

Report for the CASCA Board Equity and Inclusivity Committee 9 May 2022

1. Summary and Requests:

- A. This report summarizes the activities of the EIC from December 2021 – April 2022.
- B. In accordance with the CASCA Committee Guidelines, a new EIC chair will be selected from continuing members by consensus of that group (item 2B).
- C. **The EIC members who participated in facilitated sessions with Bridget Brownlow request** that the Board consider whether or not the guidelines that they drafted could be useful to other CASCA committees (item 3A + Appendix A).
- D. **The EIC recommends** that the Board accept the recommendations made by the Awards Committee chair to improve EDI among CASCA awards recipients. The EIC is keen to assist in their implementation if that would be helpful to the Board and to the Awards Committee (item 3D + Appendix B).

2. Composition:

Continuing EIC members:

Arif Babul (UVic): Feb 2021 - May 2024

Ivana Damjanov (SMU, outgoing Board rep): Feb 2021 - May 2023

Sam Lawler (U. Regina): Sept 2020 - May 2023

Kim Venn (UVic): Sept 2020 - May 2023

Members rotating off the EIC:

Terry Bridges (Okanagan College): May 2019 - May 2022

Daryl Haggard (McGill): May 2018 - May 2022

René Doyon (U. Montréal): Nov 2019 - May 2022

Simran Nerval (U. Toronto, GSC rep): Sept 2021 - May 2022

Kristine Spekkens (RMC/Queen's, Chair): May 2016 - May 2022

- A. The composition of the EIC is unchanged from the last report. While Ivana's EIC term extends until May 2023, the end of her Board term in May 2022 implies that a new Board rep is needed. Thanks to all EIC members for their service!
- B. In accordance with the CASCA Committee Guidelines, a new EIC chair will be selected from continuing members by consensus of that group. Ivana is coordinating that process.

3. Activities from Dec 2021 – Apr 2022:

- A. The EIC thanks the Board for providing EIC members with the opportunity to work with conflict resolution specialist Bridget Brownlow (BA, MA, Con.Res.Cert.). EIC members had the option to meet individually with Bridget and/or participate in facilitated group sessions; participation was voluntary. The participation of the CASCA President and VP in some of the facilitated sessions was appreciated. One outcome of the facilitated sessions is a set of draft guidelines to encourage constructive communication, promote goodwill, and mitigate and/or effectively address conflict when it arises. These guidelines are in Appendix A of this report, and are also included in the summary that will be provided to the Board and to the EIC by Bridget. It is hoped that incoming EIC members will be given an opportunity to review the draft guidelines. Should the post-AGM EIC accept the guidelines, it is recommended that they be posted on the CASCA website alongside the EIC Terms of Reference. The EIC members who participated in the facilitated sessions request that the Board consider whether or not the draft guidelines could be useful to other CASCA committees.
- B. The EIC thanks the Board for accepting its request to provide EDI-related feedback on a draft of the CASCA AGM invited speaker list.
- C. The EIC has finalized its initial curation of EDI-related materials, and they are now posted on the CASCA website (https://casca.ca/?page_id=17441). The EIC anticipates keeping these materials up-to-date as a resource for CASCA members.
- D. In consultation with EIC and Awards Committee members, Sam (both an EIC member and the Awards Committee chair) has submitted several recommendations to the Board to increase EDI among CASCA award recipients. A copy of these recommendations is in Appendix B of this report. The EIC recommends that the Board accept these recommendations, and is keen to assist in their implementation if that would be helpful to the Board and to the Awards Committee.
- E. The EIC was requested by the Board to provide EDI-related feedback on CASCA's "Guide to Running an AGM", which it has done. A recurring theme discussed by the EIC is the production of concise standalone materials that focus on EDI considerations, which could accompany the "Guide to Running an AGM". The EIC anticipates developing this material in the future to benefit AGM SOCs/LOCs as well as other CASCA committees (e.g. Appendix B).
- F. The EIC had several discussions regarding the design and execution of a post-LRP2020 series of longitudinal demographic surveys of the CASCA membership, and also met with the co-leads of the CAP EDI in Physics survey. Since a substantial number of CASCA members responded to the CAP survey and since it also includes responses from undergraduates, the EIC's current view is that partnering with CAP to probe CASCA demographics is a more promising way forward than running our own survey. The EIC's understanding is that the CAP survey team is willing to collaborate in this regard.

Appendix A: Draft EIC/CASCA Guidelines

The following guidelines were drafted by EIC members who participated in facilitated sessions with Bridget Brownlow. It is hoped that incoming EIC members will be given an opportunity to review the draft guidelines. Should the post-AGM EIC accept the guidelines, it is recommended that they be posted on the CASCA website alongside the EIC Terms of Reference. The EIC members who participated in the facilitated sessions request that the Board consider whether or not the draft guidelines could be useful to other CASCA committees.

Draft EIC/CASCA Guidelines

29 April 2022

The following guidelines aim to encourage constructive communication, promote goodwill, and mitigate and/or effectively address conflict when it arises within the Equity and Inclusivity Committee (EIC) and within CASCA as a whole. As such, every effort will be made to respect and adhere to the following guidelines, first drafted by members of the EIC in 2022. It is recommended that these guidelines be revisited every year and posted on the CASCA website alongside the EIC Terms of Reference.

1. Communicate in a manner that reflects patience, curiosity, clarifies assumptions and is compassionate toward others.
2. Communicate in a manner that is clear and consistent. More specifically, ensure that all relevant details are consistently and clearly conveyed to all EIC members.
3. Communicate in a manner that is respectful and appropriate. In this context, interruptions and accusatory language can be considered as inappropriate and unacceptable.
4. Communicate verbally (either in person or virtually) whenever possible to avoid the overuse and potentially inflammatory misuse of written

communications such as email, texting, tweeting. It is especially important to avoid written communication when sensitive or difficult issues are discussed.

5. Engage in active listening. If necessary, repeat what is perceived to have been said before proceeding to respond. It is especially important to consider how different perspectives and lived experiences can impact what is heard when sensitive or difficult issues are discussed.
6. Provide EIC members with an opportunity to reflect on sensitive or difficult issues before requesting a reaction or response. Consider that sensitive or difficult issues which are spontaneously raised may be triggering to some members. Provide a clear but reasonable timeframe that allows for reflection while not hindering timely discussion.
7. Ensure there is respect for confidentiality when and where appropriate as it pertains to the role and responsibility of EIC members and/or other CASCA members.
8. Resolve issues informally at the earliest possible opportunity to avoid the unnecessary escalation of conflict. Seek assistance from another EIC member, the EIC Chair, or a CASCA Board member if necessary.
9. Take initiative to intervene wherever and whenever possible should an EIC member or other CASCA member require support to address sensitive or difficult situations (ie demonstrate pro-social bystander behaviour).
10. Work toward the development of collaborative relationships in partnership with other committees operating under the auspices of CASCA. Encourage the inter-committee cooperation deemed necessary for optimal organizational functioning.

11. Work toward securing opportunities for professional development for EIC members. Possible areas of focus include issues related to equity, diversity, inclusivity and indigeneity (EDII), bystander training, conflict management and/or the creation of informal dispute resolution processes aligned with the values shared by the EIC and CASCA.
12. Demonstrate a committed effort to focus on the positive and create opportunities for informal social interactions and efforts to celebrate successful outcomes whenever possible.
13. In keeping with the spirit of these guidelines, collectively commit to support one another as committee members, as CASCA members, and as colleagues within the Canadian astronomical community.

Appendix B: Recommendations for next year's Awards Committee

The following recommendations were submitted by the Awards Committee chair (also an EIC member) to the Board.

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.