

# CASCA Education and Public Outreach Committee Report

June 2015 -- May, 2016

Submitted by Mike Reid (Chair)

## Important Considerations for CASCA Board

1. Ownership of cascaeducation.ca has lapsed and the site is now offline. The EPO Committee seeks direction from the CASCA Board as to whether maintaining a public outreach and education website is a priority for CASCA and, if so, what resources are available to support this activity.
2. The EPO committee recommends that the CASCA Board discuss long-term support for Discover the Universe.
3. The EPO committee recommends that the CASCA Board direct the LOC for each CASCA AGM to include a teacher's workshop within the AGM. The EPO Committee and Discover the Universe are available to support this activity.

## Current Committee Members

The current membership of the CASCA EPO Committee consists of:

- Chair: Michael Reid (2014-2017), University of Toronto/Dunlap Institute
- Vice-chair: Joanne Rosvick (2005-16) Thompson Rivers University
- Julie Bolduc-Duval (2010-16) Discover the Universe
- Jan Cami (2008-17) Western University
- Eric Chisholm (2010-16) National Research Council
- Robert Cockcroft (2014-2017) McMaster University
- Sara Ellison (2014-2017) University of Victoria
- Phil Langill (2014-2017) Rothney Astrophysical Observatory/UCalgary
- Ian Short (2009-16) Saint Mary's University

## Major Activities, 2015-2016

### Discover the Universe Partners with the Dunlap Institute

For many years, Discover the Universe has operated as a partnership among CASCA, the RASC, and the FAAQ. It has been funded by both CASCA and the NSERC PromoScience program. In 2015, we proposed for increased funding to expand DU's offerings and make it a full-time job for program director Julie Bolduc-Duval. Unfortunately, although PromoScience gave our proposal high grades, they declined to fund it. Instead, the Dunlap Institute has adopted the program and become its major backer. Dunlap is supporting Julie to work on DU full time, with the support of Dunlap scientific and outreach staff.

DU is proving increasingly successful. Over the next year, it will be releasing original DU/Dunlap-branded curriculum modules tailored to the pan-Canadian astronomy curriculum. There is international interest in the program as a model for teacher outreach, with talks given about the program this year at the IAU Communicating Astronomy with the Public conference in Colombia and at a science communication conference in Norway. Julie has been invited to spend a week training French-speaking teachers in British Columbia.

In the past year, DU continued offering its regular 3-week workshops for teachers and informal educators as well as numerous stand-alone webinars on different topics. Numbers of participants increased by 40% over 2014. Additionally, DU received funding from the IAU's Office of Astronomy for Development to offer an international workshop in French which ran in November 2015. This workshop reached 176 participants in 11 countries. Finally, with money received from the Quebec government, an activity kit with a guide and online videos was created for afterschool programs. This kit is only available in French for now but the goal is to translate it in the future.

We are seeking long-term sustainable funding for DU from sources beyond NSERC. Our very strong hope is that DU will remain a national partnership. Dunlap is currently the major sponsor, but it would be inimical to the goals of DU for it to become a Dunlap-only initiative. The EPO Committee recommends that CASCA make a long-term commitment to supporting DU, in partnership with other organizations.

## Lapse of Ownership of [cascaeducation.ca](http://cascaeducation.ca)

In our last report, the CASCA EPO committee discussed the problems with [cascaeducation.ca](http://cascaeducation.ca) being seriously out of date because there were no resources allocated to ongoing maintenance and content creation. There was a proposal from Jennifer West to update the site and, in our last report, we recommended that the Board contact Jennifer to launch her proposed new version of the site, and to support ongoing maintenance. We did not hear back from the Board about this recommendation. Unfortunately, the site has now been taken over by a domain squatter.

## Tracking EPO Activities Nationally

In our last report, we described the need for a national outreach reporting tool. This initiative was taken up by Phil Langill and supported by technical staff at the University of Calgary. The EPO committee has evaluated alpha versions of the tool and a public beta version will soon be available. The plan is to develop the tool further in response to public feedback.

## Revitalization of the Westar Lectureship

Following a request from the CASCA Board, the EPO committee struck a sub-committee to work on revitalizing the Westar Lectureship. Julie Bolduc-Duval is leading this committee. The committee is working on a process for nominating Westar Lecturers and connecting them with suitable communities and venues within those communities. The goal is to offer the first Westar Lecture in the fall of 2016.

## Teacher workshop at CASCA meetings

A half-day workshop for local teachers was organized at the CASCA meeting in Hamilton (2015) and another one is planned in Winnipeg for the 2016 meeting. We recommend that a workshop for local teachers be automatically planned at each CASCA meeting. Julie Bolduc-Duval is leading the workshop with help from the LOC, other CASCA members and CFHT's outreach program manager.