

**STEM Learning Ecosystems**  
**Ecosystem Advisory Committee Draft Plan for Sustainability**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**  
 Updated October 19, 2019 @ 5:58 pm  
 To view the SLECoP Plan for Sustainability use [this link](#)  
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Question	Answer
<p>What is the EAC? Why did they need to create a "Plan for Sustainability?"</p>	<p>The founding funders of the SLECoP have always imagined that eventually the members of the Community of Practice would take on a greater role and responsibility in leading and owning the initiative. They never planned to fund this in perpetuity. In an effort to bring their vision to fruition they asked TIES to construct and manage a process to bring a collaborative group together to design a Plan for Sustainability of the SLECoP. This became the EAC or the Ecosystem Advisory Committee.</p>
<p>How were members of the EAC selected? Why was I not consulted?</p>	<p>In February of 2019 the entire database of over 1,000 SLECoP contacts received an email invitation to apply to be a part of the EAC to help create the sustainability plan. From that original email request, 35 responded, completed the application survey and were invited to an introductory webinar in March and the inaugural meeting in NOLA at the CoP in April. Since then various members of the EAC have participated as their schedules and interest allowed with numerous meetings both in person in Cleveland in June and on conference calls. Collectively the members of the EAC have volunteered thousands of hours of time and work to this plan being presented.</p>
<p>In the context of the Ecosystem, how do you/we define "diversity?"</p>	<p>SLEs, as a part of their application process, were required to define diversity for their region as the under-represented populations they seek to serve. The most common reported definitions of diversity in the current slate of SLEs tend to be around ethnic, gender and socio-economic status. Within distinct Ecosystems this can look very different and very surprising. For example, larger urban areas might include in addition to the above definitions gender identity and sexual identity as an underrepresented population. In some rural communities with a mostly homogeneous widely dispersed population the under-represented populations in STEM fields and areas of study might be white male or indigenous populations. In other richly diverse urban communities, the vast number of languages spoken in the public schools pose a very different lens through which to view a very splintered definition of diversity. The SLE CoP would like communities to have transparency, agency and urgency about defining and addressing diversity in THEIR community context in ways to best overcome THEIR diversity challenges.</p>

<p>What will membership in SLECoP cost my Ecosystem? How was the fee set?</p>	<p>The plan is to charge \$3,000 per year per Ecosystem. In 2017 a small sampling of Ecosystems were polled about their feelings about and their ability to support a fee to continue in the SLECoP. Of the 10 sites polled all felt a fee of up to \$5,000 would be a reasonable fee for the initiative. Several larger SLEs felt a fee of up to \$10,000 annually would be acceptable. The funders are mindful of the vast difference in resources communities have and decided that the \$3,000 figure would likely be attainable by the majority if not all communities. It does not come close to covering the cost of the initiative but will help offset some of the operating expenses.</p>
<p>Will we still continue to have 2 annual convenings? if so, how will these operate and will the SLE CoP still cover costs for 2 attendees per SLE?</p>	<p>We believe there will be 2 convenings in 2020. After that there may be only 1 national convening and perhaps smaller regional convenings hosted, managed and run locally. As for Spring 2020- there is a plan for a Spring CoP the location and dates of which will be announced at the CoP in Cleveland. This was done primarily because 1) We had sufficient funds and funder support and 2) the planning of these events takes approximately 1 year so meeting logistics had to be contracted months ago. If the SLE CoP and funders determine sufficient interest in and funding for a Fall convening, there may be time to plan one if the decisions are made quickly-probably by early January.</p>
<p>Will the spring and fall convening format vary and if so how?</p>	<p>Because of long lead times, TIES and the funders have already begun the planning for Spring 2020 however, it is hoped that as with recent convenings members of the SLE CoP will contribute to the session designs through E2E and local planning teams. Longer term it is expected that the leadership team of the SLECoP beginning in 2021 will take a significant role in the planning and design of the convenings.</p>
<p>Who will have the final say in Ecosystem decisions?</p>	<p>The Funders have reviewed the preliminary recommendations and suggest that an interim leadership selected by TIES from members of the EAC will be identified to "stand up" the proposed structure including holding officer elections and populating the governance model. In the interim TIES working with funders and the interim SLE CoP will continue making final decisions on operations until the new organization is up and running.</p>
<p>To what extent will the SFN continue to support the SLECoP?</p>	<p>It is important to understand that the SFN does not and has never acted as a communal funder. Each of the approximately 2 dozen members fund their own programs and some coordinate aligned funding if it shares a common purpose. That said, over the years approximately 25% of the SFN members have supported in some way the SLE CoP. Several of the original funders are ending their support as originally planned in their grants. TIES is continuing to seek SFN funder support, but current indications are that the level of funding from SFN members will not keep pace with the funding levels of the past 3 years.</p>
<p>How do you recommend I get funding to support the Ecosystem membership fee? For example, would you recommend that I charge a membership fee for my team members?</p>	<p>Each Ecosystem site will need to assess their own situation in order to determine how to fund the Ecosystem membership fee. Since having funders is seen as a critical feature of healthy SLEs it is suggested that leaders cultivate those relationships first. Some communities raise funds by charging fees to members and some use grant funds to support their work.</p>

Will there be a recorded webinar that can be used to communicate the framework with our ecosystem members not attending the CoP?

On October 30, 2019 at noon EST members of the EAC will host a webinar of the presentation from the Cleveland Convening. This will be recorded and available on the SLE website. Also, the FAQ will be a living, constantly updated document to respond to the questions from the field and available on the internal site as well as the convening app.