

Education and Public Outreach Committee Report

November 30, 2013

Submitted by Dennis Crabtree (Chair).

This report covers the period from May 2012 to May 2013.

Current Committee Members

Chair:	Vacant	(2013-16)
Vice-Chair:	Joanne Rosvick	(2005-16) Thompson Rivers University
Members:	Julie Bolduc-Duval	(2010-16)
	Jan Cami	(2008-14) UWO
	Eric Chisholm	(2010-16) NRC Herzberg
	Dennis Crabtree	(2005-2016) NRC Herzberg
	Yvan Dutil	(2008-14) T3E
	Louise Edwards	(2008-14) Mt Allison
	Mike Reid	(2012-15) Dunlap Institute
	Gordon Sarty	(2008-14) University of Saskatchewan
ex-officio	Leslie Sage	
Board Representative:	Marcin Sawicki	St. Mary's University

Membership

I will be stepping down as Chair of the EPO committee as of the Vancouver CASCA meeting but plan on remaining on the committee. Of the four other members whose terms are expiring, three wish to renew their terms. These changes are indicated in the membership list above. I have a candidate to be the new Chair and, if they accept the offer (and the CASCA Board agrees), I will work with the person to complete the committee.

CASCA Outreach Activity

The Committee's on-line EPO reporting form that allows CASCA members to record their outreach activities continues to be effective at capturing our communities outreach efforts. While effective, it still captures only a fraction of the total outreach activity

A change was made for 2012 that allows people to indicate that more than activity took place, e.g., day-time observing in conjunction with a school visit. The table below shows the numbers for 2012.

For 2012 events that included more than one activity will be counted once for each activity.

Activity	Total Audience Reached
Astronomy course for non-science majors	5500
Day-time observing	12795
Night-time observing	4720
Other	21189
Public Exhibition	18751
Public talk	24469
School visit (4-8)	10364
School visit (9-12)	9625
School visit (K-3)	774

If one removes the multiple counting of people at events that included more than one activity, then a total of 46,069 people were *reached* in 2012. This compares to the 13,757 people reached in 2011. The transit of Venus and increased solar activity are probably the most significant reason for this welcome increase.

Individual Reports

Joanne Rosvick

I was on sabbatical until January 2013, and therefore did not take part in any EPO activities during that time. In the first few months of 2013 I led, or was involved in, several observatory tours: in February I and another faculty member gave a tour of our campus observatory to close to 40

Brownies. My colleague manned the telescope while I showed the girls our meteorite collection and worked on a constellation mapping exercise with them. Also in February, I conducted observatory tours during the university's annual Science Night. Approximately 50 people visited the observatory that night. In May, I hosted two separate school groups: one group of 25 elementary students (during the day; we viewed sunspots and the meteorite collection), and another of 15 high school students (at night; it was very clear and the students spent the bulk of the time at the telescope). Another school group is scheduled for an observatory tour in June. In terms of other outreach activities, in February I was interviewed over the phone by the Kamloops Daily News newspaper regarding the meteor over Russia.

Ian Short

I took over teaching the first year Astronomy course for science majors at Saint Mary's University. One pedagogical innovation that seemed to engage the interest of many students was to ask the students to find pedagogical youtube videos on topics relevant to the course, to play those videos suggested by the students in class, and then have a class discussion of the concepts being illustrated by the video. Among the videos found and put forward by the students were excellent ones on the relative sizes of stars, and on the colour-magnitude diagram of the Omega Centauri star cluster. Those students whose video suggestions were being played that day were "on the edge of their seats" during the discussion, and their level of engagement was infectious.

I also served on the three-person committee that developed the EPO section of the SMU Astronomy & Physics five-year strategic plan. Ideas included identifying and promoting specific media contacts within the Department, pursuing SMU approval to install a large highly visible public display relevant to astronomy in a central area of campus, and pursuing opportunities to have the long-standing public tour program at the newly renovated Burke-Gaffney Observatory on campus promoted more heavily in Nova Scotia and Halifax tourist information.