LTER Executive Board Meeting Notes

August 15, 2018

- Executive Board Google Drive:
  https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B3xT0TaiQmt0TkQxOVNhMGh0Tkk?usp=sharing
- Executive Board Zoom Link: https://ucsb.zoom.us/j/706470284   or Telephone: US: +1 646 876 9923 or +1 669 900 6833 (Meeting ID: 706 470 284)

Attending:

Name	Present	Absent
Peter Groffman (chair)	x	
Diane McKnight (chair-elect)	x	
Ken Dunton (BLE)		in the field
Sally Holbrook (MCR)		traveling (SA)
Michelle Mack (BNZ)	x	
Oscar Schofield (PAL)	x	
Eric Seabloom (CDR)	x	
Emily Stanley (NTL)		in the field
Katie Suding (NWT)	x	
Jess Zimmerman (LUQ)		x
Kari O'Connell (EOC-rep)		x
Dan Bahauddin (IMC-rep)	x	
Frank Davis (NCO)	x	
Marty Downs (NCO)	x	
Corinna Gries (EDI)	x	

Agenda

Prior Executive Board Meeting notes not yet available.

1. 40 year review:
    a. Guidance from NSF
    b. Committee and procedure
    c. The search for old documents
2. Agenda for Science Council Meeting at ASM
3. Letter from Dan Childers on "the state of LTER program management at the NSF
4. General discussion on how we could/should approach a conversation with NSF on program management (please see FAQ document produced in 2017
    a. What are the criteria for probation and termination; 5 simple statements.
    b. What is the PROCESS for probation and termination; addendum, chain of command
    c. What are the criteria for evaluating the LNCO and EDI?
    d. What is the PROCESS for evaluating the LNCO and EDI? Will this/should this involve the LTER SC?
    e. Under what circumstances will funding be provided for the chair?
5. Information Management update

6. Environmental Data Initiative (EDI) update
7. Information Management Committee (IMC) update
8. Synthesis Working Group updates

Notes

1. **40 year review:**
   a. **Guidance from NSF**
      i. Frank Davis talked briefly with Dan Thornhill this morning.
      ii. Dan Thornhill (Program Officer, GEO-OCE) and Gayle Pugh (Program Analyst, GEO-OCE) will lead the 40-year review process for NSF. They are aiming to produce a guidance document for the sites and the Network, which they hoped would be ready in early September. That timeline has slipped and they are now aiming for the All-Scientists' Meeting. They plan to include a template for site self-assessments.
      iii. NSF will form an internal review committee (including ADs from Geo, Polar and Bio, who will ultimately report to Bill Easterling (Assistant Director NSF-Geo) and Joanne Tornow (acting Assistant Director, NSF-Bio). They would like to meet with the LTER Review Planning Committee before having an in-depth discussion with all of the PIs and don't anticipate having time to do that before the PI meeting at the ASM.
      iv. Up to 50K can be available as workshop funds to convene meetings in preparation for the review.
      v. The Executive Board needs to convene a small group of people to serve as a working group to prepare a prepare the self-assessment.
   b. **Committee and procedure:**
      i. Proposed criteria for committee:
         - Diversity of subfields (population ecology, community ecology, ecosystem ecology, others?)
         - Diversity of biome (possibly secondary to subfield, but still important: marine, freshwater, terrestrial (forest/grassland))
         - Strong contributors
         - People with a cross-site or Network wide perspective
         - Need EDI (and possibly also IM?) on the committee
         - Someone with a Network communications perspective
         - Someone from the McKnight Committee?
         - Someone who was on the committee for the 30 year review?
      ii. **To avoid:** PIs with site reviews in 2019 (ARC, BES, BNZ, CCE, CAP, HBR, KBS, MCM, MCR, NWT, PIE)
      iii. **Brainstorming names…**

   c. **Update on the search for old documents**
      Marty Downs reported on information gathered from Bob Waide and Phil Robertson regarding the 30-year review:
         - July 2009: The network provided its perspective on a committee charge (attached).
         - Early 2010: The actual charge (appears as an appendix in the report) was developed.

- Spring 2010: The external advisory committee was formed and held a first in-person meeting.
- October 2010:
  - A second in-person meeting was held in New Mexico, to which the Executive Board was invited. The first portion of that included an LNO network overview provided by Bob Waide followed by a several hour meeting with the EB. After that the committee went to the Sevilleta site and after a tour met in closed session for a day or two.
  - Individual committee members visited some sites, but as far as Phil knows there were no other committee meetings at sites or otherwise. And as far as he recalls this was the extent of their preparation for the review, though Bob fielded requests for material in the following months. Phil believes the only site-level requests were for management plan examples, for which we sent a sampling from 8 recently renewed sites.
  -
- December 2011: The report appeared and NSF's written response to it came shortly thereafter. There was also a companion data management report, authored by Bob
- 2012: BioScience Special Issue on the LTER Network appeared

d. **Discussion Points:**
- Would it be useful to review the previous decadal reviews (10, 20, 30) to determine how the process has changed and infer what might be most effective? Probably that should be where the committee begins.
- Do we know what the 30-year external review committee was given in terms of documentation?
- We would like to know where the ultimate authority for the review lies. NSF program officers were fairly clear at the Science Council meeting that they wanted us to start with the 30-year report, and the NSF response to that report.

2. **Agenda for Science Council Meeting at ASM**.
- Draft agenda is in the review documents folder
- How much time do we need with and without NSF Program Officers?
- We should have some time to discuss among ourselves how the program management is working and how we might most effectively engage the NSF Program Officers.
- FD: Dave Garrison said that working group is putting together a document describing the management of the LTER program. THEY (NSF) wants to make sure there's a real difference between informal conversations with POs and the more formal processes where NSF is being asked about their perspective.
- How about if we use the morning slot is time for the Network and have NSF plus the network in the afternoon?
- Could we focus on what assessment or productivity we think would be useful? The publication counting is not very useful.

3. **Letter from Dan Childers** on "the state of LTER program management at the NSF in the review documents folder. No further discussion this month.

4. **General discussion on how we could/should approach a conversation with NSF on program management** (please see FAQ document produced in 2017).

a. Suggested starting points for discussion with NSF:

<ol type="i" start="1">
What are the criteria for probation and termination? Can NSF provide some specific thoughts on why sites go on probation and/or are terminated? Has this changed over time?
What is the PROCESS for probation and termination? Why has the use of addenda varied? What is the chain of command for making these decisions at NSF? Has this changed over time?
What are the criteria for evaluating the LNCO and EDI?
What is the PROCESS for evaluating the LNCO and EDI? Will this/should this involve the LTER Science Council?
Under what circumstances will funding be provided for the chair?

    b. **Discussion:**

<ol type="i" start="1">
NSF doesn't seem to be able to answer questions -- maybe another strategy would be to make some suggestions and see how they react.

<ol type="i" start="2">
Frank Davis noted that Dave Garrison had clarified that if we want for-the-record responses, 1) the request should come from the chair of the science council, 2) it should be in writing, and 3) they will need some time to develop a response as a committee and clear it through NSF management.

5. **IM update.**
   The information managers have been *getting ready for ASM, using their virtual water coolers to do working group updates so that they can maximize their meeting time in Asilomar. They too are formulating questions for NSF, particularly related to the renewal cycle. A group of IM's worked together to present their data catalogs in a coherent model for the last renewal cycle and it was very well received. They have offered to help sites that received poor marks on the last renewal, but are waiting to hear back on the specifics of review criticisms..*

6. **EDI update.**
   Corinna Gries reported that NSF was extremely happy with how the data catalogs were provided in the renewal proposals. EDI has been contacted about whether they can provide help in upgrading poorly-rated information management systems and are happy to engage with those sites.

   a. EDI had a large booth at ESA with lots of other data organizations. The most frequently asked question was "what is all this about?"
   b. EDI organized a well-attended INSPIRE session: What is keeping you from publishing your data.
   c. EDI is also working on ASM preparation. One of their key workshops (ClimDB) didn't make it onto the agenda.

7. ***Do we need to meet in September?*** *Probably yes. Let's set a meeting and release it if we don't need it.*