

Canadian Astronomical Society Société Canadienne d'Astronomie

Meeting of the Board of Directors via videoconference

Minutes for Jan. 18, 2021

Present:

Sara Ellison (President)
Judith Irwin (Secretary)
Lewis Knee (Treasurer)
Ivana Damjanov (Director)
Laura Parker (Director)
Etienne Artigau (Director)
Nicole St-Louis (Director)
Rob Thacker (Past President)

Absent: Regrets from Samar Safi-Harb (Vice President)

1. Adoption of Agenda

Moved by Laura and seconded by Etienne to accept the modified agenda. Passed.

2. Approval of minutes of the Dec. Board meeting

Moved by Laura and seconded by Ivana to approve the minutes. Passed.

3. President's Update [Sara]

Coalition Update

A meeting was held with officials in the Finance Department. At the meeting were Sara, Don Brooks, Duncan Raynor, Guy Nelson, Kristine Spekkens, and a spokesperson from MDA Canada corporation, Dave Stephens.

The main topic was the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) because of the time frame. Finance officials seemed well briefed about the project and aware of the economic benefits to Canada, such as jobs, construction and industry contracts. Canada currently has a preliminary contract to build the SKA correlator, something for which we have much experience in the country. However, this is contingent on Canada's financial commitment to the SKA. If such is not made (likely by July), the contract will go elsewhere.

A complication is the resignation of Minister Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, who has just been replaced by Francois-Philippe Champagne. Future meetings are being planned with the Dept. of Finance and Minister Champagne's office.

A request for funding (an 'ask') will have to come from NRC of order 290 million Can\$ over a 10-year period, with a one-third split, i.e. 1/3 to construction, 1/3 for operations, and 1/3 for a regional data center.

Graduate deadline coordination with the Canadian Association of Physicists (CAP)

The CAP is in favour of a deadline, coordinated with CASCA, and are reaching out to their membership now. It is too late for coordination in the current round of applications, but it could be in place for 2022.

CASCA/ACURA TMT Advisory Committee (CATAC)

Sara reported on the most recent meeting that she attended.

The TMT project scientist, Gary Saunders, retired in December, and has been replaced by Fengchuan Liu.

The University of Hawaii at Hilo is cutting 15 programs due to budgetary distress. One of them is the astronomy program!

Michael Balogh has proposed that the CATAC brainstorm as to the goals that they hope to achieve this year.

4. Long Range Plan (LRP) [Sara/Rob/Samar]

LRP Community Recommendation Implementation Committee (LCRIC) Terms of Reference (ToR) and membership

Rob, Sara, and Christine Wilson (chair of the new LCRIC committee) iterated on a ToR for this committee. The result was circulated amongst the Board by email. Moved by Nicole and seconded by Lewis that we should adopt the ToR, as circulated. Passed.

Sara will work with Samar and Chris to finalize the names of the inaugural committee members, to be in place by the end of March.

Ground-based Astronomy Committee (GAC) and Joint Committee on Space Astronomy (JCSA) ToR and membership

Discussions are ongoing as to whether some restructuring of membership and/or ToR is required in the light of the new LCRIC.

Future of the LRPIC

Now that we have the new LCRIC, which replaces and expands upon the previous LRPIC, the Board discussed whether the LRPIC should be terminated as a committee. The issue is that the LRP document refers repeatedly to the LRPIC, not the LCRIC.

After some discussion, it was agreed upon that the old LRPIC should simply be disbanded, but that this should not occur until the LCRIC membership is firm.

5. Undergraduate membership [Rob]

There is growing interest in participation of undergraduate students in CASA and, indeed, they are encouraged to make presentations at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Rob proposes that we create a new category of membership for undergraduate students who have been actively engaged in astronomical research. Such students would be those who have done an honours thesis project in astronomy or who have engaged in a summer work term involving astronomical research, or equivalent. Students who are only registered in an astronomy program would not qualify unless they are actively involved in research. A nominal fee (e.g. \$20) per year would be levied.

Because undergraduates may shift their academic focus, a limited term of one year should be imposed with students being required to re-apply each year. The nomination procedure would be similar to what we currently require for graduate students. A student who fails to re-apply would automatically lose membership in September of the following year, which is the time of our usual membership drive campaign.

6. IAU Honorary memberships [Judith]

The process of calling for nominations to be an honorary member of the IAU has begun. Only one individual can be nominated per year, per country. The call has gone out on the CASCA exploder, to RASC members, and to CEGEPs in Quebec. The deadline for application to secretary@casca.ca is February 1, 2021. We need to choose an application to put forward, plus write a covering letter of support to the IAU by March 15.

Since the call for nominations has been sent to, of order, 6000 people, we need to be ready to review these applications early in February. An ad-hoc committee has been set up, consisting of Judith, Etienne, Rob, and Laura, to do this.

In the event that we receive no applications, we also need to be ready to nominate someone, ourselves.

7. Any other Business, Move to adjourn

No other business.

Moved by Ivana and seconded by Nicole to adjourn. Passed.