

Minutes of the LTER Executive Board Meeting  
December 6, 2010; 12-2 p.m. EST; Videoconference

1. Meeting called to order at noon by Chair Phil Robertson; Members attending: Nick Brokaw, Scott Collins, Hugh Ducklow, David Foster, Corinna Gries, Steve Hamilton, Dave McGuire, Emily Stanley, Bob Waide, Mark Williams; Unavailable: Ted Gragson. Also attending: Nancy Huntly (NSF).
2. Minutes for 17 November 2010 approved by consent.
3. NSF Highlights  
Nancy Huntly reported that new NSF requirements for data management plans should require little additional effort by LTER proposal writers based on existing network standards for data storage, sharing, and access; boilerplate text will likely suffice so long as it notes existing standards and the proposers' intent to comply. The 2011 budget is still in flux; while the picture is not rosy, the LTER impact will likely be limited to resources available for 2011 supplements; she expects that the call will include international and social science opportunities but other parts are less certain at this point. Also, she is assembling an LTER site PI history and asks that we help to assemble an electronic list of cover-page PIs from each site's inception.
4. Updates:
  - a. Minisymposium planning. Scott Collins reports that the committee awaits confirmation from one speaker at this point, after which the program will be finalized and distributed.
  - b. Synthesis data prospectus. Robertson and Waide are scheduled to speak with Liz Blood about possible next steps for funding this following discussions with NEON's Tony Beasley and Bob Tawa as reported at the last meeting (see Nov. 17 minutes). That meeting is scheduled for tomorrow with a follow-on next week in Washington. Peter Groffman has agreed to chair the new committee and will be updated following.
  - c. SIP release. The SIP has been finalized and will be distributed to NSF this afternoon following final proofing. It will be distributed to the SC and site PIs within a day or two.
  - d. Transformative science highlights. About a third of the site bullets have been finalized by communications consultant Kathy Lambert, and additional help has been recruited to speed the process. Two model narratives to accompany each bullet have been vetted by Cheryl Dybas at NSF and will be distributed with instructions to sites as bullets are finalized. Bullets + narratives will be posted on the network web site as they are checked for format and approved by the EB bullets subcommittee.
5. New Committee Charges  
At the last EB meeting three new committees were formed in response to SIP adoption. The charges to those committees were discussed and adopted as follows.
  - a. Communications Committee (standing) – to establish priorities, develop and share best practices, review progress and set future directions for LTER Network communication activities. This charge is the same as that identified in the SIP's Communication Management Plan (section 4.9). Bob Waide noted that there are a number of tasks associated with the more detailed Communications Strategic Plan (see Nov. 17 minutes) that require early attention, including reviewing and revising LTER core messages and prioritizing and setting timelines for the implementation steps.

- b. Networks Coordination Group (NCG) Committee (standing) – to lead the establishment of the NCG and represent LTER within the group. This charge is from the SIP’s section 6.9. An early task will be to survey current activities and interests.
- c. Synthesis Data Committee (ad hoc) – to oversee the development of legacy data activities as described in the Network Synthesis Data Prospectus under “Data Council” as submitted to NSF, including the development of bid specifications. Concerns were raised that this committee needs to have full involvement and coordination with NISAC and IMC to avoid duplication and conflicts. It was noted that memberships will be shared (e.g. a co-chair from both NISAC and IMC were on the original ad hoc committee, which was formulated with NISAC input), and that the new committee will also have representation from 1-2 non-LTER groups once the activity is funded.

Robertson noted that all of our standing committees will need to review and prioritize activities in the implementation plans established in the SIP and to be prepared to report on SIP progress and priorities as part of their annual reports, due (as per usual) prior to the May SC meeting.

#### 6. LNO Biennial Site Survey

Bylaws call for LTER scientists to be surveyed every two years with respect to LNO performance as part of the annual LNO review conducted by the EB. Discussion elicited that the prior survey should be circulated to the EB for review, with suggestions for changes from Waide, and at the January EB meeting we will consider revisions. An advantage to using the former survey is to provide the opportunity to track changes in responses to individual questions through time. Consensus is also to have the survey conducted by an independent body such as the UNM survey office. Following review and revision by the EB in January, the survey will be administered later that month with results collated for the EB’s March LNO review.

#### 7. Site Characteristics Tables

The LNO maintains tables of site characteristics that have been useful in the past for investigators considering cross-site proposals who need a quick way to compare key environmental characteristics about sites (<http://ramble.lternet.edu/sitetest/>) and for NSF and site administrators who need administrative information about sites ([http://intranet.lternet.edu/sites/site\\_char.html](http://intranet.lternet.edu/sites/site_char.html)). Bob Waide asks if these tables are worth maintaining, and if so a best procedure for doing so. Discussion noted that the environmental table isn’t complete (data had been gleaned from publications at that time) but that it has been very useful in the past; there may be some overlap with EcoTrends but is a broader summary (EcoTrends could now be used to help populate the table); and that a revision of the table could be provided by one of Scott Collins’ UNM classes in which a similar table was assembled from on-line sources as a class project. The administrative information appears a bit eclectic, developed for specific needs at that time, but has been useful for site PIs.

Consensus is that the environmental table should be updated with Collins’ class data and then provided to sites for review of their entries. The administrative table should also be updated by sites following a review of useful table entries in consultation with NSF by Robertson and Waide, who will then ask sites for updated entries. We will likely want to develop an annual site questionnaire that collects this information plus site information required for SIP metrics in order to minimize requests to sites.

8. Lead PI Workshop at Sapelo

The workshop for lead PIs at Sapelo needs planning, particularly with respect to who should be involved and the program/format. The purpose of the meeting (see Nov. 17 minutes item 7c) is to allow site leaders an opportunity to discuss and share administrative and management strategies not directly science-related. Following discussion, consensus is that participation should be limited to lead PIs at each site (plus any impending lead PIs, i.e. those to assume lead PIship in the coming year), which will keep the size of the meeting manageable and avoid additional travel expenses. Robertson solicited volunteers for a small program committee; Nick Brokaw and David Foster volunteered, to be supplemented by 1-2 others.

9. Upcoming meetings

- a. December 20, 11-1 EST (VTC) working group proposals evaluation
- b. January, February, April (VTC) - tbd
- c. March 1-3, 2011, Arlington (Minisymposium Wednesday, March 2)
- d. SC Meeting May 17 (EB), 18-19 (SC), 20 (lead PIs), 2011; Sapelo Island, Georgia

10. Meeting adjourned 1:40 p.m.