

**Canadian Astronomical Society  
Société Canadienne d'Astronomie  
84th meeting of the Board of Directors  
December 5, 2018 10h00 – 13h00 PST  
by videoconference**

**Minutes**

<i>Present:</i>	Rob Thacker	President
	Sara Ellison	Vice-President
	Nicole St-Louis	Treasurer
	James Di Francesco	Secretary
	René Doyon	Director
	Erik Rosolowsky	Director
	Samar Safi-Harb	Director
	Kristine Spekkens	Director
	Roberto Abraham	Past-President

**1. Adoption of agenda [Di Francesco]**

- **Motion to adopt the agenda (Thacker / Safi-Harb): Carried**

**2. Adoption of the minutes of the Board meetings of May 22, 2018, September 12, 2018, and November 20, 2018 [Di Francesco]**

- **Motion to adopt all the minutes (Safi-Harb / Thacker): Carried**

**3. Business Conducted Electronically [all]**

- *Kim Venn resignation:* With now three Board members (Venn, Di Francesco, and Ellison) located in Victoria, BC, Director Venn resigned from the Board over the summer to allow broader representation of the Canadian community. The Board approached former CASCA Director Samar Safi-Harb to serve out the remainder of Venn's term until an election at the next AGM. The Board thanks Safi-Harb for stepping back into her former role on short notice.
- *Athena Swan Initiative:* The Board discussed the 'Athena Swan' initiative that is being investigated by Minister of Science Kirsty Duncan to promote equity in science academia.
- *IAU '100 Hours of Astronomy':* The Board engaged CASCA's Education and Public Outreach (EPO) Committee regarding the International Astronomical Union's (IAU's) proposed '100 Hours of Astronomy' initiative for 2019.

- *Letter of support:* The Board agreed to provide a letter of support from CASCA for the proposal by Montréal institutions to host the International Conference on High-Energy Physics in 2022.
- *LRP Terms of Reference:* The Board discussed the Terms of Reference for the upcoming Long Range Plan (LRP) to begin next year.
- *CATAC Replacement:* The Board appointed former President Laura Ferrarese to assume one of the CASCA positions on the CASCA-ACURA TMT Advisory Committee (CATAC) after the departure of Sarah Gallagher.
- *Graduate Student Deadline Coordination:* Vice-President Ellison has begun to query Canadian astronomy departments about the feasibility of a single date for prospective graduate students to accept offers.
- *Social Media Policy:* Director Rosolowsky circulated a draft of a new CASCA social media policy that was accepted by vote by the other Board members. The policy will be circulated to the membership and posted on the Society website.

#### **4. Action Items List Review [Di Francesco]**

- *AACS Reports:* The ACURA Advisory Committee for the SKA (AACS) will now have the same status as other CASCA committees and its reports will be available to the CASCA membership.
- *Spectrum Management:* To improve the protection of spectral windows for Canada's radio astronomers, NRC will pursue hiring an astronomer to engage in discussions about protected astronomy bands at meetings of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).
- *New CASCA webhost and new online CASCA membership renewal process:* Over the late summer/early fall, CASCA Communications Officer Jennifer West successfully migrated the CASCA website from SMU to GreenGeeks, the webhost used by the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada for its website. Then, Dr. West, with input from the EIC, Secretary James Di Francesco, and Administrator Susan Di Francesco, implemented a new membership renewal process that enabled members to update their contact information and provide demographic information for the EIC to analyze in future. The new process was used during the recent November membership renewal period.
- *Gender Bias:* President Thacker and Director Spekkens wrote a letter to Minister of Science Kirsty Duncan summarizing the results of 'gender bias' in NSERC's grant programs.
- *New CASCA Awards Nomination Deadline:* The CASCA Awards Committee has settled on December 15 as a common date for nominations to all CASCA Awards available the following year.

#### **5. New business**

##### **5.1 President's report [Thacker]**

- *LRP2020 Update:* NRC and NSERC have approved our selections of the co-Chairs, Bryan Gaensler and Pauline Barmby. Announcement of the co-Chairs will occur, perhaps as soon as next week, once the LRP2020 Terms of Reference have been finalized with the input of the co-Chairs.

- *Meeting with NSERC*: President Thacker met with NSERC's Liz Boston and raised the issue of envelope funding for astronomy. Though the possibility of envelope funding is still TBD, it's worth noting that the current government has only modestly provided new funding to NSERC, e.g., ~5% increases to Discovery Grants.
- *Coalition Visit to Ottawa*: The November visit to Parliament Hill by the Canadian Coalition for Astronomy went very well. This time, several teams were sent whose memberships were carefully selected to great effect. Two key messages were delivered: 1) better management of big science is needed; and 2) space astronomy. The meeting with Finance was focused on the latter. A space industry-led campaign called "Don't Let Go, Canada," is currently underway that is focused on a new Canadarm and the NASA Lunar Gateway space station proposal. The Coalition has been asked to sign on to the campaign but it hasn't yet done so because the benefits for astronomy are not obvious. Indeed, getting space astronomy on the agenda for CSA and the space industry has been difficult. It would be advantageous if we had the same engagement with this sector as we do currently for ground-based astronomy when talking with policy makers. At Finance's request, Thacker to send comment on possible space funding scenarios.
- *Request for funding from CUPC*: The organizers of the Canadian Undergraduate Physics Conference (CUPC) have approached CASCA for support. As in previous years, CASCA will provide \$1K of support.

## 5.2 Vice-President's report [Ellison]

- *CASCA 2019 update*: The LOC of next year's CASCA meeting at McGill has prepared a progress report for the Board. Overall, the LOC appears to have organization well in hand but asks for Board input on their proposed code of conduct and invited speaker list. The draft code of conduct has already been passed to the EIC for their input. The Board may consider using it as a template for future meetings once it has been accepted. The invited speaker list had many good speakers but was quite long. It may require Board input only after some speakers, and particularly next year's award winners, have been confirmed.
- *Future AGMs*: Vice-President Ellison to begin approaching possible hosts for CASCA AGMs in 2021, 2022, and maybe 2023.
- *Committee Reports*: The Board thanks CASCA's committees for preparing excellent reports on their recent activities. These are available online soon for the membership to review. Committees with specific issues included:
  - ACURA Advisory Committee for the SKA (AACS)
    - A new member is needed for this Committee.
  - Equity and Inclusivity (EIC)
    - President Thacker, Director Spekkens, and the EIC to develop a Values Statement to present to the membership as early as June 2019. From this document, a revised

Ethics Statement should manifest, also with Board and EIC input.

- Graduate Students (GSC)
  - This GSC has been very active of late. To improve its coordination with the rest of CASCA and enable its members to be aware of other ongoing initiatives, the Board discussed having a Board representative attend GSC meetings or having GSC member involvement in other CASCA committees. GSC input will be sought for the best solution. Also, Thacker to draft new GSC Terms of Reference to clarify its mandate.
- Ground-based Astronomy Committee (GAC)
  - The Board noted plans described in the GAC report about decommissioning CFHT in 2022 to allow construction of MSE, as that development seems quite soon. Indeed, the question of MSE will be considered in the upcoming LRP.
- Joint Committee for Space Astronomy (JCSA)
  - The Board noted the JCSA members' frustrations over communication with CSA. Sarah Gallagher's recent appointment as Science Adviser to the CSA President will hopefully lead to improvements.

### 5.3 Treasurer's report [St-Louis]

- *Cash Flow*: The fiscal report doesn't look very good at first glance because it only includes dates up until the end of October, i.e., right before the membership renewal period began this year. Fortunately, ~\$45K in dues payments and ~\$1.6K in donations arrived in November. Two items of interest came up while preparing the report. First, payments for the Hogg Prize seemed wrong, but Board discussion clarified that CASCA pays for Hogg Prize expenses every year. Second, CASCA received a bill from RASC for \$745 for the Plaskett Medal, a cost we don't seem to have paid before. St-Louis to investigate further.
- *Administrator Salary*: **Motion to increase our Administrator's salary by 2.5% for 2019 (St-Louis / Abraham): Carried.**
- *WESTAR Lectures*: To improve planning future WESTAR Lectures, the Board has agreed to provide the EPO Committee with a notional \$10K budget next year, with a possibility of a little extra funding if needed by request.
- *Investments*: Our investment performance lately hasn't been as good as in previous years, e.g., a decrease of 2.07% this year, thanks to the last few months. Apparently, we are still "doing well" relative to others according to our investment manager. Over the past five years, the average growth has been 3.8%, i.e., lower than our 5% target, so we need to keep a close eye on performance going forward. St-Louis met with our manager at Scotia-Macleod who explained that our fees are a little larger than before because of market trends in fees. Our fee levels appear to be now rather

typical compared to other funds. St-Louis signed a new “market philosophy” document with our manager, renewing our “prudent” stance with regards to investments.

- **Motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report (Rosolowsky / Thacker): Carried.**

#### **5.4 Secretary’s report [Di Francesco]**

- *Membership update:* This year’s membership renewal period occurred during the month of November, a little later than usual due to the changes made to the online renewal system. Response from the membership has been good: 350 members paid their memberships in November, 308 by PayPal, 23 by cheque, and 19 by e-transfer. At present, CASCA has 387 members in good standing, 105 members in arrears by one year, and 44 in arrears by two years. Secretary Di Francesco will focus on getting these latter two member types to remit their dues in early 2019. Di Francesco has also sent out word to the membership to encourage first-year students to join CASCA for a free first year, as only a few such students have joined up this fall.
- **Motion to accept the Secretary’s Report (Spekkens / Doyon): Carried.**

#### **6. Other Business**

- *Discover the Universe:* The Board to follow up with Julie Bolduc-Duval regarding specifics about her recent proposal to engage CASCA’s Corporate Members for educational and outreach efforts
- *NRC Herzberg:* Di Francesco reports that Greg Fahlman, the Director General of NRC’s Herzberg Astronomy & Astrophysics Research Centre, retired on October 15. Luc Simard of NRC Herzberg replaced Dr. Fahlman as Director General in mid-November.

#### **7. Adjournment**

- **Motion to adjourn the 84<sup>th</sup> CASCA Board Meeting (Rosolowsky / Ellison): Carried.**

## Canadian National Committee of the IAU Draft Minutes

### 1. Adoption of the agenda

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

### 2. Adoption of the minutes of the Committee meeting of May 22, 2018

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

### 3. Business arising

- *Annual Performance Review (APR) questionnaire:* Thacker, acting as IAU-CNC Chair, noted that he has not yet received word from NRC requesting he complete its annual questionnaire about the IAU.
- *Junior Memberships:* The IAU has requested that applications for its new Junior Member category be submitted by 31 December 2018. Di Francesco, acting as IAU-CNC Secretary, has sent out a call to the CASCA membership about the opportunity. Interest has been muted, possibly because the limitations turn people off, e.g., annual renewals with two reference letters needed.

### 4. Other Business

- *IAU Office of Education:* The IAU is looking to establish a new Office of Education (OE) somewhere to coordinate its worldwide efforts to improve education of astronomy. IAU Member Pierre Chastenay of UQAM is considering a proposal for this opportunity involving various Quebec groups (e.g., Discover the Universe) and has asked the IAU-CNC for its endorsement. The Committee thought that endorsement might be premature as it was unaware of possible other Canadian bids to host the OE. We should know soon as the deadline for Letters of Intent is 21 December, and a shortlist of candidates will be announced in February 2019.
- *100 Hours of Astronomy:* CASCA's EPO Committee is considering the proposal by the IAU to contribute to a '100 Hours of Astronomy' effort worldwide where astronomy will be promoted for 100 hours straight as part of ongoing efforts to mark the centennial of the IAU in 2019 (IAU100). It is unclear how much the IAU-CNC can be involved in such initiatives though we will continue to consider some possibilities.
- *IAU100 Inclusivity Initiative:* The IAU-CNC noted the recent communiqué from the IAU regarding efforts to promote inclusivity in astronomy as part of its centennial events.

### 5. Adjournment

- **Motion to adjourn the IAU-CNC meeting (Thacker / Spekkens): Carried.**