

To: The Delegates of Oxford University Press

10th January 2020

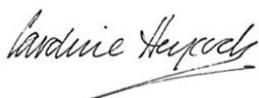
Dear Colleagues,

We write as President and President-Elect of the Linguistics Association of Great Britain, on behalf of our membership, to express our concerns about proposals as to how the OED project will be managed in future. The OED is of course central to the working lives of many of our members, and serves as one of the ways that linguistic scholarship feeds through to the general public. Our academics use the OED in their teaching, their research and as a resource in their engagement with press and public. Many of our members have, through their research and teaching, engaged with the hugely important ongoing revision programme of the OED as users, often working closely with OED colleagues during what must be one of the major linguistic projects of our time. As the socio-historical, sociolinguistic, lexicographical and lexical semantic subdisciplines of linguistics advance (and these are areas where new understanding and new breakthroughs occur continuously), this is a time for deeper engagement with the revision process, and a time when revising and updating the dictionary via the OED revision project is more important than ever.

We are of course very pleased that one of the proposed changes is to engage more fully with academics with the kind of expertise that our membership has, and that there will be a new web-based platform for the project. We were very concerned, however, to hear of major staff losses in precisely the area of the OED's work that is so important: revision of the information that keeps the OED as authoritative as it currently is. Staff losses in that area are also certain to loosen the long-standing links between University research and the OED, to everyone's detriment. The kinds of roles which we understand are likely to be cut are precisely those where the loss of expertise, connections, and the birds-eye view of the project may well damage the project's academic worth, leaving the OED much the weaker for it. The OED is unique in the English speaking world for the depth of its scholarship and its place as the authoritative repository of historical and lexicographical knowledge of the world's most important language. As a learned society with a core interest in the OED, we urge you to reconsider moves to make redundant roles which are central to the OED's academic mission.

Yours Sincerely,

David Adger
President, The Linguistics Association of Great Britain



Caroline Heycock
President-Elect, The Linguistics Association of Great Britain

