

Minutes of the LTER Executive Board Meeting
January 27, 2010; 1-3pm EST; Videoconference

1. Meeting called to order at 1 pm by Chair Phil Robertson; Members attending: Nick Brokaw, David Foster, Ted Gragson, Corinna Gries, Sarah Hobbie, Sally Holbrook, Dave McGuire, Steve Pennings, Bob Waide, Mark Williams; Unavailable: Hugh Ducklow. Also present through item 3: Todd Crowl, Roberta Marinelli.
2. Minutes for 7 December 2009 approved by consent.
3. NSF Update
Todd Crowl and Roberta Marinelli discussed NSF activities relevant to LTER:
 - a. Supplements 2010
This year's supplement requests are delayed owing to NSF budget delays; programs are still awaiting budgets from the front office. Despite increase in NSF budget, program budgets are in trouble and supplements may be limited. Sites can expect 1 month to respond once the 2010 call goes out, probably within a week or two.
 - b. Climate RFPs – 6 total 2010; emphasis will be on crossing disciplines
Two RFPs are out – (1) Water, Sustainability and Climate and (2) Ocean acidification. Four others in process – (3) Biodiversity is now in clearance and will be announced shortly (strong taxonomic / genetic/ functional focus; also an RCN option); (4) Climate Prediction (decadal modeling of integrated land-ice-ocean and atmosphere interactions) is delayed and may not be released in 2010; (5) Macrosystems Ecology expected to be out in 2 weeks (climate; land use change; invasive species; multi-site; interdisciplinary; training opportunities; LTER, CZO, NEON targeted; should include more than 2-3 sites); (6) education expected to be out in a few days.
 - c. 30-year Review
Committee is formed but has not yet met, charge not yet formalized. Review is being run by DEB rather than by BIO as in past, still expected to be forward-looking rather than retrospective evaluation.
 - d. Strategic Plan
Conversations with BIO administrators has led Todd Crowl to believe that LTER will soon be held back by the lack of a formal strategic plan; Decadal Plan is seen as a comprehensive research plan that doesn't address all of the pieces necessary to push a larger agenda within the Foundation. Science and Technology Centers are required to produce Strategic Implementation Plans (SIPs) that are periodically updated and viewed favorably by NSF administrators. We are strongly advised to consider developing, and sooner than later so as to be ready for 2011 and 2012 budget initiatives. In particular is the opportunity to plan for how LTER will capitalize on NEON and operationalize ISSE. Suggests meeting with Acting BIO AD Joann Roskoski to discuss in detail, preferably as a small group.
4. Active ad hoc committees
Robertson reported on status of current ad hoc committees:
 - a. BioScience Prospectus Committee – Dave Foster (chair), Sarah Hobbie, Chris Boone, Dan Childers, Hugh Ducklow; actively meeting.
 - b. Chair nominating committee – Steve Carpenter (chair), Barbara Bond, Terry Chapin, Alan Knapp, John Magnuson, Karen McGlathery, Dan Reed; now soliciting nominees.
 - c. Legacy Data Prospectus Committee – Peter Groffman (chair), Emery Boose, Ted Gragson, Don Henshaw, Dave McGuire, Debra Peters, Wade Sheldon; report drafted and to EB yesterday.

- d. Prospectus committees – Waide reported on known meeting plans for the Prospectus Committees; Cryosphere, Scenarios, Coastal, and Inland groups have started meeting or have meetings in the planning stages. Biodiversity group needs additional time to formulate prospectus.
- e. Communication Committee - Phil Robertson (KBS), David Foster (HFR), Jonathan Walsh (BES), Marcia Nation (CAP), Bob Waide (LNO), and McOwiti Thomas (LNO); three other potential members have been contacted; first meeting will be near the end of March.
- f. Spatial data and analysis committee - Robertson will prepare charge and distribute to provisional committee.

5. Operational Plan Approval

The synthesis, core services, and development/outreach portions of the LNO Operational Plan have been revised based on subcommittee recommendations and distributed earlier. Waide highlighted revisions since last discussed by the EB. Following discussion, Steve Penning moved that the EB approve these portions of the plan as presented. The motion was seconded by David Foster and passed unanimously.

Waide provided background on revisions to the CI/NIS portion of the plan, including a summary of comments by the External Advisory Panel that met in Albuquerque last week. The Panel (Randy Butler, NCSA; Bob Sandusky, UIUC; Bruce Wilson, ORNL; Michael Piasecki, Drexel; Terry Benzel, San Diego; and Chris Jones, UCSB) met for 2 days with LNO NIS staff. Robertson, Mark Williams, and NISAC co-chairs Wade Sheldon and Will Pockman also participated. The panel made a number of specific suggestions that are now being incorporated into a revised plan that will be ready later in the week. Their written report (expected later this week) will be included with the plan when provided to NSF later this month and discussed at the reverse site visit March 3.

Following discussion, Robertson suggested that EB approval of the CI/NIS plan be conducted via email polling next week, 4-5 days after the revised plan is distributed. Consensus acceptance.

6. Strategic Planning

Robertson presented options for addressing the need for a strategic plan as identified by NSF (see item #3 above): a) ignore, b) have EB create to be adopted by the SC, or c) have SC create. There was broad agreement that an SIP is needed, and that the most efficient way to get site / SC buy-in will be to have the entire SC involved in its creation. Two SIPs from existing NSF centers with BIO oversight were discussed to better understand the scope of what would likely be needed. Much of these plans are research-oriented, which we have already on hand as the decadal plan. The remainder of the plans appear to be elements that – with sufficient legwork beforehand – could be hammered out in a 1-day workshop.

The potential for holding a strategic planning workshop at the upcoming SC meeting was discussed; the main advantage is time and efficiency – this meeting is already on SC member schedules so does not require finding another date, and would ensure that we have a plan in place by midsummer. The main disadvantage is giving up science time. A hybrid was discussed such that the first morning could be spent on Science Prospectus plans (as suggested at the 2009 SC meeting) and NIS and the second day be devoted to planning. There was reluctance to give up a day of science but recognition that the payoff could be significant especially if we act quickly. Consensus emerged to use the SC meeting for developing the plan, with the EB providing strong direction in the form of a formal outline with straw sections developed beforehand. Robertson will present this plan to SC members and block off a major portion of the March EB meeting in Washington for planning. The SC will be advised that they should invite a second representative for their site; reps from IMExec and NISAC will also be invited.

7. NSF Synthesis Center Competition

Waide noted that NSF is currently competing the next round of synthesis center funding (future NCEAS) and asked for input on how to respond to potential requests for LTER partnerships. Discussion converged on the desirability of a passive approach – we will consider partnering with any groups so-interested, but will not actively seek to co-lead a proposal.

9. Upcoming meetings

- a. February 16, 2010
- b. March 3-5, 2010 (Washington DC)
- c. April TBD
- d. May 12-13, 2010 (SC Meeting at PIE)

Meeting adjourned 3:35pm