3 October 2016
American Philosophical Association
Small Grants Program

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to report on the progress of my current APA grant for our project entitled “An enduring platform for the Online Bibliography of Environmental Thought (OBET)”. First, I am grateful to the Society for funding this project, and am excited about the upcoming redeployment of OBET on its new platform; I and my team are proud to recognize the support of the APA in getting this off the ground. The International Society for Environmental Ethics (ISEE) was also generous with funding the project in its first incarnation between 2009-2014.

The plan of the project as represented in my grant application had eight features. I will report on each as they are presented.

1. withdraw OBET from its previous host
This was accomplished, as mentioned in the first year report.

2. acquire programmers and develop a plan for a new platform
This was accomplished, as mentioned in the first year report.

3. consult with PhilPapers about integration and arrival at an agreement
This was accomplished, although (as mentioned in the first year report) the result of the consultation is that PhilPapers integration is on hiatus indefinitely because they no longer aid in data entry. We do have a plan in place, but the execution of this plan will not commence until OBET is fully functional, after which personnel can then afford to take on this task.

4. develop the software platform and acquire a webserver
This has been accomplished, although improvements continue to be made to the platform. Currently, for instance, the Browse feature, History, and Help pages are being developed over the next month. In the following month (November 2016) we plan to reinstate the optional Registration feature.

(5) deploy OBET

OBET was successfully deployed in May 2016. This summer I and others tried the resource and have judged its functionality to be only at 75% of my expectations. As our programming team is on a 9-month schedule, they have only recently recommenced working to get rid of bugs and improve functionality after this summer’s test run. Overall the deployment has been a success, but I will not be fully pleased with it until the bugs are removed and a few additional features are added.

(6) obtain interns for data entry and begin enlarging the database

This summer we obtained 7 interns for data entry. Each was trained by postbaccalaureate student Mark Megerian, who during this project I appointed to manage our contributions. Currently the database contains 6,397 references, and our plan is to bring this to 10,000 by midterm, and 15,000 by the end of the calendar year. A total of 23,000 references are available to be formatted and imported, and many others are relevant but not yet located.

(7) integrate with PhilPapers

As mentioned above, this is on hiatus until programming and data entry for OBET have further advanced.

(8) implement outreach and evaluation plans.

The Outreach Plan as stated in the original application consists of (a) notification and survey of members of the International Society for Environmental Ethics (ISEE); (b) notification of other relevant societies and academic units; and (c) search engine optimization. So far I have notified only the Officers of the ISEE, as I do not want to advertise the redeployment of OBET or to optimize internet searches until functionality is up to standard. I expect this to happen by the end of this term, and I have reserved $250 of the granted funds (with the permission of the CUNY Research Foundation which is administering them) for search engine optimization and social media advertising once this accomplished.

The Project evaluation as stated in the original application consists of (a) workability and adequate functionality of the platform; (b) success of the pilot program of trained data entry; and (c) integration into PhilPapers. The software platform works well and approximately 75% functionality has been developed. The pilot program was
very successful and I plan to continue it indefinitely (although without the stipends for the time being).
Integration into PhilPapers was not successful, as mentioned. Thus, the project has met with mixed success,
although clearly OBET has been securely established and soon will have full functionality. This item was the
heart of this proposal from the beginning, as the application title indicates.

The OBET evaluation as stated in the original application consists of (a) results from the ISEE member survey
mentioned above, which I have postponed; and (b) results of site traffic analysis to determine the effectiveness
of the advertising and search engine optimization, which I have likewise postponed.

The grant from APA to establish OBET has been vitally successful, despite the incompleteness of the project as
initially envisioned. The functionality of the software will soon reach the point at which I will feel comfortable
advertising, optimizing online searches, and notifying relevant parties. If the Board would like an updated
evaluation of the project, say in January 2017, the expected Project and OBET evaluations could be delivered
more fully. Regardless, my heartfelt thanks to APA for supporting the rejuvenation of the Online Bibliography
of Environmental Thought.

Sincerely,

David Lahti
Associate Professor of Biology, Queens College
Doctoral Programs in Biology and Psychology
City University of New York
OBET
Online Bibliography of Environmental Thought
The internet gateway to ideas on the relationship between humans and nature

A free, cooperative resource.