



# INTERNATIONAL ASTRONOMICAL UNION COMMISSION C2

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## Annual Report

This report contains the activities of IAU Commission C2, Communicating Astronomy with the Public (CAP), for the period 1 September 2018 (following the XXX General Assembly in Vienna) to 31 March 2020.

### I. C2 Organizing Committee for 2018–2021 Triennium

Richard Tresch Fienberg (President)  
Oana Sandu Barbulete (Vice-President)  
Michael West (Secretary)  
Megan Argo  
Caterina Boccato  
Carol A. Christian  
Lucia Marchetti  
Sylvie D. Vauclair  
Lina Canas (Ex-Officio, IAU Office for Astronomy Outreach)  
Kaoru Kimura (Ex-Officio, International Planetarium Society)

### II. C2 Working Group(s)

During the 2015–2018 triennium C2 had five Working Groups (WGs). Two completed their work and were discontinued for the new triennium. Another, the *CAP Journal* WG, was made redundant because responsibility for the journal was moved from C2 to the IAU Office for Astronomy Outreach (OAO). Another, on science-communication research, was discontinued because its Chair elected not to propose its renewal. Thus only one WG was carried over into the new triennium after its co-chairs proposed its renewal and both the C2 OC and the Division C Steering Committee (SC) approved it: the CAP Conferences WG.

We solicited and received proposals for several new WGs for the new triennium, but none were deemed strong enough to win approval from the Division C SC. Thus we have only one WG for the current triennium. The chair of the CAP Conferences WG is Oana Sandu, but in practice she co-chairs the WG with Ramasamy Venugopal (see section III: C2 Associates). Furthermore, Lina Canas serves on the WG in an ex-officio capacity as OAO International Outreach Coordinator (IOC) and co-chairs the CAP Conference Scientific Organizing Committee (SOC) with Oana and Ram (see section IV: Memoranda of Understanding).

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## III. C2 Associates

Commission C2 is concerned with the advancement of effective astronomy communication and outreach. While professional astronomers, including many IAU members, participate in such activity, arguably many more practitioners are science writers, amateur astronomers, museum and planetarium workers, and others who aren't usually qualified to become IAU members. C2 depends critically on the involvement of such people, so we tend to have a higher proportion of Associates than most other IAU bodies.

For the current triennium we have one C2 Associate, Lina Canas of the OAO, and several WG Associates participating in the activities of the CAP Conference WG. Among them is Ramasamy Venugopal of the IAU Office of Astronomy for Development (OAD). Ram's co-leadership of this WG and OAD Director Kevin Govender's membership on the WG are among the ways that C2 connects to, and collaborates with, the OAD.

The OAO has a network of National Outreach Coordinators (NOCs) throughout the world, many of whom are neither professional astronomers nor IAU members but many of whom have led IAU 100 activities and/or other astronomy outreach programs in their respective countries. Some OAO NOCs have expressed interest in joining the IAU as Associates, and C2 is arguably the body with which they should be associated. Accordingly, the OAO IOC is going to identify the most active NOCs and encourage them to apply to become Associates of C2 and to engage with the work of the Commission, e.g., by participating in CAP Conferences and proposing new WGs and programs/activities.

## IV. Memoranda of Understanding

Early in 2019 C2 entered into Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with two partner organizations: the IAU OAO and the International Planetarium Society (IPS). Through these documents the partners pledge to promote each other's activities where there are common goals and other organizational synergies. The memos also describe specific roles that one or more representatives of the partner organizations will play in each other's activities.

Among other provisions, the C2-OAO MoU specifies that the OAO IOC shall serve as an ex-officio member of the C2 OC and as a co-chair of the CAP Conference SOC; that the President of C2 shall participate in a minimum twice-yearly teleconference among the IOC, the OAO Supervising Director (SD), and the IAU Assistant General Secretary (AGS) to facilitate the exchange of ideas and information; and that the CAP Journal's editorial board shall include the President of C2 or another member of the C2 OC (other than the IOC, of course).

The key provisions of the C2-IPS MoU are that C2 will appoint a member to serve on the IPS Council/Board (currently Lucia Marchetti), and the IPS will appoint a member to serve on C2's OC (currently Kaoru Kimura); and that each organization will have an opportunity to organize a session or provide a speaker at the other's regular conference, i.e., the CAP Conference and the biennial IPS Conference.

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### V. CAP 2020 Conference

The main focus of C2's activities in the current triennium has been planning CAP 2020, i.e., the next edition of the CAP Conference. A call for proposals to host the conference was issued in mid-2018, and 14 preliminary proposals were received in the fall. The selection committee, composed of the CAP Conferences WG and the C2 officers, invited a subset of the first-round proposers to submit full proposals, and five of them did so in early 2019. Those were evaluated and ranked, and Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia, was named the winner. CAP 2020 (<https://www.communicatingastronomy.org/cap2020>) was scheduled for 21-25 September 2020.

Abstract submission and registration were opened in early 2020 with an early April deadline for the former and a late May deadline for the latter at the early/lowest rates. Then the COVID-19 pandemic intervened. As of this writing, it is clear that the conference cannot be held on schedule, as Macquarie University has already indicated that the campus will not be open for such activities by then. We are working on a plan to delay the conference to February 2021.

### VI. Other Activities

Consistent with the MoU's described in section IV, the President of C2 has been meeting by telecon roughly every six months with OAO and IAU leadership and has been reviewing articles for the *CAP Journal* as requested by the editor. In addition, the President of C2 participated in an external review of the National Astronomical Observatory of Japan's (NAOJ's) Public Relations Center, where the OAO is based, in February 2020.

Similarly, C2 OC members Lucia Marchetti and Kaoru Kimura have been coordinating the organization of complementary sessions at the CAP 2020 and IPS conferences.

The President of C2 serves as an ex-officio member of the Division C SC, and in that role he has participated in several proposal reviews, for example, for IAU Symposia and for WGs in Division C and its four Commissions.

In February 2020 the C2 OC held a telecon to consider additional activities in which C2 might become engaged. Of particular interest is the OAO's nascent "Meet the IAU Astronomers" program to encourage IAU members to engage with schoolchildren and members of the public; the C2 OC expressed interest in helpful to shape the program and promote it. There was also some discussion about the external C2 website (<https://www.communicatingastronomy.org>), and a decision was made to begin moving much of the content to the server provided by the IAU to ensure continuity from triennium to triennium. That effort has begun under the supervision of the C2 Secretary.

*Respectfully submitted, 17 April 2020,  
Richard Tresch Fienberg, President, IAU Commission C2*