

Canadian Astronomical Society
Société Canadienne d'Astronomie
81st meeting of the Board of Directors
May 22, 2018 9h00 – 18h00 PDT
West Coast Room, Victoria Conference Centre, Victoria, BC

Minutes

<i>Present:</i>	Roberto Abraham	President
	Rob Thacker	Vice-President (by audio)
	Nicole St-Louis	Treasurer
	James Di Francesco	Secretary
	René Doyon	Director
	Erik Rosolowsky	Director
	Kristine Spekkens	Director
	Kimberley Venn	Director
	Christine Wilson	Past President

1. **Adoption of agenda [Di Francesco]**
 - **Motion to adopt the agenda (Rosolowsky/Abraham): Carried**

2. **Adoption of the minutes of the Board videocon of March 15, 2018 [Di Francesco]**
 - **Motion to adopt the minutes (Abraham/St-Louis): Carried**

3. **Business Conducted Electronically [all]**
 - *Executive Award:* The Board named Greg Fahlman of NRC as this year's recipient of the CASCA Executive Award.
 - *Awards:* The Board accepted the recommendations of the Awards Committee for the Dunlap Award (Kipp Cannon), Qilak Award (Rob Thacker), and the Plaskett Medal (Gwendolyn Eadie).

4. **Action Items List Review [Di Francesco]**
 - *Core Values and updated Ethics Statements:* Thacker and Abraham to continue to work with Equity and Inclusivity Committee (EIC) to develop new Core Values Statement and updated Ethics Statements.
 - *Transfer of Historical Materials:* St-Louis reports the completion of the transfer of the CASCA Treasurer materials to CASCA Archivist Randall Rosenfeld at the RASC office in Toronto.

5. New business

5.1 President's report [Abraham]

- *CITA Council Elections*: Julie Hlavacek-Lorrondo (four-year term) and Ralph Pudritz (two-year term) were selected as the next members of CITA Council.
- *Discover The Universe (DU) Update*: CASCA has supported DU for many years and the program appears to be very effective. Such support was never intended to be ongoing, however. For example, the WESTAR funds could be used to “kickstart” other educational initiatives. The Board resolved to reduce the annual contribution to DU from \$20K to \$10K annually in the short term and begin the process to allow others to propose for interim funding every few years.
- *Coalition Activity Update*: The Coalition has struggled so far to meet with Dr. Mona Nemer, the new Chief Science Advisor to the Government of Canada (GoC), as her office appears to be not yet fully constituted. Coalition meetings with GoC members in November about TMT and SKA were promising, however. Support for space astronomy continues to be lacking though, with no funds identified in the recent federal budget. In particular, CSA has pulled out of WFIRST due to lack of funds. After independent coordination with two Nobel laureates, among others, however, there will be a meeting in Ottawa / St. Hubert on June 12 between Thacker + other Coalition partners, and various ISED, NRC, and CSA people to try and revive Canadian WFIRST participation on a small scale, and discuss other LRP issues.

5.2 Secretary's report [Di Francesco]

- *Election Update*: An election for a new Vice-President of CASCA is currently ongoing, with Prof. Michael Balogh (Waterloo) and Prof. Sara Ellison (UVic) kindly consenting to stand for election. The VP election is being conducted electronically via BigPulse.com. The election results will be announced at the CASCA business meeting on May 25.
- *Membership Update*: CASCA membership numbers are up by 7% over last year with a total number of 539 members in good standing or being one year in arrears on dues. CASCA now has more members than it has had in the last six years. Regrettably, 26 members will be expelled at the business meeting later this week for non-payment of dues. In addition, 17 members opted to resign. There are 76 new members to the Society, the majority of which (51) are students. Four of the new members are Corporate Members. For further details, please see the Secretary's Report.
- *Departed members*: The Society marks the passing of two of its Charter Members, Dr. Thomas Clarke and Prof. Robert Garrison.
- **Motion to accept the Secretary's Report: (St-Louis/Abraham): Carried**

5.3 Treasurer's report [St-Louis]

- *Overview*: There is currently a rather high balance in bank account of \$82K, but this amount includes \$15K donated for Richer Award that needs to be moved to our investment account. In addition, we have earmarked \$20K for

Discover the Universe. Hence, our balance is actually about \$45K, which is close to last year's projection of \$48K. This year, about \$7K more dues were paid than expected. In addition, donations to CASCA Trust were \$2K, up by ~40% from last year and more in line with previous fiscal years. Meanwhile, investment growth has been relatively tepid, ~5.7% as opposed to ~10% last year, but within our target growth range of 5-7%. Our bank balance at end of the current FY should be ~\$44K.

- *Investments*: Investment fees from Scotia MacLeod seem high this year, 1.1%, but there has been a systematic increase in fees over the past eight years. St-Louis to talk to our contact Scott Miller for insights. Furthermore, we need to account for costs that are incurred when funds are withdrawn from our investments in a manner that is fair. St-Louis thanks Christine Wilson for her help establishing a framework for safeguarding the principal of our investments in the face of market fluctuations.
- *Conference support*: This past year, CASCA has been approached to provide financial support for conferences, something that falls within our mandate. At present, we support the Canadian Undergraduate Physics Conference and the Canadian Undergraduate Women in Physics Conference at about the \$1K level each. We did not consent to support further conferences in the absence of a framework where such requests could be considered fairly. Also, we'd need to consider what conditions we would impose on the use of such funds. The Board should consider these questions further if they plan to open up this possibility to the membership, perhaps setting aside \$5K per year for such activity. Spekkens to draft a proposal for how such a process may work.
- *Tracking Awards with Inflation*: CASCA Awards have been fixed since their inception and thus have been losing ground to inflation annually. The Board considered increasing the awards with inflation every four years (to match the award cycles) should market conditions warrant.
- **Motion to increase awards by amounts roughly aligned with inflation under normal circumstances (Abraham/Spekkens): Carried**
- **Motion to accept Treasurer's Report (Rosolowsky/Doyon): Carried**

6. Report of committees [Thacker]

6.1 Awards

- The Committee did not file a report and a new Chair will be sought for fall 2018.

6.2 CASCA-ACURA TMT Advisory Committee (CATAC)

- Chair Michael Balogh provided a very comprehensive report. Bob Abraham has accepted its recommendation for committee membership.
- Legal challenges to TMT construction are in the Hawaiian courts and expected to be resolved by November. At any rate, TIO has deferred its site selection decision until the end of 2018.
- NSF has indicated support of both TMT and GMT at the 25% level if they rank highest in the upcoming U.S. decadal survey.

- The first-light instrument WFOS will have its design revisited for a third time to reduce costs but maintain competitiveness.

6.3 Computation and Data

- Committee member JJ Kavelaars has become the Group Leader at CADC but he will remain on this committee. Two new members need to be added as well.
- The CFI proposal for astronomy computing infrastructure was unsuccessful. Some development will be going forward in CADC anyway.
- Compute Canada (CC) continues to have issues between its central management and regional centres. For example, host universities are now tasked to pay for CC staff themselves. ISED is aware of the problems and is trying to fix it itself. Thacker to take on Chair James Wadsley's suggestion that CASCA make clear statements to CC about our needs and how it can help meet them. Thacker also to raise the issue non-confrontationally with ISED itself during June 12 meetings in Ottawa. Rosolowsky is considering drafting a white paper on this issue.

6.4 Equity and Inclusivity (EIC)

- Review of EIC climate survey is coming. NDAs have been signed by Spekkens and EIC Chair Brenda Matthews. A poster presenting preliminary results will be presented at the Victoria annual meeting. The CASCA Guide to Hosting an AGM document has been updated to allow EIC presentations to be made without using up chances of science presentations.
- Climate survey suggest strong support for a Canadian program akin to Pleiades or Athena to recognize progress in equity in department hiring in Canada, with 55% of respondents in favour of such a program.
- The EIC is considering putting out an Exploder message to the membership to increase the number of Canadian "Astronomy Allies," a program begun in the US to counter harassment at science meetings. Vetting process can be quite lengthy, taking up to a year before acceptance. Another possibility is for Canadians to create their own program.
- Demographics survey has proven impossible to conduct given privacy guidelines implemented by universities about disseminating key information about staff. It is possible that CASCA itself could acquire such information via the dues renewal process beginning this fall. ACURA may then partner with us and acquire other demographic data themselves, and the datasets combined.

6.5 Education and Public Outreach (EPO)

- This committee has been busy with the Canada WESTAR Lectureship (CWL), e.g., getting out news about the program and soliciting requests for Lectures from communities. There are three planned CWLs upcoming, one in June, another in late summer, and a third in early 2019
- The Committee also helped to plan EPO Sessions for the Victoria annual meeting.

6.6 Graduate Students (GSC)

- New GSC Chair Doug Rennehan (UVic) has been quite proactive in trying to reconstitute this committee in the coming year. He has written a white paper to

- update the Terms of Reference for this Committee. To help with continuity, the plan is for members who step down to identify a replacement at their institution.
- GSC has worked on Graduate Student Workshop program for Victoria meeting.
 - GSC website needs work. Thacker to work with them to update it, possibly with Jennifer West.
 - Unclear if another GSC survey comparing living costs across Canada is warranted at this time.

6.7 Ground-based Astronomy Committee (GAC)

- *SKA*: Evolution of the treaty defining the SKAO continues. Canada, Germany and New Zealand interested in joining as “Associates” but a precise negotiation needs to be carried out.
- *MSE*: A Conceptual Design Review was completed in January 2018, and the project has moved into the Preliminary Design phase that needs money. This step has challenges, however, since NRC can’t sign on. Though ACURA could, it’s not clear it has the funds. A CFI proposal may be needed.
- *CCAT-prime*: The Canadian CCAT team is still negotiating on what it’s going to provide for this project. It is also looking toward the next CFI round though an opportunity for funding proposals has not yet been announced.
- *NGVLA*: Some exciting Canadian contributions to this project are possible. For example, NRC is working with NRAO on stuff like correlators and antennas.
- *ALMA*: Depending on the array in question, the progress in observing Cycle 5 projects has been moderately above or below expectations. A correlator upgrade project has been approved. Former DRAO Director Sean Dougherty became the ALMA Director in February 2018.
- *JCMT*: Canadian participation continuing but it’s not clear what will happen when current CFI funding runs out after 2020. University support for JCMT is now down to only McMaster and Waterloo, and Waterloo won’t renew its assistance after two years. Wilson to look into possible new avenues of NSERC support this summer.
- *Gemini*: Octocam and GHOST instrument projects are making progress. Also, a study for a “GPI for the north” is ongoing.
- *CFHT*: SPIRou had some on-sky tests recently, including first light. The CFHT Users’ Meeting is 17-18 June in Strasbourg, France.
- *CHIME*: The project is currently still in its commissioning phase, and maybe is a little behind schedule as a whole. Some issues with Compute Canada have arisen and those involved in the cosmology side of CHIME have had difficulty getting data off the site. The Pulsar sniffer side is working and has detected pulsars.

6.8 Heritage

- Work on the History of Canadian Radio Astronomy book is progressing. Jasper Wall of UBC has approached Springer for publishing.
- The CASCA Archive is now in place in Toronto, and managed by Randall Rosenfeld.
- There are no funds available to continue digitizing the DAO plate archive.

6.9 Joint Committee for Space Astronomy (JCSA)

- The JCSA is meeting in parallel with the present Board meeting and will provide an update in due course. In general, funding for space astronomy in Canada is dire.

6.10 Long Range Plan Implementation (LRPIC)

- LRPIC Chair John Hutchings is concerned about the next Long Range Plan, nominally slated for 2020. Given the timing, major asks to Government for TMT, SKA, and MSE funds may occur simultaneously and could result in trading one project after another.
- A science maturation study for CASTOR is finally going ahead.
- John Hutchings is actively considering an OIR / Space Astronomy workshop like the successful September 2017 Radio Astronomy meeting in Montreal. It is unclear who will organize this meeting, however.
- The Board may consider reconstituting the LRPIC in a few years, i.e., after the next LRP.

7. Reports of the AGMs [Thacker, Di Francesco]

a) 2018 Victoria [Di Francesco]

- Organization is largely complete. The expected attendance is high, over 300 participants. Costs for the meeting may actually go slightly into the black.

b) 2019 McGill [Thacker]

- Organization of next year's meeting is just getting into gear, and the week of 17 June seems to be the goal. A representative from McGill will invite everyone to attend next year at the end of the business meeting. It has not yet been decided who the LOC Chair will be.

c) 2020 York [Thacker]

- The York group is surprisingly enthusiastic about hosting the CASCA meeting in 2020. The faculty there are very keen to show off "York2020."

8. Nominations to the Nominating Committee

- The Board discussed membership for the Nominating Committee in the coming year. Bob Abraham, in his role as Past President, will chair it. Potential candidates will be approached during the meeting.

9. Board Student Awards (orals and posters)

- The Board divided the work in judging student contributions at the upcoming annual meeting. Nicole St-Louis, Christine Wilson, and James Di Francesco volunteered to judge student talks, and René Doyon, Erik Rosolowsky, and Kristine Spekknes volunteered to judge student posters.
- Notably, this year's student awards will be supplemented by a kind donation of fund by *Nature*.

10. Other business

10.1 SKA reporting to Board (Abraham)

- There is some concern about the scant reporting about SKA, e.g., from the Ground-based Astronomy Committee reports. The Board discussed the possibility of having a committee for SKA similar to that struck for TMT (CATAC). ACURA already has constituted such a committee, the ACURA Advisory Council for the SKA, so perhaps its reports could be also made available to the Board. Abraham to ask AACS Chair Bryan Gaensler about sharing this report with the Board or providing us with our own report.

10.2 OMM (Doyon)

- OMM funding problems are coming to the surface again – at present, operating funds will run out in March 2019. No continuous mechanism for funding OMM has been yet identified and the observatory has been running on short-term grants for a while. OMM consists of telescope and instrument labs. Also, it provides the umbrella for JWST work that has included OMM staff to get things done. The OMM community is mobilizing to get more funds, and there's been lots of political action. For example, the local MP has been talking to Minister of Science Kirsty Duncan. In addition, Quebec has been approached for \$1.5M for five years for the telescope, and \$2.5M from federal government for the lab portion. To help move this action along, letters of support are needed. Nobel laureate and senior JWST project scientist John Mather has agreed to provide such a letter, and international partners (Geneva, Toulouse, Grenoble, etc.) have been also approached. NRC has been noncommittal. A letter of support from CASCA would be greatly appreciated. If no sign of a funding plan is available by 01 September, the OMM Board has resolved to announce OMM's closure. With unanimous Board support, Thacker agreed to sign a letter of support for OMM.

11. Adjournment

- **Motion to adjourn the 81st meeting of the CASCA Board of Directors (Abraham / Spekkens): Carried.**

Canadian National Committee of the IAU Minutes

1. Adoption of the agenda

- **Motion to adopt the agenda (Rosolowsky / Doyon): Carried**

2. Adoption of the minutes of the board telecon of January 18, 2018 meeting

- **Motion to adopt the minutes (Rosolowsky / Abraham): Carried**

3. Business arising

- *Annual Performance Review (APR) feedback:* NRC returned its feedback for our APR questionnaire this year and we scored extremely well, 38/40, and were noted as the top submission. NRC has promptly paid Canada's IAU dues for 2018.
- *CASCA Representative at IAU GA:* NRC has funds available to help defray costs for a CASCA Board member to attend the upcoming 2018 General Assembly in Vienna, Austria and serve as an additional National Representative. Spekkens may be able to attend, and will coordinate with Greg Fahlman.
- *New IAU memberships drive for 2018:* The campaign to recruit new IAU members concluded in April with about 20 Canadian applications to become new Ordinary Members and about 12 Canadian applications to become new Junior Members. The applications have been endorsed by the Secretary and will be voted into the Society at the General Assembly this August.

4. Other business

- **2024 Montreal IAU GA bid:** Montreal will be visited by Debra Elmegreen on May 31st and June 1st as a representative of the IAU Executive Committee to look at its facilities. The Palais de Congress made a good bid, and provided resources, including reduced rates for students and attendees from emerging countries. The Montreal Jazz Festival will occur during the same time as the GA, but amazingly there will be no issue with hotel availability. Montreal is competing with Mexico, Chile and South Africa for the 2024 GA. No other support is needed from the IAU-CNC at this time.

5. Adjournment

- **Motion to adjourn the IAU-CNC meeting (Di Francesco / Rosolowsky) : Carried.**