

Canadian Astronomical Society Société Canadienne d'Astronomie

Meeting of the Board of Directors via videoconference

Minutes for Dec. 16, 2019

Present:

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

Absent: Bob Abraham (Past President)
René Doyon (Director)

1. Call to Order

2. Adoption of Agenda

Passed. Note that this meeting has called for reports from all committees plus the Secretary and Treasurer, and these are posted separately on the CASCA website under 'Committees'. In the following, 'see report' refers to these associated reports. Action-Items (AIs) were not explicitly discussed in this meeting due to the meeting length but several items came up naturally during reports as indicated below.

3. Adoption of Minutes from last board meeting

Passed

4. Treasurer's report & issues arising

We've recently had a major transition from the former to the new Treasurer and with the change of office administrator as well. Our new administrator is Jessica Marsano and her background experience in the financial sector is a great asset. There has been good communication between all players. Paypal is working again (their 'customer service' produced delays) and is now set up so that the problem that we previously had should not re-occur when there is a change of name in our administration.

The CASCA finances are currently healthy. We are ensuring that only a small amount of money remains in the paypal account at any time with the remainder in the bank account. Our investments were up by 11% over the year. The administrator is on a regular payment schedule now, and the new webmaster, Don Hutton, is also doing well and is billing according to his time.

See report for more details.

5. President's Report

In-camera discussion.

Terms of reference for the Graduate Student Committee (GSC) (a previous AI) is completed except for a final feedback from the GSC chair. An update to the CASCA code of ethics (another previous AI) will be done in the new year.

6. Secretary's Report

As of Dec. 9, 2019, there were 516 CASCA members of all types (honorary, corporate, ordinary, associate, and student). This number includes those in good standing as well as those in arrears. This is a decline of 80 members since June 2019. The paypal problem has likely contributed to the ease with which members could re-join. Two corporate members are in arrears and will be contacted by board members. In the new year, we will obtain more up-to-date statistics on those who are in arrears of one year or more. See the associated report for more details.

There are now links on the CASCA website to information about our three Honorary members. See the 'Awards' tab.

The secretary has scanned a number of historic Cassiopeias supplied by Gretchen Harris and these are now on the CASCA website (this is a previous AI). This leaves only 3 historic Cassiopeias that are still missing: Spring 1997, Summer 1997, and Summer 1976. It isn't clear how to fill in these final gaps.

In addition to the IAU member applications listed in the November 2019 Board minutes, 3 more applications were received and discussed via e-mail amongst the board and approved. The new IAU applicants are: Smith, Rogerson, Fraser (full membership) and Woods, Tahani, Baron and Sikora (junior membership). All paperwork is now completed from our end and these applicants will now be vetted by the IAU with their decision coming some time in the spring.

7. Review of Committee Reports (Vice President)

Please see associated reports for details. The reports were presented by the vice president, Sara Ellison, with discussion of each amongst the board. Some notes are included here. See the individual reports for more information.

CDC: There has been a new change to the chair. New data research infrastructure is replacing Compute Canada. There was discussion as to having a list of names for membership on the committee. Rob Thacker will discuss this with them.

CATAC: There has been a meeting every few weeks and active updates are posted.

EIC: The EIC has presented 5 recommendations to the board. Given time constraints and the fact that René (the EIC rep) is away, we will review them in more detail at the next meeting.

EPO: There were updates on Westar and Discover the Universe. The Exoplanet naming went well. The top choice has been selected and forwarded to the IAU. We should hear about this soon.

GAC: This was a thorough report and is best read in its entirety.

JCSA: A brief report was submitted.

LRPIC: Some of this was already covered in other reports. There is some urgency in finding a chair for the AACCS. Rob Thacker will follow up on this. In-camera discussion followed.

Heritage: See report.

GSC: See report.

8. AGM updates

The basic schedule for the AGM at York University is set except for lecture/banquet night (Tues. or Wed.) and no final decision has yet been made for the banquet venue. The board prefers Wednesday for the banquet but this is advisory only. The rooms are booked and look good. The Website is not yet live but the design is in progress. There was some preliminary discussion of the proposed list of invited speakers. We confirm the 10K is an amount for student travel. AGM announcements for the exploder should be bilingual. The website should also be bilingual but abstracts for papers need not be. Some concern was expressed about the timeline, i.e. only one month between the website going live and deadline for talk slots to be filled.

The AGM timing is the same as a space exploration and engineering workshop in Toronto.

An offer has arrived regarding the 2021 AGM by DRAO (in partnership with UBC) and this organization so far is in good order.

Waterloo will host the 2022 AGM.

9. Discussion of the creation of a Sustainability Committee

There was discussion about creating this committee and there has been considerable interest in the topic, with a white paper having been submitted, with Rob Thacker as co-author, for decadal planning. CASCA has a carbon footprint that could be reduced, especially related to the AGM.

Some concern was expressed about establishing another committee and stretching CASCA human resources too thin. Also whether such a committee would make recommendations that aren't necessarily in the best interest of astronomical research in cases of conflicting goals.

It was decided that, rather than establishing this committee as a standing committee, it would instead be established as an ad-hoc advisory committee to the Board for a period of one year at which point a reassessment of the committee's status would be made.

10. In-camera items

11. Any other Business

We will review the committee reports further and extract action items in preparation for further discussion at the next meeting.

12. Adjourn