IMEXEC Meeting Notes
2019-05-22

Attending:

- Stevan Earl (co-chair)
- Suzanne Remillard (co-chair; notes)
- Jason Downing
- Tim Whiteaker
- Renee Brown
- Marty Downs (NCO representative)

Unable to attend: Dan Bahauddin (EB representative), Kristin Vanderbilt (EDI representative)

Executive Board report (Dan)

Dan was unable to participate in this meeting but sent notes from the May 2019 meeting of the Science Council (pasted below)

2019 LTER Science Council Meeting notes

Each site gave a lightning talk on one of 6 different themes related to the 40-Year review:
- Role of resources and/or trophic interactions in structuring populations, communities, ecosystems, and/or responses to environmental change (ARC, CCE, GCE, NTL, SEV, LUQ, NGA)
- Relationships between biodiversity and ecosystem functioning/stability (CDR, NES, SBC)
- Functioning of coupled socio-ecological systems (HFR, CAP, BES, KBS)
- Importance of legacies, land use, and disturbance history (KNZ, CWT, BNZ, FCE, HBR)
- Linkages among ecosystems -– the importance of interfaces and, connectivity, e.g., aquatic-terrestrial, terrestrial-marine, ecosystem-atmosphere linkages (BLE, MCM, NWT, PIE)
- Resilience, Abrupt State Shifts and Alternative Stable States (JRN, MCR, VCR, AND, PAL)

Followed by breakout groups where each of these 6 topics were examined for how they have advanced various aspects of science
- The most important theme is how this area of research represents an important scientific advance and how progress in this area has been facilitated in unique and powerful ways by LTER funding.
- What can only be done in the long term context?
- How did these findings emerge from long term data? Why do they need long term study?

- Links to broader societal impacts; if these are obvious and noteworthy.
- Links to research outside of LTER; if these are obvious and noteworthy.
- How is LTER (and this science) a platform for career development of diverse scientists?

There was a 1 hour Q and A session with NSF officials Dave Garrison, Dan Thornhill, Colette St. Mary, and Gayle Pugh
- 40 Year Review process is on track. Committee is hoped to be formed by the end of October. A list of nominees for the committee is finished. Issues in defining conflict of interest with regard to this process have been resolved. Because there are fewer financial implications, they had more freedom to choose potential members. They anticipate around a dozen members. There will likely be some site visits, but that will be up to the committee to decide.
- Reviews of how the LTER is managed by NSF will happen at the Division level as per their normal schedule and process, with each division examining their own programs.
- There is money allocated for NEON data use, and NSF wants to reduce barriers for interactions between NEON and groups like the LTER.
- There is no near-term solution for using NSF annual report publication lists for NCO purposes.
- There is no word on the approval of EDI's renewal, but NSF is pleased in general with the direction of EDI.
- There are no current plans for equipment supplements across the LTER nor within the individual Divisions, though sites are free to speak to their program officers about specific needs.
- NSF is working to create stable RFPs for site renewals, and the officers believe the process to do so is progressing well. The officers also expressed a belief that site reviews have been fairly consistent over time.
- There was a discussion at the conference over the possibility of continuing to involve defunded sites in LTER processes, meetings, etc. While there is general support for the idea of these sites to continue doing science, there are issues with branding and creating expectations of future funding.

IMC, ED, EDI, and NCO presented annual report information. Marty and Kristen can provide this information. The IMC information was a summary of the annual report with a small amount of material from the IMC 40 year self-study. A good deal of appreciation for the progress of IM in the network was expressed. Collette St. Mary pointed out the usefulness of third party analyses such as the work done by Gordon Habermann.

There was a half-day PI meeting which was meant for PI's to be able to speak freely. As such, details here will be minimal. Topics were:
- Conceptual Frameworks/Diagrams: How are they important, how to craft them, how to make them meaningful, and considerations of the review process.
- Maintaining Productivity: Distribution of funds among people and projects at a site. Defunding people and projects when productivity or applicability changes.

- Managing Data Management: Communication can be difficult because of differing skill sets. There can be misunderstandings of responsibilities for tasks within a data pipeline. There is value in having a PI specifically tasked to working with the IM team. How does a new site deal with historic data issues. What cross-site info management software could be developed to simplify processes?

IMEXEC discussion:

PIs recognize that DOI on datasets is increasingly important from the NSF perspective and that it is important to continue to educate the LTER communities.

PIs questioned the ability to display the length of time of datasets so that it was easy to find "long-term" datasets. They were informed that it is not possible to do in EDI because of the various date formats. In addition to this issue, there are other issues that make this challenging like how datasets are archived by the site perhaps by year or due to the time resolution within the data. But EML does include a temporal resolution for every dataset. Why can't these found in EML rather than looking at data? We should ask EDI about the specifics behind the inability to display temporal resolution.

Tim will reach out to EDI to figure out what the issue is and how we may begin to solve it.

The last comment in Dan's report regarding managing data management was of interest. This was a closed PI session, so we don't have all of the details. PI's seem mostly satisfied with the IMC and their efforts. But, can IM's help to create a tighter and smoother relationship with PIs and site scientists?

NCO update (Marty)

Focus is still on the 40 year review. The EB is working on a document with specific requests for sites to respond.

NCO heard from Collette that the NCO will be refunded. Operating dates are October 1, 2019 - 2024. The setup is a bit different than the last, as they are funded through a cooperative agreement with NSF and not a grant. The situation is similar to sites in that they could reapply for another 5 years.

EDI has not yet heard about their refunding effort, but the solicitation came out later than for NCO and their timeline is different.

Working Group Updates (Tim)

ECC

This was discussed at the last VWC (last Monday). Two new checks related to file size went into effect on May 15.
Find ECC resources here: https://github.com/EDIorg/ECC/blob/master/docs/index.md

Semantics: No update

ClimDB: No update

Core Metabase
There are several pull requests in the Core Metabase GitHub repository to address issues, which are awaiting Gastil and Margaret's review. Tim, An, Margaret, and possibly Gastil and Li are presenting a joint core metabase and EML Profile session at ESIP. (EML profile aims to identify the most common features used in EML documents and creates a subsetted profile that enables tool development.)

Zotero: No update

DataBits
John reported that the Spring Databits is not yet out. The authors were not satisfied with the final draft (whose formating was corrupted due to the import of various file formats from the authors into John's preferred editing environment) and requested changes. John has also been under deadlines related to the end of the semester and getting a journal article out. The hope is to address these issues and get it out soon.

VWC

June 10 VWC - Jonathan Burnett (AND) will present the Andrews Forest use of ArcGIS Open Data Hub: https://data-osugisci.opendata.arcgis.com/
Suzanne has already spoken to Jonathan and he has agreed to do it. But Suzanne will verify once again with Jonathan.

Tea with the chair

This was a group of new IMs that meet regularly with Gastil, who was the previous IMC chair, to discuss issues related to LTER Information Management. The group developed an IM Orientation Google Sheet (https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1VJMP2v8_z2AvY8oGVakaYKInDQXPoFUG5aHaRl57uHE/edit#gid=0) that listed questions and issues. Gastil farmed out questions or the new IMs were charged with asking other IMs and share the information gleaned. It is considered a knowledge base. The G-sheet isn't the best format and it was suggested that it moved to Github, but Gastil isn't comfortable with Github, so it was suggested that Renee may be able to help move it. Renee was in antarctica and was unaware of this request.

Renee has questions about what the future is with this group. There are a lot of new IMs and she feels it is an important group/resource. It is a mentoring program. The IMC started an IM mentoring program in 2003 and created some resources that are on the IMC website (http://im.lternet.edu/resources/im_practices), ironically instigated by Gastil's predecessor. We do have our IM Guidelines, so what are the specific needs of IMs outside of these Guidelines? Being a part of this network is overwhelming as a new IM.

Should we address this in the future? As an example, Marty relayed that the PIs really value the annual PI meeting to learn new things from other PIs. Perhaps we can think about a similar approach within the IMC? At the annual SC meeting, the PIs have 3 topics with some discussion time for each topic. The topics are introduced by a PI sharing a few minutes on a topic to get the discussion going. This could be a model for how we move forward to share information and knowledge. We could cover at the annual meeting or a VWC every so often (quarterly or every 6 months). Potential topics could include: "how do you acquire metadata at your site" and then the discussion would be directed around that... what works at your site, what doesn't, what could be improved and so on.

==We need to begin to formalize these VWC maybe quarterly. Let's start after IMC meeting. We also need to begin developing topics. Renee has agreed to spearhead this effort.==

2019 ESIP Partner Survey - Response Requested by June 7

==Either Suzanne or Stevan will respond==.

Getting together 2019 Site Review cohort of IMs

Renee asked how any collaboration among IM's on site reviews was done in the past. There really hasn't been anything formal. Maybe some informal discussion between some IMs. At this point, the first review is in a few weeks, so it may be already beyond having useful input from the cohort. Two years ago sites got together to standardize the presentation of the data catalog, pulling information from PASTA, for renewal proposals. Is this something that we as IMEXEC should be thinking about and orchestrating? The thinking among IMEXEC members seemed mixed.

Obtaining info regarding recent proposal reviews, particularly of sites on probation and/or received fair or worse ratings of IM

Just as PI's share this information among themselves, would it be valuable for the IMC to do the same when it comes to feedback on IM systems? There is a question of how we would obtain this information. Do we address specifically those sites that were put on probation? However, that may be inappropriate of uncomfortable. Reviews aren't shared. Sites have very different ideas about sharing. IMs may need to ask their PIs if they could share. We may ask if we could get summarized reviews relating to IMS. There is value in talking to other IMs, but how do we

proceed. We can ask what we could do to better prepare sites in terms of IM. It is not clear that we have an action item about this topic. But it may be worth trying to discuss among IMC. Maybe in a VWC format.

Inviting LTER Network Chair to an upcoming IM Exec Meeting to obtain her perspectives and priorities of LTER IM as well as share with her our understanding of LTER IM perspectives and priorities

Diane McKnight is the new chair of LTER SC. Renee has worked closely with her and wondered if there would be value in inviting her to one of our IMEXEC meetings to obtain perspective on LTER IM and have a back and forth conversation. The group agrees that more communication is always better. But we'd want a very structured format. Diane may be able to give a good perspective of the SC conversation about IM and relationship with PIs. She is also just coming out of NSF and may have interesting observations from that experience. She doesn't have a lot of experience with EDI, so may not be able to speak much to that relationship, but we could provide information on that to her. We will aim to do this in the Fall. Renee will draft questions that we could review. We can also talk about the questions at the annual meeting.

Annual Meeting Structure

We had a fantastic VWC discussion on Monday. The group reviewed the 'Targeted IMC topics' and the 'Attending' tabs in the Google Sheet (https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1DvwLsNZ-elCPbJ6zlGklPrqEixNoSvAFXjMtllK6DXU/edit#gid=945526362).

Stevan modified the Google sheet a bit to highlight was trickled to the top of the discussion. He suggests the following:
       Group discussion on engagement and EML 2.2
       Breakouts on BP for biodiversity, spatial data, Wired

How do we get people to go to Wired? Maybe incorporate facilitation of IM communication. Maybe call it IM Collaboration. There is still some changes from NCO regarding website changes (Zoho) that could affect the final decision for Wired. However, the website seems like a group discussion about getting it to a stable platform to get it to a useful resource and how do we deal with the resources we already have and have spent decades developing. Whatever we do, the site must move from Drupal 6. NCO has a Drupal 7 set up that it could move to, but we need to prioritize the type of information that is desired and the types of access that is desired (open vs private; type of rights for certain users, etc.).

There's a similar issue with spatial data. There are some IMs who do not deal with their spatial data and may not have much input for this breakout.

We could have each group talk about the same topics, reconvene and report and then breakout to next topic. After some discussion, it seems that we are settling on these final topics:

engagement and collaboration

We could develop some questions for each topic, like, what is working at your site and what is not working at your site, and each group will discuss each topic based on the questions. We would have two different breakout sessions. We will cogitate on this and begin to draft some seed questions.

Meeting update from ESIP (Renee)

Meeting agenda from ESIP is not yet final and it's not clear when it will be.

Update from ESIP: "*Regarding the schedule, the current agenda is at https://2019esipsummermeeting.sched.com/. We do not anticipate any changes to it.*"

Transportation: People will need to take a shuttle, bus or a very long rail trip to get from Sea Tac to Tacoma, but no more info from ESIP, so we should provide this information to IMs.

Meeting time: Has been confirmed and we have the room from 8:30 am - 5:30 pm

Meeting room configuration: classroom style, but we need some space for breakouts; Renee will ask about this, but there may be nice outdoor options at the Convention Center. Update: briefly, there are no rooms available for breakouts, but our room will seat 75 and we are welcome to break out to other common areas of the convention center and/or outside.

Renee needs to revisit our call with NSF.

Stevan asked about the value of having an NSF call just because it is tradition. He did not feel like we got a lot of information from our meeting at ASM (2018) or the call from Bloomington (2017), but the call from Santa Barbara (2016) was extremely valuable because we were in a period of unknown transition. It's important to keep our ties with our NSF program officers, but sites have different officers that interact in different ways.

Marty advised that how our questions are framed is very important. NSF is not very forthcoming with information. They prefer to answer how they would like to see things going forward versus what the issues were in the past. The discussion should be how we could facilitate the desired outcomes.

Asking questions regarding IM and the 40 year review may not be fruitful as NSF does not have a charge for the review committee and they can't control how the committee will carry out the charge anyway.

Stevan emphasized that unless we can think of a good reason to have a call, then we should table it for now. Peter McCartney is potentially attending ESIP in person and expressed an interest in attending and we should definitely meet with Peter if that is the case, but we may not need to orchestrate a call with the different time zones and different officers. Renee will follow up with Peter directly.

Today's action items:

- Suzanne will coordinate with Jonathan Burnett (GIS) about a water cooler in June.
- Stevan will respond to the 2019 ESIP Partner Survey by June 7
- ALL will think about seed questions for our engagement and collaboration breakouts.
- Tim will reach out to EDI to inquire about the inability to display temporal resolution of datasets.
- Discuss ways the IMC would like to share review information.
- Jason will begin to incorporate IM mentoring topics into the VWC's with help from Renee.
- Renee will organize one or more Zoom meetings with 2019 and 2018 IM mid-term review cohort to prepare/provide feedback about midterm reviews. Marty provided cohort emails to Renee.
- Renee will invite Diane McKnight to attend part of an IMEXEC meeting in the fall, and begin draft to guide our discussion
- Renee will follow up with Peter McCartney re: attending our annual meeting.
- ALL will review content of IMC website reflected in Google Doc (carried over from last month);
  https://docs.google.com/document/d/1f7kVDlunQ7d9CcNROkcuweuFMn06WnfXEaNdX0xzMys/edit