

Minutes of the LTER Executive Board Meeting  
November 7, 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, Hugh Ducklow, David Foster, John Moore, Phil Robertson, Steve Hamilton, Bob Waide  
Unavailable: Karen McGlathery  
Also attending from NSF: Saran Twombly

1. Approval of the minutes from 17 October 2011 EB meeting – SLC  
Approved the minutes of the last minute. Add Bob to list of attendees

2. News and Views from NSF – Saran Twombly

What is going on at NSF. LTER Solicitation is required. It is simultaneously being evaluated by different directorates participating in LTER. DGA is also looking at policy implications of the document. Criteria for proposals have been distributed to sites. LTER Working Group (POs) across NSF finished response to 30-year report. ADs want to read and comment on it. Lots of interest in LTER across NSF so they are being brought up to speed and this report helps. General contents are well-known to LTER community. Nothing terribly radical in it. Recognize that LTER folks are eager to see it. Several Directorates feel that it is time to “sit back and take a long look at the LTER Program.” NSB is fussing about re-competition. Five vs six years of funding. Why not 5 years of funding? Concern in DGA about probation status. Is there any legal basis for this? Questions about supplements to LTER awards that are different from other programs in the Foundation. Issues about data - rethinking the way that LTER and NSF have done data management. These changes are not the result of the 30-year report, but are a function of the broad reach of LTER in NSF. Starting to assemble a list of people to serve on the renewal panel in spring and the LNO site visit in early summer. Building some basic guidelines for annual reports – make them easier to write, use, and interpret. “Reconsideration of LTER Program in general.” No budget yet, fearing government shutdown.

Question: What is the purpose of the solicitation if proposals are being submitted regardless? Answer: Need to codify requirements for internal accounting and regulation. Solicitation will formalize the LTER Program. GPG works for core programs, but because LTER does not conform to these guidelines it requires a special solicitation. Required by IG Office. It does draw attention to certain procedures that we use now and may be questionable – e.g., probation.

Question: Putting list of people together for panels and site visit – need suggestions? Ans: Yes.

Question: NSB asking about re-competition for any program? Ans: MREFC people fighting about this issue.

Question: More open discussion about these changes, will LTER scientists be involved in these discussions? Ans: just started to discuss these issues. Rumbblings within NSF in the past few years. Stop making supplements and just provide the money as needed? LNO site visit will start the discussion of how to best reconfigure the LNO to meet the LTER needs. LTER can assert itself in scientific leadership. Minisymposium is an important opportunity to demonstrate leadership in areas of research, and symposium could also allow us to help set a future agenda.

Questions about pilot project RFP. Liz was to contact Scott about concerns that were raised. Nancy and Saran concerned that the RFP was too open ended. Concern that it would then be open to all sites. Such open-ended wording can easily be eliminated to ease these concerns. Still waiting for sites to finish the supplementary documents to accompany the RFP.

### 3. Information management challenges – SLC, Emery Boose

- Survey of available data
- Access issues
- Defining the role of site IMs
- Site vs. global IM conflicts, if any
- LINX I and II data management

Some problems with data access may be easy to solve, some not so easy. We need to determine where the problems lie. For example: Metacat may not display site information correctly or optimally. EML files may contain errors that render data links unusable. Or site data may not be available online. The EML congruency checker may help sort this out. Most reviewers in the past go through the site websites. These are the most reliable, if the Metacat was working properly, it could be the best place for one-stop shopping. Other reviewers use the Metacat. EML Checker: being developed as part of the NIS in JAVA. Use this software with some modification to see if data are ready for NIS. Are the metadata and data congruent? Margaret O'Brien got some time to get it up and running with help from Duane Costa. Still in its infancy. Coding issues or other fixable things. Congruency checker does about half dozen checks. Checks for live links, checks to see if data can be streamed, checks for data in table. Ultimately could have 30 checks for metadata and data files. Could do complete runs at network or site level. Lots of promise in the congruency checker. No resources currently being applied to this now. Waide has asked what it will take to move this forward faster? Might try to find some other way to get programing time to move forward.

NISAC charge to address and redesign style sheet.

Renewal reviewers will be instructed to go to site website to find available data. Can they find the data they expect to find given the length of time the site has been in existence?

Looking for other ways to get info on who is using data than current registration forms. Maybe track download amounts, etc.

Ask NISAC to address conflicts and effort by site IMs to manage site based data and prepare data for global access as well. May or may not be a conflict here. Determine priorities for derived data sets. Which ones should be moved forward first?

LINX projects data: Ad hoc system of excel spreadsheets. It is well organized. 400 worksheets in LINX II. Contact LINX participants to see if they can help with metadata development.

#### 4. Education committee reports - Collins staffing

Does the education coordinator focus on what we need? Is this a person to coalesce around? One job goal is writing proposals. \$60-100K range salary, PhD in education or MS with lots of experience. Difference between support person vs. a leader. Ed Committee may have priced themselves out of what can be done. Either we rethink this position or accept their argument and find the money from some other source. Major part of SIP is devoted to education. This is an important issue to consider. If we can't follow through on SIP item, do we want to propose them? Need to ask about the kind of person we need, or part time at this level. Bring in ED folks for the discussion. Request for slot on EB - Secondary issue at the moment. Maybe refer them to the Bylaws. This is a Science Council issue not an EB issue. Must propose an amendment to the bylaws. Share that with SC and perhaps get a recommendation from EB. This committee focuses a lot on K-12 yet sites focus on undergrad/grad so that needs to be reconciled.

5. Julia Jones request for additional funding. She is going to go over budget. This BioScience group was excellent. Truly synthetic article. Holding a virtual workshop for a long period of time. SRN proposal development is a new activity but reflects a strong outcome from the BioScience synthesis. EB members feels this is well worth the effort, although a bit uncomfortable about the "process after the fact." We do not want to encourage groups to run over budget. They do not get much money so more care needed. In this case, this seems like a good investment.

#### 6. Announcements/brief reports

Pilot Project Update – Collins, Waide

Sites are about to complete inventory documents.

RFP is one thing, but we need to submit a proposal to fund it.

Proposal exchange – Collins

Three proposals in hand, several promised

Science Council update – Karen McGlathery (Chair)

ASM Update – Waide

Things are moving along.