

**Canadian Astronomical Society
Société Canadienne d'Astronomie**

**54th Annual General Meeting, Penticton, BC
Business Meeting Minutes (DRAFT)
15th June 2023, 16:00-17:30 PDT**

Board members present:

In person

Chris Wilson (Acting President)
Adam Muzzin (Vice President)
Rob Thacker (Past President)
Laura Parker (Director)
Lewis Knee (Treasurer)

Online

Rob Cockcroft (Secretary)

Regrets:

Renée Hložek (Director)
Karun Thanjavur (Director)
Julie Hlavacek-Larrondo (Director)

The President calls to start the business meeting at 16:00, and introduces the VP to chair.

1. Adoption of agenda [Muzzin]
 - a. Moved by Adam; seconded by Laura.
 - b. Question from the floor: Will there be a discussion of possible virtual AGMs?
Adam: yes.
 - c. Question: can we add a tribute to Dan Brooks, past ACURA executive director, to the any other business?
Adam: added.
 - d. Majority approved adoption of agenda. (Note that votes were taken both in person and online; the numbers in person (80+) exceeded the numbers online (~20), so if the motion carried with in person votes it carried overall.)
2. Approval of minutes from May meeting [Cockcroft]
 - a. Moved by Rob; seconded by Laura; majority approved.
3. Announcement of/invitation to 2024 AGM [Muzzin]
 - a. "CASCA-TO" will be co-hosted by both the University of Toronto (Renée) and York University (Adam) in 2024 in person with hybrid options.
4. Nominations to the nominating committee [Parker]
 - a. Alan McConnachie and Kristine Spekkens have indicated willingness to serve and were nominated by Laura. After an invitation for other volunteers, there were none. Alan and Kristine were thanked for their continued role, with applause from the room.
5. Request two volunteers for scrutineering [online scrutineering will then take place via Zoom with Cockcroft, Parker, and scrutineers]

- a. Ryan Cloutier (McMaster) and Catherine Lovekin (Mount Allison) volunteered to scrutineer, and left the business meeting room with Laura, to begin the Zoom call with Rob. Results were announced later in the business meeting.
- 6. President's report [Wilson]
 - a. SKA
 - i. Good news in February 2023: Canada to seek to join SKA at a 6% partner level
 - ii. April 2023 budget: \$269.3M
 - iii. Thanks to LCRIC who organized and hosted a pair of webinars on SKAO work in outreach with local communities in Australia and South Africa
 - b. LRP 2020 Recommendation #1 on land and consent
 - i. At our May 9, 2023 meeting, the CASCA Board voted to approve the policy document 'Guidelines and principles around land and consent for astronomical facilities' dated April 28, 2022
 - 1. This document had been circulated to CASCA members in April 2022
 - 2. The document was presented and discussed at the 2022 CASCA AGM
 - ii. This document will be posted on the CASCA website shortly, along with its French translation
 - c. Consulting Canadians on a modern regulatory framework for space
 - i. Government of Canada sought views of Canadians on Canada's space regulatory framework
 - ii. IAU encourages national policies that make best efforts mitigation of negative effects on astronomy a licensing requirement
 - iii. CASCA President and IAU President sent a joint letter
 - 1. Focused on impact of large constellations of communications satellites
 - 2. Highlighted multi-wavelength impacts (bright streaks in optical; interference in radio)
 - 3. Highlighted the large number of observatories in which Canada has invested that could be impacted
 - d. Review of CASCA Board and Committee Procedures
 - i. Board discussed the possibility of an external review of CASCA governance at our semi-annual meeting December 2022
 - ii. Met with chair of CASCA's Equity and Inclusion Committee in March 2023 for further discussions
 - iii. Director Laura Parker provided a detailed review of the By-Laws at April 2023 meeting
 - 1. Several house-keeping tasks to deal with but nothing urgent
 - iv. The revised by-laws will be presented to the CASCA community at the AGM 2024 for voting and approval
 - v. No clear need seen for an external review at this time
 - e. National Outreach Coordinator
 - i. This idea was discussed briefly at the 2022 Business Meeting
 - ii. The Board was tasked to look into this possibility

- iii. Westar/EPO committee provided a cost estimate as part of their proposal for a part-time Westar Co-Ordinator
 - iv. Unfortunately, even a half-time National Outreach Coordinator is beyond the Society's means without a significant increase in dues
 - v. However, a part-time Westar coordinator position has been approved by the Board (more in upcoming Vice-President's report)
- f. Best Practice for Postdoc Hiring
 - i. The Postdoc Committee has written a document with recommendations for best practices to be applied in postdoc hires
 - ii. This document has been approved by LCRIC and the CASCA Board
 - iii. The document is posted on the CASCA website in the postdoc committee area and in the "Submit a News Item" page
 - iv. This document serves as a set of guidelines (not requirements)
- g. Desire for a CASCA postdoc award
 - i. Lack of an award for postdocs has been highlighted by the Awards Committee for a couple of years
 - ii. CASCA Board recognizes the value of establishing a postdoc award
 - iii. Beyond the means of the society to establish at this time without additional fundraising
 - iv. Want to highlight it as a potential philanthropic opportunity for members in the coming years
- h. Some activities planned for the coming year
 - i. Review and revision of CASCA By-Laws
 - 1. Updating some of the language to comply with current norms
 - 2. At this time do not anticipate any major changes
 - 3. Proposed changes will be presented to membership for a vote at the 2024 Business Meeting
 - ii. Overhaul of underlying structure of CASCA website
 - iii. Two new committees (see Vice-President's report next)
 - 1. Indigenous Engagement Committee
 - 2. Optical/Infrared Review Committee
- i. Thank you!
 - i. To the CASCA Board members
 - ii. To Jessica Marsano, the CASCA Administrator, and Don Hutton, the webmaster
 - iii. To all the chairs and members of CASCA Committees
 - iv. To the LOC of the 2023 CASCA meeting
- j. Q&A
 - i. Question: Do the society's bylaws include a values statement.
Chris: No but Board's action item list includes that we need to write something similar (probably a mission statement)
 - ii. Question: How much money would be needed for a postdoc award?
Chris: ~\$30k to fully endow it.
 - iii. Comment: Regarding the National Outreach Coordinator, I encourage the Board to continue working with EPO committee to try and make it happen.
Chris: Thank you (and applause from the room)

- iv. Question: Regarding the regulatory framework for space, who would we contact?
Chris: We need to consider this further.
- v. Question: What's happening behind the scenes with the website?
Chris: Explains paid vs. unpaid membership on Wordpress (where our website lives)
- 7. Secretary's report [Cockcroft]
 - a. Rob thanked CASCA administrator, Jessica Marsano, for compiling the report
 - b. Board membership
 - i. Past year (2022-2023)
 - 1. *Acting President*: Christine Wilson (2022-2023)
 - 2. *Vice-President*: Adam Muzzin (2022-2024)
 - 3. *Past-President*: Rob Thacker (2022-2023)
 - 4. *Secretary*: Rob Cockcroft (2022-2025)
 - 5. *Treasurer*: Lewis Knee (2019-2025)
 - 6. *Director*: Laura Parker (2020-2023)
 - 7. *Director*: Julie Hlavacek-Larrondo (2020-2023; on leave 2021)
 - 8. *Director*: Renée Hložek (2022-2025)
 - 9. *Director*: Karun Thanjavur (2022-2025)
 - ii. Incoming members (2023 onwards)
 - 1. President: Sarah Gallagher (2023-2024)
 - 2. Two directors (2023-2026); election results announced during business meeting
 - c. General membership (2022-2023)
 - i. 494 members in good standing and 111 members 1 year in arrears
 - ii. Board voted on Monday 12th June 2023 to expel the 36 members who were two years in arrears (see Secretary's Report for details)
 - d. Minute of silence in memory
 - i. Morley Bell
 - ii. David Gray
 - iii. Judith Pipher
 - iv. Kaylie Green
 - v. Nick Kaiser
- 8. Treasurer's report [Knee]
 - a. General overview
 - i. The financial position of the Society remained solid over FY22-23
 - 1. Operating account balance \$82.2K (expectation was \$88.8K)
 - 2. Dues still coming in after start of budget year (\$58.4K, final likely ~ \$75.0K)
 - 3. Sustained burst of inflation increased operating costs
 - 4. CASCA Administrator received two 2.5% salary steps in January 2023
 - ii. Investment Account
 - 1. Members contributed \$0.9K to CASCA Trust (\$6.1K last year). Thank you!
 - 2. Value of investment capital continued growth to \$884K (up 10.7% since 2020)
 - 3. Dividend and interest income held up well at \$31.6K
 - b. CASCA Office Operations
 - i. Office Administrator

1. Jessica Marsano (\$28.2K) day-to-day office operations.
 2. In second year of two-year contract
 - ii. Webmaster/IT Support
 1. Independent contractor Don Hutton supports our IT services.
 2. \$3.1K invoiced last year (previous year \$2.8K).
 3. Other IT costs \$1.8K
 - c. Membership Dues
 - i. Dues have remained constant since 2019. Non-corporate dues were:
 - ii. Ordinary members: \$163 (Retired and over 60: \$66)
 - iii. Graduate students: \$66 (first year free)
 - iv. PDFs and Associate members: \$119
 - v. Joint CASCA/CAP: \$114 (Graduate students: \$46)
 - vi. Undergraduate students: \$15
 - vii. A membership dues increase for 2023-24 will not be necessary.
 - viii. Resumption of travel support and Westar will require a closer look next year
 - d. CASCA and Westar Trusts
 - i. CASCA Trust

Members have donated \$0.9K this year. Income helps fund activities such as student/PDF travel to the AGM, best student presentation/best poster awards, and the Plaskett award
 - ii. Westar

Westar funds used to support the Westar Lectures Series. Planned spending of \$10K/year for the next three years
 - e. Report on Investments
 - i. Investments managed by ScotiaMcLeod. Teleconferences normally twice a year, most recently 14 December 2022. Next meeting later this month
 - ii. Capital increase of 10.7% since 2020, currently at \$884K
 - iii. Board has resolved to divest non-sustainable (oil and gas) investments from our investment portfolio over a two-year period. In the first year we have sold about \$33.2K of those holdings in favour of renewable energy funds, financial, and health sectors. Aim is to complete by next AGM in 2024
 - iv. We have \$81.1K in cash/money market funds available in the account
 - v. Over the year we paid \$11.6K in management and transaction fees
 - f. Cash flow and balance sheet from the Treasurer's report was presented
 - g. Endowments
 - i. The major awards carry invested endowments, the return from which is used to fund the awards and maintain the principal. Each endowment is tracked
 - ii. Details of each endowment were presented
 - h. Operating Account Plan for FY23-24 was presented
 - i. Opening balance: \$82.2k
 - ii. Total income: \$99k
 - iii. Total expenses: \$99.1k
 - iv. Closing balance: \$82.1k
 - i. Auditors
 - i. Wilkinson & Company LLP (Kingston) is the current auditor and assists in preparing our tax return. Wilkinson has worked with us for several years, is very familiar with our account, and has worked very effectively with the CASCA Administrator and Treasurer. Lewis recommends that CASCA re-appoint the same auditors this year.
9. Motion to reappoint CASCA Auditor [Knee]

- a. Current auditor is Wilkinson & Company LLC, 785 Midpark Drive, Suite 201, Kingston ON, K7M 7G3
 - b. Moved by Lewis; seconded by Catherine Lovekin; majority in favour.
- 10. Motion to approve increase in CASCA administrator's salary [Knee]
 - a. Question: What are the hours of employment for the CASCA administrator?
Lewis: 15 hours
 - b. Question: Can we donate to specific pots of money?
Lewis: It should be possible to do so. For example, awards are endowed.
 - c. Question: Does the \$10k/year for the Westar coordinator position include funding the Westar travel?
Lewis and other Board members: Clarification that these are separate (i.e., there is \$10k/year for the Westar coordinator for three years, from unspent amount during 2020-2022, in addition to the usual \$10k/year for Westar travel).
 - d. Moved by Lewis, seconded by Denis, majority in favour.
- 11. Committee reports [Muzzin]
 - a. All committee members thanked – especially outgoing chairs. Applause from the room.
 - b. Repeat of call for volunteers to help increase diversity of committees; please email Adam if interested. Note that not all volunteers will be selected.
 - c. Question: Will the 2024 AGM be hybrid, have sessions recorded, and will there be consideration for start times on the west coast?
Adam: yes to all.
 - d. Question: Why was MSE not on the GAC-VLOT report?
Adam (and other Board members): Only considered 25m and up.
 - e. Question: There seems to be a different strategy for committee members for most committees versus the IEC and OIR. Why?
Adam: Clarifies that IEC is looking for volunteers. Good point for the OIR committee... will consider this.
 - f. Question: How is the sustainability committee soliciting opinions, apart from at the business meeting in 2024?
Adam: The Board and the sustainability committee are working on this.
 - g. Question: The quantitative estimates of the carbon footprint are not worth it because the reduction in emissions by having a virtual AGM far outweigh any other reductions that could be made.
Adam: We're still going to share that useful information.
 - h. Denis Crabtree (who is on the sustainability committee) volunteers his data from the 2021 AGM towards this.
- 12. Announcement of results of elections [Cockcroft]
 - a. All those willing to stand for Directors thanked.
 - b. Maria Drout (University of Toronto) and Matt Taylor (University of Calgary) announced as winners. Applause from the room.
- 13. Other business [Muzzin]
 - a. Tribute to Don Brooks
From Gilles Joncas, chair of the ACURA institutional council (of 20 Canadian universities to develop Canadian astronomy). Gilles emphasized the many years of service to ACURA from Don Brooks, who started as an ACURA Board member, then as institutional council chair, and most recently, over the

last 8 years, was the executive director. Don was instrumental and pivotal in steering Canadian astronomy for future astronomers – including ensuring that funding was obtained for large infrastructure (e.g., TMT and the SKA). Don retired last February, and we thank him for his incredible investment of time and energy over the many years. Applause from the room.

- b. Graduate Student Committee on the topic of sustainability
From Blake Ledger, GSC chair: The sustainability committee reached out to the GSC and, in response, the GSC is soliciting feedback from graduate students, which will be shared with the sustainability committee, the Board, and the general CASCA membership. Initial comments: there is a fairly even split of concerns between networking opportunities that in-person AGMs allow for, compared to the reduction of emissions of virtual AGMs.
- c. Thanks to outgoing President
From VP: Adam thanked Chris for doing a fabulous job, saying that Chris stepped in at very short notice, and it has been a pleasure working with Chris. Applause from the room.

14. Adjournment [Wilson]

Moved by Bill McCutcheon; seconded by Gilles Joncas; majority in favour. Meeting adjourned at 17:21.

Post-business meeting, prizes for best student talks and best student posters were awarded from both the Board and the GSC. GSC prizes were awarded by GSC judges who had undergone implicit bias training, with each talk/poster being reviewed by at least two judges (and noting that GSC rep talks/posters were not included in the evaluations).

Best talks from the Board (in no particular order):

- **Demet Kirmizibayrak** (UBC); "Time Lags in Astronomy Through Novel Timing Methodologies"
- **Stefan Pelletier** (Université de Montréal); "Probing the Carbon Budget and Formation History of the Ultra-Puffy Exoplanet WASP-127b"

Best poster from the Board:

- **Xiaoyi Ma** (winner; University of Toronto); "Vortex-induced rings and gaps in a protoplanetary disk"
- **Alice Curtin** (runner up; McGill University); "Science in Space: How to telescope designing and building telescopes in Minecraft to encourage belonging and equitable spaces in STEM"
- **Alan Knee** (runner up; UBC); "Gravitational wave detection techniques for hierarchical triples in the LISA band"

Best talks from the Graduate Student Committee (in no particular order):

- **Alice Curtin** (McGill University); "Science in Space: How to telescope - designing and building telescopes in Minecraft to encourage belonging and equitable spaces in STEM"
- **Veronika Dornan** (McMaster); "Investigating the M_GCS - M_h Relation in The Most Massive Galaxies"

Best posters from the Graduate Student Committee (in no particular order):

- **Lauren Foster** (McMaster University); "Comparing Star Formation on the Leading versus Trailing Sides of Infalling Group and Cluster Galaxies"
- **Kate Hartman** (McMaster University); "Comparing Globular Cluster System Properties with Host Galaxy Environment"