

# Canadian Astronomical Society Société Canadienne d'Astronomie

## Meeting of the Board of Directors via videoconference

Minutes for Feb. 22, 2021

### Present:

Sara Ellison (President)  
Judith Irwin (Secretary)  
Lewis Knee (Treasurer)  
Laura Parker (Director)  
Rob Thacker (Past President)  
Don Hutton (Webmaster)

### Absent: Regrets from Nicole St-Louis (Director)

Regrets from Etienne Artigau (Director)  
Regrets from Ivana Damjanov (Director)

### 1. Adoption of Agenda

Moved by Samar and seconded by Laura. Passed.

### 2. Approval of minutes of the Jan. Board meeting

Moved by Lewis and seconded by Laura. Passed.

### 3. Website Committee Sub-Domains [Don Hutton]

Building on past discussions, some committees would like more freedom to enhance their web pages on the CASCA site. Some possibilities are to build subdomains, include break-out pages, clone the site, or redirect to a different machine.

The issue, though, is to ensure that the structure, access, and homogeneity of the current CASCA site is maintained and that there aren't marked changes from one committee to another. The possibility of including a sidebar on the left-hand side of committee pages was discussed, similar to what the American Astronomical society does. It is more straightforward to include a sidebar for all committee pages, rather than just one or two. However, it is still a considerable technical overhead that is not straightforward to manage.

However, the simplest is to add links to the pages as they are. The links could be at the top of the pages so that the interesting information is at or near the top and no scrolling is required to the page bottom. Samar will followup with the committee chairs and Don will prepare a prototype committee template webpage and send it to Samar, who will then seek the approval of committee chairs. Note: this is currently relevant to the Sustainability Committee and the EIC Committee.

[Don Hutton left the meeting at this point.]

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#### 4. President's Update [Sara]

##### *Long Range Plan:*

The original schedule indicated that a final typeset electronic version in English would be ready by Feb. 18. This has slipped a bit so the new deadline is the middle to end of next week. This also pushes back the hard copy deadline, probably to the end of March. Hard copies are mainly for Duncan Raynor/ACURA to distribute, including to university VPs.

The French translation will also likely come towards the end of this week, with hard copies in French to follow.

Judith is ready to request ISBNs as soon as the title for the French version has been finalized.

Bryan Gaensler and Pauline Barmby have been contacted by the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) to come and give them a presentation, which will probably be at the end of March. The CSA wanted to be briefed on the LRP consultation and engagement process. Sara will be attending this meeting.

##### *The Square Kilometre Array (SKA):*

The SKAO (the SKA Organization) has officially transitioned to SKAO (the SKA Observatory). Canada now has 'observer' status. It is not a 'member'. Canada has not made either a formal or an informal commitment at this time.

##### *Thirty-Meter Telescope (TMT):*

There is now a joint ACURA/CASCA communications committee, chaired by Kim Venn of the University of Victoria. This is a one-year pilot project which is the length of time that funding has been provided through ACURA for the communications officers. Two highly experienced communications officers have been hired: Jim Rutkowski and David Bieber. The primary mandate, for now, is to develop media resources mainly with a focus on the TMT.

##### *Coalition:*

Repeated requests to have an audience with Minister Freeland's office have paid off with one scheduled for early tomorrow (possibly Wednesday). The focus will be on the SKA.

A 'meet and greet' with the new president of the NRC, Mitch Davis, is also being set up.

The Gov't of Canada is looking for feedback on future projects for the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) and there is now an ad-hoc committee from CASCA to attend to this issue. Locke Spencer has asked Sam Lawler and Aaron Boley to provide input. The deadline is March 31.

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## 5. Vice President's update [Samar]

### *Annual General Meeting (AGM) Update*

The website for the AGM was launched on Feb. 1 and the abstract sub-site was set up in mid-Feb. April 9 is the deadline for posters, and March 15 for orals. We would like to let people know, if they are doing orals, by April 1, as per the AGM guidelines which state that a 6 week advance notice is needed. The goal is to inform successful oral presenters by April 1 and poster presenters by April 15.

Some updates to the AGM guidelines are still required to reflect community priorities, e.g. number of presentations for which a member can be first author.

A 90 minute Indigenous Cultural Awareness session is being organized. The first 60 minutes of this session will consist of a short talk, followed by Q&A, by Bob Joseph, the author of "21 Things You Didn't Know About the Indian Act". The last 30 minutes will consist of a panel discussion that is currently being organized. CASCA2021 attendees will be provided with a code to download an electronic version of Bob Joseph's book, with the cost covered by the CASCA2021 budget.

There have been requests for six townhalls, as well as a request for a poster session on mega-constellations of small satellites.

Three evening events are: the Helen Sawyer Hogg (HSH) Public Lecture, a games night with 'Among Us', and the CASCA 'banquet'. The banquet will use Remo. The HSH lecture will be streamed via YouTube and Facebook to reach as large an audience as possible.

This is CASCA's 50th anniversary and the AGM has a number of ideas as to how to celebrate at the AGM. Their planning includes:

1. Gordon Walker giving a talk at the banquet on 50 years of CASCA and Canadian Astronomy.
2. A CASCA's 50th commemorative coin made for all CASCA2021 attendees.
3. Video recollections on the formation of CASCA will be requested from charter members that are still current members. In addition, 'futurecast' videos will be requested from graduate students and PDFs, asking them to share their thoughts on Canadian astronomy in 2071. A collection of these photos will be shown during the banquet.
4. The Heritage Committee will produce short bios of the Charter members who are, sadly, no longer with us.
5. CASCA members will be asked to submit 50th anniversary Zoom backgrounds that people can use. There will be a "People's Choice" contest to select the best Zoom background.

Regarding point two, the organizers have asked whether coins should be sent to all CASCA members, whether they register for the AGM or not. Doing this for all CASCA members could be very time consuming, expensive because of both the coins and postage, and may not be fully appreciated by those who receive them. As a result, the Board is not in favour of extending such an initiative to all members. There could also be other ways of 'commemorating' the event.

This conversation extended to ideas for 50th anniversary celebrations that are not necessarily tied to the AGM. Judith suggests a press release celebrating 50 years of accomplishments by Canadian astronomers. Sara will reach out to our press officer, Leslie Sage, to see what is possible. The Heritage Committee should also be involved in this process.

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## *LCRIC, JCSA, GAC Membership*

The new LCRIC Committee (LRP Community Recommendation Implementation Committee) Terms of Reference (ToR) have been finalized. The Chair is Christine Wilson, and Brenda Matthews is a confirmed member as the LRP panel representative. The Board was presented with a long-list of names for possible members and asked if any changes are required. The Board approved the long-list. The Board notes that the ‘nominal’ term is 3 years, but some staggering of terms is desirable so that people are not rotating off at the same time.

A draft ToR has also been drawn up for the Joint Committee on Space Astronomy (JCSA). This draft will be circulated by email to the Board for feedback. This is a slightly different committee in that both CASCA and the CSA should have roughly equal input.

Membership on the JCSA and also that GAC (Ground-based Astronomy Committee) was also discussed because there will be rotations off these committees. Again, the JCSA is somewhat different from other committees because the CSA does security screens. Samar is following up on these.

### **6. Treasurer’s corner [Lewis]**

Lewis and our administrator, Jessica, would like to start with the auditing process, a bit earlier than has occurred in previous years. However, since the auditor needs to be voted on at the AGM each year, Lewis was wondering whether this process can begin before the AGM. The Board noted that the current auditor was voted on properly at the last AGM and is still in place at least until the next vote, so starting the auditing process should be fine.

### **7. EPO/Westar [Laura]**

The Education and Public Outreach (EPO) Committee notes that we did not spend any Westar funds last year and were wondering if the money can be used for something slightly different from talks, e.g. training of speakers in remote communities. Currently, what is written for the Westar bequest is rather vague. Rob will work with Rob Cockroft, Chair of the Westar subcommittee of the EPO, to develop a clearer ToR and ensure that these go onto the CASCA Westar web page. [Note added: Rob Thacker forwarded the original documents to Sara on this issue. The ToR are not really web-age suitable, as they are written quite differently from the other committees. Sara has forwarded a copy to our administrator, Jessica, so that the administrator always has a copy.]

### **8. Charity Initiatives**

CASCATrust currently has a low level of donations. An earlier action item was to try to identify more concrete charities that could be advertised so that CASCA members become more engaged and donate to those causes. As time was running out during this meeting, a call for suggestions by email is proposed. If nothing comes up right now, we can keep this idea on the back burner for future consideration, but it would be removed from the ‘action items’ list.

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**9. Any other Business, Move to adjourn**

No other business. Moved by Samar and seconded by Lewis to adjourn. Passed.