

Canadian Astronomical Society Société Canadienne d'Astronomie

Meeting of the Board of Directors via videoconference

Minutes for Sept. 10, 2019

Present:

Rob Thacker (President/Chair)
Sara Ellison (Vice President)
Lewis Knee (Treasurer)
Judith Irwin (Secretary)
Etienne Artigau (Director)
Suresh Sivanandam (Director)
René Doyon (Director)
Ivana Damjanov (Director)
Bob Abraham (Past President)

1. Office Issues (Susan Di Francesco)

Susan Di Francesco reported on office issues. The membership drive is going well, save for a few glitches. Currently e-transfers and cheques are the only options. There are some technical issues with the database and whoever is the new webmaster should be tasked with fixing them. Susan will send a list of these issues to Rob. e-transfers from Canadian banks should already work from cell phones, assuming that the bank's cell app supports it.

2. Administrative and Web Support

Both Susan DiFrancesco and Jennifer West are stepping down as the CASCA administrator and web-master, respectively. A call for applications for a new administrator and new web-master was sent out on the CASCA-exploder; a first look at applications will occur after Sept. 13. There was discussion regarding compensation for these positions.

3. Ethics Statement

Given recent problems regarding the TMT, the LRPIC (Long Range Plan Implementation Committee) has queried the CASCA board as to whether CASCA should have its own 'ethics statement for involvement in international projects'. Note that CASCA already has an ethics statement: https://casca.ca/?page_id=1751 but it does not go into details about land use for observatories which generally falls into the purview of those who are negotiating international agreements and have financial resources at hand.

Concern was expressed, given the complex nature of many conflicts, that we may end up binding ourselves to unintended and unanticipated consequences by extending our ethics statement beyond its current form. Most notably other fields that are involved in sensitive issues tend to have committees to review situations on a case-by-case basis, rather than having a single statement. Finding a position that is agreeable to the overall CASCA membership would also be challenging and the process likely requires hiring an ethics lawyer. The board is concerned about the current TMT issues but doesn't see a useful and productive way forward with a revised ethics statement at this time.

4. Replacement for LRPIC member

Matt Dobbs is stepping down as a member of the LRPIC and the board was solicited for names as to his possible replacement. Rob Thacker will follow up.

5. Other Issues

Our statement about synchronizing the graduate student deadlines went out on the CASCA exploder today.

Rob will be going through his list of 'action items' and will follow up by email as needed.

We are still following the TMT issue closely.

Next Meeting: Oct. 8, 2019