

Minutes of the Lever Press Oversight Committee Meeting - March 28, 2016

Attending: Andy Ashton, Margy Avery, Marta Brunner, Mark Christel, Dalia Corkrum, Mark Edington, Terri Fishel, Bryn Geffert, Neil McElroy, Loretta Parham, Mike Roy, Peggy Seiden, Charles Watkinson, Rebecca Welzenbach

1. **Approve minutes from 2/29/16 meeting** (Secretary)
 - a. Discussion of bringing the proposal for the formation of an Advisory Board to the April meeting (as we did not get to it at the March meeting)
 - b. Loretta Parham moves to approve the minutes; unanimously approved.
2. **Approve Governance Statement** (Program manager)
 - a. Discussion of how best to define the category of people who are permitted to submit series proposal (e.g., “faculty” could exclude librarians without faculty status). Agreed on “scholars at pledging institution.”
 - b. Discussion of the last three bullet points under the OC’s responsibilities. Suggestion to eliminate the bullet point about ensuring integration of Lever Press publications with OG school curricula, but to leave the bullet points about translating the principles of Lever Press into policies and the responsibility for helping to identify and recruit series editors.
 - c. Bryn Geffert moves to approve the document, Peggy Seiden second, unanimously approved.
 - d. **Action Item: Becky will make the approved Governance statement available via the Lever Press website.**
3. **Report from Operations Group**
 - a. **Library Publishing Forum:** Mark Edington proposed a panel about Lever for this conference, which takes place in May in Denton, TX. He wants to represent all sides of the Lever Press relationships, so is seeking a librarian from a pledging institution to sit on the panel. Unfortunately Diane Graves from Trinity is unable to attend. There is very little overlap between pledging institutions and attendance at LPF. Loretta Parham noted that this will be graduation weekend for many of the pledging institutions, making participation difficult. **Action Item: Mark E. will reach out to all pledging institutions to invite participation.**
 - b. **Arthur Vining Davis-Funded Stakeholder Meeting Update:** Mark E. reports that it’s now confirmed that (rather than in NYC) this meeting will take place June 22 as part of the Annapolis Group meeting--though unfortunately the response from presidents has been that many don’t plan to attend. The current confirmed list of attendees for the meetings includes:
 - i. Philip Glotzbach, President, Skidmore College
 - ii. Teresa Amott, President, Knox College
 - iii. Adam Weinberg, President, Denison University
 - iv. Alison Byerly, President, Lafayette College
 - v. Jeff Docking, President, Adrian College

- vi. Johnnella Butler, professor and former Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Spelman College
 - vii. R. Owen Williams, President, Associated Colleges of the South and former president of Transylvania University)
 - viii. Nancy Cable, president, Arthur Vining Davis Foundation, and former provost, Bates College
 - ix. A few folks are still pending confirmation.
 - x. **Action Item: Some new names were suggested by the Oversight Committee and Mark E. will follow up on these.**
- c. **Editorial Board Recruitment:** Mark E. and Margy Avery will begin phone calls to the “long list” of candidates on Tuesday, 3/29. Goal is to make a pitch for Lever, answer their questions and fill them in on expectations, and also feel out their interest and who would be an engaged contributor. **Action Item: ME will send the proposed shortlist of candidates to the OC by email by April 2. OC will have until the following Wednesday (April 5) to approve the list via their initials or make any additional comments.**
- d. **Lever Press Staff titles:** Rebecca Welzenbach reports that the Operations Group sees a need for those representing Lever Press in the world to have appropriate titles that could appear on a business card. The proposed titles are: Program Manager (Rebecca Welzenbach), Senior Acquisitions Editor (Margy Avery), and Publisher (Mark Edington). These titles would be stand-alone on a separate Lever Press business card--not appended to titles on any business cards we have already for our home institutions. Loretta Parham notes that it will be incumbent on the Operations Group to be very clear (especially in travel and expenses) when they are working on behalf of their home institution and when for Lever Press. Bryn Geffert adds that anything we can do to clarify roles, responsibilities, and reporting is to the good. **Action Item: Operations Group will proceed with making use of these titles going forward.**
4. **Budget Update:** Rebecca Welzenbach reports that Financial structure for Lever Press is still being put into place at Michigan and Amherst and as a result this quarter’s report is more minimal than what we will offer in the future. At this time, we can report that Lever Press now has \$1.25M/\$250K per year in commitments, from 42 partner institutions. As of close of February 2015, Lever has 202,043.78 in revenue and 8,812.44 in expenses, for a balance of \$193,231.34. In reviewing the summary of pledging institutions, a possible discrepancy came to light. **Action Item: Rebecca W. will investigate the discrepancy and follow up with OC.** Future budget reports will track actuals against projections and variance. Discussions of refining the projected budget tabled for a future meeting. **Action Item: Rebecca W. will continue to work with business office at Michigan to develop more robust reports, keeping Terri F. in the loop for feedback.**
5. **Communications to pledging institutions:** Andy Ashton reported that a message about posting the January minutes went out to pledging institutions last week, and asks that we get into a habit of posting minutes as soon as they are approved and sending

out a message accordingly. Communication that membership is still open through July 1 is on the Lever Press website “Join Us” page. MR asks that we add the word “still” to it (action item on RW), but otherwise folks can be pointed here. Discussion of impact on pledge amount if we have a substantial number of new members join. This is unlikely to be an issue before we close the gates July 1, but during the moratorium as the OC considers membership guidelines for the future, this should be revisited. Neil McElroy reminds that though we’ve done well with pledging institutions, we’re only just reaching the budget we hoped to reach. Peggy Seiden notes that some institutions have mentioned participation was only possible because they fell into the lowest tier. **Action item: when the Editorial Board is established, that would be a time for a major communication to the pledging institutions (and the world!)**

6. New Business:

- a. **Series Proposals:** Mike Roy revisits our old idea of inviting series from pledging institutions. Bryn G. and Loretta P. note the value of having projects in hand for the editorial board when they first meet. Charles Watkinson thinks there are lots of projects and series out there. Mark E. reports that he and Margy are working on a submission form for proposals, which can be linked from the Lever Press website. Charles W. confirms that we are open to both series and standalone project proposals. Discussion of ethics and confidentiality around proposal: CW notes that submissions should be assumed to be confidential within the publisher and the editorial board (i.e., Lever Press should not report back to home libraries or institutions about proposals received from their faculty that have not yet been approved). Mark and Margy confirm Charles’ sense of confidentiality. **Action item: Mark E., Margy, and Becky to develop call for submissions and make it available.**
- b. Face to face meeting for the editorial board: Mike Roy proposes that if all possible, we bring the editorial board together for a kick off meeting as we did the oversight committee. Marta Brunner, Bryn Geffert, and Charles Watkinson all endorse the idea as well. **Action Item: Mark E. will price out some options (Suggestion from CW to wait and see who the board consists of, in order to determine a central location.)**

7. Outstanding Action Items and future agenda items

- a. Loretta P. will work on the proposal for an advisory board; this should go on our April agenda
- b. Peggy S. and Terri F. note that they experienced real problems with the BlueJeans platform and wondered whether quality degrades as the number of callers on video goes up. We plan to continue using this platform, but Becky will investigate to see if this is a known issue and if there is anything we can do to mitigate. Neil M. suggests that anyone who is able connect early for sound and video check. **Action Item: Charles notes that Blue Jeans provides a sound/video check URL; Becky will ensure that in the future this is made available to folks.**