

Minutes of the LTER Executive Board Polycom Meeting September 8, 2006

Participants:

Peter Groffman
Morgan Grove
Don Henshaw
Chuck Hopkinson
Sherri Johnson
John Magnuson (Chair)
Mark Ohman
Deb Peters
Dan Reed
Bob Waide (exoficial)

Welcome

1. The minutes of the last meeting were accepted unanimously
2. Added agenda item to schedule the next face-to-face EB meeting in Arlington, VA on March 7-9, 2007. There was a brief discussion of this meeting and a decision to begin the EB meeting on March 7 at 9 am, have the NSF mini symposium on the morning of March 8, the National Advisory Board meeting on the afternoon of March 8 and the morning of March 9, have the final session of the EB meeting on the morning of March 9. The EB should attend the Mini symposium and meet with the NAB the afternoon of the 8th.
3. John Magnuson assigned record keeping responsibilities to various members of the EB.
4. Transition Issues (presenter: Waide; reporter: Waide)
 - a. Membership and terms of the Executive Board. not discussed
 - b. National Advisory Board changes. not discussed
 - c. Interim Chair and Chair election. not discussed
 - d. Support of new chair for year 1 from summer 2006-summer 2007.

Bob Waide discussed the situation that the new bylaws have created in the LNO. The cost of providing additional salary for the new chair as well as increased meetings expenses has put the LNO budget into the red. The meeting expenses can probably be covered through economies in other areas. However, the shortfall resulting from the Chair's salary may require that the LNO reduce services to the Network and sites. Further discussion of this topic will take place at the next EB meeting.

5. Chair Nominations (presenter: Magnuson; reporter: Magnuson)

The two candidates are Phil Robertson and Jerry Melillo. They were selected by the nominating committee from names submitted to them as well as from themselves. Bob Waide obtained their personal information and their statement about serving as chair of the LTER Network.

The election will occur at the Science Council Meeting on September 23, 2006 at the All Scientists Meeting. The candidates will be introduced and if both are present make short statements. Paper ballots with both names on them will be distributed for the vote. The ballot count will be made immediately by LNO Staff and announced immediately.

Bob Waide pointed out that the nomination procedure did not follow the new bylaws. In the by laws it says:

V, 2.1 Chairperson

The Chair of the Science Council shall be elected by the Science Council from within the scientific community of the LTER Network. Nominations for Chair will be accepted from the LTER scientific community by the Executive Director of the Office. The Office will distribute resumes of each nominee to the Science Council and thereby to the scientific communities at all LTER Sites at least 30 days prior to the election. Election of a Chair will be by majority vote of the Science Council. The election will be held at the Science Council meeting at least one (1) year prior to the expiration of the current Chair's term (i.e. every other year). The individual elected shall serve as Chair-Elect for one (1) year prior to assuming office as Chair and during this time shall be an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Executive Board. The term of office for the Chair will be two (2) years. The Chair may stand for re-election for one consecutive two (2) year term.

Instead this year we had a nominating committee and the nominations were sought or received by the committee. The Nominating Committee selected two persons from the list and they are the two persons above.

Our bylaws do not include a nominating Committee, and they are silent about whether the entire set of nominees or a selected subset are put up for election and who or what body reduces the list. So there are some transition issues in this area.

The Executive Committee does not recommend a change in the bylaws at this time. When the next election occurs we will follow the existing bylaws.

The Executive Board will discuss the way in which any nominations received by the Executive Director from the LTER community will be handled including whether a nominating committee is needed and whether the list should be reduced in number for the election. A recommendation will be made to the Science Council about how the Science Council may wish to consider the

nominations so received by the Executive Director. **We do ask that the report of the 2006 nominations committee and the total list of nominees be obtained by the Executive Director and that these procedures and the entire list of nominees be placed into the electronic archives of the Network and made available on request to interested persons and to us in preparation for the next election whenever it occurs.**

6. Completing the proposal through the planning grant (presenter: Magnuson; reporter: Peters)

John Magnuson started the discussion by highlighting key points:

The Science Task Force (STF) has been leading the Planning Grant effort, but the leadership needs to transition to the Science Council (SC) of lead PIs. It is unclear how this transition will happen. It is also unclear who will submit the proposal and how the grant will be administered. The SC may submit the proposal, although a sub-group may be more effective at writing it in conjunction with the STF. It is also unclear if this is one proposal to bring into a centralized location (e.g., LTER inc.) or if this is multiple proposals and the money is held by NSF.

7. Working groups for intersite research following the All Scientist meeting (presenter: Waide; recorder: Johnson)

Bob Waide provided background information about LNO funding for LTER working groups. Previously \$50,000 was provided by LNO annually for working groups in the form of participant travel support. Calls for proposals went out to LTER participants and the competitions were evaluated by Executive Board. The proposals were capped at \$10,000 and were identified to support travel of 6-12 people to one or more working group meetings. LNO was responsible for distributing the funds. Now, \$130,000 is available because NSF has contributed an extra \$80,000. Some concerns or models from previous years included that proposals were funded but meetings never occurred; proposals were funded but only a portion spent; and proposals were funded and the working group spent all and needed more. Waide suggested that we limit the total amount for first meeting with the possible offer to augment if need for second meeting.

Discussion:

Magnuson suggested that we clearly define during the call for proposals what the guidelines are. He thought that the priority would go toward working groups focused on intersite synthesis with lower priority for proposals that would conduct planning or proposal writing.

Groffman ask if Waide was unhappy with prior results. Did we need different model? Also can money be used to actually do research, such as funding

undergrad or graduate students. Waide explained that these funds were designated as participant support, and that he would have to go back to NSF to request a change. This change would result in different overhead and we would lose approximately 30% if these were funds were used as salary. Groffman urged that other models be considered. Grove suggested that it would be useful to be able to have a meeting and then have staff time to implement or conduct data collection and synthesis activities.

Peters asked about the response to call for proposals following the last ASM. Were working group projects evaluated to see if they were successful? Each working group was asked to submit a report, but it was just a report of first workshop and therefore not indicative of actual “success” or describing collaborations that developed with time.

Magnuson summarized several recommendations that some portion of the funds be able to be used for salary. And that the criteria be intersite working groups and a description of products from the working group be included. Waide will follow up to check into the salary option with NSF.

Next was discussion of announcement, funding level and evaluation of proposals. Waide said that last time all Executive Committee members read all 27 proposals, which were about 2-3 pages each. Magnuson and Waide suggested that Waide select 3 members of the Executive Board whose area of expertise is most closely related to the proposal to serve as reviewers, which was agreeable to all. Proposed upper limit may be \$6000-8000 for travel with additional for possible student or staff salary. The salary would likely be used to help with preparation and data synthesis before the workshop or following the workshop. Waide will send to EB a draft of the call for proposals before the ASM, so that it can be announced at ASM

8. National Advisory Board Report on the Initiative Document (Scott)

Because Collins was not present, this agenda item was not discussed.

9. LTER Network Response to the possibility of a fixed LTER budget at 2008 levels – Gholz question about strategic analysis of LTER

This agenda item was not discussed.

10. Annual Survey of the LTER Network Office (Groffman and Hopkinson)

Terms of the 2003 Cooperative Agreement between NSF and the LTER Network Office (LNO) mandate annual review by LTER sites of the LNO's assessment of site needs and LNO performance in meeting those needs. Towards meeting this mandate the LNO created a survey for sites to complete annually. The LNO developed the survey in consultation with an expert in the development and

assessment of surveys. A variety of approaches have been used in administering the survey. In 2003, at the Seattle ASM, the survey was taken by a diversity of individuals attending the meeting. In the following years, the "sites" took the survey. Each site used whatever procedure they desired to complete the survey. It is safe to conclude that rarely did the survey represent the consensus of all PIs at a site.

During conference discussion it became evident that most participants were unfamiliar with the breadth of services supposedly provided by the LNO. Thus it becomes difficult, if not impossible, for sites to evaluate by means of the existing survey the performance of the LNO in providing said services.

A challenge is to better communicate LNO services to the LTER community. Bob Waide indicated that he was personally visiting as many sites as possible (during their annual all-scientists meetings when most LTER scientists/educators are present) in order to educate site people. Through presentations and one-on-one meetings, he hopes to inform sites and site scientists of LNO services. While this is probably the most informative approach, the number of site visits annually will be limited. Services will undoubtedly change faster than sites are revisited (delta 6 yrs with 4-5 sites per year).

Another approach discussed by the EB was to elevate the position of LNO services on the LNO web page. During our conference, it became evident through individual searches of the LNO web page that a listing of their services was not easily found. It was suggested that the LNO modify their web page to bring forward the LNO structure and LNO services.

The EB also discussed who the recipients of LNO services are to be. Are services provided to site PIs or to sites? The LNO considers its role to be to the network first, then the sites, and then to individuals. This reinforces the need of the LNO to meet with both site groups and site PIs.

The EB also thought that it should determine if the LNO was satisfied with the survey and whether they had any suggestions for change.

Next steps:

1. Strengthen communication between LNO and sites as to the services to be provided to sites.
2. Determine if the survey effectively evaluates the LNO performance in providing those services.
3. Determine if the survey effectively assesses the various sites needs.

Time Table:

- At ASM EB meeting continue discussion of this topic

- Following ASM EB members Groffman and Hopkinson to evaluate survey following additional feedback from EB and SC and then to make recommendations to EB at December videoconference.

11. Response from LTER Program of Research Sites on NEON Integrated Science and Education Plan (ISEP) (presenter: Magnuson; reporter: Groffman)

The general sentiment was that we should provide some comments on the new ISEP, if we have something to say.

Some positive comments:

There is more flexibility and potential interaction with LTER science than the earlier version.

We are heartened to see the link to the NRC Grand Challenges in Environmental Sciences, this is consistent with current LTER planning activity.

An informal poll of the Executive Board showed enthusiasm for the transects and core sites over the other activities (airborne observatory, experiments).

However, the group did not come to a consensus about if we had enough information to pass this result along.

One idea is to focus on areas of complementarity and difference between NEON and LTER. Some distinctions include that we have more of a focus on research, social science etc. The big complementarity is that a lot of what is proposed in NEON could really help us accomplish things that we want to in the LTER network.

There was some discussion about overlap between NEON and LTER and that if both are asking for lots of new money from NSF that may create problems.

There was not a consensus that we should say anything about this at this time. (Major comments were sent by Magnuson with input from Groffman, Waide, and others)

12. Agenda for Executive Board at Estes Park (presenter: Magnuson; reporter: Grove)

Not discussed.

13. Adjourn

Draft Agenda for Executive Board Meeting at the All Scientists Meeting
Wednesday Sept. 20, 2006, 8:30AM to 4:30PM

Welcome

1. Approval of minutes
2. Additions to agenda, questions
3. Record keeping (assign individuals to various items of Agenda) Magnuson
4. Review procedures for chair election (Waide)
5. Time and Place of Future Science Council meetings
 - a. Portland in Spring MCM & PAL
 - b. future years
 - Baltimore Ecosystem Studies BES – 2008
 - California Current Ecosystem CCE – 2009
 - Plum Island Estuary PIE – 2010
 - Moorea Coral reef MCR – 2011
 - Georgia Coastal Ecosystems GCE – 2012
 - c. Consent on future locations
6. Communication of Executive Board, Science Council, LTER Network Office, LTER Sites, and NSF. (Magnuson)
7. Review of LTER ad hoc and standing committees (Magnuson)
 - a. eliminations and addition of committees
 - b. combining committees
 - c. improving ways to improve committee function
8. Complete Planning Grant Proposal
 - d. Role of Science Task Force
 - e. Role and activities of the Science Council
 - f. Role and activities of the Executive Board
9. How to jump start Science Council
 - g. Science Council Meeting at All Scientists Meeting Agenda
 - h. Science Council Meeting in Spring or Summer

10. LTER Network Response to the possibility of a fixed LTER budget at 2008 levels.
 - a. Planning grant
 - b. Strategic planning issues not addressed in the planning grant.
11. NEON information
12. Show LTER video (Waide)
13. Revised Science plan????
14. Origin, Development, and Future of the LTER Network of Research Sites (Magnuson)
 - i. Oxford Series
 - j. Oral Histories
15. Timing of mini symposium, Executive Board Meeting and National Advisory Board Meeting in DC in March 2007. (Magnuson)
16. Topics raised from the floor
17. Email minutes to Bob Waide
18. Adjourn

Draft Agenda for the Science Council Meeting at the All Scientist Meeting
Saturday September 23, 2006, 3:30PM to 7PM (Dinner at meeting at 5:30PM)

Welcome

1. Welcome and charge
2. Approval of minutes
3. Election of Chair
 - c. Introduce Candidates and ask them to respond to any questions.
 - d. First vote
 - e. Second vote
4. Completing the proposal through the planning Grant
 - f. Role of the Science Task Force
 - g. Role and activities of the Science Council
 - h. Role and activities of the Executive Board
 - i. Governance Issues
 - j. Cyberinfrastructure Issues
 - k. Education Issues
5. Spring Science Council Meeting
 - l. date and place
6. How to jump start Science Council
 - m. Science Council Meeting in Spring 2007
 - i. program and program chair for meeting
 - ii. structure and topics for meeting
 - n. committee structure
 - o. communication with EB, LTER Network Office, and NSF
 - p. use Polycom
7. Topics raised from the floor
8. Adjourn