

Canadian Astronomical Society Société Canadienne d'Astronomie

Meeting of the Board of Directors via videoconference

Minutes for Nov. 10, 2021

Present:

Board Members:

Rob Thacker (Acting President)
Erik Rosolowsky (Acting Vice President)
Judith Irwin (Secretary)
Lewis Knee (Treasurer)
Laura Parker (Director)
Nicole St-Louis (Director)
Étienne Artigau (Director)

Absent: Regrets from Ivana Damjanov (Director)

1. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted by consensus, with the addition of two items under Section 8, below.

2. Minutes from Oct. 6 meeting

Moved by Erik and seconded by Nicole to accept the minutes from the Oct.6 meeting. Passed.

3. SKA update

It was moved by Rob and seconded by Étienne to hold Sections 3 and 4 of this meeting in camera. Passed.

4. President's Report

After discussion, moved by Rob and seconded by Lewis to come out of the in-camera session. Passed.

5. Vice President's Report

Erik thanks the Board for handling restaffing of some committees via earlier email. Notification regarding awards has been sent out on the CASCA email exploder. We will need one massive solicitation for committee membership later this year.

There was discussion about how to make the committees more streamlined and professional. Samar Safi-Harb had earlier written a draft document on committee management and she had also written guidelines for Chairs. The Board has already seen these draft documents and approved them. Erik has both documents now and can move forward with them, pending his review and/or updates. Rob will check the documents to see whether there has been any change in Samar's vision.

Currently, the committees are very large and this can lead to 'bystander' problems where individuals do not feel engaged. Large committees are also not conducive to begin effective. We should aim for 6 members on committees (the Graduate Student Committee can be an exception).

The EIC and EPO committees (at least) want to move to an 'open call' for committee membership. This could be the new format for all committees going forward. In the process, we need to be very sensitive to equity and diversity issues.

Erik will write a draft proposal for our discussion at our next Board meeting.

6. Discussion of Office Administration Contract

The office administrator contract expires at the end of the year. The Board had previously approved an annual increase of 2.5% per annum for this position.

Moved by Lewis and seconded by Laura to offer another two-year contract to our current office administrator with a pay raise of 2.5%. Passed.

7. Westar proposal from EPO (Rob Cockcroft to join and discuss)

Rob Cockcroft, Chair of the EPO Westar Subcommittee, joined the Board meeting at this point. He made a presentation to the Board based on a draft document called "CASCA-Westar Lectureship LRP Recommendation Update Proposal". This document is in response to the LRP 2020 recommendation that states

"We recommend that CASCA and its EPO committee revise and expand the CASCA-Westar Lectureship. The mandate of the CASCA-Westar Lectureship to support remote and underserved communities should be made explicit, and participants in the program should have training and support available to build connections with these communities." The intention is to focus on Indigenous communities.

Because of COVID, there were two virtual presentations in 2021, and currently we have not spent the normally allocated funds.

The Board emphasized that we need to revitalize this program and the LRP discussion is the momentum needed to do this. However, we need to consult regarding how to access Westar funds. We need to be in compliance with the CASCA Bylaws, as well as the original agreement as to how Westar funds are meant to be used. For example, we need to know whether honoraria can be used for consultants or whether they are meant to be for speakers only. Rob will look into the Bylaws.

Rob moves that we go forward with the process. Seconded by Erik. Passed.

8. Any Other Business

There was discussion as to whether individual universities should use the CASCA exploder to advertise their astronomy graduate student recruitment programs. In summary, the Board felt that this was appropriate. If, in the future, many universities want to do the same, we might consider a bundling into single message that gives information on recruitment for a number of universities.

Some casca members have missed receiving email messages. Judith has contacted the web-master to check into this issue.

9. Adjourn

Moved by Rob and seconded by Lewis to adjourn the meeting. Passed.