

Minutes of the LTER Executive Board Meeting  
December 20, 2011; 12:00 – 2:00 p.m. EDT via conference call

Meeting called to order at 12PM EDT by Chair Scott Collins; Members attending: Dan Childers, John Blair, Emery Boose, Nick Brokaw, Emily Stanley, David Foster, John Moore, Phil Robertson, Karen McGlathery, Steve Hamilton, Bob Waide  
Unavailable: Hugh Ducklow  
Also attending from NSF: Saran Twombly, Matt Kane

LTER Executive Board Agenda 20 December 2011  
12:00PM-2:00PM EDT

Agenda items

1. Approval of the minutes from 7 November 2011 EB meeting – SLC  
Minor change – approve minutes of last meeting. Minor editorial changes inserted and approved.
2. Discussion of 30-year review report and NSF response –  
Context – The 30-year Review is a report to the Bio Advisory Committee about the review team's perspective on 30-years of LTER. This distinction may not have been made when it was initiated, but this is the direction that it took. Who developed the charge? Ans: The Bio Advisory Committee. Now that they have approved the report, they will not do anything specific with the report. The BIOAC meets twice annually. There are no specific plans to act further on the Review Document. The BIO AC met last week. Did they discuss the report at the most recent meeting? Ans: No. It was extensively discussed in the previous meeting. The NSF response was directed to the LTER PIs, not the BIOAC. Representative from all the other directorates that participate in LTER vetted the response from NSF. The BIO Directorate has no further plans to respond to the review. No written response is required by LTER to NSF. A plan is being developed for the wider community to submit comments to NSF regarding the 30-year review report and the NSF response. The LTER EB might want to submit a response to deal with perceived inaccuracies in the Report.

A question arose about oversight of IM and compliance with LTER standards. This has been done during reviews in the past, but the response implies oversight should be undertaken by the LTER Network. Both LNO and LTER must work together on this challenge. LTER identifies standards, timelines, etc., and these are evaluated during reviews. Oversight of data management should occur at 3 levels: individual sites, LNO, and NSF. What is the role of LNO? NSF oversight will increase as needed. Ultimate goal is to make the data available and usable to the broader scientific community. This needs to get fast-tracked a bit.

LTER needs to set priorities for getting a fully functional network data system, cross-site research, personnel, etc.

Depending on availability of funds, NSF will consult with the EB about the best use of those resources regarding potential supplements to sites.

We were rather disappointed by the treatment of our efforts to incorporate social science into the network. The report suggests that social sciences are appropriate at some sites, but not at all sites. Does our desire to incorporate SS into the network come at the expense of cutting-edge ecological research? NSF is NOT sending a message that including social science is a bad idea, but if done, do it well. There is a pretty significant mismatch between the report and NSF response regarding incorporation of social science research in the LTER Network. We undertook the ISSE to provide a context for cross-site synthesis initiatives. Is that appropriate? The NSF response is based on the committee report, but may not reflect the broader views or interests of NSF management. The key point to make is that NSF does not expect sites can be outstanding at ecological research, IM, cross-site research, education, social sciences, outreach, etc. So, sites must establish priorities, and they must do so within the context of LTER priorities.

The Education Committee was underwhelmed by the way the report characterized education goals and efforts within the Network. Some of the work appears to be unrecognized. Is it taken seriously, or is it not being communicated well? The NSF response was in the context of resource limitation, and encouragement to seek funds from other competitions and agencies. NSF does believe that the network-level effort in education and outreach was not as high a priority as research and information management.

NSF is about to open a mailbox that will allow response to the 30-year review and the NSF response by the broader research community.

### 3. Strategy for evaluating cross-site synthesis proposals - Bob

Less than 20 submissions. The majority of submissions are postdoc proposals. If each of EB member reviews three proposals we can get these evaluated quickly. LNO will develop a list of proposals and suggested reviewers, and a website to facilitate the review. We will schedule another phone call "panel" to discuss the proposals. We may be able to fund all the working group proposals, depending on quality and budget requests.

### 4. Announcements/brief reports

#### 1. Legacy Project Update – Waide

One site bowed out. Will go forward with two sites. RFP is ready to go. Just need to confirm before submitting.

#### 2. Science Council update – Karen McGlathery (Chair)

Have a list of seven speakers, 5 from mini-symposium plus two more. No one is committed yet. Scheduling challenges at HJA have affected agenda

development because the SC meeting is being compressed into 2 days. This will require activities both evenings (Business Meeting, Lead PI Meeting).

### 3. ASM Update – Waide

Planning is moving along. The discussion about the number of major plenary speakers and who to invite is still going.

### 4. BioScience update – Foster

Three manuscripts have been officially accepted; three have been contacted for better quality figures. It looks like we are on track for an April publication date. The majority of papers will have page charges and color figure charges. So, authors/sites/LNO needs to think about of how to cover these costs. Next, we need to use the publication of this suite of articles for outreach. How many copies of this issue should be purchased? Push this at the site and network level, with outreach help from NSF. We should get the full cost estimate from BioScience in early January.