

## Lever Press Oversight Committee Meeting Minutes

129 Shapiro, Williams College

Present:

- Andrew Ashton, Director of the Libraries at Vassar College (Secretary)
- Marta Brunner, Dean of the Library at Skidmore College
- Mark Christel, Director of Libraries at the College of Wooster
- Dalia Corkrum, College Librarian, Whitman College
- Terri Fishel, Library Director, Dewitt Wallace Library, Macalester College (Treasurer)
- Neil McElroy, Dean of Libraries, Lafayette College
- Kevin Mulroy, J. McFadden Dean of the Library at The Claremont Colleges
- Michael Roy, Dean of the Library, Middlebury College (Chair)
- Peggy Seiden, College Librarian, Swarthmore College

1. **Funding for Oversight Members when presenting at conferences** - a panel presentation at ASIANET in Chicago will include Margy, Terri, and Karil Kucera (St. Olaf, Editorial Board.) The question is whether funding is provided to cover any costs for Oversight members. Action: **Add to the next phone call for the Oversight Committee.**
2. **Moratorium on new members** - discussion focused on two institutions who are interested in joining and whether we want to stick to plan of no new members. In terms of making this a sustainable endeavor, we have funding to allow us to operate for the next four years. In terms of adding institutions, the bylaws state that members of the Oversight Committee are elected from participating members. Concerns were expressed that we want to stay true to our original mission and as long as new members understand this, the group felt it was not necessary to keep the moratorium. In the course of discussion, it was pointed out that some publications being produced are not including the name of the Oberlin Group. The group agreed that identity of Oberlin Group needs to be in all future publications since it was the Oberlin Group that initiated and was the original funding group that enabled Lever Press to start. **Motion to end moratorium(made by Terri, seconded by the group), all in favor, approved.**
3. **Incorporation** - questions regarding OG discussion to incorporate and possible implications for Lever Press were raised:
  - a. How would OG incorporation have helped Lever at its formation and in early development?
  - b. How would it help Lever now that it's up-and-running?
  - c. What projects/grants etc. do we envisage for Lever going forward that would benefit from OG incorporation – and how?
  - d. If we incorporate, would all OG members be expected to participate in Lever? How would an opt-in/opt-out model work now for an incorporated OG (especially now that the project is up-and-running)?Discussion focused on what effect, if any, incorporation may have had and in the future might have on Lever Press. Currently, since the OG is not incorporated there is no legal entity and any risk has been assumed by Michigan Press. There is also no connection with incorporating Lever Press. Lever Press as a legal entity is a series of legal agreements with various entities. There was a perception that Lever Press has raised the profile of the OG, but Lever can be seen as one of many initiatives undertaken by the group. **No action was required at this time.**

#### 4. **Assessment: How are we doing as a board, and what might we do differently to be more effective?**

Mike had 11 responses to his survey on assessment. Our charge will be found here

[http://www.leverpress.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/LeverPressGovernanceStatement\\_20160526.pdf](http://www.leverpress.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/LeverPressGovernanceStatement_20160526.pdf)

Discussion focused on the development of the Editorial Board and the general feeling that the Oversight Group was not as involved as many members felt it should have been. There is interest in being more involved with the strategic planning and a feeling that we may not be doing enough to represent the pledging members. Concerns were expressed that there is not enough information being shared about pending book projects. How much needs to be kept confidential versus providing some information on number of projects submitted versus number accepted? What is customary about what is shared and what level? A book deal isn't a book deal until there is a manuscript. The group feels there is a need to clarify expectations for sharing information based on what is confidential and what is the traditional expectation in publishing for sharing information on submissions and accepted proposals.

A key marker of success is quality of first six titles. Should we exercise some method of control of this? The first, second, and third book we care deeply about. Broad statistical information - are we only getting proposals from people in English? Or across the board? Limited proposals from disciplines? What is our refusal rate? Are people submitting first time authors or established authors? Concerns were expressed that communication was not happening smoothly in terms of acknowledging submissions and responding to interested authors.

Questions from the group included:

- New Frontiers in Digital Liberal Arts - what's happening with that? Is this something the editorial board is taking on? Is this something we should be looking more closely at? Are we equipped to do that kind of work?
- What can Fulcrum do? Is the intention that they want everything to go through Fulcrum? If someone does something in Scalar, will it be published?

Views expressed included:

- We want more to do
- We want to be more strategic
- We were not involved in the forming of the Editorial Board
- At the Stakeholders meeting - we had one representative from Oversight Committee - not to be part of that was a mistake - in the opinion of some, there seems like there was a point where the Oversight Committee should have been present and working with Robert Weisbach ourselves
- Operations Group needs to tell us how they are doing and if there are areas where they need help, they need to let us know; maybe there are things we could be doing or resources we could mobilize. They have not asked for anything, things are either going really well or terribly.
- Is our main job is to convince authors to submit proposals? What is our role in that? Work on our campuses? We all go to conferences, connected to other groups. One of our chores do outreach.
- Several members expressed concern that communication was a problem and gave examples of individuals who submitted, but did not receive a response acknowledging that the proposal was received; one faculty member is contacting an Oversight Committee member to get information on what is happening
- Difficulty in doing outreach to solicit proposals from our faculty, only to have them rejected puts us in a tough position

- Growing pains of start up
- How many manuscripts submitted fit within the editorial program and if it was a great proposal, but didn't fit with the program, what is being done?
- How are we connecting with scholarly societies - going up to people? We need a clear outreach strategy. And if doing outreach, we need to go prepared with handouts.
- A real plan for outreach and acquisitions - who is going to talk to whom and go where
- We need to determine if we are making progress - if we do outreach, how is this contributing to number and types of submissions?
- What is our relationship to Editorial Board - could we have a joint meeting? Bring the chair into our meeting?

**Motion: Joint meeting of Editorial Board and Oversight Committee in person before the end of June 2017 (made by Terri, seconded by Kevin.) All were in favor, approved.**

Discussion focused on when to have the meeting, possibly in conjunction with ACRL and the Library Publishing Coalition which is meeting before ACRL in Baltimore. [Note: LPC meeting March 20 - 22, 2017 in Baltimore, MD; ACRL is March 22-25]

Further concerns:

- The importance of meeting face-to-face at least twice a year and including Mark and Becky.
  - Composition of three titles will do so much to set the identity of the press, if they are stellar future acq will be easier, if they are OK won't put wind in our sails. Big difference between stellar and OK. Can't give too much attention to the first group of publications.
  - Editorial program didn't broaden the audience as much as some would have liked. Make one of the principle attributes of the press part of the ethos and mission of the liberal arts colleges and consider a format like the Stanford Briefs which are distinctly long essays/short books. Great opportunity for scholarship that addresses a broader audience and not intended to be a tenure book.
  - It was suggested that shorter works could be our version of Ted Talks in print. Raise the visibility of those scholars beyond the limited audience that usually reads them. Could be adopted by more classes. The question is how do we move this idea forward into the Editorial Program?
5. Deferred due to lack of time: what do we think success will look like? what would lever press look like and be doing in ten years.

Adjourned at 1:50

Respectfully submitted by Terri Fishel