

## CASCA Committees: restructuring, mandates and terms of reference

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November 2009

### 1.0 Introduction

In May 2008, Paul Hickson, then CASCA's first vice-president, submitted to the CASCA Board an assessment of our Society's committee structure (Hickson 2008). Eight recommendations were submitted and approved as stated in the minutes of the 52nd meeting of the CASCA Board. Most recommendations have been put into application. Still pending are:

- 1) the introduction of a system of rotation for committee chairs;
- 2) the merging of OIRAC and RAC into a Ground-based Astronomy Committee (GAC).

To address these issues and provide clear purpose and objectives to the CASCA committees, this document proposes mandates and terms of reference for most of them.

### 2.0 Structure and purposes

Since the Graduate Student committee and E-Cass differ from the other committees they will not be discussed here. The JCSA is a joint committee with the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) and already possesses its own mandate (it can be consulted on the CSA web site: [www.asc-csa.gc.ca/eng/sciences/committees-jcsa.asp](http://www.asc-csa.gc.ca/eng/sciences/committees-jcsa.asp)). IYA 2009 is an *ad-hoc* committee with its own special purpose in this special year for astronomy.

Introducing a common system of rotation for committee chairs is a significant challenge. Hickson (2008) proposed a 4 year-4 member structure for the committees, each member becoming chair on its 4th year. Although simple, this scheme does not address the problem of the high time consumption or wide expertise needed by some committees (Awards, EPO and GAC), which translate into a large membership. I recommend that all committees be ruled by a three-year membership period (renewable) and that a staggered approach be used in populating the committee. If the committees need more manpower under some special circumstances (e.g. an LRP exercise) the chair can request the addition of supplementary members to the 1st VP. The supplementary member need not be a CASCA member (as stated in the Bylaws). However the Board will have to be informed if the latter is warranted. Choosing the chair will be done by the 1st VP in consultation with the outgoing chair or will ask for volunteers among the committee membership for two-year terms. A chair/co-chair scheme has been implemented for the EPO. I also propose a chair/co-chair, each practicing astronomy in different spectral ranges, be named for the GAC. The leadership will thus be provided with a breath of expertise.

I reproduce here an amended version of Table 1 from Hickson (2008) providing characteristics for the committees discussed in this paper.

Committee	Membership	Term	Comments
Awards	1 chair 7 members	3 yrs, staggered	standing committee
Investment	1 chair 3 members	3 yrs, staggered	standing committee chair is the treasurer
E-Cassiopeia	1	continuing	executive function
Education and Public Outreach (EPO)	1 chair, 1 co-chair 9 members 2 ex-officio 2 liaisons 1 employee	3 yrs, staggered	standing committee
Graduate Students	1 chair 1 secretary 13 members	irregular	standing committee
Heritage Resources	1 chair 3 members	3 yrs, staggered	standing committee
IYA 2009	1 chair 13 members	3 yrs, fixed	ad-hoc committee, includes non-CASCA members
Joint Committee on Space Astronomy (JCSA)	1 chair 5 members 7 ex-officio	3 yrs, staggered	standing committee, joint with the CSA
Nominating	1 chair 2 members	2 yrs for chair 1 yr for members	standing committee, Chair is Past President
Ground-based Astronomy (GAC)	1 chair 1 co-chair 8 members	3 yrs, staggered	standing committee
Theory and Data (TDC)	1 chair 3 members	3 yrs, staggered	standing committee

## 2.01 Terms of reference: group 1

This group comprises the Awards, Nominating and Investment committees. They provide important work for the Board and our community. They are in some sense our Society's backbone.

### 2.01.1 The Nominating committee

The rules governing the existence of the Nominating committee reside in the CASCA bylaws. This committee finds candidates and prepares a slate of candidates for the election of the officers of the Society. The CASCA Board informs the committee on future vacancies.

### 2.01.2 The Awards committee

CASCA delivers five different awards and prizes over two years whose descriptions are available on the CASCA web site. These awards are delivered during the Annual General Assembly (AGM). The Awards committee manages the Beals and Martin awards, the Petrie lecture and the Plaskett medal (awarded jointly with the RASC). The committee will be composed of seven members in order to cover as best as possible the varied research fields found in our community. Hence the Awards committee will:

- 1) request candidacies from the community by 1st November of the year preceding the AGM for the awards and prizes that will be given that next year using e.g. the CASCA exploder and website and e-Cass;
- 2) inform the CASCA Board of the winner of the different competitions as soon as the deadlines permit so that arrangements and coordination can be made with the AGM local organizing committee;
- 3) be ready to respond to special requests from the CASCA Board;
- 4) provide the CASCA Board with a citation for each award, suitable for publication by the CASCA Press Officer;
- 5) the committee Chair is normally invited to introduce the award winners at the AGM;
- 6) provide a report of activities and issues once a year to the Board in advance of the CASCA AGM. The Board may request an interim report if the need arises. The report will include: current members and term, suggestions for new members and/or chair, brief report of activities, any issues, questions, recommendations or requested actions for the Board.

### 2.01.3 The Investment committee

Following the announcement at the Victoria AGM of CASCA's new investment strategy, the Board struck an Investment committee. The role of the committee will be to review periodic

(at least quarterly) communications and recommendations from the investment manager, Scotia-McLeod, and to provide advice to the Board concerning portfolio modifications, etc. The Investment committee will act only in an advisory capacity, will meet by e-mail or teleconference, and will be chaired by the CASCA treasurer. The treasurer will provide a report of activities and issues once a year to the Board in advance of the CASCA AGM. The Board may request an interim report if the need arises. The report will include: current members and term, suggestions for new members, brief report of activities, any issues, questions, recommendations or requested actions for the Board.

## 2.02 Terms or reference: group 2

This group is usually made up of the Heritage and Education and Public Outreach committees. The IYA2009 *ad-hoc* committee is currently a member of this group. As mentioned in Hickson (2008), the group 2 committees have an important advocacy role for the Society.

### 2.02.1 Heritage committee

The Heritage committee must aim at preserving the history and culture of the Canadian astronomical community. Hence the Heritage committee will:

- 1) work on behalf of the CASCA Board to help ensure that cultural properties and artifacts significant in the development of Canadian astronomy, together with the intangible heritage of astronomy, are brought to the attention of proper authorities for their protection;
- 2) liaise with other international and national bodies concerned with astronomical history and heritage;
- 3) draw an inventory of heritage resources and develop working relationships with owners of heritage designated properties;
- 4) devise ways to preserve the history of Canadian astronomy through the memoirs of its protagonists;
- 5) be ready to respond to special requests from the CASCA Board;
- 6) provide a report of activities and issues once a year to the Board in advance of the CASCA AGM. The Board may request an interim report if the need arises. The report will include: current members and term, suggestions for new members and/or chair, brief report of activities, any issues, questions, recommendations or requested actions for the Board.

### 2.02.2 Education and Public Outreach committee

The Education and Public Outreach committee (EPO) must serve to further the Society's aspirations to educate and promote astronomy to the public. Hence the EPO will:

- 1) work on behalf of the CASCA Board as national advocate for the promotion of astronomy and its associated technology;
- 2) facilitate the exchange of information among sponsoring and participating astronomical facilities, organizations and agencies;
- 3) provide strategic guidance to the Board and the astronomical community;
- 4) be ready to respond to special requests from the CASCA Board;
- 5) provide a report of activities and issues once a year to the Board in advance of the CASCA AGM. The Board may request an interim report if the need arises. The report will include: current members and term, suggestions for new members and/or chair, brief report of activities, any issues, questions, recommendations or requested actions for the Board.

### 2.03 Terms of reference: group 3

This group is composed of the Ground-based Astronomy Committee (GAC), the Joint Committee on Space Astronomy (JCSA), the Solar System and Planetary Studies committee (SPSS), and the Theory and Computation Committee (TCC). The JCSA, as mentioned earlier, will not be discussed here, however its mandate can be found at the following web address: [www.asc-csa.gc.ca/eng/sciences/committees-jcsa.asp](http://www.asc-csa.gc.ca/eng/sciences/committees-jcsa.asp). The SPSS community seems to want to stand on their own. There has been no communication between the Board and the SPSS committee for some time. It may be appropriate to discuss whether we should initiate contact with the upcoming Long Range Plan exercise.

#### 2.03.1 Theory and Data Committee

The TCC has the important mandate of providing expert opinion on theoretical, computational and large database astronomy. The TCC will be composed of four members. The TCC will:

- 1) work on behalf of the CASCA Board to assess opportunities for participation in major projects identifying any gaps in needed facilities;
- 2) advise the CASCA Board on matters of priorities and areas of research while keeping the Board updated on the ongoing development, the evolution and the activities of the community they represent;
- 3) express the concerns of the scientific community they represent;
- 4) provide strategic guidance to the Board and the astronomical community in general and specifically for the Long Range Plan and the Coalition for Canadian Astronomy;
- 5) be ready to respond to special requests from the CASCA Board;
- 6) provide a report of activities and issues once a year to the Board in advance of the CASCA AGM. The Board may request an interim report if the need arises. The report will include: current members and term, suggestions for new members and/or chair, brief report of activities, any issues, questions, recommendations or requested actions for the Board.

### 2.03.2 Ground-based Astronomy Committee

The GAC has the important mandate of providing expert opinion on the observational segment of astronomical and astrophysical research performed from the ground. The GAC will reflect on all observational facilities whatever the wavelength observed from the ground and will be composed of eight members. Hence the GAC will:

- 1) work on behalf of the CASCA Board to assess opportunities for participation in major projects, identifying any gaps in facility or instrument capability;
- 2) advise the CASCA Board on matters of priority and areas of research while keeping the Board updated on the ongoing development, the evolution and the activities of the communities they represent;
- 3) express the concerns of the scientific community they represent, recognizing the diversity of approaches;
- 4) provide strategic guidance to the Board and the astronomical community in general and specifically for the Long Range Plan and the Coalition for Canadian Astronomy;
- 5) be ready to respond to special requests from the CASCA Board;
- 6) provide a report of activities and issues once a year to the Board in advance of the CASCA AGM. The Board may request an interim report if the need arises. The report will include: current members and term, suggestions for new members and/or chair, brief report of activities, any issues, questions, recommendations or requested actions for the Board.