

## LTFR Executive Board Meeting Notes

March 6, 2018

*Approved at LTER Executive Board Meeting May 15, 2018*

### **Attending:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Peter Groffman (chair)	x	
David Foster (HFR)	x	
Michael Gooseff (MCM)		x
Sally Holbrook (MCR)		x
Steve Pennings-GCE	x	
Dan Reed (SBC)	x	
Michelle Mack (BNZ)	x	
Eric Seabloom/Sarah Hobbie (CDR)	x	
Katie Suding (NWT)		x
Jess Zimmerman (LUQ)	x	
Kari O'Connell (EOC-rep)		x
Wade Sheldon (IMC-rep)	x	
Frank Davis (NCO)		x
Marty Downs (NCO)	x	
Corinna Gries (EDI)	x	

***January and February Meeting minutes: Approved***

## *Agenda and Notes*

### **LTFR Data Portal:**

EDI currently maintains a separate data portal for LTER. Their advisory committee recommended consolidating it with the main EDI portal. This item was not discussed at the March meeting and is deferred to the April meeting.

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### **Informational Update, Executive Board rotation:**

A revised [EB Rotation Schedule](#) is on the google site and will be uploaded to the documents archive. The new sites have been incorporated by adding one each year from the next 3 years, starting with BLE. Ken Dunton has agreed to serve starting after this year's EB meeting.

Departing Sites: SBC(Dan Reed), GCE (Steve Pennings), MCM (Mike Gooseff)

Incoming sites: PAL (Oscar Schofield - to be new PI in 2019), BLE (Ken Dunton), NTL (Emily Stanley - not yet confirmed)

In a related update, Wade Sheldon will complete his service as the Executive Board Representative from the Information Management Committee after the 2017 Science Council Meeting. The new representative from the committee will be elected this spring and (pending Executive Board approval) begin joining calls in June.

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### **Planning for All-Scientists' Meeting (ASM)**

#### **Questions for discussion:**

- What kind of role does the Executive Board want to play?
- Workshop solicitations will be out soon, but is there anything particular the Executive Board would like to see, organize, etc.
- NSF is discussing what they want to do -- Is there anything we'd like them to present/discuss?
- Any thoughts on the most effective format for NSF interaction?

#### **Discussion:**

- We have made some really good progress in the last few years on interactions with other networks. Critical Zone Observatories, for instance, are addressing a lot of issues that the LTER grappled with in the 70s and 80s. A few sites (Luquillo, Niwot, for example) host LTER, NEON, and CZO sites. Peter Groffman is really interested in making sure there are some workshops proposed to facilitate interactions with other Networks.
- The Education Group is developing a pretty ambitious agenda for the ASM.
- We want to make sure that the Synthesis Working Groups have a forum -- both for sharing their work and accomplishments and for exploring the potential interactions between them.
- NSF will have some time set aside for a presentation and or conversation. Are there particular topics or questions that we want to put on the agenda for that time?
- Michelle Mack would like to convene a meeting of the arctic and subarctic sites along with Program Officers from NSF Office of Polar Programs (OPP) and Division of Environmental Biology (DEB) as well as Logistics Support.
  - There's a good chance that OPP and DEB program officers will be in attendance, Logistics support probably will not unless we specifically request it or arrange for them to call in at a particular time.
- It would be a good time to assess the way the restructuring of LTER-EDI-NCO is going and how we might want to adjust it going forward. In particular, it would be an opportunity to assess whether expectations and budgets for EDI, NCO, and the LTER Chair position are well-aligned, but we will want to have a clear plan for doing so in an effective and fact-based way.

Proposed plan:

- Marty Downs will send the following documents to the EB in advance of the April Meeting. In April, we will plan how to frame a broader discussion at the in-person meeting in May.
    - LTER-NCO self-study
    - LTER review report (when we receive it)
    - EDI self-study for Advisory Committee
    - EDI Advisory Committee report (heavily focused on customer outreach/relations)
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## **Agendas for Science Council Executive Board Meeting, Science Council Business Meeting and PI Meeting**

The LTER Network's 40th Anniversary and Review is coming up in 2020 and a good deal of planning will be required to address both the decadal review (primarily internal) and any sort of external promotion (book, conference, special issue, review article?). How should we begin the process?

### **Discussion:**

- Is the review strictly necessary? Yes, it is! NSF typically ends major programs after a decade of funding. LTER is a conspicuous exception to that rule, so we really do need to do a decadal review to help justify continued funding.
- One approach would be to use some of the longest running experiments as case studies. We could ask how have results changed over the course of the experiments? What would the effect sizes have been at 30 years and what are they after 50 years? How has our interpretation changed?
- Experiments are the thing that may be falling through the cracks. What has been powerful, what do we think has worked?
- Bob Waide is leading a multi-authored book on the history of LTER, Groffman is one of the authors. The group is meeting in June to further develop the strategy.
- Externally, one of the most effective ways of reaching other scientists (and the media) is to do a really high-profile review and signature article -- ideally in Science or Nature.
- Inwardly, we have so many people who have come on in the last 10 or 15 years, who really don't look back to the history of the Network. It would be interesting to figure out a way to really allow today's Network participants to understand the significant ways that the Network has changed -- for the good and maybe also for the not-so-good. We've gained breadth in discipline, geography, and approach, but also lost an intimate connection to NSF.
- Part of the review could be to pick up on this discussion of how LTER is governed. Maybe as the Network gets larger, we need a different governance structure?
- Last year we discussed "What's the lifespan of a site?" Someone with the right skills could actually take a hard look at that. Do older sites become less productive or do they just keep getting stronger and stronger? Are we able to address qualitatively different kinds of questions as we get into very long-term research?
  - This kind of analysis might require an external body. If we tried to do it internally it could be contentious and would lack legitimacy.

### **Action:**

- Formed a subcommittee (Jess Zimmerman, Eric Seabloom, David Foster) to review the previous decadal reviews, report what has been done in the past and make some proposals for how to approach it for 2020.
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## Strategic Planning

**Context:** The recent PI survey indicated that there was interest in including some additional strategic planning as part of the Science Council Meeting. That could include several kinds of discussions, such as:

- Identifying big cross-site challenges and knowledge gaps.
- Building bridges to other Networks or organizations.
- Identifying funding opportunities (or types of opportunities) worth pursuing.
- Prioritizing specific activities at the Network level.

Open questions: What's the appropriate venue? Science Council business meeting? Possibly set aside additional time? How can we frame the discussion in a way that will result in a productive conversation?

### Discussion:

- Strategic planning really is part of the 40th anniversary review discussion. Part of the task should be to identify the big issues facing the Network.
- If we are going to have a discussion of how is the new structure working out, that too is appropriate to the 40th anniversary review.
- In 2016 we had a separate afternoon session for an hour or so to discuss the new NCO. We probably should do something similar for the decadal review and keep it separate from the business meeting.
- In 2017, we made it part of the business meeting and the quality of the discussion was poor.
- To generate a really good discussion, we want to provide participants with enough information in advance and enough time to form thoughtful questions and proposals. We need to bring people up to speed with the issues, concerns, and accomplishments.

### Action:

- Marty Downs and Peter Groffman are working on a draft agenda for the Science Council meetings and will include at least a separate hour for discussion of the 40th anniversary review and possibly an hour for discussion of the LTER-NCO-EDI relationship.
  - How to structure that discussion is still an open question. We need to identify a plan and a facilitator.
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## Principal Investigator Meeting

**Context:** Friday morning is devoted to the PI meeting. It can be a very useful opportunity to share experiences and approaches to managing a site.

- In 2017 it focused largely on structures for managing site operations and site succession.
- Do we want to identify a focus area for 2018? Some possibilities are: Inclusion, Title IX policies? Mentoring? Leveraged funding?
- It's helpful to identify someone willing to organize and facilitate that meeting.

### Discussion:

- Will there be time for the PIs without the NSF program officers?
- We could have two sessions; one with all the PIs plus the NSF program officers (1.5 hours), then a time for PI-only discussion.

**Action:**

- We will invite NSF to the beginning of the PI meeting and reserve the second half for PIs only.

**Unresolved:**

- Do we want a focus topic? Does someone other than Peter want to take the lead?

**Deferred for later Meetings:**

Affiliate Membership

- Given NSF's response on the affiliate site question, we might want to continue discussion, but it would also be useful to bring in some additional input. GLEON uses a voluntary member affiliation system that looks to be pretty well thought-out: [http://gleon.org/members/membership\\_application](http://gleon.org/members/membership_application). Maybe we could ask Paul Hanson or Kathy Weathers to join us and talk through pros and cons? Or Marty or Frank could reach out and gather that info.

EDI maintaining (or not) a separate data portal for LTER.