

# Graduate Student Committee report to the CASCA Board May 2006

## I. Current Membership of the Graduate Student Committee

The current members of the graduate student committee and their university affiliations are:

Rachel Friesen, Chair (University of Victoria)  
Pamela Klaassen, Secretary (McMaster University)  
Alyssa Moldowan, Education Committee Rep. (University of Western Ontario)  
Christy Bredeson (University of Calgary)  
Kevin Brown (University of Western Ontario)  
Saul Davis (University of British Columbia)  
Sunne Dong (York University)  
Louise Edwards (L'Université Laval)  
Pascal Elahi (Queen's University)  
Rodrigo Fernandez (University of Toronto)  
Marjorie Gonzalez (McGill University)  
Catherine Lovekin (Saint Mary's University)  
Sean McGee (University of Waterloo)  
Delphine Quievy (Université de Montréal)  
Theresa Wiegert (University of Manitoba)

As of May of 2006, Rachel Friesen and Pamela Klaassen took over as the new Committee Chair and Secretary, respectively. The Committee thanks Louise Edwards for her work as Chair, and Catherine Lovekin as Secretary. We would like to welcome Delphine Quievy, Rodrigo Fernandez, Pascal Elahi and Sean McGee to the committee, and thank our outgoing members.

## II. The 2006 Graduate Student Workshop and General Meeting

Following tradition, the CASCA Graduate Student Workshop will be held prior to the start of the annual CASCA meeting on Thursday, June 1. The theme for this year's workshop is *Jobs In and Out of Astronomy*, and has been organized by the graduate students at the University of Calgary, including GSC member Christy Bredeson. The workshop will highlight employment prospects for graduate students in astrophysics, and invited speakers include Dennis Crabtree, Jack Penfold and Chris Salter. Sessions will focus on defining the skill sets that graduate students require in order to be successful in astronomy, as well as exploring those gained which are applicable to other fields.

After the workshop the Graduate Student Committee will hold the annual General Meeting, which all graduate students are welcome to attend. The committee also actively exchanges email on all topics of interest to astronomy graduate students including upcoming CASCA meetings and funding.

### **III. Graduate Education Overview**

Alyssa Moldowan continues to represent the graduate students on the CASCA Education and Outreach Committee. The national website, [www.cascaeducation.ca](http://www.cascaeducation.ca), is up and running, and is still evolving so that the community can reach as many members of the public as possible. The committee has reviewed reports to send to the IAU and CASCA. There has also been a proposal written for the NSERC PromoScience grant to support AstronomyCanada.ca that is still being revamped (especially now after a preliminary review by the NSERC board). These are the tasks that the CEC Graduate Student rep is involved in.

### **IV. Student Awards**

At the 2005 CASCA meeting in Montreal, the graduate students held the first student-voted awards for CASCA posters and talks. There is strong support within the committee to award these prizes each year, and to this end the committee has had some email discussion to formalize the selection process for the 2006 CASCA meeting. This year, as last year, we will award two poster and one oral presentation prize selected out of all student submissions. The committee feels that these awards are a recognition of excellent student contributions to the CASCA meetings by their peers, and complement those presented by the general membership.

### **V. Graduate Student Statistics**

As nearly all Canadian Universities offering astronomy are represented on the GSC, we have recently been compiling statistics about the numbers of male, female, MSc, and PhD students in each astronomy program in Canada. These numbers will be updated each spring at or prior to the annual CASCA meeting. We are happy to work in an efficient way with others who may also be gathering similar information.