

Minutes of the Lever Press Oversight Committee Meeting

July 24, 2017

Present: Marta Brunner, Jonathan Miller, Dalia Corkrum, Mark Edington, Terri Fishel, Kevin Mulroy, Mike Roy, Peggy Seiden, Charles Watkinson, Rebecca Welzenbach, Mary Francis

Absent: Mark Christel, Andy Ashton, Marjorie Hassen

Approve Minutes

The minutes of the June meeting were approved.

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

Update on Plans for the In-Person Meeting in Ann Arbor

There will be a call to finalize the agenda on Wednesday. The plan for the Monday is that it'll be a meeting for the Editorial Board. We'll eat together on Monday evening with Jack Bernard as a speaker. Then on Tuesday the emphasis will be on (a) long term vision and sustainability, (b) break-out groups for content areas.

Action Item: Send flight plans to Chris Butchart-Bailey. She will make arrangements for travel from the airport, and accommodation. Please also communicate dietary restrictions or if you are driving.

Marta and Peg will not be able to attend. Becky noted that we'll make plans for virtual connections when and if possible. Mike asked any OC members with further requests for the meeting to contact him before Wednesday.

Discussion: Lever Press, Social Justice, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Before the meeting, Terri Fishel introduced the topic of social justice and diversity. She noted that the Editorial Board was diverse but challenged the group to think about other aspects of the Lever Press through the lens of diversity.

- Thinking about the scope of the editorial channels. For example, in expanding the scope of Lever texts to include works outside the canon.

- Being self-reflective about our review and selection processes. Do we just rely on full professors and tenured faculty? We try not to. Making visible the peer review processes -- the EB had created guidelines on this already.
- Hiring approaches. Amherst practised a single-blind approach in hiring the acquisitions editors.
- Accessibility of our publishing platform and the content on it. Accessibility is a core value of Fulcrum.

Mark summarized LP's social justice agenda as shown above being manifest in terms of content, process, governance.

Jonathan asked about respective roles of the OC and the EB, for example in the peer review process and scope of editorial channels -- these had been areas that the editorial board had been charged with. The OC's best role might be to ensure that the issue was present in the room and to get the Board thinking about these issues more broadly.

Becky noted that the examples above show a number of good initiatives around LP diversity. But how do we make our work on this front manifest? Martha noted that OpenCon had done a good job in highlighting their thinking. Mike wondered how we could challenge other presses to think through the issues.

Hearing the conversation, Becky asked if there is an opportunity for the OC to create a statement of how we manifest social justice at LP. Kevin wondered if LP needs to expand on its "core values" ([commitments](#)) statements and this would be a very appropriate role for the OC. Becky liked this idea and felt that drawing out / expanding the existing three commitments and explaining how they aligned with social justice would be good.

What are the opportunities for continuing this conversation in Ann Arbor? Becky suggested challenging the content groups to look at their work through a diversity lens. Mike wondered about the conflation of social justice with diversity and the dangers of driving away the potential authors that we so much need to attract.

Kevin volunteered to lead a subcommittee to examine and articulate "core values" which he felt was slightly different from "commitments." Terri, Martha, Mark volunteered to join the group. Mike noted that LP so far had not engaged in a formal vision, mission, values structure. Kevin felt that missing the vision, mission, values was making it hard to know whether LP is aligned with the goals of the sponsoring colleges. LP is an amazing action, furthering the diversity agenda of the individual colleges.

Peggy noted the ways in which LP undermines not only the traditional financial business models but also the dominance of a Eurocentric view of the world and the perpetuation of this. She shared an interesting article from [InsideHigherEd](#). Mike asked to what extent we are trying to

dismantle the existing scholarly communication system vs. working from within to change existing processes incrementally.

Charles asked how would this “diversity” conversation best fit into the conversation in Ann Arbor. He also noted that the charge of the sub-committee was also still unclear.

Mike noted that there are implicit values in much of what LP has done. Maybe the first focus should be to work backward and articulate where diversity shows up. This approach may also reveal where there are gaps. He suggested that this could be a good theme for the Oberlin Group directors meeting in October.

Next steps?

- (1) Mike suggests bringing this the social justice theme on Wednesday as part of the August agenda discussion.
- (2) Becky suggests that the Values Sub-Committee could evaluate the current statements and practices around social justice and makes a recommendation about a way forward for articulating values. Jonathan wondered whether this is a “social justice” framing or a “diversity and inclusion” framing -- the sub-committee should think about this. Kevin has previously chaired the Oberlin Group incorporation group. His group should be looking toward an agenda item for the Oberlin Group directors meeting.