

Canadian Astronomical Society Société Canadienne d'Astronomie

Meeting of the Board of Directors via videoconference

Minutes for Feb. 8, 2022

Present:

Board Members:

Rob Thacker (Acting President)
Judith Irwin (Secretary)
Lewis Knee (Treasurer)
Laura Parker (Director)
Étienne Artigau (Director)
Julie Hlavacek-Larrondo (Director)
Ivana Damjanov (Director)
Erik Rosolowsky (Acting Vice-President)

1. Adoption of Agenda

Moved by Rob and seconded by Étienne to adopt the agenda. Passed.

2. Minutes from Jan. 11, 2022 Board meeting

Moved by Ivana and seconded by Erik to adopt the minutes from the previous Board meeting. Passed.

3. President's Report

a) Coalition update

Two meetings have been held. One was with Marie-Hélène Légaré, Director General at Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED). The second one was with the office of François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry. The meetings focussed on the Square Kilometre Array (SKA). The meetings went well, listeners were receptive, and Kristine Spekkens did a terrific job of answering questions. Other meetings are coming up in February and probably into March as well.

b) Jan 20th/2022 meeting with Patrick Côté and John Hutchings, re CASTOR

This meeting involved an open discussion with Pat and John regarding CASTOR, which is a wide-field UV/blue-optical space telescope that was identified in LRP 2020 as Canada's top priority in space astronomy in the 2020s. The design study will finish in 2023 so it is not quite ready for government lobbying yet, but we will do so when the timing is right.

c) LCRIC-JCSA-GAC meeting summary

Last week, Rob had a meeting with these three committees.

Chris Wilson summarized the activities with LCRIC (Long Range Plan Community Recommendations Implementation Committee). Progress has been made (though slowly because of Covid) regarding how we assess facilities and address indigenous land issues. Community consultations are going ahead. The actions of the Australians with respect to SKA provides a good model. Equity, diversity and inclusivity, as well as indigenous issues have been enshrined into the SKA convention from the beginning.

The winter meeting of the JCSA (Joint Committee on Space Astronomy) will be held on the 15th. This is a 3-hour meeting.

The GAC (Ground-based Astronomy Committee) has been very active. CFHT recommendations for long programs were made in the fall.

Moved by Rob and seconded by Erik to go in-camera. Passed.

Moved by Rob and seconded by Laura to come out-of-camera. Passed.

d) Update on Westar consultations

Rob Cockroft, on behalf of the Education and Public Outreach Committee (EPO), is doing a great job with Westar lectures. The Board had previously approved the concept of honoraria.

4. Vice-President's Report

Erik has completed the document that was started by Samar to outline policies and guidelines for CASCA committees. The Board discussed confidentiality as well as the process for setting up committee membership. Because every committee may be discussing sensitive issues, detailed discussions at the committee level should be confidential by default. In any event, all committees release their reports publicly, after Board approval. Regarding committee membership, more open calls can be made to the community and volunteers are welcome. However, the document makes it clear that the appointment is made by the Board and that committee membership by volunteers is not guaranteed.

Annual General Meeting (AGM) activities are proceeding. The 2022 meeting has shifted from the original idea of a hybrid meeting to a meeting that is completely online. The organizers are working on setting up registration at this point.

5. Report from EPO - Laura Parker

Clarity was requested as to when the new policy regarding committees would start because they affect the term of the chair of the EPO. A call to replace Sharon Morsink as the Canadian National Outreach Coordinator (NOC) for the IAU will go out on the exploder later this week. The NOC should be a ex-officio member of the EPO

There was also some discussion about access to the CASCA website in order to speed up various postings. Committee Chairs should have access, provided they adhere to the social media policy.

6. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

7. Discussion with Pauline Barmby & Michael Balogh

Pauline Barmby and Michael Balogh joined the meeting at 1:43. The Secretary also left the meeting due to internet problems. The following minutes were contributed by Rob Thacker.

There was first a general discussion about CASCA's inability to set professional and program expectations since it does not audit or certify university programs. This evolved into a discussion over the financial model and the fact that it had not changed in many years was ultimately a limiting factor in what the Society can achieve. The Board noted that on some aspects of concern a review and streamlining, particularly around committee Terms of Reference, activities and reporting, was already underway and being spearheaded by the Vice-President. An organizational review was suggested that could look at various aspects of operation of volunteer societies, consider CASCA's current structure and goals, and then make suggestions for improvement. The Board agreed that this is worthwhile considering. The President agreed to write a letter to the Society outlining the challenges from his perspective and to suggest this be part of a major discussion at the AGM business meeting.

8. Adjourn

Moved by Rob and seconded by Ivana, to adjourn. Passed.