

Minutes of the Lever Press Oversight Committee Meeting - April 25 2016

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

Approve Minutes

Mike Roy moves to approve minutes from the [3/28/16 meeting](#). Unanimously approved.

Action Item: Rebecca Welzenbach will post approved minutes to the LP website

Report from Ops Group

Series and Individual Title Proposal forms

Mark Edington reports that series and Individual project proposal forms are [now available](#) via the Lever Press website. As of the meeting time, no proposals had yet been received. Mark sent an email to all pledging institutions to make them aware of the new forms and to encourage them to spread the word, including model text to share with a dean, provost, or other senior administrator to encourage faculty participation.

Discussion of how the Oversight Committee can best help drive submissions:

- 1) Good opportunity for a press release to the broader community (not just current pledging institutions). Also a great chance to spotlight our editorial board members.
- 2) Distribute announcement of ed. board and call for proposals through disciplinary societies (AHA, MLA, etc.)
- 3) Reach out to those nominated but not selected for ed. board to invite them to propose a series?
- 4) Goal is to have a good number of submissions in hand by the first in-person meeting of the editorial board (and to schedule the ed. board meeting appropriately to allow for this)

Action Items:

- **Terri Fishel will create a news item on the Oberlin Group website announcing the editorial board and directing folks back to leverpress.org**
- **By next OC meeting, Mark Edington will draft a press release (or releases, depending on audience?) to announce editorial board and invite proposals. Audience is the readers of disciplinary society lists.**
- **Where appropriate, OC members and pledging institutions should follow up with faculty not selected for this editorial board term to encourage them to propose works or (especially) series**
- **By next OC meeting, Rebecca Welzenbach and Margy Avery will create or revisit earlier Communications Strategy document with channels from the first press release (Scholarly Kitchen, etc., as well as disciplinary societies.) Let's create a template we can re-use in the future.**

Discussion of how, in general, to best publicize our progress and respond proactively to skepticism or criticism. A number of voices in the schol comm landscape are skeptical of the need for any new press, and in particular question the Lever Press premise. How can we address concerns about quality, sustainability, credibility?

Action Item: Margy Avery will work toward an FAQ for the Lever Press website, addressing such questions as “Why another press?” and “How will the books be preserved?”

Clarifying Pledging Institution Fee Structure and Process

Rebecca Welzenbach reported on confusion among some pledging institutions about which tier they fall into. How can we better clarify the fee structure?

Current practice is to check against OG collection stats for Oberlin Group libraries. Discussion of how much effort we should put into verifying collection budgets for non-Oberlin Group schools. Terri Fishel notes that IPEDS has statistics up to 2013-14 (more recent being collected now). These are required/available for every school, so why wouldn't we use them? Lever Press uses the same categories of spending as that report, so should not be difficult for pledging institutions to understand the three categories (one time purchases, continuing serials, other materials). Peggy Seiden suggests that OG stats be used for OG schools, since these are more up-to-date than IPEDS. Rebecca Welzenbach proposes a new practice: when a new institution approaches us, Oberlin Group statistics should be used to verify collections budget for OG schools. For non-OG schools, Program Manager will ask Terri to verify the tier against IPEDS statistics before the pledge agreement is signed.

Minor revisions to the pledge agreement will help to clarify LP's position. RW provided a revised document for the OC to review: [\[LINK\]](#)

1. The change consists of the following new text after the fee structure table: *“Annual Library Collections Budget means the combined total of the annual budget for 1) one-time purchases of books, serial backfiles, and other materials, 2) ongoing commitments to subscriptions, and 3) other material/service costs. The Lever Press Oversight Committee reserves the right to verify the tier indicated by the pledging institution using the resources available to them, such as Oberlin Group or IPEDS collection statistics.”*
2. Change unanimously approved

Action Item: Rebecca will post the updated pledge agreement to the Lever Press website.

Arthur Vining Davis Stakeholder Meeting

Mark Edington reported on plans for the Arthur Vining Davis-funded stakeholders meeting, which will take place June 22 ahead of the Annapolis Group meeting. We have 7 affirmative replies; waiting on some 12 more (9 presidents, 3 provosts and deans). Hoping, too, to have some presence from the editorial board there. Next status call for the planning group is May 2. This meeting will be guided by three questions:

1. How do the objectives of Lever Press align with the issues you are facing as the face of a liberal arts college?
2. How do you see this Lever Press solving a problem for your faculty and your students?
3. How can Lever Press create outcomes that will be regarded by your faculty as the equal of more traditionally published works?

The outcome will be a white paper that, among other things, will be part of the material for the first editorial board meeting.

Membership/Financial Update

Discussion of partners either withdrawing, or with changes to make to their pledge amount, due to confusion around tiers.

Discussion of ongoing partner outreach. Mike Roy and Kevin Mulroy both volunteered to follow up with respective potential partners.

Reminder that we plan to institute a temporary moratorium on new members July 1, at which point a task force will be convened to establish membership policies for the future.

New Business

Editorial Board Face to Face meeting

Discussion of when to hold the meeting. The group agreed to aim for late summer (ideally first week of August), probably in Ann Arbor (which is somewhat centrally located) in hopes of having a number of proposals in hand. Suggestions to not lose momentum between now and then:

- Have a virtual meeting before the in person meeting
- Provide a “summer reading assignment” with some questions
- Ask the group to write introductions for themselves to the group, addressing some framing questions (this could be done over email)

Action Item: Mark Edington will email the Editorial Board to start this process.

Lever Press Community Forum:

- How does this fit in with the idea of a Lever Initiative outside of Lever Press?
- Let’s convene a working group to chew on this idea. Folks that agreed to be on the working group can encourage Lever Press stakeholders to fill out [Mike’s survey](#).

Action Item: working group will bring a proposal to the next OC meeting.

Report on Trips, Travel, and Outreach

- Bryn Geffert represented Lever on a panel at CNI alongside Zia Press from the University of Nebraska Library. Other OC members who were present weighed in with feedback.
- Suggestion that what gets people excited about Lever is the brand new, experimental business model. BG: reported at CNI; can he report back on where he is
- Upcoming deadline: ACRL 2017 proposals due May 6

Action Item: Program Manager and Chair will establish a running agenda item to run down upcoming conference deadlines, opportunities, and experiences. Draw from DLF events calendar for ideas.

OC takes seriously its role as stewards and outreach folks for Lever. How can they spread the right message to potential authors and series editors?

- Make clear that in year 1 we are acquiring our first titles, we expect to start publishing our first titles in year 2, and will aim to ramp up the number of titles in subsequent years.
- We don't yet know the balance of series vs. stand-alone projects, but welcome both. Especially eager for senior scholars who will help us to establish credibility and recruit authors might be interested in proposing series.

Action Item: Mike Roy will put in a request to Dave Pilachowski to get some Lever time on the Oberlin Group meeting agenda