

CANADIAN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY - SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE D'ASTRONOMIE

Minutes of the forty-ninth Annual General Meeting Friday, May 25, 2018 4:00-5:30 pm PDT Theatre, Victoria Conference Centre, Victoria, BC

Minutes

The Annual General Meeting of CASCA started at 4:00 pm with 62 members present.

1. Adoption of the agenda

- **Motion to adopt the following agenda (Gallagher/van Laerhoven): Carried.**

- 1) *Adoption of agenda / Adoption de l'ordre du jour (Secretary/Secrétaire)*
- 2) *Adoption of the minutes of the 2017 AGM / Adoption du procès-verbal de la reunion tenue en 2017 (Secretary/Secrétaire)*
- 3) *Nominations to the Nominating Committee / Nominations auprès du Comité de nomination*
- 4) *President's report / Rapport du Président*
- 5) *Secretary's report / Rapport du Secrétaire*
- 6) *Treasurer's report / Rapport du Trésorier*
- 7) *Election of Auditor / Élection du Vérificateur*
- 8) *By-law amendment vote / Vote d'amendement aux règlements de la Société*
- 9) *Selection of scrutineers / Sélection des surveillants d'élection*
- 10) *Results of the election / Résultats des élections (Secretary/Secrétaire)*
- 11) *Committee reports / Rapports des comités*
- 12) *Future CASCA meetings / Prochaines réunions de la CASCA*
- 13) *Other business / Divers*
 - *Joint Committee on Space Astronomy / Comité conjoint sur l'astronomie spatiale*
- 14) *Adjournment / Levée de l'assemblée*

2. Adoption of the minutes of the 2017 AGM

- **Motion to approve the minutes of the 2017 AGM (Kirk/Sivakoff): Carried.**

3. Nominations to the Nominating Committee

- Helen Kirk, Patrick Coté, and Gilles Joncas were nominated to the Nominating Committee and have accepted their nominations. No other nominations were proposed.
- **Motion to close the nominations (Ngo/Wade): Carried.**

- By acclamation, Kirk, Coté, and Joncas join the Nominating Committee. The Chair will be Past President Roberto Abraham.

4. President's Report [Abraham]

- *CATAC & EIC*: Abraham recognized the hard work of Michael Balogh as Chair of the CASCA-ACURA TMT Advisory Committee (CATAC) and Brenda Matthews as Chair of the Equity and Inclusivity Committee (EIC).
- *Coalition Report*: The Coalition engaged Government extensively over the past year. For example, it provided a pre-budget submission to the Federal Government. Also, the Coalition, together with Sarah Gallagher (Western) and Deborah Lokhorst (Toronto), visited Parliament on November 28, 2017 to discuss key LRP priorities (TMT/SKA) and advocate for support of the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) in general and WFIRST in particular. The Naylor Report dominated the discussion. The Federal Government is supportive of TMT but remains concerned about its political dimension given their broad support for indigenous rights. Though the 2018 Budget was happily quite supportive of fundamental research, no funding was indicated therein for CSA projects. Post-budget, the Coalition has still not succeeded in having a face-to-face meeting with Dr. Mona Nemers, the new Chief Science Advisor for Canada, possibly because that office is still being constituted. A concern is that this office will serve as a filter for Big Science requests to Government, whereas our past approach of making direct appeals has been quite successful. Indeed, the next LRP process will need to adapt to this new reality.
- *Space Astronomy*: There has been six months of persistent recent effort to make progress in funding space astronomy through the CSA. New tactics include going above CSA and using the leverage of Nobel laureates to make an impact higher up. For example, Saul Perlmutter and Art McDonald wrote directly to the Ministers and the Chief Science Officer about WFIRST and this effort resulted in scheduled Coalition meetings in Ottawa and St. Hubert on June 12. (In recognition of his efforts, Abraham would like to pursue bestowing upon Art McDonald an Honorary Membership in CASCA.) As new President, Rob Thacker will represent CASCA in these discussions. The door appears to be closing in particular for WFIRST, however, and new ways of advocacy beyond Coalition activities may be needed.
- *Thanks*: Abraham thanked the Society and its Officers for their support during his term as President of CASCA.

5. Secretary's Report [Di Francesco]

- *Election 2018*: After this meeting, Roberto Abraham ends his term as President of CASCA and becomes Past President. Also, Christine Wilson ends her term as Past President and will rotate off the Board. Next, Rob Thacker ends his term as Vice President and will become the President of CASCA. The Society thanks each of these fine individuals for their service. An election is presently taking place for a new Vice President, and those nominated are Michael Balogh (Waterloo) and Sara Ellison (Victoria). The election results will be announced later at the AGM.

- *Memberships:* The CASCA membership numbers are significantly up this year, from 503 to 539. There are 76 new members, of which 51 are students, which more than offset the loss of 17 members who resigned over the past year and 26 members who are to be expelled at this meeting for non-payment of dues for two years. Twenty-seven members converted from one membership category to another.
- *Deceased Members:* This past year CASCA lost two Charter Members, Thomas R. Clarke and Robert Garrison. This loss was noted at the AGM with a minute of silence.
- *CAP/CASCA Membership for Students:* A member raised the possibility of joint CAP-CASCA student memberships. The Board will examine this suggestion.
- **Motion to accept the Secretary's Report (Matthews/Kirk): Carried**

6. Treasurer's Report [St-Louis]

- *Society Finances:* CASCA financial situation remains very good. The operating balance is very high at \$80.5K due in part to \$15K contributed for the new Richer Medal that needs to be transferred to our investment account. In addition, a recent payment to Discover the Universe (DU) of \$20K is not reflected in that balance. The proper balance of \$45.3K is very close to the \$48.4K projected last year. Dues payments were \$7K larger than predicted. Expenditures by CASCA this year were \$78K, again extremely close to the \$76K predicted last year. Investments have grown by 5.7% for FY2017, within our prudent target range of 5-7%. Around \$8K is available for withdrawal for upcoming WESTAR Lectureships.
- *Dues:* Based on the Bank of Canada's inflation rate of 2.22% for last year, the membership dues will increase slightly this year. Dues for next year will be set during the upcoming membership renewal drive to:
 - Ordinary: \$163
 - Student/retired: \$66
 - Postdoc/Associate: \$119
 - Joint CAP+CASCA: \$114

After October 31, 2018, the dues will increase over those posted above by 25%.

- *CASCATrust:* Members generously donated \$2090 to CASCATrust over the past year, a significant increase over last year (\$1279) but similar to what was donated in FY2015 and FY2016. These funds continue to be used for student/PDF travel to the annual meeting, the Plaskett Medal award and travel to the annual meeting, and prizes for best student presentations at the annual meeting.
- *Further information:* Please see the detailed Treasurer's Report posted on the CASCA website.
- *Members' Queries:* A member asked about the high investment fees noted in the Treasurer's Report. St-Louis responded that these fees are a concern and she will be interacting with Scotia MacLeod to find out why they have been so high lately. A member asked about the late fee for filing a T4 slip noted in the Treasurer's Report. St-Louis responded that incurring this small fee was indeed her fault but should not be repeated. A member inquired about the \$20 annual payment to

Industry Canada. St-Louis responded that this payment is a requirement of all not-for-profit corporations in Canada, as prescribed in the Act

- **Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report (Matthews/Kirk): Carried.**

7. Election of Auditor

- **Motion to reappoint Wilkinson & Sons as the auditor (Wilson/McCutcheon): Carried.**

8. By-law Amendment Vote [Di Francesco]

- Prior to the current AGM in Victoria, two Ordinary members proposed that new commercial Corporate Members be allowed to send up to two representatives to the annual meetings with their associated registration fees reimbursed to the LOC by CASCA. This proposal was made to provide further benefit to companies becoming Corporate Members and stimulate industry connections at meetings. The Board adopted this proposal for the current meeting but as it impacts members' rights, an amendment to the CASCA by-laws is needed, requiring a special resolution by members.
- Accordingly, the Secretary circulated by e-mail the following amendment (in red) to By-law 2.1.7: "The Directors by resolution may elect as Corporate members organizations whose activities are related to astronomy. Corporate members may advertise the fact of their membership, and hold exhibitions during Corporation meetings. Their representatives may attend **annual Society meetings**, but may take part in the governance of the Corporation only if they are individually Ordinary members. **In their first year of membership, commercial Corporate members shall have the opportunity to send up to two representatives to the annual Society meeting with associated registration costs reimbursed to the local organizing committee by the Society.**"
- The assembled membership debated the merits of the amendment. A special resolution to amend the by-laws was made by members Greg Sivakoff and Pauline Barmby. **The special resolution, which required the consent of a 2/3 majority of members present to pass, was passed unanimously.**

9. Selection of Scrutineers

- Pauline Barmby (Western) and Jason Rowe (Bishops) kindly volunteered to serve as scrutineers to oversee the results of the 2018 CASCA election.

10. Result of the Election

- For the position of Vice-President of CASCA, **Sara Ellison** (Victoria) is elected.
- The Board looks forward to working with Sara, and thanks the Officers rotating positions on the Board (Roberto Abraham to Past President, Rob Thacker to President) or off the Board (Christine Wilson) this year for their service.

11. Committee Reports [Wilson, on behalf of Thacker]

- Reports on activities by CASCA's many committees can be found on the CASCA web site. Each committee is performing important work for the Society, and

members are encouraged to read these reports and contact the committee Chairs as needed.

- *Thanks:* On behalf of the Society, Wilson thanked everyone who serves on a CASCA committee for their service.
- *CASCA-ACURA TMT Advisory Committee (CATAC):* This Committee continued to be highly active over the past six months, including making a recommendation on the design of the WFOS instrument. In other TMT news, a key decision point on site selection was deferred to the end of this year. Also, it appears that the prospects of NSF contributions to TMT (and GMT) are looking better if strong backing is evident in the upcoming US Decadal Survey.
- *Computation and Data:* There are many issues still impacting Compute Canada (CC) operations. Notably, CC hardware refreshes are coming online but even they may not have enough capacity to handle demand. The Ministry of Innovation, Science, and Economic Development (ISED) is considering a new approach to high-performance computing in Canada. Also, the CANFAR CFI proposal was not selected but the CADC is working to develop some of the core infrastructure independently.
- *Equity & Inclusivity:* This committee has been working extensively on their climate survey over the past few months, and preliminary findings were presented in a poster at this meeting. The demographics survey has hit challenges due to privacy issues, and possible paths forward are being considered. Meanwhile, NSERC is still unprepared to provide sex-desegregated results, and the EIC has begun working on its own analysis. The EIC has also begun initiatives to revamp CASCA's Ethics Statement, and is considering submission of a white paper for the next LRP.
- *Education & Public Outreach:* This committee worked with the LOC of the current meeting on its parallel EPO session. Also, a vast amount of effort has gone into the newly invigorated WESTAR Lectureship program. There will be three such Lectureships between now and early 2019.
- *Ground-based Astronomy:* The SKA treaty process is taking time, but its resolution will impact the Canadian share of SKA as an associate member. MSE is entering a preliminary design phase and funding is needed for it. Gemini & CFHT are moving forward with new instrumentation. Canadian participation in ALMA Cycle 6 appears to have been healthy. Canadian funding for CCAT-p will be sought in an upcoming CFI proposal. CHIME commissioning continues.
- *Graduate Students:* This committee participated in the organization of the Graduate Student Workshop held just prior to the current meeting. They are developing internal documentation on roles within the committee and are also mulling over new surveys.
- *Heritage:* Work is continuing on the "History of Canadian Radio Astronomy" book and a publisher has been approached. The CASCA Archive is now in place at RASC headquarters in Toronto and is being curated by Randall Rosenfeld.
- *Long Range Plan Implementation Committee:* This committee has expressed by concern about a potential collision in funding requests for TMT, SKA, and MSE. Careful handling of LRP2020 will be needed. Also, this committee has grave concerns about the overall lack of present funding for space astronomy in Canada.

The committee is encouraging OIR and space astronomy community workshops before LRP2020 begins in earnest. They also continue to follow LRP missions and facilities as they evolve.

12. Future CASCA Meetings

- CASCA 2019 will be held in Montreal, QC in 17-20 June 2019. Daryl Haggard (McGill) addressed the AGM to encourage everyone to attend.

13. Other Business

- *Joint Committee on Space Astronomy (JCSA)*: Jason Rowe (Bishops) updated the membership about the recent deliberations of this committee. They note that targeted Science Maturation Studies (SMS) for CASTOR and LiteBIRD have commenced. Furthermore, an open call for SMS resulted in two contracts for space astronomy and three for planetary science. An open call for concept studies resulted in four proposals received in astronomy and six in planetary science with the results expected in June-July. In addition, HQP training funds via the FAST program resulted in 72 proposals received; the expectation is that 30 grants will be awarded. A Space Technology Development Program (STDP) call is planned for this fall for targeted technologies. In particular, CSA wants to prioritize technology needs for potential missions. CSA has been providing support to the community for space astronomy planning, including funds to Canadian observers of NASA's Science and Technology Definition Team panels that are exploring future observatory concepts. In general, the CSA has been advised to provide transparency, seek stable funding, give regular updates to the community, and use peer review practices when choosing priorities. A strong community voice is definitely needed for regularized space astronomy funding for the CSA.

14. Adjournment

- **Motion to adjourn the AGM (Crabtree/Kirk): Carried.**