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## **Centre for the Study of Scholarly Communication to work with international collaboration on peer review**

Dr. Daniel Paul O'Donnell of the Centre for the Study of Scholarly Communication and Department of English at the University of Lethbridge is collaborating with an international team on a project that investigates academic peer review.

The project, led by Principal Investigator Dr. Martin Eve at Birkbeck College, University of London, has been awarded a grant of \$99,000 from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. This project will analyze the role of peer review in the research cycle to develop better ways of using expert opinion to assess and improve the literature.

The research team – comprised of Eve, Dr. Cameron Neylon (Curtin University, Australia), O'Donnell (U of L), Dr. Jennifer Lin (director of Product Management at Crossref), Dr. Damian Pattinson (vice-president of Publishing Innovation at Research Square), Samuel Moore (King's College London) and Dr. Veronique Kiermer (executive editor, Public Library of Science (PLOS)), who initially convened at the Mellon-funded Triangle Scholarly Communications Institute – will investigate the peer review database at PLOS ONE, the largest scientific journal in the world.

The reports, which will be strictly anonymized and treated as confidential, will be examined using a range of close-reading, distant-reading, and stylometric approaches. The team hopes to understand the shape of peer-review at scale, leading to a better understanding of the oft-hidden process.

“Every academic in the world is familiar with peer review,” says Eve. “We all participate in this system. However, surprisingly little is known about what peer review looks like at scale. Using a set of cross-disciplinary methodologies, we will study the writing patterns of reviewers and look for trends that can give us insight into how reviewers respond to requests for evaluation.”

“Working with the Birkbeck group allowed us to find ways to leverage our large dataset of reviews while maintaining confidentiality,” says Kiermer. “This is a great opportunity for PLOS to partner with experts to gain insights and promote evidence-based approaches to peer review.”

“This is an exciting project for the University of Lethbridge’s new Centre for the Study of Scholarly Communication,” adds O’Donnell. “It demonstrates the international and interdisciplinary scope of Scholarly Communication research and provides valuable opportunities for the students who work in it.”

To view online: <http://www.uleth.ca/unews/article/centre-study-scholarly-communication-work-international-collaboration-peer-review>

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