

Minutes of the Lever Press Oversight Committee Meeting

April 24, 2017

Attending: Andy Ashton, Marta Brunner, Mark Christel, Mark Edington, Terri Fishel, Bryn Geffert (joined halfway through meeting) Kevin Mulroy, Mike Roy (departed halfway through meeting), Peggy Seiden

Absent: Dalia Corkrum, Mary Francis, Neil McElroy, Charles Watkinson

Approve Minutes

The oversight committee approved the minutes of the March 27 meeting.

Action item: Becky Welzenbach will post the final minutes the Lever Press Website.

Update on Editor Search

ME provided an update on the search for an Amherst College Press/Lever Press acquisitions editor: out of 38 candidates, the search committee has used a scoring system to whittle the anonymized applications down to 9 finalists, Next step is to invite these 9 to respond to written essay questions. We don't expect to interview all 9; a shortlist will emerge. The process has been proactively anonymized with the intention of eliminating bias in the search committee. More to come soon.

Update on Editorial Reporting Dashboard

Mike Roy provided an update on the Editorial Dashboard, walking us through a summary of the total number of proposed Lever Press publications currently at each stage in the process. As of April 2017 there are 11 active projects, as well as 8 proposals that the Editorial Board has decided not to pursue. These numbers are drawn from the Asana board where ME is tracking acquisitions progress. Once per quarter MR will total up the numbers of projects at each stage in order to update this summary.

Questions from the OC about the dashboard and acquisitions process:

- When something is dropped from consideration, who has seen it/who decides? For now, generally the Ed. Board has had a peek. Going forward the editor may be able to make more of these calls independently. (Of course, stuff that is totally inappropriate/wrong for Lever is already filtered out—we don't want to waste the Ed. Board's time on this)
- What actually goes out for peer review? (e.g., proposal vs. sample chapter vs. full manuscript?). Our intention is to issue a conditional contract to the author at an early stage of work in order to demonstrate our commitment to them. What the object that gets peer-reviewed is may depend on the nature of the work. The default is for the full work to go out to external peer reviewers, but this may not always be possible (e.g., in a case

where we are reviewing the content of a born-digital work that has not been fully built yet)

Editorial Program “Deep Dive”

This was the first instance of what we now plan to do at each Oversight Committee meeting: spend time discussing in greater detail one channel from the Editorial Program, with a focus on what strategies the Operations Group and Editorial Board are pursuing, and how the Oversight Committee can help. The area of focus for this meeting was Special Collections.

ME presented to the Oversight Committee two relevant proposed projects. These projects are similar to one another, and a bit different from a typical book, in that in both cases, the proposed works will be modular, potentially open-ended, and call for a particular relationship between the editorial team responsible for the publication, and the Lever Press Editorial Board, specifying what role each editorial group plays in acquiring and reviewing each component of the work. The Oversight Committee asked questions about the longevity/sustainability of these projects, the relationships that would keep them running, and the potential impact of an open-ended project on Lever’s finances. The OC noted that it is important that if--for whatever reason--in the end the work cannot or does not continue beyond its initial publication, that what has been published still be of value in and of itself. The OC also emphasized the importance of the scholarly voice of each work being foregrounded--that these are not merely exhibits or collections of digitized material, but new scholarly works. The model of the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy is very recognizable and attractive here.

MR then asked the Oversight Committee to consider how they could contribute to generating interest or identifying potential projects in the Special Collections channel. KM noted that the Claremont Colleges have a CLIR Hidden Collections Grant. He is willing to reach out to other libraries that have the same grant, to see if any of those projects are leading to new scholarship related to their hidden collections. ME offered to draft a message for KM to use, if desired. BG offered to take the lead on working with ME to craft a plan for Lever to use in reaching out to all special collections and archives in the Oberlin Group. It was suggested that there might be opportunities at the upcoming ILiADS conference at Bucknell. BW offered to send more copies of the “Needs and Opportunities” whitepaper to OC members so that they can share them with their own special collections librarians and archivists--or beyond. MR suggested that where it makes sense, a member of the Oversight Committee should join the existing Editorial Board “teams” assigned to each Editorial Program channel. He offered to raise that suggestion at the next Editorial Board meeting to make sure it would work.

Action item: ME to draft a message for KM to use in contacting other CLIR Hidden Collection grant recipients.

Action item: KM to reach out to other CLIR Hidden Collection grant recipients

Action item: BG and ME to work together to scope a strategy for the OC to reach out to all Oberlin Group special collections librarians and archivists.

Action item: Becky to send more copies of the Scholarly Publishing Needs and Opportunities booklet to the OC members to share with special collections librarians and archivists at their institutions or elsewhere.

Action item: all OC members to consider whether they are willing to join one of the existing Editorial Board teams assigned to focus on each of the editorial program content areas.

Due to the substantial discussion of the editorial program, the oversight committee did not get through the full agenda for this meeting. The agenda will be picked up at the May meeting. Meeting adjourned.