

Minutes of the LTER Executive Board
25 November 2013
1:00PM-3:00PM EDT
Conference Call

Meeting called to order at 1:00PM EDT by Chair Scott Collins; Members attending: Nancy Grimm, Emery Boose, Evelyn Gaiser, Bob Waide, Mark Ohman, Mary Spivey, Gus Shaver, Karen McGlathery, Emma Rossi-Marshall, Curtis Monger, Will Pockman
NSF: Saran Twombly
Not attending: John Blair

1. NSF update

Budget situation is not looking good for this year. LTER budget is just enough to cover commitments. No money right now for supplements. Still expect renewal submissions. This only affects additional things that we may want to do for LTER. Got DGA approval to fund LUQ. Maybe spend afternoon of mini-symp get updates from other folks in NSF. Try to get meeting with SBE brass (Joann Tornow acting AD, Fay Coersmo, Exec Officer) to explain to them the kind of social science research that LTER conducts. Do not expect next sequestration to be as bad for NSF as last year. Other POs from NSF also have topics they may want to present to us. We are enthusiastic about this opportunity. Diane McKnight's committee is moving along and is on track. Their report should be filed by February and March. There is a new support staff (Andrea Sojba) in DEB dedicated to LTER. She will help with both mundane things and fun things.

2. LNO update – budget and staffing

Will receive increment for next year. ARRA award is over. Three staff members have been laid off. Two found other jobs at UNM and one got job at Konza Prairie LTER. James Williams organized conference calls. He is gone, as you can tell from the struggles this morning. Leann is working as webmaster for Dean's Office and Physics and Astronomy. Planned increment will bring budget up to core amount in LNO budget for this year. A previously-awarded supplement will provide funds for International LTER activities. Discussing other possible funds to LNO depending on IM-Exec review of NIS activities. Supplement funds for synthesis activities remain a high priority for the LTER-EB.

3. Mini-symposium update

All speakers are lined up. The theme is "scenarios and ecosystem forecasting." Six speakers this year. The presentations will be at NSF on 22 February 2014. The names, titles and summaries of the presentations have been sent to EB.

4. PASTA data migration progress

Migration progress is moving successfully. All sites should have this process completed by next spring.

5. Communication and Education Committee updates – Mary

Both committees met about the proposal to do a video series on LTER. EdComm was intrigued about the proposal, but a lot needs to be clarified. Proposal by video person was middle school as target. Is that our preference? What is the LTER Brand? CommComm has been charged with developing our brand, then when we have a brand, we can find a format, then a target audience. Then lets figure out who is the main driver of this project to keep the video person on track. CommComm is still working on their input on this. Overall, nothing is going to happen very quickly. There is no commitment at this point to produce a video, and if we do want that, we are not committed to this videographer, but he did approach us and is interested in working with Niwot for starters.

6. Chair election

Scott will no longer be Chair as of May 2015. Need to develop a plan for an election process for May 2014 Science Council meeting. We need an ad hoc committee to recruit individuals for a slate of candidates that need to be selected by mid-March at the latest. Committee meets by email and solicits names. Then selects top candidates to run for Chair. Mark is willing to serve on the committee, so is Emma.

7. Consistent messaging by LTER

- Theory
- Long-term
- Core areas
- Role of external funding in LTER research

Need to develop message about LTER regarding how these topics interact.

Addressing ecological theory seems to be a common criticism. Does this mean we need to address existing theory only? Are we not in a position to develop new theory? Fundamental questions vs theory? Are criteria being applied differently by different parts of NSF? What is the role of theory in long-term research, and what theories can only be addressed by long-term data?

8. Long-term goals of the Network

What are our own expectations of the LTER Network?

9. Other business