

Minutes of the LTER Executive Board Meeting  
July 22, 2010; 2-4 p.m. EDT; Videoconference

1. Meeting called to order at 2 pm by Chair Phil Robertson; Members attending: Nick Brokaw, Scott Collins, Hugh Ducklow, David Foster, Ted Gragson, Corinna Gries, Steve Hamilton, Dave McGuire, John Moore, Emily Stanley, Bob Waide, Mark Williams; Unavailable: none. Henry Gholz also present through item 2 and Peter Groffman for item 7.
2. Minutes for 22 June 2010 approved by consent.
3. NSF Issues. Henry Gholz shared insights on panel and mid-term reviews in response to questions:
  - a. Mid-term reviews – NSF would welcome feedback on how conducted. Because no funding decisions are made they are an open process. Few sites use the reviews to solicit specific feedback on a conceptual or experimental design or administrative change, which could be helpful and appropriate; rather the tendency is to provide project area overviews and focus only on successes. NSF requests a consensus appraisal from the site review team but there is no reason that minority opinions might also be included, which could be helpful in some cases.
  - b. Mid-term review reports are provided to panelists after individual reviews are written, except for probationary sites for which mid-term reports are provided to panelists beforehand. Panels are also provided the prior panel's summary report (6 years previous for sites not on probation, 2 years previous for probationary sites). At least two hours discussion is budgeted for each proposal; this often balloons to much longer than this.
  - c. In the 10 years of his tenure, Henry has managed 5 sites on probation. Requests for addenda are common, and range from the near-trivial to borderline probation. All addendum requests are accompanied by an offer of elective probation.
  - d. The only way for the network to learn about panel outcomes is for PIs to compare notes.
  - e. Post-probation site visits should not be needed prior to a termination decision, which is made following a site visit 4-5 y earlier, a panel 2 y prior to the decision that uses the earlier site-visit results with the proposal to recommend probation, then a final panel that evaluates the site's revised proposal in response to probation.
  - f. Personnel news: Henry plans to return to NSF October 1, and will overlap for 1 month with Todd Crawl who will rotate out of NSF after then. Richard Inouye is the new permanent program director for Ecosystems; joins Matt Kane and Henry. Nancy Grimm comes to NSF in September for a 2y cross-directorate initiative in biogeochemistry. No news on the Assistant Director search; Joann Roskoski is acting AD in the interim.
4. Updates:
  - a. 30-year review  
A call for site PIs to meet with the 30y review panel at ESA has been issued. Also, Steve Polasky has joined the review team as the sole social scientist.
  - b. BioScience prospectus  
David Foster reported that the prospectus is being revised based on comments received from the EB and others, and in particular to join several of the proposed papers to ensure that all identified topics are covered. Once the revision is made he will send to the EB and barring objections Robertson will

submit to BioScience.

c. Transformational science bullets

A majority of sites have now responded to the request for transformational science bullets and Robertson will put the subcommittee to work once the list is complete. Volunteers include Steve Hamilton, Hugh Ducklow, Emily Stanley, and Ted Gragson.

5. SIP Feedback and Status

Comments received from Strategic and Implementation Plan (SIP) Consultant Walter Collier were discussed; common to all sections is the need to specify names in the implementation tables and to be more specific about the financial resources needed and status (“funded,” “planned,” or “planning needed”). Writing team chairs reported on progress, and were charged with having revisions to Robertson by July 30.

6. Communication Strategic Plan Feedback and Status

Bob Waide described progress with the communication strategic plan, received from consultant Kathy Lambert in draft form yesterday, and to be incorporated into SIP format shortly.

7. Legacy Data Committee Status and Feedback

Committee chair Peter Groffman reviewed the current status of the Legacy Data prospectus, distributed with the agenda, and solicited feedback on the funding models. As reported in prior minutes, NSF has asked for a menu of different management options ranging from funding sites to funding external consultants to undertake the tasks laid out in the prospectus. General consensus is that incorporating a Data Council in all approaches will maintain network control of the process, and that it is important to ensure that sites receive adequate site-funding to work with whoever is undertaking the work. Groffman noted that there is some discomfort among the committee that the prospectus does not address all data needs at the sites; discussion recognized that this simply isn't possible – that we are responding to a specific strategic opportunity to bring in funding under the umbrella of legacy data. Groffman will take comments back to the committee and issue a final version within 10d so Robertson can discuss with Liz Blood and Crowl at ESA in early August.

8. Upcoming meetings

- a. August 18, 2010; 2-4 pm EDT
- b. Fall dates tbd
- c. Minisymposium/NSF date tbd
- d. May 12 (EB) and 13-14 (SC), 2011; Savannah (GCE)

9. Meeting adjourned 4:00 pm