

CATAC report to CASCA Board

April 29, 2021

Membership

Michael Balogh (University of Waterloo), Chair
Bob Abraham (University of Toronto; TIO SAC)
Stefi Baum (University of Manitoba)
Laura Ferrarese (NRC)
David Lafrenière (Université de Montréal)
Harvey Richer (UBC)
Kristine Spekkens (RMC)

Luc Simard (Director General of NRC-HAA, non-voting, ex-officio)
Don Brooks (Executive Director of ACURA, non-voting, ex-officio)
Sara Ellison (CASCA President, non-voting, ex-officio)
Kim Venn (TIO Board, non-voting, ex-officio)
Stan Metchev (TIO SAC, non-voting, ex-officio)
Tim Davidge (TIO SAC Canadian co-chair; NRC, observer)
Greg Fahlman (NRC, observer)

CATAC Activities

CATAC continues to meet almost weekly, via telecon. A record of selected meetings is on our [web page](#) and, where possible, reports are shared publicly. Updates are provided in every issue of eCassiopeia. Here we provide a brief summary of notable activities over the last six months.

In anticipation of a top ranking in the upcoming US Astro2020 review, the Project has been preparing for the comprehensive NSF review process that would follow. This review will include plans for Operations. The current Operations Plan for the telescope envisions a baseline set of minimum services provided by the Observatory, with enhanced capabilities being provided by partners according to their interests and means. The first concrete example of this has arisen, as NSF is funding NOIRLab to develop a broad, US-ELT Program¹ (USELTP) Platform (UPP) as part of the USELTP. This is a comprehensive suite of services that includes proposal preparation and observation planning (phase 1 and 2), time allocation management, observation scheduling, data pipeline processing, archiving and analysis tools. The aim is to provide uniform interfaces to both TMT and GMT, and the services will be made available to all partners in those projects.

Prompted by both the upcoming NSF review and the NOIRLab activity, CATAC reviewed the existing Operations Plan Document and Operations Requirement Document. We also met with Mark Dickinson (NOIRLab) and Jeremy Weirich (AURA, VP Corporate Strategy) on March 25, to learn more about those ongoing efforts. Upon reviewing this information, CATAC prepared a report containing 15 recommendations, that was submitted to CASCA, ACURA and the Canadian TIO SAC/Board representatives on April 14. The report makes

¹ The US ELT Program (US-ELTP) is a joint endeavour of NSF's NOIRLab, TIO and GMTO with the aim of securing sufficient federal funding to complete both TMT and GMT, and to make at least 25% of the observing time available for open access by the whole US community.

recommendations relating to the regular review and updating of the Operations Plan, time allocation, observing modes, and data archiving, planning and processing software. While the report is currently confidential, we plan to make it publicly available following any feedback.

The CATAAC Chair has also participated in the new CASCA/ACURA Communications team, chaired by Kim Venn. This team, with its professional consultants, has provided excellent advice that is helping to ensure CASCA, ACURA and CATAAC have consistent and effective messaging.

Project update

- Broad, community-led discussions continue to take place in Hawaii. A significant part of this is the informal consultation process being led by the NSF; CATAAC understands that the involvement of the NSF has been broadly welcomed by most of the TMT stakeholders in Hawaii.
- As detailed in our last report, the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) launched a review of the University of Hawaii (UH) management of Maunakea as part of the Master Lease renewal process, last May. The [final report](#) was released on Dec 31. This evaluation found that the Office of Mauna Kea Management (OMKM) has made significant progress in several areas, and in particular is, in many regards, “effectively managing the activities and uses on Mauna Kea to better protect the natural and cultural resources”. However, they also found that OMKM has not effectively implemented the Comprehensive Management Plan in three major areas: timely adoption of administrative rules; consultation with members of the Native Hawaiian community on matters related to cultural and resources issues; and engagement with the community on education and outreach efforts.
 - On Feb 4, House Speaker Scott Saiki announced that he would like to see a new management structure of Mauna Kea to replace UH. UH issued a [strong response](#), defending their commitment to improving stewardship of Maunakea.
 - Following passage of House Resolution 33, a [Working Group is being formed](#) to “Develop Recommendations for a Governance and Management Structure for Maunakea”. This group will consist of 15 members:
 - four members have been identified, representing the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, the state Board of Land and Natural Resources, the UH Board of Regents and the Maunakea Observatories.
 - Seven other members will be Native Hawaiians nominated by Native Hawaiian groups or organizations. The deadline for nominations was extended to April 26.
 - Three of the remaining members will be members of the state House of Representatives. Those members, and the chair, will be selected by House Speaker Scott Saiki.
 - The process is not universally supported and has been [criticized](#) by some of the TMT opponents.
- The instrument team for the Wide Field Optical Spectrograph has been reconstituted, as the PI Kevin Bundy stepped down last November. Chuck Steidel (Caltech) is now the PI of the project, and Eric Peng (KIAA-PKU) is the Project Scientist.

- The next major milestone for TMT is almost upon us: release of the US Astro2020 Decadal recommendations, expected to be released in early June. CATAC considers it likely that this process will make recommendations that ensure the US will have a significant level of 30-m class telescope access. However, this could take a number of different forms, with a variety of implications for Canadian access to a Very Large Optical Telescope (VLOT), and our own LRP recommendation #1 about development of guiding principles for the location of astronomical facilities. Depending on the outcome, there may be a need for broad consultation and community input, followed by a decision or statement of intent. CATAC is ready to lead and/or participate in that process as most relevant.

Meetings and Important dates

- TMT Science forum June 26-29, 2022 in Vancouver.