

# Long Term Ecological Research Network Bylaws<sup>1</sup>

Revision 4.0, May 18, 2017.5.0

## 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

**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 Communications Office (hereafter called the NCO), and the Environmental Data Initiative (hereafter called EDI). The NCO and EDI are designated specifically by the National Science Foundation. Any person affiliated with a Site can be part of the LTER scientific community.

## Article III Meetings of Membership

**Section 1. Periodic All Scientists Meetings:** At approximately three (3) year intervals, the NCO, with guidance from the Executive Board and Science Council, will organize an All Scientists Meeting (ASM) to facilitate synthesis activities and collaborative research efforts in the LTER Network. The scientific theme(s) for the meeting will be determined by the Science Council. The Office will seek additional funding from NSF for these meetings. The NCO will evaluate options for meeting locations to present to the Executive Board at least two (2) years before the scheduled meeting, and meeting locations will then be determined by majority vote of the Executive Board.

## Article IV LTER Science Council

**Article IV, Section 1. Powers:** The scientific direction and vision of the LTER Network is established by the Science Council. The Science Council reserves ultimate 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 NCO and EDI to promote collaboration, synthesis, and communication among LTER sites. The Science Council has the responsibility to provide leadership and planning for cross-site research and education, to develop proposals for the conduct of Network-level science, to interact with existing and emerging networks, to develop products that synthesize Network-level data and information, and to otherwise manage the science affairs of the LTER Network. 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.

---

<sup>1</sup> These bylaws were first adopted on September 19, 2003. Revisions were approved on September 21, 2005 (revision 1.0); May 18, 2006 (revision 2.0, included in *The Decadal Plan for LTER*); May 8, 2008 (version 3.0); May 17, 2012 (version 4.0); and May 18, 2017 (version

**Article IV, Section 2. Composition:** The Science Council shall be composed of a Chairperson, a Chair-Elect (as needed), the Principal Investigator from each LTER Site or his or her designate, the Chair/s of each Network-wide and Targeted Standing Committee.

**IV, 2.1 Chairperson.** 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 Executive Director of the NCO will distribute resumes 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 at least one (1) year prior to the expiration of the current Chair's term (i.e. every other year). 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 one consecutive two (2) year term.

**IV, 2.2 Chairperson-Elect**

If, for any reason, the Chair shall be unable to carry out the duties of that office, he/she shall be succeeded immediately by the Chair-Elect for the remainder of the term. The Chair-Elect shall succeed to fill his/her term at the end of the substitution.

**IV, 2.3 Principal Investigator**

The Principal Investigator of the NSF award to that LTER Site will serve as the Site's *de facto* 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 Principal Investigator will attend all meetings of the Science Council. In the rare instance that the Principal Investigator must be absent from a Science Council meeting, he or she 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, 2.4 Additional Participants.**

For every scheduled meeting of the Science Council, each LTER Network Site will select an individual to serve as an additional science participant whose role is to provide expertise related to the annual meeting science theme(s). The additional participant shall be selected by the Site, shall serve for the duration of the annual meeting, and may be selected from within or outside the LTER scientific community.

**IV, 2.5 Chairs of the Standing Committees**

The Chair/s 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 NCO and the EDI shall serve as a non-voting members.

**Article IV, Section 3. Meetings:** The Science Council will meet annually on dates mutually agreed upon by the Executive Board, the Principal Investigator of the LTER Site hosting the meeting, and the Executive Director of the NCO. Notice of such meetings shall be given to the Science Council by the Chair at the previous annual meeting or by electronic mail not less than six months before the date fixed for the meeting. The Science Council will determine the science themes(s) and scientific

program for the meeting. The Chair, in consultation with the NCO Executive Director, will prepare the agenda for the business portion of the meeting. Locations of Science Council meetings will be determined at least two years in advance by majority vote of the Science Council based on nominations from the floor. An attempt will be made to rotate meetings among the LTER sites to allow LTER Network scientists to become familiar with the science programs at each site. The Science Council may use teleconferencing or other electronic methods as an alternative to meeting in person, but in no instance shall it meet in person less than once per year. Meeting minutes will be distributed to the Science Council two (2) weeks prior to its next meeting for review and approval. Minutes will be approved by majority vote at the meeting. Meeting minutes shall then be archived and made available to all Sites no more than five (5) days after their approval by the Science Council.

**Article IV, Section 4. Quorum:** Except as may be otherwise expressly required by these Bylaws, two-thirds (2/3) of the Voting Representatives of the Science Council shall constitute a quorum at a meeting in which a vote occurs.

**Article IV, Section 5. Voting:** Voting requires a 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 6. Chair Resignation or Removal:** The Chair may resign by giving written notice to the Science Council, Executive Board, and Executive Director of the NCO. 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. In the event of a vacancy in the Chair, the Chair-Elect shall assume office immediately, for the remainder of the term. He/she shall succeed to fill his/her term at the end of the substitution. 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 its Members to fill the duties of the Chair.

## **Article V LTER Executive Board**

**Article V, Section 1. Powers:** Full power in the management of the affairs of the LTER Network, with the exception of those activities that are the explicit responsibilities of the NCO and EDI, is vested in the Science Council. To this end and without limitation of the foregoing or of its powers expressly conferred by these Bylaws, the Executive Board shall have power to authorize such action on behalf of the LTER Network; make such rules or regulations for its management; create, evaluate, and dissolve such additional offices or special committees; and select, employ or remove such of its officers or agents as it shall deem best. The Executive Board shall have the power to fill vacancies in, and change the membership of, such duly constituted committees. The Executive Board shall have the responsibility, in consultation with the NCO and EDI, for developing and updating the LTER Strategic and Implementation Plan for the Network and for developing and recommending Bylaws changes. 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 other than reasonable expenses.

**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; an Education Representative, the Executive Director of the NCO, the Director of EDI, a representative of site Information Managers, and, as needed, a Chair-Elect, and Past-Chair. All members of the Executive Board shall act in 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 Past-Chair**

At the end of his/her term, the Chair becomes the Past-Chair. The Past-Chair will serve as a non-voting member of the Executive Board for one year after his/her term expires. The Past-Chair receives no compensation other than reasonable expenses.

**V, 2.4 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 matter to be determined by the Site. Site Representatives shall have a single term of three (3) years or until a successor is duly selected or elected. In the event that a Site Representative is removed or is not able to fulfill his or her 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, 2.5 Information Management Representative**

The LTER Information Management (IM) Committee shall select one member from among them to serve as the Information Management Representative to the Executive Board. The IM Committee shall determine the method by which the Representative is selected. The Information Management Representative is a non-voting member of the Executive Board and shall serve a single three (3) year term. In addition to the responsibilities shared by all Executive Board members, the Information Management Representative shall serve as the liaison between the Executive Board and the Information Management Committee providing insight on informatics, technology implementation, and human-technology infrastructure issues as well as on design and implementation of federated information system activities. In the event that an Information Management Representative is removed or not able to fulfill his or her term, the IM Committee will choose a replacement to complete the term.

**V, 2.6 Education Representative**

The LTER Education Committee (EdC) shall select one member from the Committee to serve as the Education Representative to the Executive Board. The EdC shall determine the method by which the Representative is selected. The Education Representative is a non-voting member of the Executive Board and shall serve a single three (3) year term. In addition to the responsibilities

shared by all Executive Board members, the Education Representative shall serve as the liaison between the Executive Board and the EdC providing insight on education issues and providing updates to the Education Executive Committee and the EdC on current activities of the EB. In the event that an Education Representative is removed or not able to fulfill his or her term, the Education Committee will choose a replacement to complete the term.

#### **V, 2.7 Executive Directors of the Offices**

The Executive Director of the NCO 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 will meet a minimum of once per year the day before the annual Science Council meeting. The Executive Board may use teleconferencing or other electronic methods as an alternative to meeting in person. 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 EB to consider by notifying the chair at least 2 weeks prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting. Meeting minutes will be distributed to the Executive Board one (1) week prior to its next regularly scheduled meeting for review. Minutes will be approved by majority vote at the meeting. Meeting minutes shall then be archived and made available to all Sites no more than five (5) days after their approval by the Executive Board.

**Article V, Section 4. Quorum:** Except as may be otherwise expressly required by these Bylaws, two-thirds (2/3) of the Voting Representatives of the Executive Board shall constitute a quorum at a meeting in which a vote occurs.

**Article V, Section 5. Voting:** Voting requires a 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 6. Resignation, termination, and absences:** Resignation from the board must be in writing and received by the Executive Director of the NCO. 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 all meetings of the Science Council and the Executive Board and, along with the Executive Board, generally oversee and supervise the governance of the LTER Network. 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 appoint liaisons to NSF, other agencies, associations, networks, the public, and to Network committees. The Chair, with assistance from the NCO Executive Director, is responsible for preparing meeting agendas and overseeing the taking of minutes at all Science Council and Executive Board meetings and for ensuring that such minutes are available to Sites within the time frames specified in these Bylaws. 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 Chairperson.

**Article VI, Section 3. Compensation:** The Chair-Elect receives no compensation other than reasonable expenses. The position of Chair requires a substantial level of effort. In recognition of the time and effort required of the Chair, the Executive Director of the Office, in consultation with NSF, shall negotiate the mechanism for compensation appropriate to the situation.

### **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 lawful 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. The Chairs of each Network-wide Standing Committee are non-voting members of the Science Council.

**Article VII, Section 3. Targeted Standing Committees:** One or more Targeted Standing Committees may be formed by the Executive Board. A Targeted Standing Committee shall be formed to address specific, long-term scientific or administrative issues that require particular kinds or combinations of expertise. Targeted Standing Committees do not require representation from all sites to meet their charge. Targeted Standing Committees, once formed, shall elect their own Chairs. An individual from any of the LTER Sites may be a member of a Targeted Standing Committee. The Chairs of each Targeted Standing Committee are non-voting members of the Science Council.

**Article VII, Section 4. Ad hoc Committees:** The Executive Board may create such ad hoc committees as may be deemed desirable, the members of which shall be appointed by the Executive Board. Examples include organizing committees for the Science Council meeting and All-Scientist meeting. Such committees shall have only the lawful powers and term of operation/existence specifically delegated by the Executive Board. Unless specifically noted or renewed, ad hoc committees expire annually at the end of the annual Science Council meeting. Ad hoc committees may have representation at Executive Board and/or Science Council meetings at the discretion of the Executive Board.

## **Article VIII Network Communications Office (NCO)**

**Article VIII, Section 1. Tasks and Duties:** The NCO exists as the result of a grant or Cooperative Agreement awarded by the National Science Foundation to a contracting institution that hosts the Office. Tasks that the Office performs in support of the LTER Network are defined in the NSF proposal(s) or Cooperative Agreement associated with the award, guided by the LTER Strategic and Implementation Plan for the Network and the NCO, and in consultation with the Executive Board.

**Article VIII, Section 2. Executive Director:** The Executive Director of the Office is the Principal Investigator and scientific leader of the NSF Award or Cooperative Agreement. The Executive Director is an employee of the contracting institution, and operational supervision of the Executive Director resides with the contracting institution. The Executive Director is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the NCO.

## **Article IX. Environmental Data Initiative (EDI)**

**Article IX, Section 1. Tasks and Duties:** The EDI exists as the result of grants awarded by the National Science Foundation to the contracting institution(s) that hosts and maintains 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.