital innovation projects within the initiative will remain at five titles in this last year. While a departure from the RFP’s objectives, our experience teaches us that digital projects—particularly of an innovative and technologically demanding nature—do not (at least not yet) easily achieve scale. We think it best to focus in these projects on quality over quantity, believing it will be the quality of these works that ultimately makes the strongest case for their acceptance among departments and tenure committees.

A critical milestone of this fifth project year will be the June meeting of the Oversight Committee, which will take the form of an initial assessment of the project’s impact, success, and future directions. While the Oversight Committee will continue to meet at regular intervals throughout the initiative (see figure 2, p. 15), this meeting will have the character of a formal review and report to the broader Oberlin Group.

General notes
about the initiative

Organization

Consistent with our expectation that scholarly communication in an open access era will evolve in ways characteristic of commons-based peer production, we will activate networks of faculty colleagues in Oberlin-affiliated institutions to identify and engage potential authors. We think, as a general observation, that the organizational characteristics of scholarly publishing will shift more toward the functions of engaging with authors on challenges of digital research and publication, and retain the traditional function of providing rigorous review and copyediting—while the role of acquisitions editors will increasingly be taken up by a more commons-based approach to identifying and recruiting authors. Another way to say this is to imagine the traditional role of acquisitions editors being, in a sense, divided—lifted up toward faculty more deeply involved in the work of scholarly publishing as series editors and “talent scouts,” and simultaneously pressed down toward professional, highly qualified developmental editors managed by the Amherst College Press. The work of the leadership of the Lever Press—both librarians and publishers— will be to manage and grow this commons. This is a key reason why we feel the development of Lever should *not* begin by

replicating the creation of yet another firm. In the case of the Lever Press, *all* of us—librarian, publisher, and faculty members engaged in our initiative—will share this responsibility. Edington and McCollough will serve as coordinators of this effort, identifying areas of opportunity and regularly communicating with the Oversight Committee.

We will develop information for prospective authors about working with the initiative, emphasizing the open-access objective of the work produced through our partnership and providing examples of model contracts designed with a view to achieving these objectives. These contracts will retain copyright to the author, but license the work created under Creative Commons 4.0 licenses in order to signal to the community of scholars, students, and libraries the intent of both author and publisher to see the work distributed, utilized, and copied free of charge.

Lever’s model contract with authors will bring a different financial relationship between author and publisher. Because sustainability in open access publishing demands reducing the basic fixed-cost elements of the publishing value chain to the greatest extent possible, our contracts will offer one-time (but assured) honoraria instead of systems for prorated (but unpredictable) royalty-payment schemes. In this way we eliminate the accounting and payments costs associated with monitoring appropriate payments to authors, permitting a greater share of the available resources to be focused on compensating authors for their efforts and developing better digital outputs.

Simply making works universally available as open-access scholarship is not sufficient to assure that they find audiences searching for them. We will build our works with a view to discoverability and ease of use; utilize the network of faculty and librarians we build through the envisaged commons of the Lever Press network to raise awareness of the initiative, the critical role of library sponsorship in making it possible, and the scholarship it is producing; and draw on existing marketing capability in our two presses to alert audiences in specific disciplines through traditional means, social media, and such means as the New Books Network.

Amherst College Press will take the lead in generating publicity for the electronic versions of the books with a focus on social media and electronic marketing while Michigan Publishing will ensure exposure of print copies of the books in regular sales channels through the activities of its national sales reps, through seasonal catalogs, through conference displays, and other activities engaged in to advance the University of Michigan Press imprint. Lever Press books in this context will be described as “distributed by the University of Michigan Press” which articulates the relationship in a form familiar to retailers and other buyers. All publicity will indicate that electronic versions of the books are available open access.

An important element of open access publishing for authors, publishers, and sponsors lies in good measurement of impact. DLXS and its successor platform both offer rich metrics including [COUNTER](#)-compliant download

Educating authors

*Marketing, outreach,
and branding*

counts together with Google Analytics and Altmetric.com impact measures. In creating the Hydra/Fedora platform we are focused on providing dashboards by which these metrics can be easily accessed, and regular email updates provided to users choosing to sign up. We will also be working on better ways of displaying the impact of particular books on their home pages, such as the Altmetric.com “doughnut” which graphically illustrates different types of mention or discussion in social media.

While the RFP makes clear that the Oberlin Group as a consortial entity does not expect brand recognition, a particular challenge for the Lever Press will be to represent its relationship to the liberal arts colleges supporting the initiative. We believe that reference to the conventions of “subscription publishing” more common in the 19th century may be helpful in this regard. Each publication under this model would contain a listing of the institutions that had made its production possible, which in a web environment could also contain brand marks and live links. The pledging institutions would also benefit from access to the Lever Press’s skills and experience as a publishing hub and a unique insight into the challenges of open access monograph publishing, as well as participation in governance through the Oversight Committee. However, given the open access and transparent nature of the sort of publishing envisaged, where even downloadable e-book versions would be distributed without charge, it is difficult to envision tangible unique benefits for pledging institutions that would not be available to all users. We recognize the tension between public good and unique benefits and hope to further explore this issue should our proposal move forward.

Thoughts on the Editorial Program

It is not appropriate for us in this proposal to determine with precision the specifics of an editorial program for the Lever Press. Because we believe the key to the success of this initiative lies in facilitating the creation of a true and open partnership between librarians, publishers, and scholars, we would be getting ahead of that crucial first step in prescribing the specific topics such a program should pursue.

That said, in our work preparing this proposal our conversations have frequently turned to wondering together what might emerge as the distinguishing features of works published through an initiative led by the librarians of the nation’s liberal arts colleges—a [distinctively American](#) institution. We offer here some of the thoughts that have most excited us as we consider the prospect of working together with the Oberlin Group to create the Lever Press.

As a starting point it seems to us that the success of any editorial program developed for the Lever Press will be conditioned by the degree to which it authentically reflects the two principal sources of vision that has brought it forward: the *scholarly needs of liberal-arts colleges*, and the *particular per-*

spective and expertise of librarians within the ecosystem of scholarly communication.

In our own preparations for developing this proposal we have spoken with a broad spectrum of colleagues in scholarly publishing, libraries, and the leadership of liberal arts colleges. We have been reminded in these conversations of the many ways in which libraries serve the crucial function of extending, and making vibrant, the possibilities contained within a work of scholarship—by making it discoverable, by setting it within the larger context of research for both faculty and students, by linking it to the variety of other scholarly resources within and beyond the holdings of a specific institution. As one colleague remarked in one of these conversations, libraries “turn books from single events into scholarly impact; they know to extend ideas beyond the edges of the book.”

We think this suggests two guiding criteria for the work sought and developed by the Lever Press. First, because liberal arts institutions are rightly renowned for excellence in, and devotion to, teaching undergraduates, we feel the Lever Press should become known for acquiring and developing the work of scholars skilled not merely at pathbreaking thought, but at disclosing within their works the methods and paths of inquiry that have brought them to their conclusions. Said differently, we imagine asking of each next proposal submitted to us: “How does this work teach what it knows?” We feel the ability of each proposal to answer this question would be an appropriate measure of its fit within the vision of the Lever Press.

Second, because this is a press arising from the vision and support of librarians, we feel a qualifying question to ask of each proposal would be the degree to which it supports the emergence of libraries in the liberal-arts setting as critical partners with faculty in teaching information literacy. We see these works—and particularly the “digital innovation” works envisaged by the initiative—as works capable of blurring the lines that have long demarcated the work of the library from the work of the classroom. Perhaps, to appeal to labels of the moment, we might see the works developed by the Lever Press as attaining, at best, the standard of “mini-MOOCs”—works capable of not merely conveying ideas but teaching modes of inquiry and suggesting new paths for research and investigation.

In our conversations we have imagined three broad areas of work that the Lever Press might choose to pursue, each of which would answer to both these qualifications:

- Traditional monograph-length works in which an engaging recounting of scholarly findings is accompanied by a narrative of the research process itself, a description of methods and the ways in which they were implemented, and an extension of the author’s conversation with readers through the full implementation of commenting and annotating tools (e.g., *hypothes.is*).

- Shorter, focused works—basically, extended essays—that we conceive as “conversation starters.” Written by senior scholars, these would, in our vision, become the sorts of works adopted as campus-wide reads by Oberlin Group institutions. They would take on critical issues confronting our public square, and see those questions through the lenses of one or more disciplinary perspectives—suggesting not an agenda for action, but a set of questions for conversation and engagement.
- Study guides, or digitally enhanced roadmaps to the study of specific disciplines or fields of inquiry. As research and instruction librarians take on a greater and more significant role in teaching information literacy to a rising generation of students, we see these works as weaving together the once-indispensable resource of the bibliography with the new possibilities inherent in digital publishing (imagine an online bibliography of a given field with title entries linked to the works in HathiTrust, for example). We can imagine works of this sort co-edited by disciplinary faculty in a given field and librarians with research and subject-matter expertise in that field. We see this as a strong potential expression of an editorial program offering great utility to the needs and teaching mission of liberal-arts libraries.

All of this, of course, is open to further discussion and engagement with Oberlin Group leaders. We offer it here for the limited purpose of disclosing our excitement about the possibilities of this initiative, and our perspective—seen from the publishing side of the partnership—of needs that might be creatively addressed through its work.

How we will measure success

As noted by the 2014 *Economic Analysis of Business Models for Open Access Monographs* written by a team from London Economics on behalf of the Higher Education Funding Council for England in the UK, the criteria by which an individual open access publishing operation can be judged are quality, sustainability, and dissemination. We will measure success of the Lever Press according to these criteria.

Quality needs to be taken very seriously by open access publishers since there is a burden to demonstrate credibility with skeptical authors and prove that open access is a valid alternative to traditional publishing models. The Lever Press will achieve quality through careful selection of target areas in which to publish, an editorial board of senior scholars with strong reputations, association with the best scholarly series editors, a careful process of selection, and efficient editorial and design work. Reports from peer reviewers and external reviews after publication will be the main measure of whether our quality goals have been achieved. Other indicators include prizes awarded and citations.

Sustainability is a function of the stability of revenue streams. Operations relying on a single source of revenue are inherently less stable, but the consortial nature of the Oberlin Group's support of the Lever Press counterbalances this. As discussed elsewhere, we see institutional subsidy rather than reader-side revenues (for the print version) as the dominant source of support. We cannot describe the printed versions offered for sale as "premium" since it is a core belief that they should not contain features or substance beyond that available in the open access versions. Publication subventions from the authors' own institutions will be solicited; and it is hoped that the Lever Press will be sufficiently mature to also qualify for the publication payments being suggested by the AAU/ARL prospectus for an institutionally-funded first book subvention. The number of Oberlin Group members pledging and revenue earned from sources beyond the Oberlin Group's institutional support will be the major measures of sustainability.

Dissemination cannot be simply achieved by the act of making books available online for free. A challenge we must acknowledge is that open access operations entirely funded by author payments or institutional support have no strong incentive to market their products. One reason for publishing print versions at all is that the incentives for maximizing dissemination are strongest when there is component version for sale: each new reader is a potential buyer and hence a source of net revenue (as marginal costs tend towards zero). However, there is also a risk in such a model that dissemination efforts will be targeted at customer segments where there is most demand for print but where the benefits of knowledge dissemination are comparatively low. Usage (especially beyond academic institutions which may have been able to afford a for sale version) measured through implementation of Google Analytics, COUNTER-compliant download counts, and Altmetric.com will be the major measure of dissemination, with sales figures for the print versions useful but ancillary.

On the basis of our discussion of the goals, objectives, and experience of both members of our partnership, we hope it is clear why we feel we bring a unique combination of liberal-arts perspective, open-access commitment, and digital publishing accomplishment as valuable complements to the network and skills of our third partner, the Oberlin Group.

Michigan Publishing has been a leader among large, highly regarded traditional scholarly presses in moving to create and support open-access work, especially through its digitalculturebooks series; while the Amherst College Press is firmly committed to finding and presenting pathbreaking scholarship of clear relevance to the demands of the liberal-arts setting. We are both members of the [Library Publishing Coalition](#); we both are scholarly publishers situated within, and sensitive to the needs of, the research libraries of our respective institutions.

**Our interest,
commitment, and fit**

We feel these strengths offer the potential of tremendous synergy in working with the Oberlin Group libraries. In launching the Lever Press, the Oberlin Group has chosen to take a decisive step toward placing libraries in a role of new responsibility in not just the preservation, but the creation, of new scholarly work. We know that this comes in part from the frustration of librarians at the often bewildering complexity of permission layers that have resulted from publishers' efforts to derive revenue from this system. We know, too, that it comes from a sense that the overall output of scholarly publishers is not adequately addressing the particular needs of liberal arts institutions.

We feel the alignment of our commitments as librarians and publishers around shared goals of excellence in scholarship, engagement with disciplinary faculty, and the widest possible access for the resulting work make us ideally suited for doing this work together. Both members of this partnership see the opportunity of engaging with and serving Oberlin as holding tremendous potential for learning how to do better the work we do in making the system of scholarly communications serve authors, readers, students, and libraries. So, too, we see the opportunity of engaging the Oberlin Group as a full partner in this work as increasing librarians' understanding of, and perspective on, the challenges to scholarly communication as seen from the publishers' perspective.

Our expectations for the partnership

This points toward our expectations of each other, and of Oberlin, in the successful realization of the vision of the Lever Initiative. The Oberlin Group has been a leading force for thinking through, and innovating, creative and sustainable responses to the needs of scholarly communication in the humanities. In the specific case of establishing the Lever Press, we see Oberlin's leadership role within our collective work as having three critically important elements:

- Interfacing with the Amherst-Michigan partnership, providing representation for Oberlin in the joint governance structures we propose to create and giving substance to the stake Oberlin has placed in the success of this work
- Contributing to the work of channeling the work of potential authors—faculty members of Oberlin institutions—toward this pathway for the development and distribution of new knowledge in the humanities
- Taking on a role of advocacy for the acceptance of open-access humanities scholarship among key academic decision makers in the institutions they represent.

This third aspect of Oberlin's role is, we believe, of critical importance—and is perhaps not fully reflected in the language of the RFP. Ultimately, increasing the acceptance of open access and digitally produced scholarship

is a matter of changing the culture of scholarly communication such that these works are accepted as a regular part of scholarly discourse. Culture change, we believe, cannot and will not be dictated by publishers or libraries. Ultimately it can only be accomplished through effective relationships with key academic decision-makers within the Oberlin Group institution-by-institution—presidents, provosts, deans, and department chairs—backed up by examples of clearly important, rigorously reviewed, and well-produced work.

Far more than either Michigan Publishing or the Amherst College Press, the librarians of the Oberlin Group consortium are influential voices on their respective campuses, and indeed throughout the liberal-arts sector. Hastening the day that the work we produce will be regarded as the scholarly equivalent of the products of traditional modalities depends on Oberlin members being willing not just to fund and guide, but to advocate for the fruits of this effort in the places where their voices carry weight. This is a primary expectation we have of Oberlin, and particularly of those members appointed to the Oversight Committee to which oversight of the Lever Press will be entrusted.

We should be clear about how we feel the business aspects of the Lever Press should be developed. As noted, we do not feel it an effective use of Oberlin's funding to replicate existing structures or staff already in place to accomplish the functions of editorial acquisition, review, and development. This seems to us the wrong approach for accomplishing the principal goal of expanding existing capacity to develop sustainable open access publishing. But we do believe—and insist—that the Oversight Committee, with majority representation from Oberlin institutions, be the principal guiding force in this initiative, shaping its structure and guiding its work.

The objective of expanding from five to fifty titles in a five-year span, as envisaged in the RFP, may be unrealistic—at least within the frame of expected funding (taking as a baseline the funding support for “staff” identified in the RFP). There are two reasons for this. A publishing rate of fifty books per year would make the Lever Initiative itself of a scale and size comparable to mid-level members of the Association of American University Presses. While possible, growth to that scale within this span is perhaps less important than the establishment of a clear, scalable workflow in which each of the three stakeholder groups in this effort—librarians, publishers, and scholars—feels their goals for the effort are being accomplished. We believe it best to emphasize quality over quantity in the works produced in this effort, particularly in the early phases of the initiative.

Finally—and perhaps more immediately significant—is the simple fact that an open-access, digital-first model of production has as its starting point the creation of a cost structure for production that is already minimized to the greatest extent possible, and which does not realize significant economies of scale over larger numbers of titles. “Digital first” effectively means that what

has traditionally been understood as the “cost-to-first-copy” structure of publishing is now the *entire* cost structure. In some ways this can be reduced by approaching open-access as a business strategy (shifting from royalties to honoraria, for example, has potential cost savings) and moving toward a commons-based peer production system (relying more on the willing engagement of faculty to function as series editors and representatives of the press, thus reducing somewhat the need for acquiring editors).

Financial Plan

We offer here a high level financial plan showing anticipated costs over a five year period. We propose two different scenarios, one described as “premium” (total \$1,573,700 over five years) and the other as “light” (total \$770,600 over five years), to illustrate opportunities for cost savings, although we believe that the “premium” option aligns best with the focus on quality and author experience expressed in the RFP. We also attach a summary of the value of our existing staff time that both partners would commit without charge to the Oberlin Group (total \$450,735). These numbers include salary and benefits but do not reflect the additional overhead costs (space, technology, etc.) that we would also be incurring.

Based on the numbers shared in the RFP for the scenario in which the Lever Press would be covering staff costs directly, we recognize that your expectations may be for a number between the “premium” and “light” options (\$1,113,000). We believe that this would be achievable, but note that we as partners would also be bearing all overhead costs (space, technology, etc.) that would also have to be factored in should the Oberlin Group decide to employ its own staff.

We have chosen not to submit a revenue projection since, as described above, we expect the revenue needed to fund the Lever Press to come entirely from institutional commitments. Initially these would be from the participating Oberlin Group institutions, but we would work with you to expand the range of funders. We do propose to sell print editions of the works published by the Lever Press, but not to monetize downloadable electronic editions. Because the future of print formats for scholarly work seems uncertain to us, we would regard any revenue from such sales to be ancillary. We would propose to split net revenues from such sales 50:50 with the Oberlin Group, with our portion covering the distribution and sales costs associated with the production of print editions as well as returning a small surplus for reinvestment in our systems and processes.

Budget Narrative

The text below (p. 26ff) describes the basis for our estimates shown in the spreadsheet for the “Premium Option” with commentary on the items that could be omitted if the Oberlin Group chose to follow the “Light Option.” Of course, there is space for a third, intermediate option but we felt it would be helpful to show two more extreme solutions.

Table 1
Projected Costs
"Premium" Option

	Who?	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Per Title
Total titles/year		-	10	15	25	40	
Regular titles/year		-	8	12	20	35	
Innovation titles/year		-	2	3	5	5	
Book Costs							
Series Editor Honoraria	ACP	\$0	\$5,000	\$7,500	\$12,500	\$20,000	\$500.00 Per regular title contracted
Reviewer Payments	ACP	\$0	\$8,000	\$12,000	\$20,000	\$32,000	\$400.00 2 reviewers per regular ms, 50% accepted
Editorial Board Travel	ACP	\$0	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	7 people, 1 x a year in-person
Project Mgmt: Editorial	ACP	\$0	\$5,000	\$7,500	\$12,500	\$20,000	\$500.00
Project Mgmt: Production	MPS	\$0	\$5,000	\$7,500	\$12,500	\$20,000	\$500.00
Developmental editing	ACP	\$0	\$64,000	\$96,000	\$160,000	\$256,000	\$20 pp x 320 pp/book
Copyediting	ACP	\$0	\$16,000	\$24,000	\$40,000	\$64,000	\$5 pp x 320 pp/book
Typesetting/Mark up	MPS	\$0	\$14,400	\$21,600	\$36,000	\$57,600	\$4.50 pp x 320 pp/book
Indexing	MPS	\$0	\$14,400	\$21,600	\$36,000	\$57,600	\$3.50 pp x 320 pp/book
Design	MPS	\$0	\$5,000	\$7,500	\$12,500	\$20,000	\$500/book
Outreach / Publicity	MPS	\$0	\$1,500	\$2,250	\$3,750	\$6,000	\$150/book incl. catalogs, leaflets, direct mail
Platform	MPS	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	Flat rate (incl. hosting of innovative projects)
Extra Programming	MPS	\$0	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$5,000.00 Additional programming for innovation projects
Author Honoraria	ACP	\$0	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$25,000	\$40,000	\$1,000.00
Permissions Allowance	ACP	\$0	\$5,000	\$7,500	\$12,500	\$20,000	\$500.00 Per book
	Cost/book		\$17,930	\$17,397	\$16,970	\$16,355	
Program Travel	ACP/MPS	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000	
Program Publicity/Events	ACP/MPS	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	E.g., author guide
	Total	\$25,000	\$184,300	\$270,950	\$429,250	\$664,200	\$1,573,700
	ACP		\$121,500	\$180,500	\$291,000	\$463,000	\$1,056,000
	MPS		\$48,400	\$68,850	\$102,250	\$143,600	\$363,100

Table 2
Projected Costs
"Light" Option

	Who?	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Per Title
Total titles/year		-	10	15	25	40	
Regular titles/year		-	8	12	20	35	
Innovation titles/year		-	2	3	5	5	
Book Costs							
Series Editor Honoraria	ACP	\$0	\$5,000	\$7,500	\$12,500	\$20,000	\$500.00 Per regular title contracted
Reviewer Payments	ACP	\$0	\$8,000	\$12,000	\$20,000	\$32,000	\$400.00 2 reviewers per regular ms, 50% accepted
Editorial Board Travel	ACP	\$0	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	7 people, 1 x a year in-person
Project Mgmt: Editorial	ACP	\$0	\$5,000	\$7,500	\$12,500	\$20,000	\$500.00
Project Mgmt: Production	MPS	\$0	\$5,000	\$7,500	\$12,500	\$20,000	\$500.00
Developmental editing	ACP	\$0	\$16,000	\$24,000	\$40,000	\$64,000	\$5 pp x 320 pp/book
Copyediting	ACP	\$0	\$16,000	\$24,000	\$40,000	\$64,000	\$5 pp x 320 pp/book
Typesetting/Mark up	MPS	\$0	\$14,400	\$21,600	\$36,000	\$57,600	\$4.50 pp x 320 pp/book
Indexing	MPS	\$0	\$5,000	\$7,500	\$12,500	\$20,000	\$500/book
Design	MPS	\$0	\$5,000	\$7,500	\$12,500	\$20,000	\$500/book
Outreach / Publicity	MPS	\$0	\$1,500	\$2,250	\$3,750	\$6,000	\$150/book incl. catalogs, leaflets, direct mail
Platform	MPS	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	Flat rate (incl. hosting of innovative projects)
Extra Programming	MPS	\$0	\$3,000	\$4,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$1,500.00 Additional programming for innovation projects
Author Honoraria	ACP	\$0	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$25,000	\$40,000	\$1,000.00
Permissions Allowance	ACP						
	Cost/book		\$8,890	\$8,357	\$7,930	\$7,578	
Program Travel	ACP/MPS	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000	
Program Publicity/Events	ACP/MPS	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	E.g., author guide
	Total	\$25,000	\$93,900	\$135,350	\$203,250	\$313,100	\$770,600
	ACP		\$52,500	\$77,000	\$118,500	\$187,000	\$435,000
	MPS		\$41,400	\$58,350	\$84,750	\$126,100	\$310,600

Table 3
Costsharing
Plan

Total titles/year: We believe that the proposed ramp-up to fifty titles by year 5 expressed in the RFP would be too challenging if quality is to be preserved. We note that it will take time to recruit the initial manuscripts so propose that the first year be treated as a “silent phase” where the focus would be on articulating the program, seeking out excellent series editors, and seeding the initial list. No books would be published in that year, but we would ambitiously aim to produce ten books in the second year (i.e., twice the number suggested in the RFP). The division between “regular” and “innovation” titles is maintained but we believe that it would be too much of a stretch to produce 10 innovative titles in year 5, and would rather slow the growth of that program to maintain quality. As expressed below, there needs to be more discussion about what would constitute an “innovation” title; experience at Michigan Publishing shows that “digital humanities” projects can cost over \$100,000 each to produce, and there is a danger that even one such project could “suck all the air out of the room” with a young publishing program. We are advocating for “innovation within structure” where scholars would be offered much greater opportunity than currently exists but would be required to adapt their ideas to the constraints of existing systems.

Series Editor Honoraria: Rather than relying on acquisitions editors, the Lever Press will work with excellent academic series editors from Oberlin Group member institutions to build its editorial program. As well as reducing overhead, we anticipate that the reputations of these individuals will

provide early credibility for the imprint. For each title contracted in a series, the series editor who recruited the manuscript would receive an honorarium of \$500.

Reviewer Payments: Each manuscript would be reviewed by two outside specialist reviewers. As Kathleen Fitzpatrick has described, the conventional peer review process is a valuable complement to experimental forms such as open peer review in the case of long form scholarship. Each reviewer would receive a payment of \$200 for review of a full manuscript, less for a proposal. We anticipate an acceptance rate of 50% because materials would have been preselected by a series editor. Reviewers of innovation titles would receive the same payment, even if the nature of their review might be different (e.g., involve assessment of data as well as narrative).

Editorial Board Travel: We would anticipate that most of the meetings of the Editorial Board (the seven member group drawn from pledging Oberlin Group institutions) would happen remotely, but it feels important to us that the group meet in person once a year to ensure that there is a common understanding of the scope of our joint endeavor. This is particularly important since we would anticipate term limits with new members joining every few years.

Project Management: Since we would rely on freelance labor for editorial, typesetting, design, and indexing we have assumed a per-title project management fee of \$500 per book. This covers various staffing and materials expenses related to preparation of manuscripts, correspondence, trafficking of proofs, etc. Edington would be in charge of editorial project management while Colman would be in charge of production management, as reflected in our cost share proposal.

Developmental Editing: Acquisitions editors in conventional presses play two main roles; recruitment and development of manuscripts. The recruitment role in the Lever Press would be played by academic series editors, supported by the labor of our staff members (Edington, McCollough, Welzenbach) included in cost share. However, we believe that a full service to authors also requires the type of manuscript reorganization and shaping that is often described as “developmental editing” which would be accomplished by expert freelance workers, paid up to \$20 per page. *This expense is omitted from the “Light Option.”*

Copyediting: Consistency, grammar, spelling etc. checks are commodity services that can be performed by freelance copyeditors. We estimate \$5 per typeset page, which is standard for a moderate level copyedit.

Typesetting/mark up: While the term “typesetting” originates in the print age, the activity described here involves a variety of types of formatting which could be different depending on the eventual medium in which a title would be expressed. Our estimate of \$4.50 per typeset page is based on the workflow adopted at Michigan Publishing for transformation of a

copyedited Word manuscript into a richly-tagged XML version that can be represented online in HTML, converted into a range of ebook formats, and output as a print-ready file.

Indexing: Most publishers' contracts place the burden of preparing an index on the author, offering at best to charge back the creation of an index. This is a sore point with many authors and we suggest that the Lever Press might be differentiated as "author-centric" if it paid for indexes as a matter of course. The \$3.50 per typeset page rate is a standard freelance cost. ***This expense is omitted from the "Light Option."***

Design: This \$500 per book charge is for production of a cover design, and represents a standard freelancer cost. We believe a good "cover design" (which may actually refer to a something more like a logo to represent the product in a web environment) is paradoxically more important in the digital environment than it was in the print world. This is especially the case if one of our aims is to increase individual readership of work beyond the Academy.

Outreach/publicity: While the marketing of Lever Press books would be substantially the responsibility of the web developer included as part Amherst's cost share, an allowance is made here for the costs of production of ancillary materials to advertise both individual books and the full collection. We have had success in, for example, supplying authors with postcards advertising their books and with direct mail promotions to society mailing lists that are generally not made available electronically for email campaigns.

Platform: We anticipate that Lever Press titles may be some of the first to appear on the Hydra Fedora-based multimodal publishing platform being developed at Michigan Publishing as a successor to our DLXS system. We will be working with a business consultant to determine the actual cost per publisher of using this hosted platform, so the proposed figure of \$10,000 a year is something of a placeholder. However, this seems to be a reasonable estimate based on comparable services (e.g., Digital Commons implementations for single publications), although those are mostly geared to journals. We anticipate that the fee would be constant irrespective of number of titles hosted.

Extra Programming: Determining the nature and scope of "innovation projects" will be an important activity for the Oversight Committee. Since the Hydra Fedora platform is being designed with digital scholarship in mind, we believe that many currently-envisioned innovations (such as the presentation of companion audio or video files) could be accommodated relatively easily. **In the "premium option" we allow for more customization (\$5,000 worth per project) while in the "light option" we assume that existing tools would be tweaked (\$1,500 per project).**

Author Honoraria: We have made the assumption that authors will be willing to accept an "up front" payment of \$1,000 per book and will waive the

rights to continuing royalties. This will substantially reduce continuing financial management expenses. Experience at Michigan Publishing shows that it is unusual for authors to earn more than \$1,000 in royalties over the lifetime of an academic monograph, but we are realistic about the way in which hope and experience do not always mesh. Should a contract based on honoraria not prove realistic, we still believe that the sums expressed on this line would be more than sufficient to cover royalty payments.

Permissions Allowance: Like indexing, the cost of clearing third party permissions (mostly for visual materials) are generally articulated in contracts as the responsibility of the author. We propose that it would align with the concept of Lever Press as being uniquely “author-centric” if we were to provide a limited fund to subsidize permissions fees for each author. We would also propose to work with the Copyright Office at the University of Michigan and copyright experts around the Oberlin Group to push for Fair Use determinations whenever possible. *This expense is omitted from the “Light Option.”*

Program Travel: This is to support the needs of Lever Press champions to both recruit more institutional pledges and identify key series editors at Oberlin Group institutions. Every alternate year would be seen as a period of consolidation, with less travel needed.

Program Publicity/Events: As well as promoting individual books, some budget will be needed for building interest in the entire program. We anticipate that event funding would leverage other support from Oberlin Group institutions where the Lever Press initiative was being promoted.

