

LTER Executive Committee
Niwt Ridge LTER Site
September 12, 2002

Attendance: Jim Gosz, Nancy Grimm, Bruce Hayden, Peter McCartney, Gus Shaver, Bob Waide

General discussion

- How do we get NSF/GEO more invested in LTER? (Nancy Grimm)
- Cross site competition held three years ago; will there be another cross-site competition soon? How do we encourage that? (Gus Shaver)
- Need to identify and prioritize our cross-site goals. We need to be ready for a 11% increase should it occur (Bruce Hayden)
- Do we therefore need a response to the 20-year review that lays out our ideas? (Bob Waide) - consensus was yes

Discussion of CC Agenda

1. NAB membership (Gosz) – recommendation to revisit membership and charge of committee by asking CC for nominations
2. All Scientists Meeting status (Waide)
3. 2003 CC meeting in Alaska status (Waide/Walker) – Because of the heavy schedule of meetings in fall 2003, we discussed the possibility of changing the dates of the BNZ CC meeting. The consensus was to raise the question of postponing the BNZ/ZRC CC meeting until 2004.
4. EC election (Gosz) five candidates have been nominated (Gene Kelly, John Hobbie, Chuck Hopkinson, Dan Childers, John Priscu (not yet confirmed). The question was raised whether we should eliminate the alternate and expand the Exec to six members. Because of the increased work projected for strategic planning, we decided to accept this suggestion.
5. Next annual Science Theme at NSF in February 2003 (Gosz)

Do we need a new mechanism for choosing science themes? (Gosz)

- Decisions will be made on the basis of short proposals due in January of the year before the science theme meeting will take place. These proposals will be evaluated by the Committee on Scientific Initiatives and recommended to the full CC for approval in the spring meeting. Proposals will include:
 - overall theme
 - why timely and important
 - format of meeting
 - resources needed
 - long-term follow-up and products such as proposals
 - outside participants
 - potential to create a module in the NIS
 - budget

The first round of proposals will be requested for January 2003 for the fall All Scientists Meeting. The science theme for the Bonanza meeting has already been chosen, so the next science them after the ASM will be in 2005.

What should be the topic of the February meeting at NSF?

Topics need to be aligned with long-term strategic goals, with an eye on the 2005 budget. (Hayden)

Is consideration of a new core area in biodiversity an appropriate topic? (Waide)

Don't want to over look social science representation so we don't lose momentum in that area (Grimm)

The committee discussed mechanisms of choosing presentations for the February meetings without reaching specific conclusions about how this should be done. Instead, they decided to provide a list of possible topics to the CC for discussion:

- Invasive species from NWT meeting
- DOM dynamics in freshwater and coastal systems – Childers (FCE)
- Biogeosciences. Integration of ecology with physical sciences, especially hydrology, -atmospheric science, astrobiology – Grimm (CAP)
- Global Warming and Ecosystem Change – Ducklow (PAL)
- Decomposition: The other side of production – Harmon (AND) and Coleman (CWT)
- Taking advantage of the LTER Network to address regional, continental and global scale questions – Knapp (KNZ)
- Extreme events and ecosystem dynamics (Hayden)

Week of February 24; need to go directly to Mary's office about the dates (Jim)

6. Debate over social science begins

- What is it that social science wants? Can we keep the E in LTER? (Shaver)
- We need to include it. Chuck's paper on social science core areas (Grimm) Strategic plan needs to rethink core areas. But also need to address whether social science by itself is something different from the five core areas. (Shaver)
- Debate is over whether social science theory can be married with ecological theory or is it completely different and needs to be augmented.
- The two human core areas are really specialized aspects of the populations and disturbance area. (McCartney)
- Many other populations have social behavior. (Gosz)
- We need to charge someone to show how ecological theory needs to be modified to correctly involve the role of humans in ecological systems. (Gosz)
- There is a step function in funding with number of core areas. Should we keep adding them to get more money from more areas? (Waide)
- Should core areas be universal but contain themes that allow focus on specific needs? (McCartney)
- Working group needs to evaluate core areas (Grimm)
- Core areas don't really contribute to enforce site diversity...they are diverse anyway. (Hayden)
- Core areas help define common basis for integrative research between sites. (Gosz)
- The question is not do we need social science, but do we need them under as special heading. (McCartney)
- Need to get the working group going to really address this. (Grimm)

7. International LTER

- Discuss plan for pan-European LTER Network
 - We need a western or pan European liaison group
 - Nancy to speak at AGU meeting.
 - Peter is involved in digital library proposal with France.
 - Bob and Nancy will pursue Spain
- ILTER Beijing – theory, methodology and applications for ecosystem management.
 - Will solicit participation from LTER for this. (Gosz)

8. Strategic plan

Three step process

1. Skeleton response from CC working groups to NSF
2. Follow up working groups to flesh out skeleton to feed into 2005 budget process (Jim, Bob, Exec)
3. Revised strategic plan ready 6-12 months out (Exec, CoSI)

Write CoSI to inform and get buy in (Bob)

Working groups – should be assigned to discreet topics that all lead to the strategic plan

Possible topics :

- Intellectual goals – cross site synthesis
- Core activities
- Core areas and what they are for
- How do sites work?
- How the network works
- Funding strategies
- Interdisciplinary opportunities

Core area debate. What is the purpose?

- One way is use them to define how you formulate questions (Shaver)
- Initially they are great, then later on they become divisive (Grimm)
- Most sites develop project areas that reference core areas
- Question is really do we organize by core areas? (Waide)
- We should have working groups work on major priority issues, then have focus groups on the primary activities to set priorities
- Pick the major bullets in the close of the report (Waide)

Take the three major topics in three groups to set questions. Those groups subdivide to evaluate . (Grimm)

1. Questions for synthetic research
2. Core areas
3. Balance of priorities between site and network

9. Grimm will present report on CUAHSI

10. Hobbie will report on bioscience issue status

11. NIS Advisory Group

- Get NIS people together with non-informatics people involved in synthesis efforts. Not sure there should be a standing committee. (Shaver)
- People need to take action if they aren't happy with the way NIS is working. (Waide)
- Can see it as either standing group or rotating PIs (Gosz)
- Who do we identify for group? Volunteers?
- We could have the group meet and decide whether they want to continue. (Grimm)
- Should we make this one of the working groups? (Gosz)
- These issues affect monitoring, models etc. (McCartney)
- This ties in with the mandate to do things on a question driven basis. (Grimm)
- Ask 2-3 from CC and IM to participate (plus NET)
- Address IM outline and formulate strategic plan
- Make decisions on best strategies for NIS oversight