

CASCA EPO Committee | May 2022 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 December 1 2021 to May 10 2022. The committee met (online) twice during this period of time: February 4th 2022 and May 4th 2022.

1. Current Membership

Chair: Nathalie Ouellette (2022-2025), Université de Montréal ***membership renewed**

Frédérique Baron (2022-2025) Université de Montréal ***membership renewed**

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, **Outgoing 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

Both Frédérique Baron and Nathalie Ouellette have renewed their memberships to the committee for another 3-year term. The EPO Committee also voted to renew Nathalie Ouellette as Committee Chair for an additional 1-year term.

We are still looking to fill the two open spots in the committee after Nienke van der Marel and Sharon Morsink's departures in 2021. With the CASCA Board's recent call for new members to CASCA committees, we look forward to welcoming new members!

3. Committee activities

a. World Wide Telescope Contest

This initiative was sent to Nathalie by JJ Kavelaars and Dennis Crabtree (NRC-Herzberg) in December, in the hopes that it could be jointly run by the CASCA and RASC EPO Committees. Minimal involvement would have included announcing the contest to the community, and receiving and selecting the top WWT Guided Tours to be sent forward to the international level. Unfortunately, the RASC EPO Committee stated that they could not currently support this initiative, but could potentially help if it happens again next year. The CASCA EPO Committee thus decided to decline supporting as well. That being said, both RASC and CASCA EPO Committees are open to supporting next year with more time to prepare.

b. EPO Activity Reporting Form

The University of Calgary once again graciously agreed to host this form that collects EPO activities from all CASCA members. A call to submit activities was sent out in early April through the CASCA exploder. This year, additional questions were added to track the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on our membership's outreach activities. The EPO Committee believes that this collected information is very valuable, in part for planning activities such as the creation of our Long Range Plan. We will thus continue to explore ways to encourage a higher proportion of the CASCA membership to respond. In future editions, the Reporting Form will likely be a Google Form whose link will always be available on the CASCA EPO Committee's webpage.

c. 2024 Solar Eclipse

The RASC Eclipse Taskforce, Quebec Eclipse Taskforce and Ontario Eclipse Taskforce all continue to meet, and include the involvement of several EPO Committee members. All Taskforces have or are considering creating smaller working groups to enable distinct initiatives to move forward more easily. Julie is now part of the Education Working Group at the national level with RASC, and is working on mobilising Ministries of Education and other important players in education to provide eclipse glasses for students, especially in provinces where totality will occur. There has already been a positive first response from the Quebec Ministry of Education. The Quebec Taskforce is also working on a mobile application and website that will make important information about the eclipse available to the public. They are also exploring different avenues for funding a part-time or full-time coordinator to help with these efforts. Similar initiatives are also underway in Ontario, and many of them overlap with the work of the Westar subcommittee. Discussions about the 2024 Eclipse are, of course, ongoing.

d. International Dark Sky Week

Phil Langill sent out an email to the CASCA membership to encourage participation in International Dark Sky Week activities happening from April 22nd to 30th. Phil himself received good media coverage highlighting the importance of dark skies and different initiatives combatting light pollution. The issue of preserving our dark skies is one the EPO Committee would like to support more actively in the near-term, perhaps by collaborating with already established dark sky champions such as the Mont-Mégantic International Dark Sky Reserve.

4. Subcommittee reports

a. CASCA Westar Lectureship Subcommittee

Chair: Rob Cockcroft

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

The subcommittee has so far had 16 meetings since November 2021 with various Indigenous astronomers, Indigenous educators, consultancy groups, people who have previously been involved with Westar, and those working with Indigenous communities on the topic of astronomy. They still have one more meeting they would like to conduct in this initial round and are working on the report for the CASCA Board (which will consist of in-depth notes from each meeting along with a higher level "executive

summary").

b. IAU activities

Lead: Steven Pellarin

Steven Pellarin (U of Windsor) has been selected as Canada's new IAU National Outreach Coordinator (NOC). Sharon Morsink, previous IAU NOC, has generously accepted to help Steven with the transition. Nathalie has submitted Steven's official nomination to the IAU Office of Astronomy Outreach, which should be made official shortly. We thank Steven for his willingness to get involved, and look forward to working with him on many future projects!

c. Discover the Universe

Lead: Julie Bolduc-Duval

After two very busy years for Discover the Universe in 2020 and 2021, things have slowed down in early 2022. With some projects finishing, some fundings sources not yet renewed and some staff members leaving, we had to redefine our goals and plans for 2022. We continue to offer regular webinars, blog posts, and newsletters to teachers and educators. We are also busy working on different initiatives in the background, such as educational content development with various partners. For the total solar eclipse of 2024, Julie Bolduc-Duval is working with many partners to reach as many schools as possible in the provinces crossed by totality.

d. Social Media Subcommittee

Chair: Jesse Rogerson

Members: Mike Chen, Christa Van Laerhoven

The SM subcommittee and the EPO Chair worked on the creation of a submission form where CASCA members could submit content for CASCA's social media channels, as well as a call for volunteers to help with content creation for the SM subcommittee. We also suggested the creation of a CASCA social media email address where people could submit content or contact the SM subcommittee. We are currently waiting on the creation of these different resources, at which point they will be promoted to the CASCA membership. The SM subcommittee also hopes to become more active over the summer months as their members' teaching loads lessen.