

Joint Committee on Space Astronomy (JCSA) Meeting Report

27-Jan-2017

Location: telecom

JCSA members in attendance:

Sara Ellison
Sarah Gallagher
Denis Laurin (co-chair)
Brenda Matthews
Chris O'Dea
Jason Rowe
Marcin Sawicki (co-chair)

ex-officio:

none

CSA Observers:

Jean Dupuis
Christian Lange

Guests:

none

Observers:

none

Regrets:

none

1. Signature technologies document reminder

Christian Lange reminds JCSA that a draft Signature Technologies document was circulated by the CSA and requests feedback. Document is on the secure JCSA server.

[Action: JCSA members to read and send feedback to Denis Laurin no later than 15 February 2017; only high-level comments needed. \(Please keep in mind that this document is a working draft to advance CSA dialogue on technology prioritisation and is by no means a finished product. This draft document has not been approved by the CSA and must not be distributed outside the CSA Space Exploration Consultation Committees.\)](#)

2. JWST science support

Jean Dupuis provided an update on JWST science support funding. The details at the CSA are proving complicated. Several JCSA members emphasized the urgency of getting this funding approved, noting, as before the timelines. In particular, it is now urgent to get an announcement that science support funding will be available to the community: the JWST Early Release Science (ERS) projects letters of intent are due 3 March 2017. Availability of funding to process

these data will be a key factor in JWST ERS program selection and so to encourage Canadians to lead ERS proposals CSA must announce that such funding will be available in a timely manner. Other deadlines loom on the horizon as well and have been emphasized in other documents (e.g., December 2016 JCSA meeting report); all these deadlines make it vital that CSA make an announcement on JWST science support funding as soon as possible and implement the funding allocation model by mid-summer 2017.

JCSA re-states here its recommendation on JWST science support funding from its December 2016 meeting:

Recommendation 1: CSA should announce to the community the annual funding envelope by end of February 2017. Following this, the detailed mechanism for allocating funds for JWST science support should be announced significantly in advance of the JWST ERS proposal deadline of 2017 August 18.

A document outlining fund allocation models has been prepared by a JCSA-appointed committee led by Sarah Gallagher and is attached to this report as an Appendix.

3. CASTOR

Denis Laurin provided an update on the next step for CASTOR. It is expected that a ~one-year science and technology maturation study will be carried out starting in FY2017. This study is expected to involve both science and engineering teams. It is expected that an RFP will be released early in FY2017.

4. Science support for Euclid and other missions

JCSA received a request for science support funding for Canadian astronomers involved in the Euclid mission. JCSA's view is that CSA science support funding should be available, on a competitive basis, for all missions that are of strong interest to Canadian astronomy but which do not involve a CSA hardware contribution. Precedent for such CSA science support funding exists in Planetary Science.

Recommendation 2: CSA establish a competitive program to support Canadian science participation in international space missions of high interest to the Canadian astronomy community but in which CSA is unable to have a hardware contribution.

5. BRITE

Following a funding gap in recent days which resulted in the loss of 10 days' worth of data, CSA BRITE operations funding has now been restored for one year. While JCSA is delighted to hear that Canadian BRITE operations have resumed, it notes that the loss of 10 days of data in a time-series experiment (BRITE was observing an edge-on disk with a probable planet) is a big loss. In the future steps must be taken by all parties to ensure uninterrupted operations.

Recommendation 3: JCSA will review the status of its past recommendations at each meeting, including its telecon meetings. Additionally, JCSA will request short status updates, highlighting threats and problems in particular, from all ongoing mission PIs one week before each JCSA meeting.

6. Next Meeting

Next JCSA meeting will be held by telecon in early April.