

CASCA Education and Public Outreach Committee Report

June – Dec. 2018

Submitted by Phil Langill, Chair

1. Committee Members

The current committee members are;

- Julie Bolduc-Duval (2010-18), Discover the Universe / À la découverte de l'Univers
- Kelly Lepo (2017-20), McGill University
- Mike Reid (2014-18), University of Toronto
- Pierre Chastenay (2017-20), Université du Québec à Montréal / 2017 Qilak Award Recipient
- Robert Cockcroft (2014-18), University of Western Ontario
- Paul Delaney (2016-19), York University
- Sharon Morsink (2016-19), University of Alberta
- Lorne Nelson (2016-19), Bishop's University
- Magdalen Normandeau (2016-19), University of New Brunswick / Co-Editor of Cassiopeia

The EPO Committee's ex officio and Board Representative are Leslie Sage and Erik Rosolowsky, University of Alberta, respectively.

The CASCA Westar Lecture subcommittee is headed by Julie, with members Robert, Paul, Lorne, and myself (at arm's length). Kelly is our Social Media lead.

2.1. CWL History to date, and annual budget clarification request

The sub-committee recently had their meeting to assess the latest round of applications. Very impressive actually (CASCA members are doing a great job disseminating the CWL invite across the country). There were eight applications, some from the very edges of Canada.

There are 2 CWL's on the go currently (one in QC and one in MB). The QC one completes the 3rd CWL in 2018, and the MB one is already slated for March 2019. We'd like to do 2 more in 2019 for sure, giving a total of 3, equalling the number in 2018. However, if funds are available the sub-committee would really like to add an additional in 2019, because the applications are so good. The decision to add an extra CWL in 2019 depends on funds available.

With some elaboration, the anticipated the costs of the QC and MB CWL's to be \$3k and \$4k respectively (with ~20% error bars). For comparison, the proof-of-concept CWL in 2016 to Whitehorse cost \$3.2k, and the two we've done so far in 2018 cost \$1.4k total. One of the CWLs selected for 2019 is

to REMOTE Canada (Igloolik - google that!), and the cost of just the flights from Montreal alone are \$~3k. So before the sub-committee moves forward to invite two, or possibly three, communities and confirm their acceptance, they need to know more precisely the CWL funding situation.

Note that the “CWL machine” has been running for some time now and with each iteration the machine runs smoother. The initial concerns of the sub-committee about things like web links, web page content, and communication issues connecting players, are not as big now. The natural upward progression is to be able to fine tune arrangements between CWL lecturers and communities – and that means knowing in better detail what the budget picture is from year to year.

Case in point is the following; there are two remote locations only ~50 km apart who have submitted excellent applications. If the sub-committee organizes a CWL at one, would it not make sense to try to organize a CWL at the other subsequently, if the same lecturer agrees to visit both places? Logistically very prudent. The CWL budget can handle one (it is assumed), but would doing the second exceed budget limits? If the sub-committee were better informed about funds available, they could make these types of decisions as they arise.

So these are two reasons why the CWL sub-committee needs to know in better detail the annual and long-term CWL Budget; (a) numbers of CWL’s to organize annually, and (b) organizing each CWL in greater detail.

2.2. The CASCA-Discover the Universe Partnership and CWL clarification request

Another big question that came up at the last CWL sub-committee meeting surrounds the teacher-training workshop and student interaction components of a CWL visit. As the sub-committee sees it, an ideal CWL visit would incorporate both of these (most probably combined into one school visit).

Some Westar lecturers are happy and comfortable to take on these components, but some are not (and it's not a requirement for someone to get accepted to the list of Westar lecturers). So if the lecturer does not want to do the school component, is this where Discover The Universe (DU) should step in?

DU is built to do exactly this, and could potentially tag-team with every CWL planned. But of course there would be manpower and budget implications for DU. And it is not clear to the CWL sub-committee the level of commitment CASCA expects of DU for maximizing the effectiveness of the CWL visits with these components.

And is it the other way around? Above I suggest that DU step in when the lecturer declines doing the school interaction component. But is it actually the case that DU is the default school component deliverer, and the lecturer takes this on only if they are so inclined?

So the CWL sub-committee really needs the Boards direction here. To the budgetary points (a) and (b) above, there is point (c) to add: does DU have its own budget from which it can decide for itself how much CWL partnering to take on, or is it expected that DU deliver the teacher training workshop and student interaction with every CWL? And if the latter, the sub-committee needs to know with even greater detail the CWL budgetary picture.

3. EPO townhall @ 2019 AGM McGill University

It was brought up by members Mike Reid and Julie Bolduc-Duval that it would be a useful exercise to engage the general CASCA membership in a discussion about EPO in Canada, perhaps in a townhall-style meeting or plenary session at the AGM in June 2019. The goals would be many, from raising general awareness to drafting a white paper that could be incorporated into CASCA's Long Range Plan.

McGill's LOC members in charge of EPO sessions, Nicolas Cowan and Daryl Haggard, have been contacted, and they are bringing this idea to their LOC. Hopefully a decision will be made within the first 4-6 weeks of 2019, as a great deal of planning will be required should this go ahead. I will be attending the AGM and so will champion this initiative. I will use the 'clicker' technology I employ in my teaching to facilitate anonymous interaction with participants, and get real-time candid data and opinions from attendees.

4. Utilizing Social Media

Several email exchanges were made between the EPO Committee, spearheaded by Kelly Lepo, and the Board, specifically President Rob Thacker, on the topic of the role of Social Media for CASCA. After some considered discussion with Board members Rob summarized some key ideas in an email. I would like to include these in this report, as they touch on many important and general points. So via cut 'n paste:

- Thoughts about the role social plays for CASCA:

- 1) We are the only professional astro society in Canada so we aren't that focused on recruitment other than to existing students/professional astros.
- 2) The private nature of our primary information distribution system (the exploder) means that we don't actually need to back that up with social.
- 3) We are an affiliation of competing institutions, so social should promote the whole in an equitable way.

- What do we need to achieve?

- 1) Promote successes of Canadian professional astronomers & awareness of the success of Canadian astronomy (and by definition make agencies aware of their role in this success).
- 2) Promote the moral and ethical values of the Society.
- 3) Build bridges to other science organizations in Canada.
- 4) Preserve the reputation of the Society.

- So coming back to the original email -

- 1) Promoting imagery, outreach seems to fit the above mandate provided it is done in a fair way and no particular individual dominates.
- 2) In terms of content creation I agree that is deeply problematic. We have thought about a communications officer, but the challenge for a small body like us is how we would provide

compensation.

3) For CASCA announcements we should be able to provide a minimum level of media creation (e.g. backgrounds and announcement images).

- OK that's a distillation of what we have so far, let me know what you think.

Thanks very much for these words Rob. Although not official CASCA policy, that I am aware, they could be the foundation for crafting such policy.

The EPO committee discussed this further. We know that the CASCA Facebook page is underused, and Instagram is probably the more popular platform today. But as Kelly says (and which echo's point 2 above), hopefully someone in the aether will take these on because it will take a lot of work.

The one platform that is being used, although not to peak potential, is the @AstroCanada-CASCA Twitter account. Kelly is championing these tweets following the parameters outlined above.

5. IAU100

Generally the EPO committee has not gotten excited about the 100th Anniversary outreach initiatives of the IAU. The Canadian wintry weather and the start of the academic year clash badly with the 2019 Jan 10-13th IAU100 dates. It was felt that a nation-wide activity or initiative would not have been successful.

However, an email will be sent around to all CASCA members, reminding them of the opportunity to piggyback whatever outreach events they might be hosting during this time frame to the 100 Hours of Astronomy event. Included in this email will be a reminder to report their outreach activities for 2018 to the CASCA-EPO reporting form.

For CASCA's EPO Committee

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