

# CASCA EPO Committee | December 2021 Report

Submitted by Nathalie Ouellette (Chair) on behalf of the EPO Committee

This report covers the activities of CASCA's Education and Public Outreach (EPO) Committee over the period from May 1 2021 to December 1 2021. The committee met (online) twice during this period of time: August 9th 2021 and October 22nd 2021.

## 1. Current Membership

**Chair:** Nathalie Ouellette (2019-2022), Université de Montréal

Frédérique Baron (2019-2022) Université de Montréal

Mike Chen (2020-2023) University of Victoria

Robert Cockcroft (2014-2023) University of Western Ontario, **Chair of Westar Lecture**

### **Subcommittee**

Simran Nerval (2021-2022) Queen's University, **GSC Representative**

Phil Langill (2014-2023) Rothney Astrophysical Observatory/University of Calgary

Laura Parker (2020-2023) McMaster University, **Board Representative**

Jesse Rogerson (2020-2023) York University, **Chair of Social Media Subcommittee**

Christa Van Laerhoven (2020-2023) University of British Columbia

**ex-officio:** Julie Bolduc-Duval, Discover the Universe

**ex-officio:** Leslie Sage, CASCA Press Officer

## 2. Changes to the membership

The following committee member has a term that has come to an end and chose not to renew their membership: **Sharon Morsink**. Sharon was also the IAU OAO National Coordinator and will be stepping down from this position gradually in the next few months. Many thanks to Sharon for all her work on the committee for the last 5 years, we look forward to working with her on her new role as part of the LCRIC.

**Simran Nerval** has joined the EPO Committee as our GSC Representative.

There are a few openings for new members in the committee. As the process surrounding membership to a committee currently under review by the CASCA Board is clarified, we will recruit new members accordingly in 2022.

Previous committee member and **IAU OAO National Coordinator** Sharon Morsink will be helping us to write a Call for a new IAU OAO NC. This will hopefully be done by the end of 2021. We will then send it out to the CASCA exploder list after getting CASCA Board approval in early 2021. The selected IAU OAO NC would de facto be a member of the CASCA EPO Committee. We have obtained permission from the CASCA Board to recruit this particular committee member this way before the general committee recruitment guidelines are clarified.

## 3. Committee activities

### **a. Lookback on AstroComm 2021 Workshop**

The Centre for Research in Astrophysics of Quebec organised a science communication workshop for astronomers on June 16th from 1pm to 5pm (EDT). The workshop was delivered by Nathalie Ouellette (Université de Montréal), Julie Bolduc-Duval (Discover the Universe) and other instructors (including many EPO Committee members and urban astronomer Plateau Astro). The virtual workshop lasted 4 hours. About 50 undergrad students, grad students and postdocs attended. Many different things were covered: outreach for different audiences, presentations tips, social media, sidewalk astronomy, media training, educational resources. The format was a mix of lectures, “hands-on” exercises and discussion. We received feedback from about 20 participants, and it was overwhelmingly positive. We hope to offer this science communication workshop in some format in the future!

For more information on AstroComm 2021, refer to the CRAQ website: <http://craq-astro.ca/activities/astrocomm-2021-workshop/>

### **b. 2021/2024 Solar Eclipses**

For **2021**, iREx and partners distributed glasses and viewers in the Montreal area. The weather was good and there were several unofficial gatherings that took place in parks across the city. DU and the Dunlap Institute focused on the Northern communities along the path of annularity.

For **2024**, there are several initiatives at different levels (nationally with a RASC-led Taskforce, in Ontario, in Quebec). It will be important to have open communication between these different efforts. The QC group has put together a broad two-pager that describes what the eclipse is, when it's happening, and why there is an immediate need to mobilise resources for the event (see the PDF here: ). <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uZoe4e05rGCz3L4M4DoN-hgfUIYFgzA6/view?usp=sharing>). The letter is now being sent to key stakeholders in Quebec. The Ontario taskforce, with leadership at Dunlap, is also very active and is currently discussing fundraising possibilities for millions of eclipse glasses, among other things. There is a national taskforce currently led by Randy Atwood (previously RASC President), and Nathalie and Julie are members, with Jesse in contact with the group as well. It would be good to have a more cohesive national approach to optimise funding opportunities and reach more remote communities (could be a good Westar opportunity?), which could in part be done through good branding. In order to generate interest, Phil suggested a photography contest for the eclipse that could be hosted on an online website. The committee is discussing ways for CASCA to display more leadership on this, while considering everyone's busy schedules and the current initiatives already underway.

### **c. Webb Telescope Activities**

Webb activities have really reamped up ahead of the target launch date of December 22 2021. UdeM and the Canadian Space Agency co-organised an awareness campaign through a series of “Webb 101” webinars for different important stakeholders including professional astronomers, amateur astronomers, science centres and educators across Canada. The CSA also released a number of resources including a Speaker's Kit on their website: <https://asc-csa.gc.ca/eng/satellites/jwst/default.asp>. Nathalie has also created a Webb Outreach Help Desk for Canadian astronomers: [http://jwst.astro.umontreal.ca/?page\\_id=1326](http://jwst.astro.umontreal.ca/?page_id=1326). Finally, the Webb team is building a

catalogue of “Canadian Webb Ambassadors”, astronomers who could connect with local-to-them classrooms, science centres, astronomy clubs, etc. and pick up media requests to talk about Webb in the upcoming year and beyond which includes the launch, commissioning, release of first images and start of science operations of Webb. The sign-up form can be found here: <https://forms.gle/q6MewRAee8sVGCoJ7>.

#### **d. EPO Activity Reporting Form**

While Phil was Chair, the University of Calgary graciously agreed to host this form that collected EPO activities from all CASCA members. Yearly reminders were sent out through the CASCA exploder. There was a need to move this form to a more permanent, potentially CASCA-affiliated hosting location, but these discussions were interrupted in part due to COVID, and the form hasn't been shared in a while. Statistics from this form were previously used in the LRP EPO community paper and shows that, even if they are incomplete, CASCA members are very active in outreach. Phil is asking if UCalgary would agree to host the form one last year (with a call sent out near the end of the year), and we will pick up the conversation early in 2022 to discuss where else (such as the CASCA website) the form could be hosted.

### **4. Subcommittee reports**

#### **a. CASCA Westar Lectureship Subcommittee**

**Chair:** Rob Cockcroft

**Members:** Frédérique Baron, Christa Van Laerhoven, Terry Bridges (EIC Representative)

**Past/Ongoing Westar visits:** For 2021, in addition to Doug Johnstone's virtual talk and virtual school visit in Whitehorse, Stan Metchev also gave a virtual talk and virtual school visit in Inuvik. The Mangilaluk School in Tuktoyaktuk, Canada received their "Telescope For All" from the IAU competition. This group is still waiting for an in-person Westar visit, and we are planning to provide support with the telescope at that time.

**Future visits:** In response to the LRP 2020 recommendation for the CWL, the CWL subcommittee, in consultation with the EPO and LCRIC committees, have put forward a new proposal to begin the process of redesigning the CWL. This redesign will involve the CWL subcommittee hosting a series of consultations from a broader Westar Advisory Group (drawn from individuals both inside and outside the CASCA membership). These consultations will start in late 2021/early 2022, and honoraria will be paid to those in the Westar Advisory Group, but not in the CWL subcommittee.

#### **b. IAU activities**

**Lead:** None

As mentioned above, we need to recruit a new **IAU OAO National Coordinator**. This will hopefully be done early next year.

#### **c. Discover the Universe**

**Lead:** Julie Bolduc-Duval

New workshops were deployed in the Spring, Summer and Fall. This included two great webinars (one in French, one in English) with Farah Alibay, NASA engineer on the Perseverance mission. June 2021 eclipse activities went well. DU and Dunlap sent out glasses to Northern communities along the path of annularity. DU has been extremely busy in the last little bit and is looking to re-examine its scope and purpose as it evolves moving forward.

#### **d. Social Media Subcommittee**

**Chair:** Jesse Rogerson

**Members:** Mike Chen, Christa Van Laerhoven

The Social Media Subcommittee presented a poster at the 2021 CASCA AGM, in part to recruit some help in creating social media content. They received some interest from two students who could help with content creation. Jesse, Nathalie and Laura worked on developing a submission form for the CASCA website where members could submit social media items to be posted on CASCA's platforms. This should be announced via the CASCA exploder in 2022 along with a call for volunteers who would help for content creation, pending CASCA Board approval. Note that these individuals would not be members of the CASCA EPO Committee. Passwords and accesses to CASCA's Facebook and Twitter have been transferred over: Laura, Jesse and Nathalie are the only ones with access.

The SM Subcommittee has been studying how to optimise the workflow of receiving and posting social media items. Tools that would be used include the CASCA EPO Slack channel and a Google Sheets document. The team would also like to use HootSuite, but would need a CASCA social media email address for this (this would be useful for other purposes as well, such as receiving submitted news items from the CASCA website submission form).