

# **Report from the Diversity and Inclusivity Committee**

8 December 2016

## **CASCA 2016**

The DIC ran a very successful session at the CASCA 2016 meeting in Winnipeg in May. Attendance was very good and much of the session was interactive. Participants were asked to discuss in groups how people should respond to various scenarios in which they could find themselves related to bullying or intimidating behaviours. Following this session, the Committee submitted a summary article of the event to eCass, including the scenarios and the range of recommended responses compiled during the meeting.

The freshly drafted Code of Conduct was tested at the meeting when a CASCA member raised concerns about the title and abstract of one of the invited speakers. Indeed, the language in the abstract was a violation of the code, which had been drafted after the abstract deadline. The title was amended for the presentation.

We recommend that the CASCA Board ensure that LOCs in future know that adherence to the Code of Conduct should be a visible requirement for those registering to attend CASCA meetings.

CASCA could push farther on this by developing a Speaker policy. Diversity is not just a matter of gender, but also of hearing different viewpoints. An interesting read is the article "Ten Simple Rules to Achieve Conference Speaker Gender Balance".

(<http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/article?id=10.1371/journal.pcbi.1003903>)

## **Membership**

Following the CASCA meeting in May 2016, DIC member Pauline Barmby rotated off the CASCA Board. She has stayed on as a member of the DIC. Kristine Spekkens has now joined the DIC as a Board representative.

## **Climate Survey**

At the CASCA meeting, the committee noted that we plan a climate survey in the community. Several challenges (all manageable) have been identified in launching such a survey. The content of the survey must be carefully considered to ensure that the resulting data provide useful information the community can act upon. We had hoped to model after the US survey, which we have failed to obtain from our US counterparts, who tell us they cannot release such information until the survey is published. In addition, there are privacy issues to be considered; who will look at the data and interpret the findings? Pauline Barmby has sought advice from colleagues and had an interested response from a member of the sociology department at Western. She will follow up with him on the draft version of the climate survey (appended below). The Board is welcome to comment on the survey as well of course.

The general goal of the climate survey will be to produce robust data on the frequency of bullying and harassment experienced in the CASCA community and the forms these take. The ultimate goal is to identify areas of concern so that these can be addressed, resulting in an improved workplace experience for everyone.

## **Demographics Survey**

This will be modeled after the 2005 survey using the same questions (if possible) as Mike Reid & I used then. Bryan will host the survey online at DI. This will be executed after the climate survey, though since they target different people for input (departments versus individuals), we could in principle run them at the same time.

## **Expertise Form and Spreadsheet**

The committee has discussed the expertise form circulated by Sarah Gallagher. The form in which people enter their relevant expertise seems reasonable. One suggestion is to add the year of PhD as a measure of career stage. As well, location could be added, since not everyone knows where the universities are (for instance, amateur societies which may be seeking speakers). It isn't clear how people can update information in this format since the spreadsheet is to be manually populated and posted on the CASCA website. The concern is that the spreadsheet can rapidly become outdated.

One idea was to find a way to search the profiles of CASCA members. This used to be visible on the CASCA site (a members "list"). This seems to have disappeared, so it would not be a matter of updating profiles, but creating them in the first place. This is clearly a larger project and therefore seems to favour the form/spreadsheet as an immediate way to provide a resource of speakers and topics for community use.

Measures should be taken to ensure that emails cannot be harvested easily from the document. Will it be maintained regularly or updated on a periodic basis?

## **CANTAC Survey**

Kristine Spekkens, independent of the DIC, initiated an analysis of the long-term allocations of CANTAC to probe whether there was evidence of gender bias. This was done in concert with NRC, since Dennis Crabtree has the data on genders of PIs and TAC members and the outcomes of their assessments. NRC contracted a social scientist at Queen's University to look at the CANTAC review process and data (all names removed) provided by Dennis. Data set includes average scores for proposals for CFHT and Gemini between semesters 2012a and 2016b (~800 proposals total). The analysis is complete but NRC will have to give permission to publish the results. Kristine would like to be able to present the results of this analysis at the next CASCA meeting.

## **Sexualized language in Science**

Kristine brought this issue to the committee when she was confronted with a strong example of a (deliberately chosen) sexualized acronym for software at a meeting in November. The DIC discussed how to manage this issue. It is clear that the presentation she saw at a conference would have been in violation of our Code of Conduct. So, as far as CASCA goes, we have a policy in place that regulates this at our meetings. Pauline has written a short article about the perils of racy (even if clever) acronyms in astronomy which she will send to eCass.

## **New Name for Committee**

In light of the sexualized language discussion and to better capture the preferred language of the issue the committee is meant to address, the committee would like to change our own name from the Diversity & Inclusivity Committee to the Equity & Inclusivity Committee, to avoid any confusion about our acronym as well. If the Board thinks this is acceptable, we'll go by EIC from now on.

(Climate Survey Draft appended below)

## Draft Climate Survey

Define the goals:

Ask directed questions to assess the status of equity and access issues in our community. These require broad questions on gender, disability, race etc.. The ultimate goal is to address any issues the survey raises in a manner that improves the workplace environment for everyone.

We will therefore administer a survey on the climate within the Canadian astronomy community.

We will invite all members of CASCA at all levels.

We will need some information to be able to interpret the results.

### Basic information to request of each respondent

\* need to decide which categories can have a “prefer not to answer” option

Birthyear

PhD year

Level of respondent: faculty, research staff, emeritus faculty, postdocs, graduate students, undergraduates? (should we include former members of CASCA? going back how far?)

Gender: multiple potential responses

(instead of asking for this we could opt for toggles and let the respondents select all that apply, i.e., male, female, transgendered, cisgendered, visible disability, visible minority, indigenous etc. with options of “other” if people want to add any other distinguishing characteristic they may think is relevant)

Region of the country in which you currently work/study (or in which you worked/studied in the past 5 years

could do Province, or to keep more general:

BC, Prairies, ON, QC, Atlantic Canada since some provinces lead to easily identifying the university/department — are we worried about this?

PLUS

Other country (specify) should be an option. Could ask for “Current” and “other” or “former”

Q. Should we confine the questions to experiences in their current and previous positions within the last 5 years? or last 5 PLUS 5-10 years previous?

(perhaps better to just add a text box for “anything else you want to say” at the end of the survey)

### Survey Content

The survey will begin with a preamble about the goals of the survey, the “about you” section of basic information, and then launch into queries. To save space, not all the tables are reproduced here. Each of the following questions would have its own table or suite of potential answers.

We will define terms here as well.

**INCLUDE HERE AN EXPLICIT DEFINITION OF HARASSMENT**

How often do you hear the following language from your PEERS?

How often do you hear the following language from your SUPERVISOR?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Negative comments about religion or lack thereof				
Negative remarks about mental ability/disability				
Negative remarks about physical ability/disability				
Transphobic remarks				
Homophobic remarks				
Comments about not acting “feminine enough” or “too feminine”				
Sexist remarks				
Racist remarks				

In your current position, how often have you been VERBALLY harassed because of the following characteristics?

In your current position, how often have you been PHYSICALLY harassed because of the following characteristics?

In your current position, how often have felt discomforted because of comments/jokes/postings/literature of the following nature?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
religion or lack thereof				
gender				
gender identity				
sexual orientation				
mental disability status				
physical disability status				
race or ethnicity				

Where have you experienced harassment (in any form)?

- in a classroom
- in a shared office space
- in a supervisor's/instructor's office
- at a conference
- at a telescope/observatory

What was the general nature of the most serious incident(s) of this unwanted attention/harassment/discomfort?

- uncomfortable invasion of my "personal space" (standing too close)
- uncomfortable staring or comments on physical appearance
- sexual/gendered communications that made me uncomfortable
- touching of my body that was unwelcome
- unwelcome requests for "dates" or other personal interactions
- harassment of some sort (threats, offers of exchange, abuse of power)
- other?

Followup: did you report these occurrences? (y/n)

Were you satisfied with the outcome of reporting the incident(s)? (y/n)

(Option to add more detail.)

Q. If they answer “often” do we want to dig deeper?

In the most serious incident above, the person responsible was:

- non-university/organization/institution affiliated or surrounding community member
  - on campus (e.g., visiting speaker)
  - off campus (e.g., at a conference, such as CASCA)
- non-academic staff (secretaries, support staff, etc.)
- university/organization/institution administration
- supervisors outside of the local department/organization/institution
- supervisors within the local department/organization/institution
- peers outside of the local department/organization/institution
- peers within the local department/organization/institution

In your current position, do you feel or have ever felt unsafe because of any of the following personal characteristics (either at your workplace or in other work-related venues)?

- race or ethnicity
- physical disability status
- mental disability status
- sexual orientation
- gender identity
- gender
- religion or lack thereof

In your current position, how many classes/meetings/conferences/field work opportunities etc. have you skipped per month because of feeling unsafe?

(answers will be compiled by academic level of respondent)

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements using the following scale:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

“I feel that the astronomical community climate is healthy with respect to equity within my own workplace environment.”

“I feel that the astronomical community climate is healthy with respect to equity within the environment of CASCA meetings.”

“I feel that the climate is healthy with respect to gender/gendered issues within my workplace.”

“I feel that the climate is healthy with respect to gender/gendered issues within CASCA.”

“I understand how to report incidents of equity infringement/sexual harassment/harassment/violence at my place of work.”

“I understand how to report incidents of equity infringement/sexual harassment/harassment/violence at CASCA meetings or CASCA sanctioned events.”

“Do you want to follow up this survey with a report of any incidents you have experienced?”

- options if they say “yes”

What is the ONE action you would like leadership at your institution to take on the issue of equity in your workplace?

Please include here any additional comments you wish to make on this subject. They can include incidents that go beyond the 5 year window of this survey.