

**Minutes of the Lever Press Oversight Committee  
January 29, 2018**

**Attending:** Marta Brunner, Mark Christel, Dalia Corkrum, Marjorie Hassen, Alexia Hudson-Ward, Jonathan Miller, Jennifer Nutefall, Mike Roy, Peggy Seiden, John Tombarge.  
**Staff:** Beth Bouloukos, Mark Edington, Terri Geitgey, Charles Watkinson.

1. Welcome to new members, new program manager
  - a. Marta Brunner, Skidmore College
  - b. Alexia Hudson-Ward, Oberlin College
  - c. John Tombarge, Washington and Lee University
  - d. Jennifer Nutefall, Santa Clara University
  - e. Terri Geitgey, Lever Press program manager

2. Approve December minutes

Because of problems accessing the December minutes Mike asked that the vote of approval be deferred until the February meeting.

**Action Item: Terri will investigate and resolve the document access problems some members experienced, and resend the links.**

3. Officer roles for 2018
  - a. Chair: Mike Roy (current)
  - b. Vice chair: Bryn Geffert (current)
  - c. Treasurer: vacant (was Terri Fishel)
  - d. Secretary: vacant (was Andy Ashton)

Dalia asked for a reminder of the duties of the Secretary and Treasurer. Mike explained that the Secretary makes sure that meeting minutes (usually taken by a staff member) are accurate, and presents them to the OC. The Treasurer presents to the OC the budget updates put together by staff. In response to a question by Peggy, Mark confirmed that the current Vice Chair does not become the next Chair. [Officer duties are described in more detail in the Lever Press Governance Statement]

Mike asked everyone to take a week to consider if they'd like to put their name forward. Anyone interested should send their name to Terri Geitgey along with the officer role they're interested in. An online voting poll will be set up so that members can cast their votes. The new officers will be in place by the February 26th OC meeting, which will be run by the new Chair.

**Action Item: Interested members submit their name and the officer role they're interested in to Terri Geitgey <[tgeitgey@leverpress.org](mailto:tgeitgey@leverpress.org)> no later than end of day Wednesday, February 7<sup>th</sup>. Members will be alerted once the online voting poll mechanism is in place.**

4. Sub-committees/task forces for 2018.

a. Long-term sustainability:

This group needs to get re-engaged to work out what to do after Year 5. Hiring a business consultant is one option. Mike will make it a goal to get this group started again this Spring.

b. Communications/webinars:

This group thinks about social media outlets such as Twitter, Facebook, and how to communicate out the group's intent to the general public, but even more so how to communicate with the membership. Peggy Seiden asked to be removed from the Communications subcommittee due to too many competing commitments. Alexia Hudson-Ward and Jennifer Nutefall volunteered to join this committee.

**Action Item: Terri will remove Peggy Seiden's name from the Communications subcommittee member list, and add Alexia Hudson-Ward and Jennifer Nutefall as new members.**

5. Revised budget proposal.

a. Spreadsheet

b. Narrative justification

Mike explained that we are two years in and have a surplus largely because of the deferred production timeline. Because budget approval is an important decision and the group has not had sufficient time to review the budget spreadsheet and the narrative justification document, Mike proposed that today be a general budget discussion, with the approval decision deferred until the February meeting. Marta supported this, noting that it would be good to have the new officers in place prior to budget approval.

Mark gave the group some background information, touching on the nature of the surplus, and how Amherst and Michigan propose to reallocate certain line items. Specifically, Copyediting and Editorial Board travel are being moved from Amherst to Michigan. Copyediting rate estimates were increased to match what the University of Michigan Press now pays for copyediting its titles. The reallocations mean percentages would flip from 55% to Amherst and 45% to Michigan, to the new proposed percentages of 55% to Michigan and 45% to Amherst.

Mark explained that Amherst proposes to use some of the surplus to find additional capacity to acquire titles—perhaps a freelance acquiring editor who has an existing network and whose subject area of expertise doesn't overlap with Mark or Beth. He has 3 such candidates in mind and has begun exploratory conversations with them. Amherst also wants to concentrate on expanding the social media profile of Lever Press. He envisions hiring someone who could work both for Amherst College Press and Lever

Press, and be jointly funded. Dalia asked what else the social media person would do. Mark said redesign of the Lever Press website would also be part of their job. Alexia observed that this sounds more like a web marketing manager than a social media person. Mark agreed. Dalia particularly welcomed the addition of a web marketing manager / social media expert. Mark has a person in mind for this position. Mike would be interested in spending some surplus on sustainability planning to look beyond the 5 years. Mark raised the idea of using some funds to apply for membership in the Association of University Presses. Jonathan wondered if there was an alternative proposal -- giving money back at the end of the program for example, although he had concerns about the ability of institutions to accept money back. Mark also pointed out that this could leave members with a negative perception. Mike emphasized that he was supportive of the overall directions but wanted some time for the Committee to consider the details.

Mark asked: What do you want to see in Lever Press beyond the 5 years? Jonathan emphasized that we want to have a liberal arts voice in the changing paradigm of scholarly publishing, in being experimental, and expressed how interested he was in seeing reader reactions. The kind of readership we get will help govern where we go in the future. Dalia posed the question as to the impact on the budget if the additional acquisitions support leads to great success and we end up with more titles than anticipated? Mark replied that as they get closer to contracting title #60, they would know they were approaching the end of Phase 1 and wouldn't continue to issue contracts beyond the agreed upon number.

Charles cautioned the group that this is likely not the last time we'll need to do a budget reallocation, given that we don't as yet have any concrete production costs under our belt. He pointed out that there is a "ragged edge" to this project that we'll need to wrestle with.

#### 6. Strategy for taking on new partners (discussion)

We have had strong expressions of interest from Hope, Baldwin-Wallace, and Willamette. We have responded that they can still join but at the original rate and for the full five years, though Mark wants to know if the Committee agrees with this approach. Jonathan and Mike were concerned about changing the conditions of membership half way through for such new additions. Dalia asked if anyone remembered previous discussion around preferential treatment for founding members. Marta had a vague recollection of something to do with this, though others did not remember. Mike believes that in terms of administration, the simpler it is and the fewer custom arrangements to keep track of, the better. Marta wondered whether prorating new members coming on board at this point would be better, but Mike prefers the idea of reducing "the cliff" (i.e.,

the drop off in Year 5), but thinks we should follow up with the interested new potential members and see what they're willing to sign on for.

The OC authorized Mark to reach out to schools interested in five year terms. If the terms change in the middle of their agreements, they will get the most favorable terms. We will revisit the idea of a recruitment campaign once some titles have been published.

Mike concluded the meeting by again welcoming the new members, and confirming that we'll have the new officers in place by the next meeting, during which we'll continue the discussion about the revised budget and vote whether or not to approve it. He asks that if others have agenda items they'd like to add, please contact Terri, Mark, or Mike, and we'll add those to the agenda.

The next Oversight Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 26, 3:30 – 4:30 EST.