

Long Term Ecological Research Network Bylaws

Revision 5.2, June 13, 2024

NOTE: In this round of revisions (5.2), we are only attempting to address current inaccuracies in the bylaws. In a second round of revisions (5.3 or 6.0, depending on the ultimate extent of changes), we will consider structural changes.

Article I Name

Article I, Section 1. Name: The name of the network is the Long Term Ecological Research Network (LTER Network).

Article I, Section 2. Purpose: The purpose of the LTER Network is to promote the advancement and applications of long-term ecological research in the United States and internationally. This is accomplished through communication and coordination of research, education, and information management activities, and through synthesis activities across sites and ecosystems and among other related national and international research programs.

Article II Membership Affiliation

Article II, Section 1. Membership: The LTER Network consists of sites funded under the LTER program by directorates of the National Science Foundation (NSF), or by other agencies in conjunction with the NSF, an LTER Network Office (LNO), and the Environmental Data Initiative (EDI). The LNO and EDI are designated specifically by the NSF. Any person affiliated with a site is a member of the LTER scientific community.

Article III Meetings of Membership

Article III, Section 1. Periodic All Scientists Meetings: At approximately three (3) year intervals, subject to supplemental funding availability, the LNO will organize an All Scientists' Meeting (ASM) to facilitate synthesis activities and collaborative research efforts in the LTER Network. The scientific theme(s) and overall agenda for the meeting will be determined by the Executive Board and the Science Council. The LNO will evaluate options for meeting locations and present recommendations to the Executive Board for discussion and approval.

Article IV LTER Science Council

Article IV, Section 1. Purpose: The vision and scientific direction of the LTER Network is established by the Science Council. The Science Council reserves authority for decisions affecting the network, and may address any issue that arises from the Executive Board or the participating LTER sites. The Science Council works in close partnership with the LNO and EDI to promote collaboration, synthesis, and communication among LTER sites. The Science Council has the responsibility to provide leadership to the Network and facilitates: (1) planning for cross-site research and education, (2) development of proposals for the conduct of network-level science and products that synthesize network-level data and information, and (3) interactions with existing and emerging networks. As needed, the Science Council shall appoint subcommittees to help carry out its responsibilities. The Science Council elects the chair and approves bylaws changes. With the exception of the chair, the Science Council receives no compensation other than reasonable expenses.

Article IV, Section 2. Composition: The Science Council shall be composed of a chairperson, a chair-elect (as needed), a lead principal investigator from each LTER site or their designate, a representative from each network-wide standing committee, and directors of the LNO and EDI.

IV, 2.1 Chair. The chair of the Science Council shall be elected by the Science Council from within the scientific community of the LTER Network. The Executive Board shall appoint an ad hoc nominating committee that will, at least 60 days prior to the election, solicit nominations for chair from the LTER scientific community. At least 30 days prior to the election the LNO will distribute résumés of each nominee to the Science Council. Election of a chair will be by majority vote of the Science Council. The election will be held at the Science Council meeting one (1) year prior to the expiration of the current chair's term. The individual elected shall serve as chair-elect for one (1) year prior to assuming office as chair and during this time shall be an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Executive Board. The term of office for the chair will be two (2) years. The chair may stand for re-election for a second consecutive two (2) year term.

IV, 2.2 Chair-Elect. If, for any reason, the chair shall be unable to carry out the duties of that office, they shall be succeeded immediately by the chair-elect for the remainder of the term. At the end of the substitution, the chair-elect shall succeed to fill their term as chair.

IV, 2.3 Principal Investigators. A lead principal investigator of each LTER site will serve as the site's voting representative to the Science Council and shall represent that LTER site in all actions performed by the Science Council. It is expected that the lead principal investigator will attend Science

Council meetings. In the rare instance that the principal investigator must be absent from a Science Council meeting, they shall appoint from among site members, an acting voting representative. Should the chair of the Science Council be a site principal investigator, then the chair will appoint a representative from that site to serve as the voting member of the Science Council during the chair's term(s).

IV, 2.5 Representatives of the Standing Committees. Representatives of each network-wide standing committee shall serve as non-voting members of the Science Council.

IV, 2.6 Executive Directors of the Offices. The executive directors of the LNO and the EDI shall serve as non-voting members of the Science Council.

Article IV, Section 3. Meetings: The Science Council will meet at least annually on dates mutually agreed upon by the Executive Board, the Principal Investigator of the LTER site hosting the meeting, and the LNO. Notice of such meetings shall be given to the Science Council not less than six months before the date fixed for the meeting. The Executive Board will determine the science theme(s) and scientific program for the meeting with input from the Science Council. The chair, in consultation with the LNO Director, will prepare the agenda for the business portion of the meeting. Meeting minutes will be made available to the Science Council for review and comment via a shared drive within one (1) month after each meeting and will remain open for comments for one (1) additional month. At the end of that comment period, meeting minutes will be publicly archived and made available to all sites.

Article IV, Section 4. Voting: Voting requires a two-thirds (2/3) quorum of the voting members. The chair only votes to break a tie. Except as otherwise expressly required by these bylaws, all matters shall be decided by the affirmative vote of a majority of the Science Council members present. Each voting representative of the Science Council attending the meeting shall be entitled to one vote.

Article IV, Section 5. Chair Resignation or Removal: The chair may resign by giving written notice to the Science Council, Executive Board, and Executive Director of the LNO. Such resignation shall take effect at the time of receipt of the notice, or at any later time specified therein. The chair can be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Science Council. If no chair-elect exists, the procedure described in Section 2.1 above shall be followed to elect an interim chair to serve out the remainder of the term. In the period between the vacancy and the election of an interim chair (no more than 45 days), the Executive Board shall elect one of its members to fill the duties of the chair.

Article V LTER Executive Board

Article V, Section 1. Purpose: The Executive Board is the operational arm of the Science Council. The Executive Board shall have the responsibility, in consultation with the LNO and EDI, for developing and updating the LTER Strategic and Implementation Plan for the network and for developing and recommending bylaws changes. The Executive Board may designate special committees, establish their charges, and assess continued need for committees. If a site objects to a decision of the Executive Board, it can seek redress of the issue with the Executive Board, and with the support of at least 5 sites, with the Science Council. With the exception of the chair, the Executive Board receives no compensation.

Article V, Section 2. Composition: The Executive Board shall be composed of the elected chair of the Science Council serving as chair of the Executive Board, nine members selected by individual sites on a rotating basis, the Executive Director of the LNO, the Director of EDI, a single representative from each standing committee, and as needed, a chair-elect. All members of the Executive Board shall act on behalf of, and are accountable to, the membership of the LTER Network. Members will serve as liaisons to LTER Network committees and perform other functions as delegated by the chair.

V, 2.1 Chair. The chair of the Science Council serves as chair of the Executive Board and shall be elected by the voting members of the Science Council and be subject to the term lengths described in Article IV, Section 2.1.

V, 2.2 Chair-Elect. The chair-elect of the Science Council serves as chair-elect of the Executive Board and shall be elected by the voting members of the Science Council as described in Article IV, Section 2.2. The chair-elect is a non-voting member of the Executive Board.

V, 2.3 Site Representatives. Nine members of the Executive Board shall be selected from among the LTER sites on a rotation that includes all LTER sites. The rotation is designed to optimize representation by the sites in network governance, and each site is expected to participate in the Executive Board at the time determined by the rotation scheme. Each site will choose its representative in a manner to be determined by the site. Site representatives shall have a single term of three (3) years. In the event that a site representative is removed or is not able to fulfill their term, the site will choose a replacement to complete the term. Terms of the site representatives will be staggered, so that terms of one-third of the members expire each year.

V, 2.4 Standing Committee Representatives. Each standing committee shall select one member from among them to serve as the committee representative to the Executive Board, who will serve as a non-voting member of the Executive Board for a single three (3) year term.

Committee representatives shall serve as liaisons between the Executive Board and their committees. In the event that a committee representative is removed or not able to fulfill his or her term, the committee will choose a replacement to complete the term.

V, 2.5 Executive Directors of the Offices. The Executive Director of the LNO shall serve as a voting member of the Executive Board. The Director of the EDI shall serve as a non-voting member of the Executive Board.

Article V, Section 3. Meetings: The Executive Board for the LTER Network meets monthly. The chair shall have the authority to call special meetings of the Executive Board to address urgent governance issues. Network members may bring forward business for the Executive Board to consider by notifying the chair at least 2 weeks prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting. Meeting minutes are continuously available to members via a shared drive.

Article V, Section 4. Voting: Voting requires a two-thirds (2/3) quorum of the voting members. The chair only votes to break a tie. Except as otherwise expressly required by these bylaws, all matters shall be decided by the affirmative vote of a majority of the voting members of Executive Board members present. Each voting Representative of the Executive Board attending the meeting shall be entitled to one vote.

Article V, Section 5. Resignation, termination, and absences: Resignation from the board must be in writing and received by the Executive Director of the LNO. An Executive Board member may be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Board.

Article VI Officers and Duties

Article VI, Section 1. Chair: The chair shall preside at meetings of the Science Council and the Executive Board and, along with the Executive Board and the LNO, generally oversee the governance of the LTER Network. The elected chair leads the Science Council and the Executive Board in establishing and enacting the scientific direction of the network, and represents the network where a strong scientific presence is required.

The chair shall facilitate communication to network sites regarding decisions of the Executive Board; provide a receptive ear for any network member who wishes to raise an issue of concern; and serve as or work with the Executive Board to appoint liaisons to NSF, other agencies, associations, networks, the public, and to network committees. The chair will work with the LNO director to prepare meeting agendas and produce minutes of the Science Council and Executive Board meetings. The chair will orient the chair-elect to the duties of the office.

Article VI, Section 2. Chair-Elect: The chair-elect shall, in the absence of the chair, preside over meetings of the Science Council and Executive Board and otherwise exercise all powers and duties of the chair. The Executive Board, in the absence of the chair and chair-elect, may appoint from among its members an acting chair.

Article VI, Section 3. Compensation: In recognition of the substantial time and effort required of the chair, modest compensation will be provided from NSF, via the LNO award. Candidates for the chair position will be made aware of the compensation amount and mechanism prior to accepting their nomination. The chair-elect receives no compensation.

Article VII Other Committees

Article VII, Section 1. General: Other committees, consisting of network-wide standing, targeted standing, or ad hoc, may be created by resolution adopted by the Executive Board. Each committee shall have only the powers specifically delegated to it through the charge to the committee approved by the Executive Board. The Executive Board shall evaluate all committees on an annual basis. Any committee may be dissolved by a vote of the Executive Board. Committees may have representation at Executive Board meetings at the discretion of the Executive Board. Committee chairs shall report on their work at least annually to the Executive Board and at such other times as directed by the chair. chairs and members of committees receive no compensation except for reasonable expenses.

Article VII, Section 2. Network-Wide Standing Committees: One or more network-wide standing committees may be formed by the Executive Board for each major scientific, educational, or research program identified by the LTER Network. Members shall include one representative from each site. Network-wide standing committees, once formed, shall elect their own chairs. Representatives of each network-wide standing committee are non-voting members of the Science Council.

Article VII, Section 3. Ad hoc Committees: The Executive Board may constitute ad hoc committees as necessary. Ad hoc committees report to the Executive Board at least annually, at which time the Executive Board may renew, update, revoke, or deem the committee charge to be fulfilled. Ad hoc committees may have representation at Executive Board and/or Science Council meetings at the discretion of the Executive Board.

Article VIII LTER Network Office (LNO)

Article VIII, Section 1. Tasks and Duties: The LNO exists as the result of a grant or cooperative agreement awarded by the NSF to a contracting institution that hosts the office. Tasks that the LNO performs in support of the LTER Network are

defined in the NSF proposal(s) or cooperative agreement(s) associated with the award, guided by input from the Science Council, Executive Board, and the LTER Strategic and Implementation Plan for the Network and the LNO.

Article VIII, Section 2. Executive Director: The executive director of the LNO is the lead principal investigator and scientific leader of the NSF award or cooperative agreement. Both the executive director and the director are employees of the contracting institution, and operational supervision resides with the contracting institution. The director of the LNO is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the LNO.

Article IX. Environmental Data Initiative (EDI)

Article IX, Section 1. Tasks and Duties: The EDI exists as the result of grants awarded by the NSF to the contracting institution(s) that host and maintain the LTER data products in the EDI data repository. The EDI is responsible for secure data archival of network data products, and their public accessibility and re-usability. Specific tasks are defined in the NSF proposal(s) or the proposal(s) project execution plan associated with the award, guided by the LTER Strategic and Implementation Plan for the Network and its information management requirements, and in consultation with the Executive Board.

Article IX, Section 2. Director: The director of the EDI is a principal investigator of the NSF award(s). The director is an employee of the contracting institution and operational supervision of the director resides with the contracting institution. The director is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the EDI.

Article X Amendments to the Bylaws

Article X, Section 1. Amendments: All bylaws of the LTER Network shall be subject to amendment or repeal and new amendments may be made by vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the voting representatives of the Science Council at any annual or special meeting. A notice that has specified or summarized the proposed amendment, repeal or new bylaws must be circulated to the Science Council at least 30 days before the vote.