

# Minutes of the Lever Press Oversight Committee Meeting

November 28, 2016

Attending: Andy Ashton, Margy Avery, Mark Christel, Mark Edington, Terri Fishel, Mary Francis, Bryn Geffert, Neil McElroy, Mike Roy, Peggy Seiden, Charles Watkinson, Becky Welzenbach

## Approve Minutes

The Oversight Committee approved the draft minutes from the September 26 conference call and the October 9 in-person meeting.

**Action item: Becky Welzenbach will post the minutes to the Lever Press website.**

## Report from Operations Group

### Acquisitions to Production workflow

Becky Welzenbach and Margy Avery introduced two visualizations of the workflow (A high-level swim-lane chart and a more detailed grid) for a Lever Press title from proposal through production. This is a living document that will necessarily evolve as we go.

### Questions from the OC:

- What is the peer review process and how can it be clearly communicated to authors?  
The press will identify the most appropriate form of review for each work in order to ensure that the work is rigorously reviewed in a manner that is acceptable to the author's discipline. Editorial Board member Jason Mittell is working with Mark Edington on a statement defining different forms of peer review that Lever Press might use in different situations. When that statement is ready, it will be added to the Lever Press website.
- What format do the materials come in (i.e., full manuscript or proposal)? What does the editorial board ultimately see and approve? The Editorial Board will receive a packet containing a substantial portion of the manuscript (if not the whole thing), along with reader reports and author responses. Becky updated some language on the workflow grid to make this more clear.

**Action Item: Oversight Committee to review, comment, and pose any additional questions about this process.**

## Report on Submissions

Margy Avery pointed to several milestones (represented by blue diamonds on the swim lane diagram) that would make suitable points for reporting out to the Oversight Committee on

acquisitions. The board asked for some additional points along the way. Going forward, summary reports will encompass numbers for each of the following:

- Proposals received--including indication of which series or content area the proposal fits into (or if this is not applicable)
- Proposals under consideration
- Proposals reviewed favorably
- Projects approved by Editorial Board
- Projects in production pipeline
- Projects published

**Action item: Margy Avery will present this report for the first time as part of the January Oversight Committee meeting, with updates to be provided quarterly.**

### Model Contract for Digital Scholarship upcoming sessions

Becky provided background on the Model Contract for Digital Scholarship project. This contract has been drafted as part of a one-year Mellon-funded research project between the University of Michigan and Emory University. Although this contract is designed for general use by any university press, we expect to adapt a version of it for Lever Press. On January 13 the Oversight Committee will meet virtually with Meredith Kahn, the University of Michigan Librarian who is managing this project, to discuss and offer feedback on this document. The website for the project is: <http://modelpublishingcontract.org/>. Draft documents should be posted there by mid-December.

**Action Item: Becky Welzenbach will alert the Oversight Committee when the documents are available to review.**

### Communications to Membership

Becky confirmed that an invitation to the upcoming Fulcrum webinar has already been sent. This calendar invite included explanatory text about what the event is and who it is for. The OC agreed that it would be good to send a reminder to all Lever Press pledging institutions about this event

The Oversight Committee then brainstormed ideas for future Lever Press webinars. We proposed to hold these periodically in the coming year, with the aim of ensuring that pledging libraries feel included and invested in what's going on with Lever--and to foster a sense of community and professional development around publishing/scholarly communication.

Proposed topics include:

- Fulcrum (scheduled)
- Peer review
- Lever Press workflow
- Author contract
- Conversation/brainstorm about seeding/supporting interdisciplinary scholarship
- Metrics--proposed invitation to Chris Long at Michigan State University, who is working on a matrix of "humane metrics for the humanities"

- Invite members of the Ops Group/Lever Press staff to provide a window into/reflection on their work. What are different roles in publishing doing today?

**Action Item: Mark Edington will send an invitation/reminder/announcement about the webinar to the Lever Press pledging institution mailing list, and add a post to the Lever Press website.**

## New Business

### Conflict of Interest task force

The task force of Mark, Marta, and Bryn has been working on a draft. A link to the draft is available in the agenda.

**Action Item: By next OC meeting, all should read and comment on the draft policy.**

### OC Bylaws task force

The OC lacks documentation about how to carry out various tasks, including replacing a member part of the way through a term, staggering membership, elections, etc. Mike Roy proposes that a task force be convened to draft/recommend some operating practices. Andy Ashton, Peggy Seiden, and Becky Welzenbach agreed to make up this task force.

**Action Item: Andy, Peggy, and Becky will organize on their own to start drafting.**

### January 2017 face-to-face meeting

Mike Roy noted that one outcome of the face-to-face OC meeting at Williams College was that it is desirable for members of the Oversight Committee, Editorial Board, and Operations Group to meet face-to-face to agree on the vision for how the press will operate in the coming years, articulate roles and responsibilities, and forge a shared stake in the future of Lever. Such a meeting goes above and beyond the Lever Press budget, so all participants will be asked to fund their own way if possible. Jonathan Miller at Rollins College has reported that the meeting could be hosted there, but only if it is held on January 17. If that date does not work, the meeting may need to take place in a different location.

**Action Item: Becky and Mark will coordinate to find out availability in January, and go from there.**

### Lever Press Workplan Q416-Q1 and Q217

The committee tabled this topic for the next meeting due to time constraints.

### Funding for OC members for travel representing Lever

The committee discussed the implications of Lever Press funds being used to offset the costs of travel for the Oversight Committee when that travel is in direct support of Lever Press outreach. This question pertains to a specific request for support to cover the conference registration fee (not travel or accommodations) at ASIANetwork 2017, in order to enable participation in a panel

also including Karil Kucera and Margy Avery. Comments and concerns raised include the following:

- Travel funds used to support OC would take away from support for Lever Press acquisitions staff travel.
- The amount of money requested in this case is small, but there is an important policy precedent.
- Acquisitions staff will need as much travel support as possible in the coming months.
- If there's a major change in how travel funds are being allocated, that decision-making process should be transparent and communicated out to the membership.
- One possible solution: if there are travel funds unused by the operations group at the end of the year, could they be put into reserve to help defray costs of other Lever affiliates who need some support to fully participate?
- If there are travel funds to spare, they should be used systematically to support group/Lever Press staff, then Editorial Board member travel costs, and only then potentially Oversight Committee members.

The committee did not come to a decision at this meeting.

**Action item: the By-laws task force should consider this issue in its draft recommendations.**

**Action item: at next Oversight Committee meeting, members should be prepared to vote on a way forward.**

The meeting adjourned just after 5 p.m. Eastern Time.