

Bylaws

The Lever Initiative

January 2022

amended April 2023

ARTICLE I

NAME AND OFFICES

1.01 Name

The name of the entity is The Lever Initiative.

1.02 Offices

The registered office of The Lever Initiative is at such location in Michigan as determined by the Oversight Committee. The Oversight Committee may establish other offices in or outside the state of Michigan.

ARTICLE II

PURPOSES AND POWERS

2.01 Purpose

The purpose of the Lever Initiative is to be an open-access, digitally native, peer reviewed scholarly press, with an editorial program aligned with the ethos and mission of liberal arts colleges.

The Lever Initiative is organized and operated exclusively for charitable, scientific, literary, and educational purposes. Subject to the limitations stated in the Articles of Incorporation, The Lever Initiative is a nonprofit corporation formed to carry out lawful purposes not involving pecuniary profit or gain for its directors, officers, or members. The Lever Initiative has all corporate powers permitted by law.

To maximize its impact on current efforts, the Initiative may seek to collaborate with other non-profit organizations which fall under the 501(c) (3) section of the internal revenue code and are operated exclusively for educational and charitable purposes.

2.02 Powers

The corporation shall have the power, directly or indirectly, alone or in conjunction or cooperation with others, to do any and all lawful acts which may be necessary or convenient to affect the charitable purposes, for which the corporation is organized, and to aid or assist other organizations or persons whose activities further accomplish, foster, or attain such purposes. The powers of the corporation may include, but not be limited to, the acceptance of contributions from the public and private sectors, whether financial or in-kind contributions.

2.03 Nonprofit Status and Exempt Activities Limitation

(a) Nonprofit Legal Status. The Lever Initiative is a Michigan non-profit public benefit corporation, recognized as tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code.

(b) Exempt Activities Limitation. Notwithstanding any other provision of these Bylaws, no director, officer, employee, member, or representative of this corporation shall take any action or carry on any activity by or on behalf of the corporation not permitted to be taken or carried on by an organization exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as it now exists or may be amended, or by any organization contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of such Code and Regulations as it now exists or may be amended. No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall inure to the benefit or be distributable to any director, officer, member, or other private person, except that the corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in the Articles of Incorporation and these Bylaws.

(c) Distribution Upon Dissolution. Upon termination or dissolution of The Lever Initiative, any assets lawfully available for distribution shall be distributed on a pro-rata basis to the participating members. The percentage basis on which distribution is made will be determined by the percentage of a member's annual contribution as a percentage of overall remaining assets. Dues prepaid by a member for future fiscal years will be repaid in full to that member prior to the percentage-based distribution to other members. In the case where existing assets do not cover full reimbursement a pro-rata calculation as describe above will be applied to all prepaying institutions

ARTICLE III

MEMBERSHIP

3.01 Organization

The Lever Initiative is organized on a nonstock, membership basis.

3.02 Membership Eligibility and Rights

Qualification as a member is dependent on (a) status as a library at a non-profit institution of higher education within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or a corresponding foreign designation as a non-profit; and (b) current status in the paying of membership fees. Libraries applying for membership shall complete a membership agreement, and acceptance for membership is subject to approval by the Oversight Committee.

Members of the Lever Initiative are its participating libraries. Each participating library has equal membership, for matters of governance, in the Lever Initiative. Each participating library is accorded one vote in all matters pertaining to the governance of the Initiative including, but not limited to, annual elections to the Oversight Committee. Each participating institution shall identify one individual to serve as its representative in the governance of Lever Initiative. This individual, and only this individual, shall have power to vote on behalf of the institution in the governance of the Initiative to stand for election as a member of the Oversight Committee; and to represent that institution in the work of the Initiative. This individual will typically be the dean or director of the institution's library, or a senior institutional officer authorized to commit resources on behalf of the institution.

3.03 Non-Voting Affiliates

The Oversight Committee may approve classes of non-voting affiliates with rights, privileges, and obligations established by the Oversight Committee. Affiliates may be individuals, businesses, and other organizations that seek to support the mission of the corporation. The Oversight Committee, a designated committee of the Oversight Committee, or any duly elected officer in accordance with Oversight Committee policy, shall have authority to admit any individual or organization as an affiliate, to recognize representatives of affiliates, and to make determinations as to affiliates' rights, privileges, and obligations. At no time shall affiliate information be shared with or sold to other organizations or groups without the affiliate's consent. At the discretion of the Oversight Committee, affiliates may be given endorsement, recognition and media coverage at fundraising activities, clinics, other events or at the corporation website. Affiliates have no voting rights, and are not members of the corporation.

3.04 Membership fees

The schedule of membership fees will be determined by the Oversight Committee after consultation with the membership.

3.05 Right to Vote in Lever Initiative Governance

The right of each participating institution to vote in any Lever Initiative election is dependent upon that institution being current in its payment of dues to Lever Initiative. Any representative of a participating institution elected to sit on the Oversight Committee may not vote in the deliberations of the Oversight Committee unless the payments of their respective institution are current.

3.06 Termination or Withdrawal of Membership

Membership in the Lever Initiative ceases when the member institution does not renew its membership pledge, or is 120 days or more in arrear of payments for a current pledge.

Institutional members may withdraw from The Lever Initiative at any time by the members voting representative providing sixty days notice or more in writing to the Oversight Committee Chair. Dues already paid for the fiscal year will not be refunded.

3.07 Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the membership is held on the date set each year by the Oversight Committee to conduct any business that may come before the meeting.

3.08 Special Meetings

Special meetings of the membership may be called at any time by the Chairperson of the Oversight Committee, or by petition of at least 50% of the membership.

3.09 Notice of Meetings

Pursuant to Michigan Compiled Laws 450.2404, Members will be notified personally, by mail, or by electronic transmission of the date, time, and place of annual and special meetings not less than ten (10) or more than sixty (60) business days before the meeting by a method to be determined by the Oversight Committee. Attendance of a person at a meeting constitutes a waiver of objection to lack of notice or defective notice of the meeting, unless the member at the beginning of the meeting objects to holding the meeting or transacting business at the meeting because the notice was deficient.

3.10 Quorum and Voting

A member is considered present and may participate in a meeting through telephone, Internet, or other similar communications equipment so that all members can communicate with all other members as long as all participants are advised of the means of remote communication in use and the names of the participants in the meeting are divulged to all participants.

A simple majority of all Members constitutes a quorum at the Annual Meeting and Special Meetings.

3.11 Consent to Actions

Any action that could be taken at a meeting of the membership, including the election of directors and officers, may also be authorized without a meeting by a vote by mail or by electronic communication to the fullest extent permitted by law. Such a vote by mail or by electronic communication must be:

- a. Ordered by the Oversight Committee;
- b. Available to all members; and
- c. Conducted in accordance with procedures established by the Oversight Committee, these Bylaws, and applicable law.

ARTICLE IV

THE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

4.01 Number of Directors

The Lever Initiative shall have an Oversight Committee consisting of no more than twelve (12), and no fewer than three (3), representatives of the Members. Members of the Oversight Committee (hereinafter “directors”) are elected by the representatives of the participating institutions. It may also have ex-officio members appointed by the Oversight Committee with non-voting status.

4.02 Powers

All corporate powers shall be exercised by or under the authority of the Oversight Committee and the business affairs of the Lever Initiative shall be managed under the direction of the Oversight Committee, except as otherwise provided by law.

4.03 Terms

- (a) Directors shall be elected to serve a three-year term. Terms of individual directors may be extended at the discretion of the Oversight Committee until a successor has been elected.
- (b) Director terms shall be staggered so that approximately one third the number of directors will end their terms in any given year.

(c) Directors may serve terms in succession.

(d) The term of office shall be considered to begin January 1 and end December 31 of the year in office, unless the term is extended until such time as a successor has been elected.

4.04 Qualifications and Election of Directors

In order to be eligible to serve as a director on the Oversight Committee, the individual must be 18 years of age and the voting representative of a Member Library in good standing. The election of directors to replace those who have fulfilled their term of office shall take place in November of each year.

4.05 Vacancies

The Oversight Committee may fill vacancies due to the expiration of a director's term of office, resignation, death, or removal of a director, or may appoint new directors to fill a previously unfilled Oversight Committee position, subject to the maximum number of directors under these Bylaws.

(a) Unexpected Vacancies. Vacancies in the Oversight Committee due to resignation, death, or removal may be filled by the Oversight Committee for the balance of the term of the director being replaced.

4.06 Resignation and Removal of Directors

Any director may resign at any time by providing written notice to The Lever Initiative Oversight Committee, the Chair, or the Secretary. The resignation will be effective on receipt of the notice or at a later time designated in the notice of resignation.

A director may be removed by two-thirds vote of the Oversight Committee then in office, if:

(a) the director is absent and unexcused from one-third of the meetings of the Oversight Committee in a twelve-month period. Or:

(b) for cause or no cause, if before any meeting of the Oversight Committee at which a vote on removal will be made the director in question is given electronic or written notification of the Oversight Committee's intention to discuss her/his case and is given the opportunity to be heard at a meeting of the Oversight Committee.

4.07 Oversight Committee Meetings

(a) Regular Meetings. The Oversight Committee shall have a minimum of four (4) regular meetings each calendar year at times and places fixed by the Oversight Committee. Oversight Committee meetings shall be held upon four (4) days' notice by first-class mail, electronic mail, or facsimile transmission or forty-eight (48) hours notice delivered personally or by telephone. If sent by mail, facsimile transmission, or electronic mail, the notice shall be deemed to be delivered upon its deposit in the mail or transmission system. Notice of meetings shall specify the place, day, and hour of meeting. The purpose of the meeting need not be specified.

(b) Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Oversight Committee may be called by the chair, vice chair, secretary, treasurer, or any two (2) other directors of the Oversight Committee. A special meeting must be preceded by at least 2 days notice to each director of the date, time, and place, but not the purpose, of the meeting.

(c) Waiver of Notice. Any director may waive notice of any meeting, in accordance with Michigan law.

4.08 Manner of Acting

(a) Quorum. A majority of the directors in office immediately before a meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at that meeting of the Oversight Committee. No business shall be considered by the Oversight Committee at any meeting at which a quorum is not present.

(b) Majority Vote. Except as otherwise required by law [or by the articles of incorporation,] the act of the majority of the directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Oversight Committee.

(c) Hung Oversight Committee Decisions. On the occasion that directors of the Oversight Committee are unable to make a decision based on a tied number of votes, the chair or vice chair in the order of presence shall have the power to swing the vote based on his/her discretion.

(d) Participation. Except as required otherwise by law, the Articles of Incorporation, or these Bylaws, directors may participate in a regular or special meeting through the use of any means of communication by which all directors participating may simultaneously hear each other during the meeting, including in person, internet video meeting or by telephonic conference call. . The chair of the Oversight Committee is empowered to excuse directors from attendance for a reason deemed adequate by the chair. The chair shall not have the power to excuse him/herself

from the Oversight Committee meeting attendance and in that case, the vice chair shall excuse the chair.

4.09 Informal Action By The Oversight Committee

Any action required or permitted to be taken by the Oversight Committee at a meeting may be taken without a meeting if, before or after the action, all members of the Oversight Committee then in office consent to the action in writing or by electronic transmission. The written consents shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the Oversight Committee. The consent has the same effect as a vote of the Oversight Committee for all purposes.

4.10 Compensation

Directors shall receive no compensation for carrying out their duties as directors. The Oversight Committee may adopt policies providing for reasonable reimbursement of directors for expenses incurred in conjunction with carrying out Oversight Committee responsibilities.

Directors are not restricted from being remunerated for professional services provided to the corporation. Such remuneration shall be reasonable and fair to the corporation and must be reviewed and approved in accordance with the Oversight Committee Conflict of Interest policy and state law.

ARTICLE V

COMMITTEES

5.01 Committees

The Oversight Committee may, by the resolution adopted by a majority of the directors then in office, designate one or more committees, each consisting of two or more directors, to serve at the pleasure of the Oversight Committee. Any committee, to the extent provided in the resolution of the Oversight Committee, shall have all the authority of the Oversight Committee, except that no committee, regardless of the substance of a resolution creating such committee, may:

- (a) amend the Articles of Incorporation;
- (b) adopt an agreement of merger or consolidation;
- (c) take any final action on matters which also requires Oversight Committee members' approval or approval of a majority of all members;
- (d) fill vacancies on the Oversight Committee or in any committee which has the authority of

the Oversight Committee;

- (e) amend or repeal Bylaws or adopt new Bylaws;
- (f) fix compensation of the members of the Oversight Committee for serving on the Oversight Committee or on another Committee;
- (g) amend or repeal any resolution of the Oversight Committee which by its express terms is not so amendable or repealable;
- (h) appoint any other committees of the Oversight Committee or the members of these committees;
- (i) expend corporate funds to support a nominee for director; or
- (j) approve any transaction to which the corporation is a party and one or more directors have a material financial interest; or between the corporation and one or more of its directors or between the corporation or any person in which one or more of its directors have a material financial interest.

5.02 Meetings and Action of Committees

Meetings and action of the committees shall be governed by and held and taken in accordance with, the provisions of Article IV of these Bylaws concerning meetings of the Oversight Committee, with such changes in the context of those Bylaws as are necessary to substitute the committee and its members for the Oversight Committee and its members, except that the time for regular meetings of committees may be determined either by resolution of the Oversight Committee or by resolution of the committee. Special meetings of the committee may also be called by resolution of the Oversight Committee . Notice of special meetings of committees shall also be given to any and all alternate members, who shall have the right to attend all meetings of the committee. Minutes shall be kept of each meeting of any committee and shall be filed with the corporate records. The Oversight Committee may adopt rules for the governing of the committee not inconsistent with the provision of these Bylaws.

5.03 Informal Action By Committees

Any action required or permitted to be taken by a Committee at a meeting may be taken without a meeting if, before or after the action, all members of the Committee then in office consent to the action in writing or by electronic transmission. The written consents shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the Committee. The consent has the same effect as a vote of the Committee for all purposes.

ARTICLE VI

OFFICERS

6.01 Oversight Committee Officers

The officers of the corporation shall be an Oversight Committee chair, vice-chair, past chair, secretary, and treasurer. Officers shall be elected by, and serve at the pleasure of, the Oversight Committee. The Oversight Committee may determine the method of electing officers. Each officer shall have the authority and shall perform the duties set forth in these Bylaws or by resolution of the Oversight Committee, or by direction of an officer authorized by the Oversight Committee to prescribe the duties and authority of other officers. The Oversight Committee may also appoint additional vice-chairs and such other officers as it deems expedient for the proper conduct of the business of the corporation, each of whom shall have such authority and shall perform such duties as the Oversight Committee may determine. One person may hold two or more offices, but no officer may act in more than one capacity where action of two or more officers is required.

6.02 Term of Office

The chair shall serve a three year term: one year as vice chair, the following year as chair, and a third year as past chair. The secretary and treasurer shall each serve a two-year term. The Oversight Committee may choose to extend the term of a member so that they may complete their term as an officer. An officer may not serve more than three (3) consecutive terms of office. Each Oversight Committee officer's term of office shall begin upon the adjournment of the Oversight Committee meeting at which elected and shall end upon the adjournment of the Oversight Committee meeting during which a successor is elected.

6.03 Chair

The chair shall be the chief volunteer officer of the corporation. The chair shall lead the Oversight Committee in performing its duties and responsibilities, including, if present, presiding at all meetings of the Oversight Committee, and shall perform all other duties incident to the office or properly required by the Oversight Committee.

6.04 Vice chair

In the absence or disability of the Oversight Committee chair, the ranking vice chair or vice-chair designated by the Oversight Committee shall perform the duties of the Oversight Committee chair. When so acting, the vice-chair shall have all the powers of and be subject to all the restrictions upon the Oversight Committee chair. The vice-chair shall have such other powers and perform such other duties prescribed for them by the Oversight Committee or the Oversight Committee chair. The chair shall normally accede to the office of Oversight Committee chair upon the completion of the Oversight Committee chair's term of office.

6.05 Secretary

The secretary shall keep or cause to be kept a book of minutes of all meetings and actions of directors and committees of directors. The minutes of each meeting shall state the time and place that it was held and such other information as shall be necessary to determine the actions taken and whether the meeting was held in accordance with the law and these Bylaws. The secretary shall cause notice to be given of all meetings of directors and committees as required by the Bylaws. The secretary shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Oversight Committee or the Oversight Committee chair. The secretary may appoint, with approval of the Oversight Committee, a director or member of the staff to assist in performance of all or part of the duties of the secretary.

6.06 Treasurer

The treasurer shall be the lead director for oversight of the financial condition and affairs of the corporation. The treasurer shall oversee and keep the Oversight Committee informed of the financial condition of the corporation and of audit or financial review results. In conjunction with other directors or officers, the treasurer shall oversee budget preparation and shall ensure that appropriate financial reports, including an account of major transactions and the financial condition of the corporation, are made available to the Oversight Committee on a timely basis or as may be required by the Oversight Committee. The treasurer shall perform all duties properly required by the Oversight Committee or the Oversight Committee chair. The treasurer may appoint, with approval of the Oversight Committee a qualified fiscal agent or member of the staff to assist in performance of all or part of the duties of the treasurer.

6.07 Non-Director Officers

The Oversight Committee may designate additional officer positions of the corporation and may appoint and assign duties to other non-director officers of the corporation.

ARTICLE VII

CONTRACTS, CHECKS, LOANS, INDEMNIFICATION AND RELATED MATTERS

7.01 Document Procedure

No documents (including stocks, bonds, agreements, insurance and annuity contracts, qualified and nonqualified deferred compensation plans, checks, notes, disbursements, loans, and other debt obligations) will be signed by any officer, designated agent, or attorney-in-fact unless authorized by the Oversight Committee or by these Bylaws. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

The Lever Initiative may, from time to time, engage a fiscal agent or create an agreement with another organization that may execute contracts and agreements on behalf of the Lever Initiative.

7.02 Loans

No loans shall be contracted on behalf of the Lever Initiative and no evidence of indebtedness shall be issued in its name unless authorized by resolution of the Oversight Committee. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

7.03 Indemnification

(a) **Mandatory Indemnification.** The corporation shall indemnify a director or former director, who was wholly successful, on the merits or otherwise, in the defense of any proceeding to which he or she was a party because he or she is or was a director of the corporation against reasonable expenses incurred by him or her in connection with the proceedings.

(b) **Permissible Indemnification.** The corporation shall indemnify a director or former director made a party to a proceeding because he or she is or was a director of the corporation, against liability incurred in the proceeding, if the determination to indemnify him or her has been made in the manner prescribed by the law and payment has been authorized in the manner prescribed by law.

(c) **Advance for Expenses.** Expenses incurred in defending a civil or criminal action, suit or proceeding may be paid by the corporation in advance of the final disposition of such action, suit or proceeding, as authorized by the Oversight Committee in the specific case, upon receipt of (I) a written affirmation from the director, officer, employee or agent of his or her good faith belief that he or she is entitled to indemnification as authorized in this article, and (II) an undertaking by or on behalf of the director, officer, employee or agent to repay such amount, unless it shall ultimately be determined that he or she is entitled to be indemnified by the corporation in these

Bylaws.

(d) Indemnification of Officers, Agents and Employees. An officer of the corporation who is not a director is entitled to mandatory indemnification under this article to the same extent as a director. The corporation may also indemnify and advance expenses to an employee or agent of the corporation who is not a director, consistent with Michigan law and public policy, provided that such indemnification, and the scope of such indemnification, is set forth by the general or specific action of the Oversight Committee or by contract.

(e) Notwithstanding the foregoing, no person is indemnified from his or her acts or omissions that are determined to be willful misconduct or illegal activity, or which may arise out of professional errors or omissions.

ARTICLE VIII

MISCELLANEOUS

8.01 Books and Records

The Lever Initiative shall keep correct and complete books and records of account and shall keep minutes of the proceedings of all meetings of its Oversight Committee, a record of all actions taken by Oversight Committee without a meeting, and a record of all actions taken by committees of the Oversight Committee. In addition, the corporation shall keep a copy of the corporation's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws as amended to date.

8.02 Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the corporation shall be from July 1 to June 30 of each year.

8.03 Conflict of Interest

The Oversight Committee shall adopt and periodically review a conflict of interest policy to protect the corporation's interest when it is contemplating any transaction or arrangement which may benefit any director, officer, employee, affiliate, or member of a committee with powers delegated by the Oversight Committee.

8.04 Nondiscrimination Policy

It is the policy of The Lever Initiative not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), national origin (ancestry), marital status, sex or gender, sexual orientation, age, gender identity or expression, size, disability, veteran's status, political service or affiliation, or socioeconomic background in any of its activities or operations.

8.05 Bylaw Amendment

These Bylaws may be amended, altered, repealed, or restated by a vote of the majority of the Members then in good standing as defined in Article III, provided, however,

(a) that no amendment shall be made to these Bylaws which would cause the corporation to cease to qualify as an exempt corporation under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future Federal tax code; and,

(b) that an amendment does not affect the voting rights of directors. An amendment that does affect the voting rights of directors further requires ratification by a two-thirds vote of a quorum of directors at an Oversight Committee meeting.

(c) that all amendments be consistent with the Governance Statement of the Lever Initiative.