

Recommendations for next year's Awards Committee:

As the chair of the Awards Committee and also a member of the CASCA EIC Committee, my top concern is that it's very obvious from looking at the list of past CASCA award winners that the winners do not represent our diverse membership. In consultation with the EIC and the Awards Committee members, I have several recommendations for how to have our nominations and award winners better reflect the makeup of our CASCA membership along many axes of diversity.

-Allow self-nominations: AAS and APS both now allow self-nominations. CASCA currently requires 1-2 letter writers per award, who have to be CASCA members in good standing, which can be pretty restrictive for some potential nominees. Evaluating self-nominations alongside traditional nominations from nominators will definitely be a little odd for the Awards Committee at first, but after hearing about experiences in other science organizations, I think it will be easy for CASCA to adjust. There are already guidelines posted on the CASCA website https://casca.ca/?page_id=14982 that will allow either nomination or self-nomination.

-Require some sort of diversity awareness training for Awards Committee members: the EIC is hoping to develop/find a short video and discussion guidelines that can be worked through in a one hour long meeting. Helping the members of the Awards Committee to be better aware of their unconscious biases will help with fair assessment of nominations. (The EIC is also planning to make this training available to any CASCA committee that makes decisions on awards/talks/etc).

-Solicit diverse nominations: AGU has a process in place where there is a full committee dedicated to nominating diverse people for awards. CASCA is not big enough to do that, but perhaps just a brainstorming session within the EIC each year well before the nomination deadline can identify a few diverse candidates, and then the EIC can contact the institutions of these potential nominees to solicit nomination letters for them.

-Automatically reconsider nomination packages for 2 or 3 years: this will save people work so they don't have to re-nominate people, but the whole package will be considered 2 or 3 times. Currently, this sometimes happens, and sometimes does not.

-Mid-January deadline for nominations: many people expressed that they were quite burnt-out by the end of December and unable to submit a nomination letter after a ridiculously hard slog of a semester. With a deadline in mid-January, the Awards Committee should still have enough time to read through the packages by mid-February, make decisions at the end of February, and give their choices to the CASCA Board by the beginning of March. I think this change in date would increase the number of nominations for awards.

-Establish an award for postdocs: Postdoctoral fellows in Canadian astronomy are well-documented to produce a disproportionately large fraction of our published research, while precariously employed in temporary positions. Establishing an award specifically for postdocs would be a great step toward making postdocs feel more welcome and appreciated, as well as better connected to the Canadian astronomy community.