

Minutes of the LTER Executive Board Meeting
November 17, 2010; 12-2 p.m. EDT; Videoconference

1. Meeting called to order at noon by Chair Phil Robertson; Members attending: Nick Brokaw, Hugh Ducklow, David Foster, Ted Gragson, Corinna Gries, Steve Hamilton, Dave McGuire, Emily Stanley, Bob Waide, Mark Williams; Unavailable: Scott Collins. Also attending (through item 8): Nancy Huntly (NSF).
2. Minutes for 11 October 2010 approved by consent.
3. Updates:
 - a. Minisymposium planning.
The minisymposium planning committee (chair Scott Collins, Diane McKnight, Hugh Ducklow, David Foster, Dan Reed) reports 5 confirmed speakers, with 1-2 additional still possible.
 - b. Data prospectus status
Per Liz Blood's suggestion, Waide, Robertson, and James Brunt discussed with NEON's Chief Operations Officer Tony Beasley and Director of Computing Bob Tawa the potential procedures and pitfalls in pursuing bids for outside firms to help with the legacy data prospectus. The discussion provided a number of insights as well as examples of bid documents for moving forward, and their observation that the model will require more site involvement than the prospectus describes and the advisability of a pilot project. Robertson will discuss with Liz Blood before re-engaging the legacy data committee.
 - c. 2011 Workgroup proposals
The call for workgroup proposals was distributed to all LTER investigators in early November with proposals due December 7. The EB will meet to evaluate and prioritize proposals December 20, 11am EST.
4. NSF Highlights
In response to questions, Nancy Huntly reported that NSF's being on a continuing resolution should not affect funding for LTER continuation awards, which are still on schedule for fall starts, but may affect 2011 supplements. A positive development is the inclusion of schoolyard LTER and REU funds in the base budgets of the 11 new awards, and the expectation is that this will occur for all sites as cohorts work through their next funding cycles. Barring budget surprises, the cross-directorate climate and sustainability programs initiated in FY10 on a continuing basis are expected to be re-competed in the spring, but decisions are on hold until the FY11 budget is signed.
5. Strategic Communication Plan
Bob Waide presented the draft Strategic Communication Plan (distributed earlier) on behalf of the ad hoc Communication Committee. The plan (attached), which has been incorporated into the overall SIP, details objectives, strategies, and activities for communicating LTER science to specific audiences. The Committee met a number of times since forming last spring, and assisted by communications consultant Kathy Lambert discussed a wide range of models, audiences, and potential activities, narrowed to a set of specific objectives and high priority activities identified in the plan. The plan was favorably received by the EB; discussion centered on its importance, how to populate the recommended standing Communications Committee, and funding challenges.

Following discussion the Communications Strategic Plan was approved as acceptable with broad endorsement, and Robertson will inform and thank the committee: chair Bob Waide, Karen Baker, David Foster, Peter Groffman, Nicole Kaplan, Kathy Lambert, Bill Michener, Marcia Nation, Daniel Nidzgorski,

Dan Reed, Phil Robertson, Thomas McOwiti, and Jonathan Walsh.

6. Transformative Science Highlights

The site bullets are now in the final editing stage, having been passed on from the EB subcommittee (Ducklow, Hamilton, Robertson, Stanley, Waide) to communication consultant Kathy Lambert for final formatting. At the same time, model narratives have been provided to NSF's Cheryl Dybas for comment and are expected back shortly. Once the bullets and model narratives are finalized, lead PIs will be asked to prepare final narratives for each of their bullets. Robertson expects these requests to go out in early December. The Network web site will be prepared to post the highlights (as they are finalized by sites) beginning late December.

7. De-risking Site Renewals

Robertson noted that over the past several months a number of ideas have been generated to strengthen site continuation proposals in order to lessen the number of site probations and avoid terminations. Informal polling suggests that over the history of the network about a quarter of all sites have been probated, and this presents an unacceptable risk to the network that might be better avoided with appropriate network support. Three actionable ideas were discussed:

- a. Sharing proposals, panel reviews, and site review summaries. A number of sites post their proposals on their web sites; most do not, and no sites appear to post panel summaries or site review reports. Broader sharing of proposals and reviews among lead PIs could provide site leadership additional strategies for meeting reviewer expectations and a broader understanding of emerging concerns among the reviewing community and NSF. Discussion elicited broad agreement within the EB for the Network's posting on a password-protected web page panel summaries of continuation proposals and reports from mid-term site reviews. Posting these by cohort would allow sites preparing for proposals and site visits to learn about recent successes and problem areas. All review panels are unique and sometimes idiosyncratic, but common themes emerge and concerns might be pre-empted by better knowledge up front. **Robertson will contact lead PIs for proposals, panel summaries, and site review reports to be posted on a centralized web site available only to lead PIs.**
- b. Assisting probationary sites. Discussions with sites formerly and presently on probation suggest at least two ways the network could help sites that go on probation. One is to provide a group of lead or former lead PIs who could advise the sites on strategies to address NSF concerns. This group might best include PIs from sites that have survived probation. Another is to provide sites the opportunity for proposals to be peer-reviewed by Network PIs prior to submission. There was broad support for both strategies. **Robertson and Waide will contact sites currently on probation to offer this support and solicit additional suggestions.**
- c. Leadership training. David Foster noted that there are fewer opportunities today than in the past for site leaders to interact informally to discuss site management and other issues not science-related. And thus there are fewer opportunities for both new and existing PIs to learn about successful strategies employed at other sites. One way to remedy this might be to hold an annual PI meeting, perhaps at NSF. Nancy Huntly noted that this has been discussed at NSF as a good idea but not pursued because of other demands on program officers. There was agreement among the EB that such a meeting could be helpful but reluctance to schedule a special separate meeting. Hugh Ducklow suggested that adding a day to the spring SC meeting might be a reasonable compromise and there was agreement that we should try this to start. **We will thus add to the upcoming May meeting a Friday morning PI-only meeting.** Waide will make

necessary arrangements with the meeting planners.

8. 30y Review

Robertson, Scott Collins, Emily Stanley, Mark Williams, and Bob Waide met with the 30y Review Committee in Albuquerque in late October. All but one committee member were present, as was Nancy Huntly, and the morning discussion centered on network governance, management, and its relationship to and the role of the network office. The 4h discussion was productive and positive, and resulted in requests for additional materials now provided at <http://intranet2.lternet.edu/content/30-year-review-reference-documents>. The committee visited SEV that afternoon, and after their meeting on Wednesday, three committee members visited JRN. As far as we're aware members have now visited BNZ, PIE, CAP, JRN, SEV, LNO, and CDR (as well as ARC and PAL at home institutions).

9. Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) Approval

The latest version of the SIP was distributed earlier and is ready for approval. Edits from the prior version include removing redundancies, de-emphasizing funding needs, emphasizing a long-term focus in the vision and mission statements, standardizing the presentation of dates and status in the implementation tables, making metrics less arbitrary and linked to specific objectives, and incorporating other suggestions from SC reviewers. Still missing is an introduction that lays out our vision in a bolder way, but otherwise the SIP is ready for approval. Discussion centered on the SIP's ambition, new funding requirements for many of its activities, the need to prioritize the "needs planning" activities, and the need for committees (including 2 new committees for Communications and Networks Coordination) to take ownership of major sections. **Steve Hamilton moved to approve the SIP as it now stands (with the expectation that the introduction will be revised); the motion was seconded by Hugh Ducklow and passed unanimously.** Next steps: Robertson will rewrite the introduction, with editorial help from Brokaw, Foster, Hamilton, Collins, and Waide, for final assembly prior to delivery by Robertson, Waide, and Collins to BIO Interim AD Joann Roskoski on December 13.

10. New Committees

Three new committees are required to enact activities enumerated in the SIP. Specific charges for each committee will be discussed and approved at the next EB meeting.

- a. Communications Committee. This will be a standing targeted committee comprised of 8-12 members charged with guiding the Communications activities described in the communication section of the SIP and the Communications Strategic Plan. **A motion to create a standing targeted Communications Committee was made by Hugh Ducklow, supported by Steve Hamilton, and passed unanimously.** Members of the now-dissolved ad hoc Communication Strategic Planning Committee will be invited to join the committee, supplemented by others after a call for nominations and approval by the EB.
- b. Networks Coordination Group Committee. This will be a standing targeted committee charged with leading the activities described in the SIP section "Coordination with Other Networks." **A motion to create a standing targeted Networks Coordination Group Committee was made by Nick Brokaw, supported by Ted Gragson, and passed unanimously.** Members of the team that developed the SIP section on other networks will be encouraged to join the committee, supplemented by others after a call for nominations and approval by the EB.
- c. Synthesis Data Committee. This will be an ad hoc committee charged as described in the Network Legacy Data Prospectus ("Data Council") to oversee the development of legacy

data activities, including the development of specifications for bid requests. **A motion to create an ad hoc Synthesis Data Committee was made by Steve Hamilton, seconded by Hugh Ducklow, and passed unanimously.** Members of the now-dissolved Legacy Data Prospectus committee will be invited to join the new committee, and efforts will be made to ensure cross-representation with NISAC and IMC.

11. Upcoming meetings

- a. December 6, 12-2 EST (VTC)
- b. December 20, 11-1 EST (VTC) working group proposals evaluation
- c. January, February, April (VTC) - tbd
- d. March 1-3, 2011, Washington DC (Minisymposium Wednesday, March 2)
- e. SC Meeting May 17 (EB), 18-19 (SC), 20 (leadPI), 2011; Sapelo Island

12. Meeting adjourned, 2:15 pm