

Canadian Astronomical Society Société Canadienne d'Astronomie

Meeting of the Board of Directors via videoconference

Minutes for Jan. 15, 2020

Present:

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

Absent: Bob Abraham (Past President)
Ivana Damjanov (Director)

1. Adoption of Agenda

Passed

2. Adoption of Minutes from last board meeting

Passed except for reading by one board member, to be communicated by email shortly. [Minor changes were recorded.]

3. Gift for Previous CASCA administrator

Flowers have been sent to the former CASCA administrator who recently stepped down from this position. A gift will also be sent.

4. Coalition and CATAC Update

In-camera discussion.

5. Review of Members in Arrears

Five members are in arrears for dates prior to 2018-19. Two of these 5 are currently up-to-date except for one year (either 2015-16 or 2016-17). Since this is so long ago, the board has decided to waive those arrears dues. Three of the five are owing for past years as well as the current 2019-20 year.

Fifty-nine people are in arrears for the year 2018-19. Of these, only 4 people have paid for the 2019-20 year.

The secretary will contact each of those who are in arrears as well as send reminders to those who have not yet paid for the 2019-20 year.

6. Follow-up on December Committee Report Reviews

EPO (Education and Public Outreach) was discussed. CASCA does not have a dedicated budget for a press officer or other EPO activities, unlike the RASC. It would be useful to have an individual who could mine possible grants and write proposals to help in this regard. NSERC funding currently is for research only, not EPO activities. Currently, CASCA is basically a coordinator. The concept of a press office could be discussed in the AGM.

Canadian EPO activity form should be hosted on the CASCA web site, rather than the University of Calgary where it currently is located. Phil Langill will be connected with Don Hutton, our webmaster to help facilitate this.

There were 5 recommendations from the EIC (Equity and Inclusivity Committee). Rob will review these.

GAC (Ground-based Astronomy Committee): Canadian radio astronomy and overall spectrum management is a concern. Ken Tapping has indicated that NRC is currently writing a job application in order to hire a replacement for Ken.

7. Progress on Sustainability & Postdoc committees

Rob had a discussion with Toby Brown about a CASCA Postdoc Committee. Post-docs are currently 'ordinary members' so there is no reason why a post-doc could not be, for example, a CASCA director. While postdocs retain all the privileges of being ordinary members it is clear that they are smaller in number within the society. Currently, we do not have an a priori way of separating post-docs from faculty since we treat them the same. It would be useful to have longitudinal studies and information as to where post-docs go. The post-doc pool is rather small, perhaps about 100 but not all are CASCA members so the 'real' pool is likely closer to 50. Rob is working with Toby on a detailed set of Terms of Reference; such a committee would start with perhaps 5 to 7 people. This could be an ad-hoc committee rather than a standing committee.

There is no new information on the Sustainability committee but Rob hopes to action this before the next Board meeting.

8. Impact of Satellite Constellations on Astronomy

AURA put out a statement of concern regarding satellite technology. An explosion of new satellites will impact optical astronomy, especially time-domain astronomy. This is an important cultural issue and the media are also interested. Rob Thacker will draw up an official CASCA statement, with board input, about his important issue. [ed. The statement can be found at <https://casca.ca/?m=202002cat=3>]

9. Any other Business

The CASCA president is the key contact for the new digital research organization which is taking over from Compute Canada. It costs \$500/year but gives us important input into the organization.