

CASCA - Annual report for Awards Committee, 2010-2011.

Committee Members:

Kim Venn (Chair)	(2007-2011) Univ. of Victoria
Pierre Bergeron	(2009-2012) Univ. of Montreal
Ken Ragan	(2009-2012) McGill
Pat Cote	(2011-2013) HIA
Michael Balogh	(2011-2013) Waterloo
Ethan Vishniac	(2011-2013) McMaster
Jasper Wall	(2011-2013) UBC

1. The committee was expanded to 7 members this year, after conflicts of interest depleted the previous smaller committees to the point where no discussion was possible and external support from the CASCA board was requested. With 7 members, we have had no significant problems with conflicts of interest depleting our voting pool and limiting the discussions.
2. Only the chair (Kim Venn) needs to be replaced next year.

ACTION: Committee member Patrick Cote (HIA) is willing to serve as the next Awards committee Chair.

3. Petrie prize lecturer.

The committee received 2 nominations. The prize was awarded to Dr. Andrew Fabian, at the Institute of Astronomy, Cambridge University, who accepted.

Proposed Announcement:

We are pleased to announce that the 2011 CASCA Petrie Prize is awarded to Dr Andrew Fabian, from the Institute of Astronomy at Cambridge University, UK. Dr. Fabian is renowned for his innovative work in high-energy astrophysics particularly related to the topics of galaxy clusters, active galaxies and black holes, and the X-ray background. Prof. Fabian has received numerous other accolades, such as the AAS Bruno Rossi and Dannie Heineman Prizes, he is a Fellow of the Royal Society and currently its President, he is the Editor-in-Chief of the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society, and he is an Officer of the Order of the British Empire. In addition to authoring numerous research papers, reviews, and books in his area of research, Prof. Fabian also publishes works unrelated to astronomy, and is the editor of books on the subjects of Evolution, Origins and Darwin, as well as Conflict and Warfare, all published by Cambridge University Press.

The only significant issue related to the Petrie prize was the nomination process. On the CASCA Awards website, the instructions are that only the name of the person needs to be submitted. This is not sufficient, and a supporting letter was deemed necessary by this committee. For the 2011 award, one nomination came with a well thought out letter of support, the other did not and therefore the Chair (Venn) contacted the nominator and requested a letter.

ACTION: CASCA Awards committee strongly recommends that a letter of nomination accompany each Petrie lecture prize candidate.

This needs to be clarified on the Awards webpages.

4. Plaskett prize.

The committee received 4 nominations.

Now that the committee has more members, the paper copies of the Plaskett materials is an issue. With only 4 paper submissions, we were forced to read the materials in two shifts, with everyone having to send the materials to another. Online theses, and scanned letters would be far more convenient for the committee, and probably the nominators and candidates, in the future.

ACTION: Replace the required paper copies of the Plaskett nomination materials with online (thesis links, scanned letters) materials.

The committee was unanimous in its decision to award the 2011 Plaskett to Dr. Kaitlin Kratter (UofT). A brief statement was sent to the CASCA Board for approval on 18 Feb 2011.

Proposed Announcement:

"We are pleased to announce that the 2011 Plaskett Award for best Canadian PhD thesis is awarded to Dr. Kaitlin Kratter from the University of Toronto. Dr. Kratter's thesis on the theory of gravitational instability, spiral structure, and fragmentation in rapidly accreting disks, and it has already had a significant impact in the fields of massive star formation and planet formation. Her thesis was supervised by Dr. Christopher Matzner. The CASCA Board and CASCA Awards committee extend our congratulations to Dr. Kratter, who is now a postdoctoral fellow at the CfA."

5. P.G. Martin mid career Award.

The committee had received no nominations by the Jan 31, 2011

deadline, thus an email exploder was sent out extending the deadline to 15 Feb, 2011. The materials for 5 nominations were received.

Preliminary voting showed an even tie between two candidates, leading to an open discussion of the selection criteria.

We note that the specific language for the Martin award, as it appears on the website, is non-specific in its selection criteria, and therefore open to interpretation:

"The Peter G. Martin Award for Mid-Career Achievement by a CASCA member is bestowed upon a Canadian astronomer, or astronomer working in Canada, within ten to twenty years of receipt of his or her PhD degree, to recognize significant contributions to astronomical research."

It was recognized that the number of papers, quality of the papers (estimated through the citation index), and thus the h-index are all important selection criteria, which show the impact of the nominees on the international scientific community. The committee chose to use these indicators to set a bar for scientific impact, but not to further rank candidates by these criteria above that bar. The committee then took secondary criteria into consideration; these included examples of scientific leadership within their own research

groups and communities, general astronomical community involvement and specific investment in the Canadian national infrastructure, and of course the teaching and training of students and other highly qualified personnel.

With the committee in agreement on the selection criteria, then it is our pleasure to recommend the Peter G. Martin 2011 mid-career award be given to to Dr. Roberto Abraham.

Proposed Announcement:

We would like to announce that the 2011 winner of Peter G. Martin Award for Mid-career Achievement by a CASCA member is Dr. Roberto Abraham (University of Toronto). Over the past decade, Dr. Abraham has propelled himself to become one of the very top leaders in the world in galaxy evolution, including playing a leading role in the highly successful Gemini Deep Deep Survey, and the development of new instrumentation (F2T2) for Gemini. His research accomplishments have come hand-in-hand with tireless service to the community, e.g., he has been a member of the CASCA 2010 Long Range Planning Committee, chair of the NSERC Evaluation Committee for Astronomy and Space Physics, chair of the Joint Committee for Space Astronomy (CSA), and many more. Dr. Abraham's work has been previously recognized by a number of awards including a Premier's Research Excellence Award in 2002, the E.W.R. Steacie Memorial Fellowship in 2005, and a Canada Foundation for Innovation Career

Award in 2005. He has also won the University of Toronto's Faculty of Arts and Science Teaching Award in 2005. We are pleased to add the Peter G. Martin Mid-career Achievement award for 2011 to this list.

6. There is no Beals Prize this year.

7. Other business.

(a) There is a strong feeling that for the Peter G. Martin Award, the Carlyle S. Beals Award, and R.M. Petrie Prize Lecture, that nominees should remain on file for 3 years. Nominators could update their submission (and should, e.g., an updated CV), but it would not be required.

(b) There is a strong feeling that the Plaskett award materials should be sent to the Awards committee as pdf file(s). PhD theses are regularly available in pdf format, thus this would only require that nomination letters and other supporting documents be scanned and bundled together.

Dr. Kim Venn (Chair)

University of Victoria

1 April 2011