

**Canadian Astronomical Society  
Société Canadienne d'Astronomie  
76th meeting of the Board of Directors  
Mar. 9, 2017 12h00 – 14h00 PST  
Via videoconference**

<i>Present:</i>	Roberto Abraham	President
	Nicole St-Louis	Treasurer
	James Di Francesco	Secretary
	Stéphane Courteau	Director
	Erik Rosolowsky	Director
	Christine Wilson	Past President

<i>Absent:</i>	Rob Thacker	Vice-President
	Sarah Gallagher	Director
	Kristine Spekkens	Director

## Minutes

1. **Adoption of the agenda [Di Francesco]**
  - **Motion to adopt the agenda (Courteau/Abraham): Carried**
2. **Approval of minutes of the 75th Board meeting [Di Francesco]:**
  - **Motion to adopt the minutes (Abraham/Courteau): Carried.**
3. **Business Conducted Electronically [all]**
  - *IAU Questionnaire:* The President completed the annual questionnaire from NRC regarding Canada's involvement with the IAU.
  - *IAU Junior Membership:* The IAU President sent out a short survey to its national adhering organizations regarding the creation of a Junior Member category in the Union. After some discussion, the Board did not favour this idea and completed the survey accordingly. This position turned out to be in the clear minority with regards to other respondent organizations, and the IAU is preparing a motion to introduce the category at the next General Assembly.
  - *CASCA-ACURA TMT Advisory Committee:* To enable good communication between the TMT and the Canadian community, CASCA and ACURA have jointly formed the CASCA-ACURA TMT Advisory Committee (CATAC). The President assisted with the selection of the chair (Michael Balogh of the University of Waterloo), the definition of the Terms of Reference, and the

choice of the members. The CATAC has since had several meetings and community consultation sessions. Relatedly, the LRPIC released a statement to the community regarding unity in the face of difficulty in regards to TMT.

- *Fundamental Science Review Panel*: The President received some feedback regarding our input to the federal Fundamental Science Review panel. Until the TMT situation is clarified, it appears prudent to hold off on meetings with senior government officials.
- *Order of Canada*: The Board congratulated Profs. Vicky Kaspi (McGill) and Peter Martin (Toronto) for their respective elections to the Order of Canada.
- *Report to ACURA*: The President completed a report to the ACURA institutional council regarding TMT.
- *Quebec Shootings and U.S. Travel Ban*: In the wake of recent news, the Board issued a statement to the community affirming that CASCA does not endorse singling out individuals based on their ethnicity, religion, or nationality.
- *WESTAR Lecturers*: The Board adopted the recommendations of the EPO Committee regarding the selection of WESTAR Lecturers.

#### **4. Review of the Action/Ongoing Items Lists [Di Francesco]**

- Minor updates given about various works in progress.

#### **5. New Business**

##### **5.1 President's Report [Abraham]**

- *e-Cassiopeia*: co-editor Magdalen Normandeau has contacted the President about the future of the publication. She would like to send the membership a survey asking what they think the newsletter should be. The Board generally agreed that this was a good idea and authorized the use of CASCA funds for such a survey. E-Cassiopeia is not meant to be replaced by the more recent “e-News” which summarizes recent changes to the CASCA website. Notably, e-Cass is good for providing the community updates on long-term projects. By ending e-Cass in favour of a news-ier website, CASCA would need to enlist a website manager to keep content timely, perhaps in an “on-demand” basis.
- *TMT*: The CASCA-ACURA TMT Advisory Committee (CATAC) has been assembled. The committee has been very active, communicating via Slack to themselves and via WebEx to the larger community. Abraham is currently writing ESO Director to find out the current terms and incentives to joining.
- *Coordination of grad program acceptance dates*: member Sara Ellison has written Abraham suggesting CASCA promote a common date for acceptances to Canadian grad schools, e.g., April 15 as in the US. After much debate, this idea was considered desirable but too difficult to implement for many reasons (e.g., professors acting independently, astro departments are combined with physics departments, later NSERC notification dates).

##### **5.2 Treasurer's Report [St-Louis]**

- *Update on Revenues vs. Expenses*: St-Louis has examined CASCA's revenues from dues, donations, and investments and expenses to see if we have been sufficiently protecting the various endowments' capital. The bottom line is

that we appear to be in good shape though we have to be careful with regards to depleting the WESTAR funds now that we are using them more aggressively. See attached Appendix below for full report.

### **5.3 Secretary's Report [Di Francesco]**

- *Elections*: For the upcoming AGM, there will be elections for two Directors. The Nominating Committee has approached several people with the hope that we will have four or five candidates willing to stand for election.
- *Richer Award*: The blanks for future strikes of the Richer Medal have been obtained directly from Harvey Richer during a visit to UBC yesterday and are now in Victoria.
- *CUPC*: The CUPC has contacted the Secretary for funds to support this years' conference at Carleton University in Ottawa. The Board agreed to continue to fund it (and the CUWIP conference) for \$1K a year.

### **5.4 Directors' Reports [Gallagher]**

- *AGM Mission Statement*: Prior to the meeting, Gallagher circulated a draft of a document for a Mission Statement and Best Practices for organizing CASCA AGMs. She requested the Board vote to adopt the document but the Board concluded that further iterations were necessary. Furthermore, Gallagher has been asked to send the document to the Edmonton AGM organizing committees for their feedback and possible implementation.

## **6. AOB [all]**

- *Financial Assistance to Board members*: The Board discussed the possibility of providing financial assistance to key Board members to ensure their attendance at the CASCA AGMs. The Board favoured the possibility, provided the funds are needed and available.
- *Next Meeting*: The next Board of Directors meeting will be held on May 29, 2017.

## **7. Adjournment [all]**

- **Motion to adjourn the 76<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CASCA Board of Directors (Courteau/Abraham): Carried.**

## **Appendix**

Note from Nicole St-Louis, Treasurer, regarding CASCA finances, prizes, and WESTAR endowment:

In the past four years, CASCA's general expenses have ranged from \$56K to \$68K per year. The revenues from dues varied from \$48K to \$68K. Therefore, roughly speaking, in recent years, the dues approximately cover the cost of running the society. We also received of the order of \$2K in donations to CASCA Trust by members and, in the past three years, our investments have been providing us with an extra ~\$40K per year, after

taking into account the necessary increase of the value of the investments to protect the buying power of the endowments against inflation.

If one considers the total value of the endowments for all CASCA's prizes and estimate the minimum our investments should be at to protect their value against inflation, I obtain ~\$580K at the end of FY2015. The total value of our investments at the time was ~\$770K. Therefore, we have easily covered for inflation and there is what we could call "an excess" of \$190K that could potentially be used. Most of this surplus is from the WESTAR fund, which CASCA has not used very much since its creation in 2001. Therefore, this money should be in large part be used for public outreach. Since the start of our current investments (in November 2008), the funds have grown some ~40%. Based on the value of the WESTAR portion of the original investments in 11/2008, I estimate that the excess associated with the WESTAR fund is \$146K.

Of the \$146K in excess we have already spent, \$65K in participation in funding the Discover the Universe initiative over the past (I think 7) years. We pledged another \$40K to "Discover the Universe" for FY2016 and FY2017. Therefore, some \$41K of WESTAR money can be used for other public outreach or Web endeavors such as the Westar lectures. Each year this extra money grows by at least 5% so the first year we will get ~\$2K from the investments. If we spend more than that the excess will gradually decrease until empty. We always have to protect the capital in perpetuity.

Finally, I verified if the return we were getting on our investments is sufficient to pay for the prizes and cover inflation and most are fine, requiring a return between 2-5%. The only uncertainty is for the Hogg and the Plaskett awards for which we pay travel costs to the AGM and therefore are more uncertain. We have to be particularly careful about the Plaskett because it is attributed *every* year as opposed to the Hogg that is attributed every other year.

So I would say that there is no problem in general with CASCA's cash flow at the moment but that we have to keep an eye on the WESTAR fund to assess how we are using the accumulated excess.