

LTER Executive Board Minutes 14 May 2013
8:30AM-4:00PM MDT
Wooton Hall
New Mexico State University

Meeting called to order at 8:30AM MDT by Chair Scott Collins. Members attending: John Blair, Emery Boose, Dan Childers, Evelyn Gaiser, Steve Hamilton, John Moore, Mark Ohman, Gus Shaver, Mary Spivey, Emily Stanley, Bob Waide.
Absent: Karen McGlathery (flight delayed)

Agenda items:

1. Approval of minutes of the 16 April EB meeting
Approved

2. 2013 Site visits – Collins

Site visit teams have been selected for most sites. Teams include LTER and non-LTER people. Goal is for all site visits to be performed in the same way to avoid bias pro or con. Strategies for preparing for the new focus on the site visit – is the site doing what it said it would do in the proposal. If not, why not? Site team is also looking for evidence of waste, fraud and abuse. Sites are likely asked to prepare a separate document, not excessively long to orient the site visit team. Organize lots of information on the web. Summarize the proposal to show how a site got where it is. Approach to the site visit program and presentations is not that different from past site visits.

3. 2014 Renewals and exchanges, etc – Collins

Will consider a renewal exchange for those interested. Plan for December exchange

4. Diversity workshop and recommendations – Collins/Waide

Focus on undergraduates for now. We can also do something at the Graduate level. Working with high school teachers can be great mechanism to bring majors into departments and the field. LTER should consider using RAMHSS opportunities more often. We should take advantage of other NSF programs, as well as non-NSF funded programs on campuses. Can we develop cross-site multiyear REU opportunities? Check with various High School outreach programs across campus to at least connect with these groups. Could we establish an application portal for all REU opportunities across the network, sites or otherwise? There is interest at NSF to engage younger students (between Freshman and Sophomore years), first time REUs, minorities. Could provide ethics component via internet across all sites. We need to find ways to distribute the workload.

5. Cross-site research funding with existing budgets – Collins

Goal is good to push us to think in a cross-site manner. Could definitely work on smaller scale with sites that have common interests and measurements. How can we also encourage others to do cross-site research that includes non-LTER sites? One challenge is site budgets are really tight, especially toward the end of a funding cycle. Second problem is mechanism – how do we get dribs and drabs from each site into a bigger pool of money to support cross-site projects? Should we use these funds to start a couple of big, long-term experiments? Can we do this through supplements, if there are supplements in the future?

Maintaining connections with Emeritus sites – Need to consider mechanisms to keep sites and site scientists engaged. One mechanism could be through cross-site initiatives, LNO sponsored workshops. Over time, site scientists will eventually move on which may make continued interactions more difficult unless concrete funding/data collection mechanisms remain in place.

6. Options for restructuring the NAB – Collins

Could this board be built to connect us with other networks?

Do we want to use them more strategically, such as a review of LTER?

How do we bring people up to speed if they serve on these committees and don't know much about LTER?

Invite members to attend Site Visits?

Mechanism of engagement needs to be developed

Should we even have any kind of external board? What funding will be available for such a group in the future LNO? This fits into our efforts to re-invision the LNO and the governance of the LTER Network. The EB believes it is important to have some type of external advisory committee. It is a priority for that body to provide evaluations of the network to the network. This is not a committee formed by NSF, but rather a committee formed by LTER reporting to the EB and addressing our specific needs for input.

One advantage of moving to an *ad hoc* External Advisory Committee is to reduce the perception that LTER is a closed shop. The majority of members must be non-LTER participants. Use in targeted and specific ways. Another big advantage would be we might get good objective external advice.

EB suggested that the heads of relevant networks should meet once a year to share ideas and information.

7. LNO renewal update and funding status – Waide

Money is going out the door on schedule for the ARRA award.

No communication thus far from Kratz/McKnight committee or NSF regarding re-competition of LNO. What approach shall we take regarding the open

competition? Does the network submit a proposal as it did in the 1990s, or do we encourage any site to submit, which would highlight different strengths that may exist across the network? This remains to be determined.

8. Changes to IM review criteria – Boose

IM review criteria were adopted in 2005. Document is considered out of date. Also, concern that the IMs were defining the criteria for their own review. Issue came up between Saran and IMExec. Decided that old criteria were not to be used in 2013 site visits. IMExec came up with one pager for NSF review with some general questions to be used in upcoming site reviews. Are these new questions to be used in the upcoming reviews? Some sites will likely build their presentations from the old criteria. Is there any value in revising the review criteria if they are not of interest to NSF? Does NSF plan to use the questions submitted by IMExec to NSF for the review process? Need clarity regarding how the IM component will be reviewed during upcoming site visits. Clarity was provided and the new criteria will be used in the future because it may be too late to introduce these in time for site visits scheduled early in 2013.

9. Status of NIS/PASTA and site data packages – Waide

Version one of PASTA was released in January. Worked out bugs and started to add data sets. 929 data sets freely available. 16,343 data packages in NIS. Some data in PASTA will be locked up for good reason. Some data would be publically available and can be downloaded without any forms required. Next are data that require information in a form prior to download. This would be a verified form of login. This form would send an email to the individual asking if they are who they said they are. If verified, the user can get access to all data sets within a given foraging session. Next visit would still require a login but user would already be verified. Pages in portal look good, but need some word-smithing.

10. Communication Committee – Waide

This committee came out of the SIP. Some things can be done by a group of members, but if we want this group to be more active and comprehensive we will need dedicated people at the Network level. We have established a network of communicators across the Network. Probably not appropriate for the lead PI. Must be sensitive to how we interact with NSF, not meant to be a barrier to contact with the PI or key scientists associated with press releases or Discovery articles. This committee helps to develop the LTER Network Annual Report. Glossy, flashy, engaging document. Highlight awards to LTER Scientists. Highlight sites up for renewal. Key findings. Please update key findings periodically.

Working to increase the number of newsletters per year. Can't get enough content. Need to stop relying on PIs to write articles.

Established twitter and facebook pages.

Still working on content in the Policy Makers section of the LTER Website. Working with COMPASS for outreach. HBR publication on Mercury is a particularly good model to replicate for policy makers. Consider developing submissions to *Issues in Ecology*.

Working on a Grad student blog.

Next steps of the CommComm will cost more (coordinator – full time) and the existing committee can only do so much on a volunteer basis.

11. Education Committee – Spivey

EdComm working on digital library of lesson plans using LTER data. Focus is on grades 7-12. These are peer reviewed. HigherEd working group needs some recommendations from EB regarding topics and priorities. Should we sponsor grad meetings at National Meetings? Minigrants? Communication mechanisms between grad students? Grad student committee is very active and organizes workshops at ASM, etc. How can we expand this effort? Maybe use grad students to recruit at meetings such as SACNAS. What type of data sets are available for use in undergrad and grad courses? These will be topics for further EB meetings and discussion.

How can we measure outcomes of our educational effort? Doing so can have a big positive impact on research proposals to EHR.

12. Other business – All

What constitutes a site publication? How does a site get credit for publications that use their data but do not include any site scientists? It will help in the future when authors in such cases cite datasets. Then it is possible to report how often a given data set has been cited. EB conclusion is that you know a site publication when you see it. If the experiment was designed and the data were collected, proofed, and curated, it should be considered a site publication and can be listed as such under a special category of the publications list even if no site scientists were involved in the study.