

Leverage Board update - Q1 2026

Contents

Our Q1 update for the board covers the most important developments at Leverage during the most recent quarter (Q1, 2026), from Friday, January 2, 2026 through Friday, March 27, 2026. This update is intended for the board to review before the Q1 2026 board meeting on Friday, March 27, 2026.

The update covers: Institute, Research, Services, Initiatives, Resources, and Compliance.

The preceding board update is available here: [Q4 2025 Board Update](#).

Institute

During Q1 2026, Leverage updated its business model, reorganized internally, refreshed its website, and has now begun a new fundraiser. These tasks occupied the majority of the team's time and energy.

(1) Updated business model

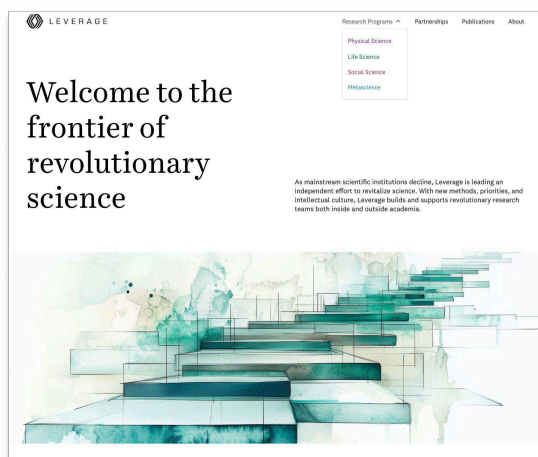
As planned, Leverage has now updated its business model. The new business model has two parts: first, a product offering called "Operations+" (or "Ops+" for short), where Leverage will supply scientific support services to teams doing revolutionary science, and second, traditional non-profit fundraising. The Ops+ offering is intended to provide Leverage with enough revenue to support its basic operations. Philanthropic donations are intended to support revolutionary science, either conducted by Leverage or by Leverage's collaborators. Operations+ has tiers: Consultation, Operations+, and Partnership. It is also a modular offering, including operations, recruiting, community management, operations, the production of fundraising materials, and more.

| Leverage Services Description | |
|--|--|
| Operations+ Leverage and the Wolfram Institute share the mission of advancing frontier science, and both organizations believe that novel approaches to fundamental science, such as those pioneered by Wolfram Institute founder, Stephen Wolfram, are needed now more than ever. Leverage offers operational support services to help non-profit research institutes, such as the Wolfram Institute, achieve their missions. | |
| Operations From legal compliance to budgeting to setting up new organizations, we handle day-to-day operations, helping teams focus on the science. First quarter \$25,000, then \$12,500/quarter | Sourcing and Hiring We find and help you hire the talent you need to complete your project. \$25,000 (2 month timeline) |
| Briefs, Decks, and Roadmaps We work with your team to learn about potential audiences and the science behind your project, then develop attractive materials for fundraising, e.g. briefs, decks, and roadmaps. \$25,000 (2 month timeline) | Community Management We help shape communities of sometimes untidy supporters into a positive force for your project or help you grow a community from scratch. First quarter \$25,000, then \$12,500/quarter |
| Social Media & Communication We work with your team to determine a social media and engagement strategy, then execute it, with an emphasis on accessible, scientifically accurate communication. First quarter \$25,000, then \$12,500/quarter | Donation Administration We help individuals and teams receive tax-exempt donations with appropriate controls. Varies; 5% fiscal sponsorship fee |
| Partnerships | |
| Fundraising We work with teams to determine the most likely fundraising paths, then pursue most or all of them in parallel. Includes crafting persuasive pitches, joint conversations with key donors, access to the Leverage network, and last mile support. May include novel fundraising methods and principal action to align with the request. Up to \$100,000 (6-9 months) | Research Validation We examine research programs from a third-party perspective and provide an assessment of key premises, methods, and likely outcomes. \$50,000 (6-9 months) |
| | Scientific Strategy We identify ways to make progress, especially when incremental efforts have been exhausted. \$50,000 (6-9 months) |

(2) Internal reorganization

In line with the updated business model, Leverage has also reorganized internally. Leverage is now organized into divisions: the Research Division and the Services Division. Within the Research Division, there are four research programs: Physical Science, Life Science, Social Science, and Metascience. Within Services, there are Leverage's service offerings: consultation, Operations+, and partnerships. Geoff is leading Research, Melinda is leading Services, and Oliver has fully taken on the co-founder role and is now in many regards leading the organization. Of course, we expect all members of the team to help out with many aspects of the work, in accordance with their skills and interests.

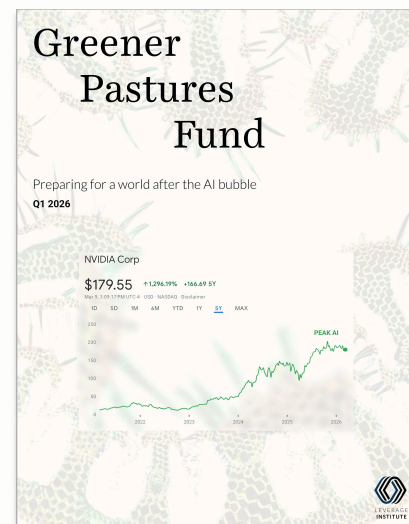
(3) Refreshed website



Leverage has refreshed its website. The new website is based on the idea of revolutionary research, which has been Leverage’s focus since its inception. The website includes Leverage’s research programs, service offerings, publications, and a new About page. The About page covers Leverage’s vision, approach, and a brief description of its continuous history from 2011 to the present. The new website reflects Leverage’s evolving aesthetic and is the clearest and best representation yet of the institute’s activities. That said, the website is still missing a lot of material. The team expects to add material on many topics over the coming year, as well as update many of the images.

(4) New fundraise

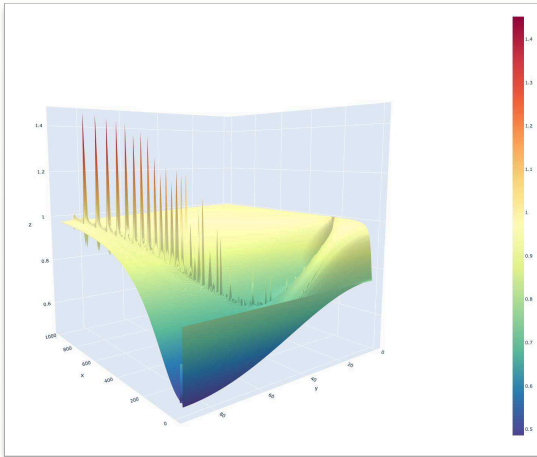
After taking most of Q4 2025 and all of Q1 2026 off from social media, Leverage is now set to resume external communications. The focus will be on the Greener Pastures Fund. The Greener Pastures Fund is intended to advance many fields in science, providing an alternative to a future dominated AI. Likely fields include introspection, topics in social science, magnetobiology, quantum biology, nucleonics, discrete science, and AI safety. The fund builds in various hedges, so that funders focused on AI can also contribute to a future where AI does not fully pan out, and funders not focused on AI have some investment in AI safety in case AI is more powerful than they expect. The fund will have a special governance structure which gives funders a voice in how the funds are deployed, while also incentivizing communication between funders and finding synergies between fields. The fundraise is intended to follow the pattern of the fundraise led by Leverage for quantum biology in 2024, which was intended to raise \$5-20 million; the amount raised was approximate \$7 million. The Greener Pastures fund aims to raise \$20-60 million.



Research

Despite its focus on reorienting, Leverage was still able to make progress on science. The primary focus was magnetobiology (Physical Science, Life Science), with research by Lóric Sárkány. Progress was made on dissemination in introspection (Social Science), with volunteer work by Peter Buckley. Geoff oversaw or managed the research; also, Geoff and Oliver worked together on understanding the scientific funding landscape (Metascience, Social Science).

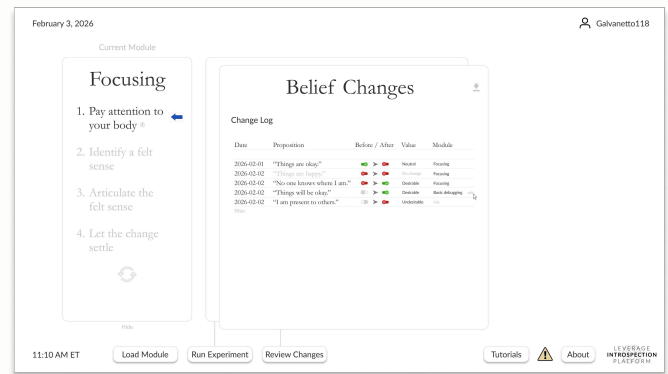
(5) Magnetobiology: Physics-First Approach



From Leverage’s earlier study of magnetobiology, it has appeared that one promising research avenue is a “physics first” approach, where the principles and mindset of physics is applied in understanding biological systems. Over the last quarter, Lőrinc completed his review of Vladimir Binhi, a Russian researcher following a similar approach and who appears, in many regards, to be many steps ahead of Western researchers. Geoff and Lőrinc then created a research plan, starting with achieving a clear physical understanding of the “radical pair mechanism,” a magnetochemical mechanism that has been the focus of much Western magnetobiology. In the next quarter, they expect to publish a publicly understandable paper on the topic.

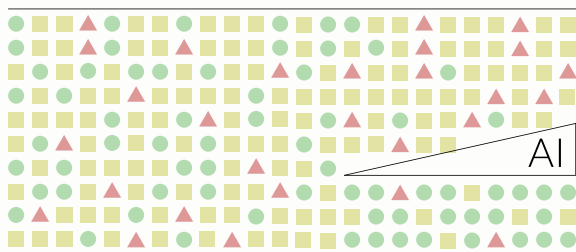
(6) Introspection: Research Platform Mockup

Inspired in part by conversation with former collaborators and in part by the NSF Tech Labs’ focus on “platforms,” Geoff mocked up a platform for introspection research. Volunteer Peter Buckley then created a prototype of the platform using Claude Code. The platform, as envisioned, will allow researchers to load different introspection “modules,” receive step-by-step introspection instructions, keep notes, record the results of experiments, consult resources, and easily manage privacy settings.



(7) Sociology of Science: The Science Funding Landscape

As part of preparing for the Greener Pastures fundraiser, Geoff and Oliver have come to a number of conclusions about science funding and how current scientific efforts are being shaped by the scientific funding landscape. Three important proposals are that (1) the rate of charlatanism in science is higher than

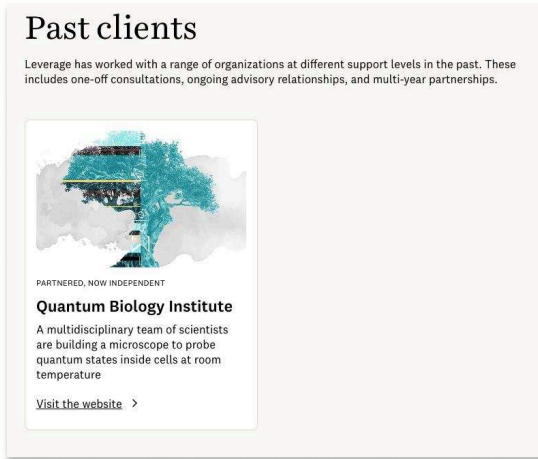


- ▲ Charlatans
- Corner cutters
- Sticklers

most people expect, (2) science funding is set to contract for many years, and (3) AI will have a transformative effect in science, though perhaps not in the way that everyone thinks. In particular, it appears as though there will be some scientific teams that master AI tools and as a result become much more productive. However, it appears likely that the vast majority of scientists who adopt AI will do so in the spirit of cutting corners faster. This will lead to a bifurcation in scientific culture, between those who have adopted AI and cut corners more quickly and those who remain sticklers for scientific accuracy.

Services

(8) Concluded partnership with QBI



Regrettably, the attempt to wind down the partnership with QBI amicably did not succeed. After receiving a surprise termination letter, and after QBI failed to remit payment (\$20,833) for the last month in December, Leverage threatened legal action. QBI remitted payment, but required a non-disparagement clause as part of a settlement, which Leverage rejected. After it became clear that QBI was burning money on legal counsel and was struggling to find confidence to raise funds itself, Leverage decided to not pursue the matter further. Leverage will provide the final report free of charge to QBI, which will focus on key scientific and fundraising challenges QBI will face, as well as advice on how to meet them.

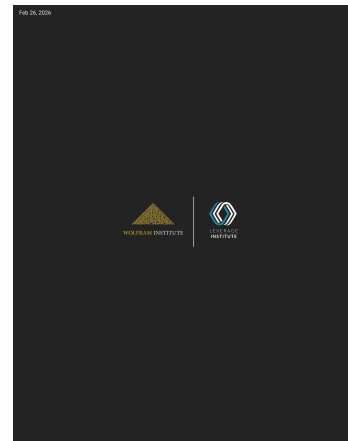
(9) MIT LENR

Leverage has been working with the MIT low energy nuclear reactions (LENR) team since Q2 2025. More recently, we had the opportunity to provide feedback to the team on their National Science Foundation (NSF) Tech Labs Request for Information (RFI), as well as their application to the DARPA Mechanisms for Amplification of fusion Reaction Rates in Solids. The Leverage team has also been tapped to help the MIT LENR team organize the 2027 International Conference on Quantum Energy (ICQE), which will take place in summer of that year.



(10) Wolfram Institute

Leverage also approached the Wolfram Institute about a potential collaboration, focusing on helping them with certain aspects of their recent grants. The proposal was met with some interest, though has not gotten across the line. Whether a collaboration is possible or not, Leverage has been convinced of the value of discrete science and can be expected to seek to advance it in the future.



Initiatives

(11) AI initiative — AI paper checker, round #1.

Can AI systems evaluate research papers?
Experiment #1 - Retracted papers
Author: Oliver Caulfield, Feedback: Geoff Abood, Melissa Draxler

Description of study

To determine whether AI systems can evaluate the quality of scientific papers, we uploaded 10 papers of known low quality to various AI models and asked for an assessment of quality. Rather than using our own judgment to assess whether a paper was low quality, we chose papers that had been formally retracted and listed in the [Retraction Watch database](#). Papers were not read prior to selection and were not chosen in a systematic way. Papers were selected from a variety of fields: Biology (5), Chemistry (1), Physics (1), Mathematics (1), and Psychology (2).

The models tested were: ChatGPT 5.2, Claude (Sonnet 4.5), Gemini 3 (Thinking, Elicits, and ScienceOS). Models were assessed using the prompt "Assess the quality of this paper", or minor variations. The retracted papers were retracted included: image manipulation, data manipulation and/or fabrication, errors about methods, compromised peer review, and unreliable results and/or conclusions. Full results of the experiment can be found [here](#).

Summary of results

| AI Model | Retraction detected | Average assessment | Top paper retracted |
|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| ChatGPT 5.2 | 7/10 | 100% | 100% |
| Claude (Sonnet 4.5)* | 1/10 | 100% | 100% |
| Gemini 3 (Thinking) | 7/10 | 100% | 100% |
| Isoswords | 7/10 | 100% | 100% |
| Elicits | 7/10 | 100% | 100% |

1. Retraction was detected in 9 out of 10 tests (10 papers, 5 AI models).
a. One paper (#8) was detected by all 5 models. We suspect the reason for detection was the widely publicized nature of the case ([Schulin scandal](#)).
b. ScienceOS detected 4 other retractions ([45](#), [46](#), [47](#), [48](#)).

2. Except for where ScienceOS detected a retraction, models tended to agree on an assessment.
3. In cases where retraction was not detected, papers were on average rated "good" to "excellent".
Papers judged to be lower quality were still evaluated by the AIs as valuable enough to publish.

Conclusion

Current AI systems, when prompted in a simple and straightforward way, fail to detect many retracted papers. This raises some doubts about whether AI systems can assess the quality of scientific papers. Further research on this topic is warranted.

* ChatGPT paper #8 was not retracted, but flagged it with "extreme caution", partial credit was given and awarded 1p.

Published February 12, 2026; doi.org/10.17092/doi/10.7554/10111 | © Leverage 2026; all rights reserved.

Leverage's AI initiative has been running in the background since 2023. At the Q1 2026 retreat, the team identified a perfect question to investigate: whether AI systems are capable of assessing the quality of scientific papers. If AI systems cannot assess the quality of scientific papers, they cannot do science on their own, even if they are useful to scientists who can assess the quality of papers. If, on the other hand, AI systems can assess the quality of scientific papers, AI may be able to do science autonomously. Leverage thus began, with Oliver leading the research, an investigation of whether current AIs systems can assess the quality of scientific papers. The first test, which was whether AIs can, with a simple prompt, detect the quality of papers when fed retracted papers, returned the answer "no." Leverage has published a 1-pager on the topic. Further tests are planned.

(12) Quantum Biology DAO

While not an official initiative, Leverage staff have started playing a larger role at the Quantum Biology DAO, an organization that is part of the Quantum Biology Ecosystem which Leverage helped fundraise for in 2024. Geoff and Oliver, in particular, helped co-organize an event hosted by the Quantum Biology DAO and the Biophysical Society, which had more than 70 attendees and featured talks on quantum biology and panels on the relation between quantum biology and biophysics, as well as the future of scientific funding. Another highlight was a meeting with Peter Hore, the leading biochemist studying the biological effects of the radical pair mechanism. This was attended by Geoff, Oliver, and Lórin, in addition to several other members of the DAO.

Resources

During the first quarter of 2026, the team spent much of its time transitioning from the QBI partnership to our new business model which entails supporting revolutionary science teams with operational support in many different areas, such as fundraising, general operations, recruitment, and others. We also spent a good deal of time focusing on fundraising in light of the abrupt termination of the partnership and our funding.

This quarter, Leverage did not bring in any funds, other than a final partnership payment and outstanding travel reimbursements from QBI, wrapping up our engagement with them.

For Q1, the numbers are:

- Account balance on January 1: \$37,404.23
- Funds received from January through March 27: \$22,160.24
- Amount spent January through March 27: \$54,168.00
- Account balance on March 27, 2026: \$5,396.47

After being our main funder in 2024, and a supplemental funder in 2025, Geoff is hesitant to fund the organization, so the team has been spending a lot of time thinking about fundraising. Geoff continues to donate his time instead of drawing a salary, and at this time, with an insufficient amount of funds in the bank, and nothing on the horizon, the rest of the team has worked the past 6 weeks without pay. We are hoping to rectify this situation as soon as possible.

Though we did have a great time meeting in Los Angeles in December at our last staff retreat, and were very productive, in light of the lack of funding, Leverage cancelled its planned Q1 retreat, meant to take place in New York next month. We hope to resume in-person retreats once we have suitable recurrent income.

Compliance

Some compliance matters handled this quarter were:

- End of year tax filings and donation receipts were sent out in early January.
- Melinda worked on the operations section of our 2024 and 2025 Annual Reports, covering staffing, location, compliance and finances, though clearly, the organization as a whole is behind on publishing both Annual Reports.
- With Geoff relocating to New York, the organization needed to update its headquarters, registered agent, and insurance policies, and register with all pertinent agencies, which have all been completed.
- Labor Law posters were sent out for 2026. Relevant posters were emailed to employees with a requested signature for compliance. Employees may also access these posters in the institute's Drive.
- Melinda created an interactive budget tracker with real-time updating, so the team as whole can monitor our funds.
- As always, we will continue to stay updated on regulations, identify areas of risk, and conduct internal and external audits to validate ongoing compliance and identify areas for improvement.

