

# Canadian Astronomical Society Société Canadienne d'Astronomie

## Meeting of the Board of Directors via videoconference

Minutes for Oct. 13, 2020

### Present:

Sara Ellison (President)  
Samar Safi-Harb (Vice President)  
Judith Irwin (Secretary)  
Lewis Knee (Treasurer)  
Laura Parker (Director)  
Etienne Artigau (Director)  
Julie Hlavacek-Larrondo (Director)  
Ivana Damjanov (Director)  
Rob Thacker (Past President)

### Absent:

#### 1. Adoption of Agenda

Motion to adopt agenda: moved by Samar Safi-Harb and seconded by Lewis Knee. Passed.

#### 2. Approval of previous minutes

Motion to accept the minutes of Sept. 15, 2020: Moved by Etienne Artigau and seconded by Laura Parker. Passed.

#### 3. President's update

##### *NDRIO (AGM/RC update)*

CASCA has two official reps on the National Digital Research Infrastructure Organization (NDRIO). These are the CASCA president plus the Computation and Data Committee (CDC) chair, who is currently Catherine Lovekin. The first annual general meeting (AGM) was a few weeks ago. A Researcher Council (RC) has also been struck, consisting of 22 members, and Erik Rosolowsky is on this RC. Erik is also currently a member of the CASCA CDC.

***SKA (treaty progress, ACURA/AACS update, website)***

The SKA project is moving very quickly now. Australia has ratified the treaty and the last remaining country needing to ratify is the UK. That ratification is expected this month. The transition to an Intergovernmental Organization (IGO) is expected to occur this year.

At this point, Canada will become just an 'observer'. We are trying to formalize Canada's membership, but this would require a budget-request of the government. There are two options: 1) become an associate member, or 2) become a full treaty member.

The ACURA Advisory Council on the SKA (AACS) has been very active in discussing the issue. With a minority government, it is difficult to know how to proceed, but an argument can be made that it costs the same amount of money for both categories but category (1) means that you lose out on management, economic employment, tech advances, etc. So trying for 2) is best.

***TMT***

1). There was a recent CBC article on the prioritization of TMT in the LRP. The piece included interviews with astronomers as well as native Hawaiians and was a balanced piece that covered several diverse opinions in the current site debate.

2). CASCA/CATAC/LRPP received a letter from the OHA with a request to clarify in the final LRP that support for the TMT originally coming from the OHA in 2009 was rescinded in 2015. CASCA President has confirmed (on behalf of the LRPP and CATAC) to OHA that this will be done.

***Coalition update***

Lobbying is being carried out virtually.

Duncan Raynor, our lobbyist, is setting up virtual hill days with short zoom sessions. SKA is front and center. Duncan is trying to obtain more active interest from MacDonald, Dettwiler and Associates (MDA) because industry involvement is extremely important. In the past, Guy Nelson was our industrial representative for many years and he could make a strong case for industry and economic benefits. An analogous voice now for SKA would be helpful.

***JCMT update***

A financial crisis has been averted for now because \$5K has been injected from ACURA and \$40K has been injected from NRC to help alleviate the shortfall by the Chinese.

***Conference support competition***

CASCA sent a call for requests for conference support in the summer, with a deadline of October 1. A form was sent out with this call so that anyone wanting support could be clear about their budget, etc. The information was also sent out to Francine Ford, Executive Manager of the Canadian Association of Physicists (CAP) who sent the information out to their membership.

There were no applications by the deadline.

A request then came, after the deadline, for support for the Canadian Undergraduate Physics Conference to be held virtually in November, 2020. The organizers were sent the form and asked to fill it out by the time of this board meeting so that the board could discuss it. However, no application was received.

The secretary has asked the web developer to put the information about conference support on the web page for possible future requests.

#### *Astronomy and colonization course*

The registration deadline is now passed for this course which is being run by Hilding Neilson. Two sections will run, each with 10 registrants, so the numbers have worked out well, compared to the suggested maximum of 15 people per course. Both the CASCA president and past chair of the Equity and Inclusivity Committee have registered. There is a balanced mix of faculty, post-docs and students.

#### **4. Vice President's Update**

##### *AGM 2021*

Prior to the board meeting, the Vice President circulated a document from Dennis Crabtree, who is the Chair of the Online Organizing Committee (OOC). Ingrid Stairs is the Chair of the Scientific Organizing Committee (SOC). Both the OOC and SOC have now been constituted, with good representation from across the country.

The board had previously asked Dennis to look further into minimizing costs associated, in particular, because iPosters were expensive. Whova, starting in November, plans to incorporate posters for free. While waiting for that to be implemented, Slack may be an alternative; it is a good environment that is more affordable than iPosters, with an associated cost of \$5400 CAD assuming a maximum participation of 500. A decision will be made after discussions with the OOC and after Whova releases their poster platform.

Also, NRC computers can be used for hosting.

There was some discussion about the possibility of using fees for the virtual AGM as a fundraiser. However, the spirit of the By-Laws suggests that the AGM should be zero-net-sum. A modest registration fee should be charged, however, since costs are somewhat uncertain and are unlikely to be zero.

##### *Update on committees*

The CASCA website is now up-to-date in terms of committee membership. There are quite a few new members and changes in chairmanships.

The new post-doc committee is now being implemented and is chaired by Toby Brown.

There was some discussion as to whether various committees could enhance the CASCA website with material related to their committee. Several issues were discussed, such as: a possible imbalance of the the quantity of material committee-to-committee, possible statements that may go beyond or not reflect the official views of CASCA, whether there could be links to off-site pages, whether disclaimers need or should be present on the CASCA pages, and whether material needs to go through the Board before posting.

For now, the VP should have oversight of the web pages and keep an eye on them, if they outgrow the current setup. We may wish to revisit this discussion again at a later date and possibly develop

FROM SAMAR:

On the cost/posters item: Whova is something Dennis proposed at the earlier meeting (should have been summarized in the previous meeting and why this is a good platform for CASCA2021). The news here is that Whova plans to incorporate posters in Nov. (for free) and while waiting for that to be implemented, Slack may be a good alternative: it can provide a more affordable-than-iposters, but very good environment, for posters. The associated cost is \$5400 CAD assuming a max participation of 500. Decision will be made after discussions with the OC and after Whova releases their poster platform.

## 5. Secretary's update

### *Membership drive*

The membership drive is in full swing. As of this morning, the following payments have been made: 27 Retired + Students, 14 joint CASCA/CAP, 7 PDF + associate, 38 Ordinary, 1 5-year membership, and 1 5-year corporate/non-commercial. There have been two resignations.

A request was sent to Carter Rhea (GSC Vice-chair) to contact the graduate student representative at each institution so that the rep can ask all students to become CASCA members.

### *Call for IAU Memberships*

A call for IAU membership has been sent out on the CASCA exploder with a note to let the secretary know by November 2, if they are interested. These applications are to be discussed at the November board meeting.

There is a relatively new category called 'honorary member' with a different timeline and different rules. It is meant for non-professional astronomers who have made a contribution to astronomical research. We will follow up on this.

## 6. LRP Implementation Discussion

The Long Range Plan Implementation Committee (LRPIC) has been led by John Hutchings who has effectively carried this weighty dossier for the community for some years. The role of the LRPIC has been to give a voice to things that the actual document misses, although there has been no specific power associated with the LRPIC to make changes.

There was discussion about the need to and whether it could be more effective, whether it should change format, membership, whether we should start fresh, etc. We also need to start taking the first steps towards implementation discussions.

So many of the recommendations in the draft that we have seen are now society and community-related, rather than facilities alone. This is an evolution beyond the funding of facilities. It would make sense to engage the relevant CASCA committees in the process and be more proactive. The Board would need to rewrite some of the terms of reference, if that is the case.

Sara will discuss this issue with John.

## 7. Any other Business

None

## 8. Adjourn