

CASCA Awards Committee LRP draft report
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Introduction

The CASCA Awards committee is composed of CASCA members who hold faculty/staff positions, and award a range of CASCA prizes and awards annually. These awards vary year-to-year given specific award timelines.

This LRP report will summarize the awards, nominators and membership of the committee, paying attention to the following information requested by the LRP Committee:

- Demographics of award nominees/nominators, where available
- Follow-up of awardees: do they get other national/international awards (ie. do CASCA awards help the community's visibility outside astronomy?)

CASCA Award Committee

The awards committee has fluctuated between 8 and 6 members, with efforts made to have equal representation on the committee of both men and women. In addition, the rotation of the chairs have also been roughly equal, with women chairing the awards committee for 4 out of 10 years.

Gender Make up	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Chair	W	M	M	M	M	W	W	M	M	W
Men	6	7	6	5	5	3	3	3	4	4
Women	1	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	3

CASCA Awards

CASCA awards typically fall into two main categories: those that are awarded every year (Qilak award, the Hogg lecture and Plaskett medal for student thesis) and those that are awarded in alternate years (the Richer Medal, the Beals award, the Martin award, the Executive Prize, the Dunlap award and the Petrie Prize lecture).

Some awards were only instituted within the previous decade.

We summarize the gender demographics¹ over the past decade in the following two charts: Figure 1 shows the demographics for awards made annually, while Figure 2 summarizes the gender demographic information for awards made in alternate years. In cases where awards

¹We note that the demographic information was obtained 'anecdotally' through information on nomination packets and award citations. A thorough survey of gender identity has *not* been performed for this summary.

were initiated within the decade, the date of the origin of the award is included in the figure legend.

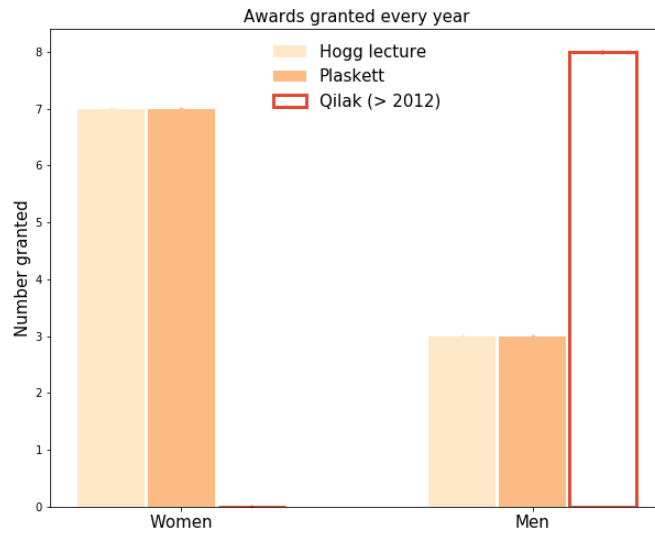


Figure 1. Summary of gender demographics for awards granted every year between 2010 and 2019. The filled bars show research-related awards, while the unfilled bar is for a service or outreach-related award. The variance in the awards given out every year is lower than for the awards given out once every two years.

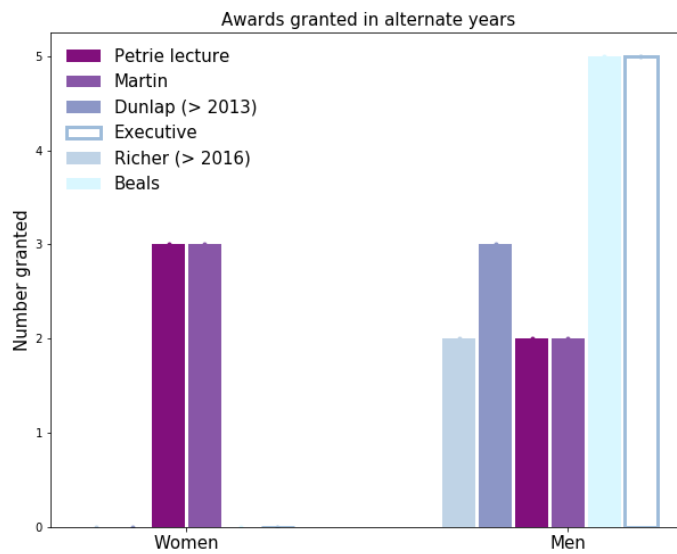


Figure 2. Summary of gender demographics for awards granted in alternate years between 2010 and 2019. As above, the filled bars show research-related awards, while the unfilled bar is for a service or outreach-related award. The variance in the awards given out in alternate years will be larger than those given out every year, so care should be taken when interpreting these results.

Some common themes emerge from the two figures:

- In the case of student awards and the Hogg public lecture, the gender distributions has skewed towards women recipients.
- For the Prize lecture and mid-career Martin award, the demographics are reasonably well balanced.
- For the ‘specialist’ awards made for specific areas (e.g. Executive award for service, the Dunlap award for instrumentation) typically skew towards men.

While we note that the Richer and Dunlap awards have only been awarded twice and three times respectively, they are among the four alternate year awards that have never been awarded to a woman in the past decade.

At the time of completing this interim report, the full demographic breakdown of the nominators for CASCA awards for the full ten year history is not known, however the known fraction of nominators that are women is shown in Figure 3. These data should not be interpreted out of context. For the student Plaskett award, the nominator is typically a department chair and so the numbers reflect the larger issue that women in Canada hold a smaller fraction of the senior academic administrative positions than their male counterparts. Additionally, a comprehensive survey of gender demographics was not undertaken for the purposes of this study: given that it is a historical study it is by definition incomplete.

	Award	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
0	Qilak	-	-	-	0	-	0.5	-	0.42	0	0.67
1	Martin	-	-	-	0	-	0.1	-	0	-	0.55
2	Richer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.2	-	0.1
3	Plaskett	-	-	-	0.11	0	0.25	-	0.17	0.2	0
4	Beals	-	-	-	-	0.5	-	-	-	0.5	-
5	Dunlap	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
6	Executive	-	-	-	-	0	-	-	-	0.5	-
7	Petrie	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.2	-	1

Figure 3. Fraction of *nominators* who are women in any given year. Given that the Plaskett nomination is typically made through a Department Chair, the gender breakdown of the nominators in this case reflects the fact that the proportion of women astronomers in senior departmental leadership roles is small. No particular trends are observed between the gender of the nominators and the gender of the award recipients, but the numbers here are very small. One recommendation to the LRP would be to collect demographic data on award nominators at the time of nomination for future longitudinal studies. Not reflected in these percentages is the low overall rate of nomination for CASCA awards.

A recommendation for future awards would be to gather demographic information anonymously at the time of nomination. Indeed, this should extend to axes other than gender identity, which is only the focus of this study as it is the most readily available data to hand.

Finally, what is not reflected in the above fraction is the low rate of nomination for CASCA awards. A combination of advertising, departmental encouragement and outreach at events like the CASCA AGM may hope to improve the numbers of nominations received for various CASCA awards. We strongly suggest to the LRP that the CASCA awards procedure (from nomination to selection) be examined through the lens of equity and diversity, to identify potential strategies to improve the statistics of our most prestigious awards.

CASCA Awardees and future success

The impact of CASCA awards are best viewed when including information on what additional national and international awards are received by previous CASCA awardees. The causal link between CASCA awards and other awards is not always completely clear, in that the recipients themselves are outstanding and the potential for recognition by other bodies is great, but we consider here awards made after the CASCA award was granted.

Two previous awardees (Roberto Abraham, Harvey Richer) have become Fellows of the Royal Society of Canada after receiving a CASCA award.

Two previous recipients of awards have gone on to be President of CASCA (Abraham, Ferrarese), while Peter Martin (recipient of the Beals Award in 2007 and the Executive award in 2014) was anointed as an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2016.

Recognition from CASCA has also worked in concert with recognition by other national bodies. For example, John Hutchings was awarded the Chapman award of Excellence in 2016 from the CSA after his Executive award in 2013.

For the student award, the Plaskett Medal, the rewards are perhaps clearer. Within a decade, two recipients of the Plaskett medal are already in faculty positions, while one has a staff scientist role.

The Plaskett awardees have also been the recipients of prestigious national and international awards, such as the CITA National Fellowship, the Banting Fellowship, the Veni award in the Netherlands and the Sagan Fellowship.

One recipient has left the field, working as a software developer within Canada.

Changes to the awards procedure

In the past decade, a few changes have been made to the CASCA award procedure to promote gender balance among awards, and to ensure engagement of nominees and nominators within CASCA.

- Nominators and nominees must be CASCA members in good standing by the time of the award (this is particularly relevant for the PhD student awards, where membership has previously not been assured)
- Addition of two years extension on *both the Martin and Richer career awards* to account for leave including parental, medical, disability, political, family care and military leave.

We suggest additional improvements to the communication process to the CASCA community, particularly on the award structure, number of nominees required etc. and outreach to departments to encourage more nominations for most awards.

In addition, we recommend that the awards committee work on better reporting on the demographics of the award nominators and nominees, to more concretely investigate issues of equity and inclusion in the CASCA awards process.

Summary

The CASCA awards procedure has been refined over the past decade, with care taken to make the nomination and award procedure more clear and transparent. The CASCA award recipients typically have great success after the awards, and are hopefully seen within the community as a sign of national prestige. However, current demographics show that the awards remain imbalanced across the axis of gender identity, and more work is needed to address this. This study has largely focused on gender; more data are needed to study the awards along different demographic axes.