

**Canadian Astronomical Society  
Société Canadienne d'Astronomie  
69th meeting of the Board of Directors  
May 24, 2015 9h00 – 16h30 EDT  
Adelaide Room, Sheraton Hamilton Hotel,  
Hamilton, ON**

<i>Present:</i>	Christine Wilson	President
	Roberto Abraham	Vice-President
	Nicole St-Louis	Treasurer
	James Di Francesco	Secretary
	Pauline Barmby	Director
	Stéphane Courteau	Director
	Sarah Gallagher	Director
	Lorne Nelson	Director
	Laura Ferrarese	Past President
	Leslie Sage	Press Officer

## Minutes

1. **Adoption of Agenda [Di Francesco]**
  - **Motion to adopt the agenda (Wilson/Courteau): Carried.**
  
2. **Adoption of the Minutes of the Board Telecon of April 2, 2015 [Di Francesco]**
  - **Motion to adopt the minutes (Wilson/Ferrarese): Carried.**
  
3. **Matters Conducted by E-mail [all]**
  - *Request for Financial Support:* A student member requested financial assistance from CASCA to attend the International Space University. After some consideration, the Board denied the request because CASCA has no mechanism for evaluating such requests.
  - *Nominations for the Nominating Committee:* The Board discussed potential members for the Nominating Committee, ultimately deciding to approach Alison Sills and Norm Murray. Both agreed to serve in the coming year.
  - *Attendance at Budget 2015 “Lock-up”:* The Board authorized travel funds to Wilson so she could attend the Federal Budget 2015 Stakeholders’ Lock-up in Ottawa, where budget information was revealed about one hour before its presentation to the House of Commons.
  - *Circulation of a “We Support TMT” petition:* The Board considered a request from a member to circulate a petition in support of the TMT, in the face of

considerable public opposition to the project in Hawaii. The Board decided to not circulate the petition because having non-residents sign it might dilute its impact.

- *Delegates Grant for IAU attendance:* The Board discussed who should receive \$800 in assistance from NRC to attend the IAU meeting as Canada's national representative. Wilson will receive these funds and represent Canada during the first week of the upcoming General Assembly. Greg Fahlman of NRC to represent Canada during the second week.
- *New CASCA Patrons:* Wilson proposed that Dr. Don Brooks of UBC and Mr. Guy Nelson of Empire Industries be made Patron members of CASCA in recognition of their efforts to secure Canada's role in TMT. The Board unanimously approved the proposal.
- *ACURA Advisory Council on the SKA:* Prof. Bryan Gaensler of Toronto recently updated the Terms of Reference for this panel. These Terms were circulated to the Board for comment.
- *CITA Council Membership:* The Board approved the selection of Natasha Ivanova of Alberta to CITA Council.
- *JCSA Membership:* The Board approved the nomination of Sarah Gallagher of Western to the Joint Committee on Space Astronomy.

#### **4. Action Items List Review [Di Francesco]**

- *CASCA Webpage Translation:* Courteau to remain on call for urgent translations on CASCA web pages.
- *Spectrum Management:* Wilson/Barmby to approach Greg Fahlman of NRC at the CASCA meeting about finding an "empowered" person to take on spectrum management issues.
- *ACURA communication:* Wilson submitted a written report to ACURA about TMT and MTR issues for its June 15 meeting.
- *Corporate Membership:* Wilson and Abraham to consider ways of maximizing the benefit of Corporate Membership to corporations, e.g., exploring ways of linking such members with students and postdocs or to the future CASCA LinkedIn page (see below)
- *CASCA LinkedIn page:* Abraham, Gallagher, and Di Francesco to create and administer a new CASCA LinkedIn page to connect current and former CASCA members with each other. This page may include forums and discussion groups.
- *2017 CASCA meeting:* The University of Alberta has agreed to host the 2017 annual meeting of CASCA in Edmonton.
- *NSERC issues:* Wilson to send letter to NSERC with the names of individuals who can be contacted to serve on the next Discovery Grant review panel.
- *CAP issues:* Facing similar issues as CASCA, CAP is concerned about support levels from NSERC. CAP has circulated a survey to Canadian Physics departments about "Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats." The proposal to have a CASCA member join their NSERC liaison committee will be considered in June, and if approved Nelson or Gallagher to attend the next meeting of this committee.

- *Solar System + Exoplanets Committee*: Abraham to approach potential stakeholders at CASCA meeting about reconstituting this committee. Could be a test for new, group-specific committees to enlarge CASCA's membership base.

## 5. New Business

### 5.1. President's Report [Wilson]

- *TMT Update*: The Federal Government approved funding Canadian participation in TMT at a level of \$243.5M a few weeks before the release of the 2015 Federal Budget. This amount of money is largest yet invested in Canada for astronomy, and possibly in science. The funding does not include costs of actual construction of the enclosure in Hawaii and some cash contributions. The Federal Budget had two pages on TMT, outlining how money would be spent over the next six years (and previous year). NRC is now the official signing authority for TMT.
- *IAU*: Canada submitted 42 nominations for new members to the IAU in January. The IAU is currently being reorganized into new Divisions and Commissions. NRC has paid our annual dues, but no feedback on the Annual Performance Review form has been yet received. Wilson also was interviewed by telephone by NRC about whether they should be paying IAU dues, and Wilson made the point that if CASCA were to pay IAU fees its annual fees would have to double.
- *Madawaska Highlands Observatory (MHO)*: Wilson was contacted by MHO to make an announcement at annual meeting. They expect to open in 2018 and sell time to Canada's astronomical community, as well as be a conference center.
- *James Clerk Maxwell Telescope (JCMT) news*: The JCMT is now under new management by an East Asian Observatory-led consortium. Canada is currently a partner, though short-term cash fundraising at six universities. Only Canadians at those institutions, however, can apply for PI time, but this situation may change if the NRC archive is recognized as a cash contribution. New JCMT partners are being asked to join at a level of \$300K for three years, so Canada got a good deal getting in before this plan was implemented. (NB: Wilson is also the Canadian member of the new JCMT Board.)
- *Mid-Term Review (MTR) news*: The MTR panel had a very productive meeting on 20 April. Panel Chair Rob Thacker will provide a ~1 hour MTR session on the second day of the CASCA meeting to present preliminary findings. At the moment, SKA-1, MSE, and WFIRST are each recommended, along with a mid-size microwave background polarization mission. LSST, however, is still looking for a Canadian champion. (NB: Wilson is an MTR panel member.)

### 5.2. Secretary's Report [Di Francesco]

- *Membership levels*: CASCA currently has 506 members, including 444 members in good standing (MIGS) and 62 who are one year in arrears in their dues payments. Thirty-six members are now two years in arrears and will be expelled at the CASCA business meeting on the second day of the annual meeting. CASCA gained 53 new members, including 22 first-year students. Overall, membership levels continue their slight decline, with a ~10 member decrease

- every year for the past few years, despite a concerted effort this past year to attract new members and get existing members to pay their dues.
- *Postdoc memberships*: A general feeling exists that postdocs in particular are not joining the Society, but a demographic analysis is needed to be sure. Perhaps instituting formally a postdoc prize for best talk could help (e.g., one was awarded at the annual meeting in 2011 in London, ON). In addition, perhaps eliminating registration fees for postdocs would be worthwhile to improve participation but the financial impact of that move needs to be analyzed.
  - *New members*: Di Francesco to contact all Canadian astronomy departments in September for the e-mail addresses of new students (and postdocs?) to invite them personally to join CASCA.
  - *Deaths*: The Society mourns the passing of Prof. Richard Bochonko, formerly of the University of Manitoba.
  - **Motion to accept the Secretary's Report, performed by e-mail after the Board meeting (Gallagher/Barmby): Carried.**

### 5.3. Treasurer's Report [St-Louis]

- *Financial situation update*: CASCA's overall finances are in good shape. The value of our investments is up by 6.8% over last year. The operating account contains \$40.5K, much more than the \$11.1K projected last year, due to various expected expenses not being realized (see Treasurer's Report document for more details.). A total of \$27.6K was earned from dividends from investments and these have been reinvested. Investments in cash and cash equivalents and fixed income funds are going down, as previously planned.
- *Next year's projections*: \$113K income is expected in the next year, with \$103K in expected expenditures, leading to a \$10K balance that is down from \$40K this year.
- *WESTAR funds*: Our investments include a big fraction from the WESTAR endowment that is producing large amounts of income, a situation that needs to be remembered if we start spending those funds. Nevertheless, these funds need to be spent as they were intended. For example, we are currently funding the "Discover the Universe" teacher education project at a \$20K/year level. Legal advice will be sought to review the terms of the WESTAR endowment and clarify the obligations of the Board regarding its maintenance.
- *Awards from investments*: In recent years, award funds have been drawn from operating income, not the investments made from endowments given for these purposes. This situation needs reconsideration, especially if operating income is reduced in coming years.
- *Auditor*: Wilkinson and Sons of Kingston, ON has been the designated auditor of CASCA for several years. With cost and clarity of reportage in mind, CASCA should consider its options regarding future audits.
- **Motion to approve the 2015 audit of the Canadian Astronomical Society (Gallagher/Nelson): Carried.**
- *Annual LRP encumbrance*: with LRP-related expenses being incurred every five years, it is prudent for CASCA to set aside \$5K/year for this purpose and

minimize the impact every five years. This process will be kick-started by rolling over any unspent MTR expenses from this year into this new “fund.”

- *Mandate of the CASCA Investment Committee (IC):* The IC is at odds with the investment advice provided by Scotia-Macleod (S-M) advisor Scott Miller, and believes we are not getting good value for their service. For context, S-M has charged CASCA ~\$40K in total over the last few years. An informal meeting between the Board and IC will be set up during the annual CASCA meeting to seek a way forward, possibly involving the IC in re-evaluating CASCA’s risk profile and searching for a new investment manager.

#### **5.4. Directors’ Report [Barmby]**

- *Improving Board communication:* “Igloo” has been proposed as a possible web-based means to consolidate Board discussions outside of quarterly meetings. Tasks may be assigned, potentially eliminating the Action Items Lists generated after each Board meeting. Igloo is free if less than ten people use it but no support is given. Igloo is a Canadian company whose data are stored in Canada. A licensing fee of \$2K/year is required for more people, but some support can be made available for \$1K/year. The paid options were considered too expensive for CASCA’s needs, but the Board is directed to read the Terms of Service to see if Igloo can be used in future.

#### **5.5. Directors’ Report [Nelson]**

- *WESTAR Lectureship:* Given the complexity of this issue, discussion will be tabled for a special Board meeting in coming weeks.

#### **5.6. Coalition activity [Wilson]**

- A new ACURA advisory committee for the SKA is ramping up. Notably, Canada has been selected for the SKA Central Signal Processing and Dish work packages for SKA-mid.

### **6. Reports of Committees**

#### **6.1. Ground-based Astronomy Committee**

- *Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope (CFHT):* Doug Simons (CFHT Director) is actively talking to Hawaiian communities, leading up to the renewal of the Master Lease for Mauna Kea. TMT construction has led to controversy about astronomy on the Big Island. Given the volatility of the issue, and the possibility that any seemingly innocuous comment can be magnified on social media, CASCA members should be reminded to be careful when discussing this issue.
- *CANTAC:* telescope proposal review process should be reviewed in the future.
- *Membership:* Courteau willing to replace Barmby as Board member of GAC.

#### **6.2. Awards**

- *Nomination Deadlines:* plan to move up nomination deadlines from the springs before AGMs to the autumns of years prior, i.e., at the end of the membership

drive. This move will allow award winners more time to plan their travel to the meeting. The move is unanimously supported.

- *New nomination criteria:* Only Members in Good Standing can be nominated for appropriate awards.
- *Plaskett nomination materials:* Current nomination letter includes the external examiner report, i.e., material not necessarily intended to be read beyond the dissertation committee. May ask for option whereby the external examiner can write a letter of support instead.

### **6.3. Computation and Data**

- *CFI:* (people and CPUs) Two proposals going forward for CFI challenge 1, led by Chris Pritchett and Bryan Gaensler, was four proposals but three were merged. Complementary between proposals should be emphasized. Proposal also being prepared for Challenge 2, involving refresh of aging HPC equipment.
- *CANARIE:* (networking) CANFAR is the component of CANARIE most relevant to astronomy. The Federal Government has re-upped its support for CANARIE but CANFAR itself needs to remain supported by CANARIE vs. other projects. James Wadsley is working on a proposal for CANFAR support and CASCA may assist, e.g., by providing demographic information about CANFAR usage.

### **6.4. E-Cass**

- *Feedback:* No report submitted from editors but E-Cass appears to be running smoothly. Wilson to acknowledge the hard work of the new editors at the AGM.

### **6.5. Education and Public Outreach**

- *National Teacher Outreach Program (NTOPI):* A joint initiative to launch a NTOPI by CASCA, RASC, FAAQ, and Dunlap Institute is being considered, providing teachers with resources, materials, educational packs, and training. Would provide immediate leverage of 100:1 or more since teachers to the work, and we benefit from the branding. If we endorse this approach, is “Discover the Universe” (DU) the way forward? For context, we already provide \$20K annually in cash for their bilingual activities. Future of DU is uncertain, however, as its organizer, Julie Bolduc-Duval, wants a more permanent job, but she could continue if DU were expanded when all four groups get involved. (The Committee will also come up with a method about whether or not DU is the right choice.) Could WESTAR funds be used in this context?
- *CASCA Education Website:* This site no longer exists, but Jennifer West should be contracted (at a \$3K level) to produce education pages on the main CASCA website. These pages may include a better mechanism for reporting EPO activities by the membership, maybe costing another \$1K. May require also a part-time person to look after the website to keep it up to date.

### **6.6. Graduate Students**

- *Equity Report:* Updated report delivered by Committee to the CASCA membership.

- *Awards:* Grad students will continue to select and award best poster and presentation awards.
- *Grad Student Day:* The “Astro-statistics Day” led by Eric Feigelson of Penn State this year was a great idea. GSC members should write up notes about how to prepare a CASCA grad student day for future students.

#### **6.7. Heritage**

- *Priorities:* i) modest funding requested for funding research costs for book on history of Canadian radio astronomy started by Richard Jarrell before his death; ii) establishment of a physical archive for CASCA; iii) establishment of a database of professional astronomers; iv) modest funding requested for searchable database for archived spectra and plates. The Board declined funding for the book as that is beyond its capability and purview. Committee member Lee Robbins may have ideas for the physical archive and searchable spectra database.

#### **6.8. JCSA**

- *Funding Challenges:* the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) remains fiscally challenged, leading to some concern about its ability to support space astronomy missions.
- *Report:* The Board requires the full, un-redacted report from the Committee.

#### **6.9. Nominating**

- *Membership:* Allison Sills and Norm Murray have agreed to serve on next year’s Nominating Committee. They will be nominated at the upcoming AGM.

#### **6.10. LRPIC**

- *CSA:* fiscal situation of CSA needs the most focus as there is no funding for a major astronomy mission in the budget, affecting Canada’s credibility. The Mid-Term Review Panel will likely address the CSA issue in its report. Further, it may be suitable for the LRPIC to express “levels of support” rather than “priorities” in its future reports.

### **7. Discussion of National Outreach Strategy [Wilson, Nelson]**

- Some discussion on this issue took place already in the Report of the Education and Public Outreach Committee (see above). The Board will convene a special meeting either via telecon or igloo to discuss the flexibility of using WESTAR funds for the NTOP.

### **8. Donations to Nepalese Astronomers [Wilson]**

- Following the requests of some members, Wilson will highlight in the President’s Report the ongoing need for donations of equipment, etc., to Nepalese astronomers following the disastrous earthquake there last month.

### **9. Report from the Press Officer [Sage]**

- *Vendors*: The publisher Springer-Verlag inquired about setting up a table at the upcoming AGM, which they actually did. A policy needs to be developed, however, about how such vendors can be accommodated in future meetings.
- *Breakdown Display*: After contact by Quebec City festival organizers for participation, CASCA should consider some kind of “breakdown display” with pretty pictures and some education to install (and man) at future functions. Jeanette Gladstone (Edmonton) may be able to provide such materials, and help out with EPO in concert with the RASC.

## **10. Reports of the AGMs [Abraham]**

### **10.1. 2015 McMaster**

- The AGM will not run a deficit this year after the organizers discovered they were being erroneously charged twice for HST.

### **10.2. 2016 Manitoba**

- Nothing to report, except offers of organization assistance have been sent to the locals.

### **10.3. 2017 Alberta**

- Nothing to report, beyond that they have agreed to host the meeting in two years’ time.

### **10.4. 2018 NRC/Victoria**

- Nothing to report.

### **10.5. 2019 York?**

- Nothing to report.

### **10.6. 2020 Queen’s University**

- Nothing to report.

## **11. Nominations to the Nominating Committee**

- See above Report from the Nominating Committee.

## **12. Board Student Awards (orals and posters)**

- Courteau, Nelson, and St-Louis agree to judge student posters.
- Gallagher, Abraham, Ferrarese, and Di Francesco agree to judge student oral presentations.

## **13. Other Business**

- No other business.

## **14. Adjournment**

- **Motion to adjourn the Board meeting (Courteau/Wilson): Carried.**



# **Canadian National Committee of the IAU Meeting**

## **Draft Minutes**

- 1. Adoption of the agenda**
  - **Motion to adopt the agenda (Wilson/Gallagher): Carried.**
- 2. Adoption of the minutes of the board telecon of December 5, 2014 meeting**
  - **Motion to adopt the minutes (Wilson/Courteau): Carried.**
- 3. Business arising**
  - *New Commissions:* Period to adhere to new Commissions to allow voting ended on May 15. We will need to know which Canadians joined which Commissions this fall for next year's Annual Performance Review.
- 4. Annual Performance Review (APR) questionnaire feedback**
  - No feedback from NRC has been received regarding the January 2015 APR. They did, however, send Wilson and Di Francesco notification that the IAU membership dues for this year have been paid.
  - NRC interviewed Wilson about the effectiveness of it paying annual IAU dues. She pointed out that having CASCA pay dues would double our annual fees.
- 5. Other business**
  - The IAU executive sent Wilson some materials in advance of the IAU General Assembly on proposed budget issues. She will review and seek guidance from this committee as needed.
  - Wilson to take up NRC funding to attend the General Assembly as Canada's representative, at least for the first week.
- 6. Adjournment**
  - **Motion to adjourn the meeting (Courteau/Wilson): Carried.**