Minutes of the OLH Library Board

Held on 17th April 2024 at 3pm BST via Microsoft Teams.

Present: Caroline Edwards (CE), Paula Clemente Vega (PCV), Theo Andrew (TA), Oya Rieger (OR), Shiela Winchester (SW), Maureen Walsh (MW), Siobhan Haime (SH), Susanne van Rijn (SR), Robert Atkinson (RA), Demmy Verbeke (DV), Curtis Brundy (CB), Sharla Lair (SL).

Apologies from: Katerina Wiberg (KW), Agnès Ponsati (AP), and Andreas Ferus (AF).

1.0 Welcome

1.1 CE welcomed everyone to the second Board meeting. CE referenced the pre-circulated OLH Report to the Library Board and apologised for short notice and welcomed any concerns or comments about the report.

2.0 Reflections on past six months of journal flipping

2.1 TA offered congratulations on the high-profile journals that the OLH have flipped and commented on their prestigious profiles which 'represent exactly what the OLH should be aiming to achieve'. TA offered his help in broadcasting the news of this success. CE reflected on the challenge of knowing whether such news filters through to library communities and welcomed any suggestions from the Board for improving the OLH's communication with librarians.

2.2 OR echoed congratulations and asked whether the OLH was working to a milestone, target, or metric to achieve this number of flips.

2.3 CE explained that the OLH has been understaffed in recent years. As Executive Director, she has focussed in the past eighteen months on building sustainability through increasing operational capacity (investing in OLH staff). As a result of this understaffing, various processes of external-facing communication and reporting to OLH stakeholders have not been possible and now need to be built back up, such as communicating key targets and milestones achieved. Typically, the OLH aims for three journal flips a year. The preceding six months have seen more flips than average because it reflects the target for two years. Moreover, three journals left, two of which were university partnerships that were not economical for the OLH to maintain, and this opened space for some new journals. CE explained that this decision not to renew university partnerships (that had been initially established for a 5-year period in 2018-2023) was due to the rising cost of article production with the university publishers. The OLH's own production costs are substantially cheaper, as a result of bringing production in-house on the Janeway platform that OLH runs. The decision was taken not to renew these partnership agreements to free up library funding for supporting more OLH journals. CE emphasised her desire to demonstrate value for money to the libraries that financially support the OLH's publishing activities and

acknowledged the trust these libraries place in her and the OLH team to spend the money effectively and appropriately.

2.4 CE reflected that there has been a lot of recent interest from journals published by the "big 5" commercial publishers. SW expressed interest in hearing about some of the ways that the OLH has been successful when talking with editorial teams about moving from commercial publishers. CE offered informal follow-up conversation but explained in brief that journal editorial boards approach her informally because they have heard about the OLH from academic colleagues. In some of the high-profile cases of journals whose editorial boards have resigned en masse, CE has approached journal editors where possible. In some cases there can be legal sensitivities and Editors-in-Chief are unable to speak with any other publisher because of no-compete clauses in their contracts.

2.5 CE explained that there has been a shift within the OLH's journal portfolio to include social science titles; however, only when the journal relates to, or impacts, humanities disciplines. For example, a journal on the *history* of economics rather than economics as a social science. CE reflected that the priority has been to build a high-quality portfolio of journals and there is an element of opportunism in terms of responding to news of journal discontent with commercial publishers.

2.6 PCV mentioned that the OLH is aiming to release its first comprehensive annual report in September 2024. This will provide a narrative about the OLH's progress and strategic direction, including anticipated future milestones (previous OLH reports have been shorter statements at the end of each calendar year). The expanded annual report will be published in September to align with the OLH's financial year-end on 31 July 2024.

3.0 Collaboration and building momentum

3.1 CB reflected that the OLH's recent journal flips do not appear to be isolated clusters but part of a momentum. He wondered whether there is more potential for collaboration between university presses, as opposed to competition.

3.2 CB expressed that it would be shrewd to intentionally position university-owned and not-for-profit diamond OA publishers such as the OLH as 'landing spots' for these journals, which would help give editors confidence. CB proposed that he would like to see academic communities take control of their journals by leaving commercial publishers, but editors need to have confidence that they have 'a safe place to land'. This could be achieved by promoting 'success stories', such as recent OLH journal flips.

3.3 CB reflected on the OLH's own capacity for scaling up its journal flipping programme, and asked whether it will be necessary in the coming years to communicate more closely with the diamond OA publishing community. This would mean that publishers, funders, and academic societies are not competing but working together to return journals to community control.

3.4 CE reflected on the kinds of collaboration already happening – for example, communication between OLH and the Community Investment Programme (CIP) at Lyrasis. CE explained that in cases where journal applications are not accepted at OLH, she recommends editors approach Lyrasis' CIP and also the Shift Plus Open programme at MIT.

3.5 SL noted that there will be an immanent announcement from several consortia in the United States who are working together to strengthen diamond open access, which will extend beyond the US as part of the vision of DIAMAS. The idea is to create a 'diamond capacity centre' for 'diamondization': helping journals to transition from a commercial environment to a not-for-profit diamond framework via university-owned publishing infrastructure.

3.6 SL pinpointed a desire globally to connect these kinds of programmes. She explained how we are encountering 'blurred lines where we're trying to respect each other. However, at

the same time, by working together, I think we would strengthen ourselves individually'. She noted that it makes sense to work together because funders don't always differentiate between diamond OA publishers and infrastructure service providers. Funders are concerned with how to invest money to achieve the widest journal and disciplinary coverage for scholars.

3.7 SH raised the challenge of improving collaboration between academics, publishers and libraries, and how to 'get them in the same room at the same time' so that the motivations of all three perspectives can be understood.

4.0 Communicating with the librarians who fund the OLH

4.1 CE introduced Siobhan Haime, the OLH's new Publishing Technologies Librarian. SH raised the question of how the OLH can best communicate journal flips to the library community – especially acquisitions librarians who have budget-holding power. SH reflected on how she has reached out via personal networks, but this is limited by the national scope of her contacts (located primarily in the UK). SH asked the Board for advice on developing a more structural approach for reaching subscription librarians and making the case for diverting library subscription funds, APCs and TAs to support the OLH. CE encouraged the Board to reach out if they have any thoughts on this question.

4.2 The Board discussed the importance of consortia such as JISC as a means of enhancing librarians' trust of the OLH. CE queried how the OLH might reach more library consortia internationally. SL discussed the importance of consortia to increasing the visibility of diamond not-for-profit OA programmes and PCV mentioned her involvement as part of a COPIM working group undertaking research into how not-for-profit organisations can approach consortia.

> **Action**: CE encouraged the Board to reach out if they have any additional thoughts or recommendations re. how to communicate OLH's journal flips away from commercial publishers with librarians and the library community.

5.0 Metadata and discoverability

5.1 CE asked the Board for feedback for improving the OLH's handling of metadata for libraries and what OLH might do from a technical point of view to improve discovery; are there any systems or services OLH should be aware of?

5.2 SH explained her current approach to this area. Currently, she is auditing how OLH journal metadata flow through Ex Libris products (which are part of Clarivate's research discovery, referencing, and analytics services). She is finding a mismatch between what librarians see in their Ex Libris accounts and the data that OLH provides to Ex Libris; she is in an ongoing discussion with Clarivate about this. SH is also investigating platforms where content providers can sign up to see their metadata and manage it. SH explains that another approach has been through the library organisation OCLC and Open Alex, an open library catalogue.

5.3 SH explained that she has also been doing some exploratory work on how OLH can provide better quality MARC records. However, she expressed concern that even if OLH's MARC records are of an improved quality, the question remains as to how the records are ingested into library catalogues. SH asked whether it is best to try to go through or OCLC or Clarivate? Or is there a third option not covered?

5.4 SW encouraged use of OCLC worldcat.org. SW also recommended Ulrichsweb, which is now part of ProQuest, the serials directory. SL seconded the recommendation that OLH look into using Open Alex.

5.5 SL also encouraged an ongoing and strong relationship with DOAJ, who are looking at how to better identify diamond OA journals through metadata. SL recommended that the OLH take any opportunity to put itself forward as a case for how to lead the way on metadata. CE agreed and noted that the flagship journal of the OLH has recently been a test case at DOAJ re. the legitimacy of a journal that only publishes special collections but maintains very high standards of academic credibility. Although guest-edited, special collections are stewarded through robust editorial processes that oversee peer review and the training and managing of guest academic editors.

5.6 SH asked the Board how OLH might improve the human side of discovery and how OLH can better promote diamond open access journals to academics.

5.7 OR replied that it is a well-known fact that academics do not always start online research searches using their library catalogue but, rather, rely on disciplinary portals or Google Scholar.

5.8 SL asked whether the OLH has a community for OLH journals. SL reflected that while the OLH is lucky to be supported by vocal individual advocates, it may be worth investing in empowering the editorial teams of OLH journals to talk to each other. SL mentioned that OACIP at Lyrasis is experimenting with community-building among its diamond OA journals. CE mentioned the Janeway symposium (which took place in London and online in September 2023), as well as an editorial open day that the OLH Editorial team are organising for Autumn 2024. CE reflected that this could be an important moment because of the editorial teams of new journals that have recently joined the OLH. In several cases, these journal profiles are quite different from older OLH journals – they are more internationally visible and publish at a higher volume. CE suggested linking up with SL to discuss organising joint community events and reflected that the strengths of organisations such as OLH and Lyrasis is that they academic-led and therefore have more credibility and trustworthiness among scholars and librarians.

Action:
Action: CE to consider whether there is potential to collaborate with Lyrasis around generating editorial communities.
Action: CE to consider whether there is potential to further work with DOAJ on their metadata for diamond open access journals.

6.0 DOIs and translations

6.1 CE introduced a query included in the pre-circulated report regarding a new OLH journal, which is in the process of joining (a public announcement is forthcoming). The journal publishes articles in three languages and the translations are assigned separate DOIs. CE asked the Board for responses to the proposal of moving to one DOI with translations provided in the 3 languages for HTML, PDF and XML.

6.2 TA discussed this agenda item with colleagues prior to the Board. They investigated on the CrossRef website and could not find any established guidance. He recommended approaching CrossRef to request publishing one DOI that points to a splash page for the article and then the different languages / translations hang off that splash page. However, TA thinks it may be worth escalating to CrossRef for official guidance.

6.3 MW found a CrossRef forum that suggests that each translation should be assigned a different DOI – she would consider the translations different content.

6.4 The Board reflected on how it may make a difference whether the translators are credited and whether the article is machine translated. CE explained that in the case of this journal, articles are translated in-house by the editors and individual translators are not credited.

CE explained that aggregating the translations into a single DOI would increase visibility, particularly for non-Anglophone articles, which aligns with the OLH's international mission. TA agreed that this would be an advantage. SH wondered whether having three different records might be problematic for indexing. MW argued that separate DOIs for each translation can be captured in the metadata; the translations would point back to the original language.

6.5 CE asked whether it might be worth writing up a comment piece on this specific journal issue, offering guidance for other publishers in future.

> **Action:** CE to approach CrossRef for guidance and decide whether each translated version of the same article requires a separate DOI.

7.0 Final words and length of board meetings

7.1 CE concluded the Board by saying that the OLH needs to increase the number of libraries financially supporting its publishing activities if it is to expand its programme of flipping journals. There is growing demand for the "diamondization" of academic journals, as evidenced in the successful journal flips to OLH from commercial publishers over the past 6-12 months, as well as the number of journal applications that the OLH cannot accept and inquiries from editorial boards that CE receives.

7.2 SH asked if she can send an email to the Board asking for advice about what kind of information the OLH team should provide to libraries as part of its library outreach programme. It's important for OLH staff to know what kind of resources and information would be most helpful to librarians who may wish to support the OLH and need to make a business case to their senior managers or budget holders.

7.3 MW suggested scheduling a separate discussion about how libraries who have subscription bundle agreements in place with commercial publishers can begin negotiating reducing their funding to "zombie" journals that have flipped to diamond OA at the OLH. CE reflected that communicating this process of divesting OA funding away from APCs and TAs with commercial publishers and towards scholar-led, not-for-profit diamond OA publishing is a key part of the OLH's mission. How libraries can achieve this divestment remains unclear.

7.4 CE asked whether the Board would like to continue scheduling meetings of one hour, or whether this might be increased to one hour and a half to give more discussion time. The Board was generally receptive to longer meetings, so long as these can be scheduled well in advance.

> **Decision**: next meeting will be 1.5 hours in duration.
> **Action**: SH and CE to establish email thread about the best information to provide librarians as part of the OLH's programme of library outreach to increase the number of members funding the OLH's publishing activities.
> **Action**: CE will begin an email discussion with the Board re. the practicalities of librarians diverting funds from commercial publishers, in response to announcements of journal flips.