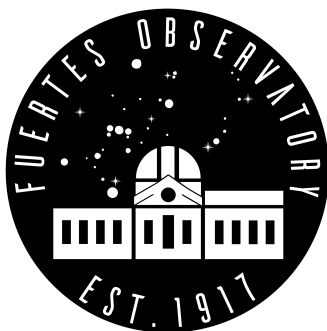


Cornell Astronomical Society



Constitution

August 2024

Article I – Name of Organization

Section 1. Official Name.

- a. The official name of this organization is the Cornell Astronomical Society; Campus Activities and University Relations have approved it. The name follows the Cornell University Policy 4.10 on Student Organization Branding.

Section 2. Official Acronym.

- a. This organization is also called CAS and will be the official acronym.

Article II – Mission, Purpose, Aims of Organization

Section 1. Purpose.

- a. The purpose of the Cornell Astronomical Society shall be to educate the public about astronomy, primarily through public viewing nights at the Fuertes Observatory, and to provide Cornell students with opportunities to learn about astronomy.

Section 2. Goals.

- a. The goals of this organization are to educate the public through our outreach open houses, and special events. We also aim to help teach Cornell students the basics of amateur astronomy and show what a rewarding experience it can be.

Article III – Membership Requirements and Limitations

Section 1. Membership eligibility.

- a. The organization shall consist of undergraduate and graduate students of Cornell University who are interested in the purpose of the Cornell Astronomical Society and who shall be approved by the Officers.
- b. Any undergraduate or graduate student at Cornell University is eligible for membership.
- c. The Cornell Astronomical Society complies with Cornell University Policy 6.4 of Prohibited Bias, Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual and Related Misconduct. This policy is also outlined in the Big Red Guidebook.

Section 2. Current Members.

- a. Members may be removed from the organization as permitted by the CAS Bylaws.
- b. CAS Members are informed of the provisions of this Constitution and of the Bylaws. CAS Members will also be notified of any changes made to either in as timely a manner as possible.

Section 3. CAS Keyholders.

- a. A CAS Keyholder is any Member who can open the Observatory without supervision.

- b. Keyholders are responsible for opening and running the Observatory for public viewing nights.
- c. Keyholders are responsible for offering training sessions to prepare other CAS Members to become Keyholders.
- d. A person who ceases to be a Keyholder for any reason must return their Observatory key, if any, to the Department as soon as possible.
- e. Non-keyholding Members can only open or operate the Observatory under the supervision of or with the approval of a CAS Keyholder. In both cases, the Keyholder is responsible for the actions of this individual.

Section 4. Grounds for Removal.

The Officers reserve the right to remove any member, based on the unanimous decision of the Officers, through the following grounds:

- a. Violation of rules and regulations outlined in the Cornell Student Policies and/or Student Code of Conduct.
- b. Failure to uphold the provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws.
- c. Does not act in the best interests of the organization and/or is engaged in activity jeopardizing the organization's existence.

Section 5. Weekly Activities.

- a. General Body Meetings
 - i. CAS General Body Meetings are held every Friday evening during the Cornell academic year unless a lecture or other public event is scheduled, approximately 30 minutes before the start of the public viewing night.
 - ii. Any active CAS Officer may call additional meetings to discuss CAS business. Meetings must be announced at least a week in advance except in an emergency.
- b. Public Viewing Nights
 - i. Public viewing nights are held at least every clear Friday night at the Observatory, except when no Keyholders are in the Ithaca area.
 - ii. At least one Keyholder and three total Members must be present at all times during public events.

Article IV – Student Code of Conduct

Section 1. Legislation.

- a. All members must follow local, state, and federal laws, Cornell University rules, and the organization's Constitution at all functions.

Section 2. University Policy.

- a. All members shall abide by Cornell University Policies, specifically policy 6.4: Prohibited Bias, Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual and Related Misconduct.

Section 3. Violations.

- a. In case of a violation and/or an active University investigation, the following actions may be taken by unanimous decision by the Officers:
 - i. Members involved in an active University investigation may receive a temporary suspension or limited membership.
 - ii. Members found violating university policy may be permanently removed as members as determined by a unanimous decision of Officers and Advisors.
- b. Many University investigations are confidential, and there is no obligation for the University to share information about a particular case.

Article V – Executive Board of Officers

Section 1. Elected Officers.

- a. The elected Officers in the Cornell Astronomical Society shall be the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Outreach Coordinator, and Newsletter Editor-in-Chief.
- b. Both elected and appointed Officers shall be responsible for their duties as listed in this Constitution.
- c. Each officer shall establish and maintain a working relationship with the General Membership and other Officers as necessary to perform their duties.
- d. All Officers must actively ensure that the organization's activities and members follow all Cornell University policies.

Section 2. President. The President shall:

- a. Be responsible for the maintenance of this Constitution and of the Bylaws.
- b. Call any General Body Meetings established by this Constitution.
- c. Serve as the general organizational leader of CAS and its outreach activities.
- d. Ensure that the Cornell Astronomical Society's activities and members follow all Cornell University policies.
- e. Collaborate with the Advisor to ensure that all Officers are full-time students on their campus.
- f. Secure CAS's registration with Cornell University each year.

Section 3. Vice President. The Vice President shall:

- a. Assist the President in their responsibilities.

Section 4. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall:

- a. Obtain funds for the CAS budget.
- b. Be responsible for the budgeting of all CAS funds and keeping track of spending.
- c. Ensure that any regulations or conditions established by funding sources are met.

Section 5. Outreach Coordinator. The Outreach Coordinator shall:

- a. Work with the other CAS Officers and the Department to organize and promote events involving CAS at the Observatory.
- b. Organize the CAS Lecture Series.

Section 6. Newsletter Editor-In-Chief. The Newsletter Editor-In-Chief shall:

- a. Organize and design the CAS monthly newsletter.
- b. Be responsible for the newsletter's creative direction and publication every month.

Section 7. Term of Service.

- a. No individual shall hold a specific position as Officer for more than five semesters, unless this limit jeopardizes the existence of the organization, as determined by unanimous vote by all Officers and the Advisor.
- b. An Officer's term begins either at the beginning of the academic year following their election (hereafter the Office Year) or when the previous Officer becomes ineligible for the office, whichever comes earlier. An Officer's term continues until the end of the summer following the Office Year or until the Officer is no longer eligible for the office, whichever comes earlier.
- c. If an Officer's term ends unexpectedly and there is no successor, the President is responsible for calling an emergency election for that office as soon as possible. All restrictions in the preceding paragraphs of this Section apply, except that the new Officer's term begins at once. In this case, the Office Year is defined to be the academic year in which the term began.
 - i. If the President's term ends unexpectedly and there is no successor, the next active officer in the order defined in Section 1(a) shall be responsible for calling an emergency election for that office as soon as possible.
 - ii. In the exceptional circumstance that all Officer positions are vacant, the Advisor shall appoint a member to fill the position of President. The appointed President shall then attempt to fill the remaining vacant positions as soon as possible, by appointment. All Officers appointed by this procedure shall be subject to the responsibilities of an elected officer in that position.

Section 8: Delegation of Officer Duties.

- a. When an Officer is unable to complete the duties assigned, the Officer chooses to delegate that responsibility to either another Officer or a suitable CAS Member.

Section 9. Elections.

- a. Election Procedures
 - i. Officer elections will be held during the Spring semester at the General Body Meeting on the Friday before the last week of scheduled Cornell classes. Alternatively, if the Officers unanimously agree, they may schedule elections for a different date provided they inform all CAS Members at least 5 days prior to the new date.

- ii. Only active CAS Members may vote in elections. The requirements for being an active Member are defined in the Bylaws. Additionally, part-time students, non-matriculated students, students on a leave of absence, and students who are abroad may not vote in elections.
 - iii. No CAS Member can hold more than one office at a time. A Member may run for more than one office; however, if the Member is elected to more than one office they must surrender all but one of the positions. Each surrendered office goes to the runner-up for that office.
- b. Officer Eligibility
 - i. A CAS Member must expect to be in the Ithaca area for both the fall and spring semesters of the Office Year to be eligible for office, unless the election is an emergency election held after the end of the fall semester. In that case, the CAS Member only needs to be present for the spring semester.
 - ii. A CAS Member must be an undergraduate student at Cornell University during the Office Year to run for any Officer position.
 - iii. Graduate students, part-time students, non-matriculated students, students on a leave of absence, and students who are abroad may not serve as Officers of CAS.

Section 10. Meetings.

- a. Officers shall meet as much as necessary to discuss the business of the organization.

Section 11. Impeachment.

- a. Officers can be impeached if they do not:
 - i. Fulfill the duties of their office, or
 - ii. Meet the requirements for being an active Member.
- b. Any active Member may request at a General Body Meeting a hearing to impeach an Officer. The accused Officer may request that the hearing be postponed by no more than two weeks so that the accused is able to attend. If said parties cannot agree on a meeting time, the CAS Advisor will choose a meeting time.

Section 12. Officer Transitions.

- a. Each officer shall maintain a record of their position, including budgets and activities of the office, to provide to incoming officers following elections.
- b. Outgoing officers shall also make every effort to assist in the transition process, including helping to ensure that incoming officers are aware of their responsibilities.

Article VI – Advisor

Section 1. Advisor selection.

- a. Any faculty or staff member at Cornell University capable of corresponding with the university in the official and legal matters of the Cornell Astronomical Society.
 - i. When selecting an advisor, every effort must be made to select an Advisor,

willing to act in the best interests of CAS, affiliated with the Astronomy Department.

- b. Potential CAS Advisors are chosen by the CAS Officers. The CAS Advisor's term begins as soon as the candidate agrees to the position.

Section 2. Responsibilities of the Advisor. The Advisor shall:

- a. Attend general body and/or executive board meetings when needed.
- b. Meet with the organization's President to stay updated and serve as a resource.
- c. Collaborate with the President to ensure that all officers are full-time students on their campus.
- d. Assist with the annual registration process.
- e. Assist with the funding process.

Section 3. Term of Service.

- a. CAS Advisors serve for terms of indefinite length. The term may be terminated either by the Advisor or by unanimous decision by the CAS Officers. The terminating party must inform the other of the action, and the Officers must then choose a new Advisor as quickly as possible.
- b. If the CAS Advisor is on leave, the Advisor's term is considered terminated.

Article VII – Amendments and Ratification

Section 1. Validity.

- a. This Constitution shall become effective once uploaded to CampusGroups.
- b. The Constitution on file in CampusGroups is uploaded at least annually during the re-registration process and is valid until amendments are made.

Section 2. Amendments.

- a. Amendments to this Constitution may be enacted in three ways:
 - i. By unanimous consent of the Officers during the Fall or Spring semesters.
 - 1. The Officers must discuss a proposed amendment at a general body meeting before they implement the change.
 - 2. After a discussion at a General Body Meeting, the Officers have one month to approve the amendment.
 - ii. By unanimous consent of the Officers at other times.
 - 1. This method of amendment may only be used when required by the Campus Activities office or other governing body at Cornell University.
 - 2. The Officers must unanimously approve any proposed amendments.
 - 3. Following approval, the revised Constitution must be shared with the Members at the next General Body Meeting.
 - iii. By a majority vote of CAS Members present.
 - 1. Any active CAS Member may propose to amend the Constitution during a

General Body Meeting.

2. A meeting to vote on an amendment cannot be scheduled less than five days in advance.
 3. Amendments are decided by a majority of present CAS Members, or five present CAS Members, whichever is larger.
- b. Amendments, if approved, take effect immediately.
 - c. Any changes to the constitution must be shared with Campus Activities as a revised constitution for review.

Article VIII – Emergencies

Section 1. Emergency Operations.

- a. Any bonafide Emergency will take precedence over all other responsibilities of the organization. In this context, an Emergency is defined as a situation endangering human life or property.

Bylaws of the Cornell Astronomical Society

Updated on June 22nd, 2020

1. Terms

- 1.1. These Bylaws describe the operating procedures for the Cornell Astronomical Society (hereafter, CAS).
- 1.2. CAS operates out of the Fuertes Observatory (hereafter, the Observatory), whose primary observing instrument is the 12-inch Irving Porter Church Memorial Refractor (hereafter, the Telescope) mounted in the center of the Observatory dome.
- 1.3. CAS works with the Cornell Department of Astronomy (hereafter, the Department) to achieve common goals and make use of shared resources.
- 1.4. A CAS Member who holds a key to the Observatory issued to said Member by the Department is a Keyholder.

2. Membership

2.1. Member Participation

- 2.1.1. The only purpose of distinguishing active from inactive CAS Members or non-Members is voting. To be eligible to vote, the Member must have attended at least four CAS events for the majority of the duration of the event within the last 180 days. An Officer will maintain the right to vote during their term regardless of attendance.
- 2.1.2. If the eligibility of a person present at a voting meeting to vote is in question, it is the responsibility of the Officers to determine if said person is eligible to vote. If at least two Officers agree that the person in question has NOT met the requirements of active membership, then the person in question may not vote on the current proceedings.

2.2. CAS Keyholders

- 2.2.1. A CAS Member wishing to become a CAS Keyholder must first demonstrate their ability to operate the Observatory without damaging it or its equipment, without endangering other users or visitors, and without impairing the use of the Observatory by authorized personnel or its enjoyment by the public. A Member must be in good standing with CAS and the Department to be eligible for a key.
- 2.2.2. A CAS Member wishing to become a CAS Keyholder will demonstrate these abilities in person to a group which must include at least two current keyholders. The Member must demonstrate that they:
 - 2.2.2.1. Can operate all telescopes without performing any action that puts the Observatory, the equipment within it, or its operators and visitors at risk.
 - 2.2.2.2. Can demonstrate use of all applicable telescopes for solar observing with the proper filters.
 - 2.2.2.3. Is familiar with all other observatory equipment, including all eyepieces, filters (with and without use of the filter slider), the 90-degree diagonal, the binocular tripod, and laser pointers.

- 2.2.3. x
 - 2.2.4. The Department and CAS Advisor are ultimately responsible for issuing keys and defining all rules regarding the privileges of holding a key to the Observatory.
 - 2.2.5. Keyholders have full responsibility for keeping track of their key, whether or not they are using it, and meeting all applicable Department restrictions.
 - 2.2.6. If the number of eligible keyholders exceeds the number of keys issued by the Department to CAS, Keyholders without assigned keys are permitted to borrow keys from other Keyholders. Keyholders must refuse all other requests for their keys, except for those that represent Department confiscation of the keys.
 - 2.2.7. If a Keyholder who is required to return their keys has not done so after two requests, or before leaving the Ithaca area, CAS reserves the right to contact the Department directly and to inform it about the problem.
- 2.3. Damage, Injury, and Conflict
- 2.3.1. All alleged violations of Cornell Policy by CAS Members will be handled by Cornell or the local law as specified by the Cornell Code of Conduct. During any investigation relating to CAS, the Member(s) in question will be considered on probation. A Member on probation must return any observatory key they possess to the Astronomy Department. If it is determined that the Member did commit the alleged violation, the Member will be subject to expulsion or probation according to a vote of the four primary CAS Officers. In case of a tie vote, the CAS Advisor will be asked to break the tie. Otherwise, the Member's probationary status will be removed and all normal privileges will be restored.
 - 2.3.2. CAS has been entrusted by the Department with care and proper use of the Observatory; any violations of this trust are a serious offense.
 - 2.3.2.1. In case equipment belonging to the Astronomy Department is damaged, CAS will work with the Department to determine how best to restore the Observatory and/or its equipment. This may entail damages against the Member.
 - 2.3.2.2. Incidents with or damage to equipment owned by CAS which do not affect the Department will be discussed at a general body. Final judgment rests with the CAS Officers and CAS Advisor; however, other Members may present arguments relevant to the case. Probation and expulsion may be ordered in extreme cases.
 - 2.3.2.3. In either case, Officers should consider amending the constitution, bylaws, or other CAS policies to prevent similar incidents in the future.
 - 2.3.3. Irreconcilable Personal Conflicts:
 - 2.3.3.1. If two or more Members have a conflict that escalates until it interferes with the activities of CAS, then the President is responsible for settling the dispute.
 - 2.3.3.1.1. If the President has a conflict of interest regarding the dispute, then the responsibility for resolving it falls to the other Officers.
 - 2.3.3.1.2. If no Officer is fit to resolve the problem, then a general body meeting will be called to settle the issue. Any resolution must receive a majority vote.

3. Additional Officer Duties

In addition to the duties outlined in the Constitution:

3.1. President

- 3.1.1. The President presides over meetings.
- 3.1.2. The President is responsible for arbitrating conflicts involving CAS Members.
- 3.1.3. Along with the Outreach Coordinator, the President is responsible for contacting third parties, whether for arranging private visits to the Observatory, for cooperative undertakings, or for any other purpose.
- 3.1.4. The President assists the Treasurer in securing funding from the SAFC.
- 3.1.5. The President is responsible for ensuring that minutes are taken at meetings when necessary.
- 3.1.6. The President assists the Outreach Coordinator in organizing the CAS Lecture Series defined in Section 4.4.
- 3.1.7. The President may, at their discretion, delegate some of these duties to another Officer.

3.2. Vice President

- 3.2.1. The Vice President is responsible for assisting the President in the President's duties.
- 3.2.2. The Vice President is responsible for assisting the Outreach Coordinator in the planning and execution of large public events such as Yuri's Night.
- 3.2.3. The Vice President is responsible for sending an annual newsletter to all alumni on record.

3.3. Treasurer

- 3.3.1. The Treasurer is responsible for the proper recording and management of all CAS funds.
- 3.3.2. The Treasurer is responsible for the collection and tallying of any donations to CAS.
- 3.3.3. The Treasurer is responsible for managing these accounts in an orderly manner, documenting changes, and passing the appropriate information on to the new Treasurer at the end of the former's term.

3.4. Outreach Coordinator

- 3.4.1. The Outreach Coordinator is responsible for organizing the CAS Lecture Series defined in Section 4.4.
- 3.4.2. The Outreach Coordinator is responsible for working with the Department of Astronomy Outreach Coordinator to organize non-Friday night outreach events involving CAS at the Observatory.
- 3.4.3. The Outreach Coordinator is responsible for working with outside parties and groups to organize outreach events involving CAS both at the Observatory and away from the Observatory.
- 3.4.4. Along with the other Officers, the Outreach Coordinator is responsible for maintaining CAS social media accounts, email listservs, and website.

4. Elections

4.1. Voting Procedure

- 4.1.1. All elections shall be conducted via a secret ballot.

- 4.1.2. Members may only vote for one candidate for each office. Members may also abstain from voting.
- 4.1.3. To be elected, a candidate must receive a simple majority of the votes from present CAS Members, or five present CAS Members, whichever is larger.
- 4.2. Vacancies
 - 4.2.1. In the event of a singular vacant office, it is at the discretion of the officer team to decide whether to leave the office vacant for one semester or to hold an emergency election as described in Section 7.3.5. of the Constitution.
 - 4.2.2. In the event of multiple vacancies, the officer team must hold an emergency election to fill the vacancies.
 - 4.2.2.1. If there are still vacancies after one emergency election, the officer team may appoint Members to fill the positions.

5. Meetings and CAS Events

- 5.1. Opening Announcements
 - 5.1.1. On any day that the Observatory is open for a public event, the announcement on the Observatory's answering machine (hereafter "the Message") will be updated to announce the fact at least one hour in advance. The Message will be changed to a standard announcement as soon as possible after the event or events have ended. The announcement must be recorded by a CAS Member in a clear and easily understandable manner.
 - 5.1.2. On any Friday on which there are no public events at the Observatory, the Message will be updated to an announcement specifically stating that the Observatory is closed on that day. The Message will be changed to a standard announcement by the next day. Any standard announcement must include:
 - 5.1.2.1. The name of the Observatory in the greeting.
 - 5.1.2.2. The hours a public viewing night runs given clear weather at that time of the year.
 - 5.1.2.3. A statement to the effect that the Observatory is closed.
- 5.2. General Body Meetings
 - 5.2.1. A general body meeting will be held every Friday evening when Cornell University is in regular academic session, unless a lecture or other public event is scheduled.
 - 5.2.2. Additional meetings will be scheduled at the discretion of the Officers.
- 5.3. Public Events
 - 5.3.1. Public viewing nights will be held on every clear Friday evening when Cornell University is in regular academic session.
 - 5.3.2. During the Summer, if enough Members and Keyholders are present, CAS will hold public viewing nights as usual every Friday evening. In the event that there are not enough CAS Members present to run public viewing nights over the Summer, the Officers will inform the Department so other arrangements can be made.

- 5.3.3. The schedule of additional CAS public viewing nights will be determined by the CAS Officers (in coordination with the Department). The CAS Officers will also be solely responsible for any advertising or public notification.
 - 5.3.4. Only a CAS undergraduate or graduate student may open the observatory for CAS-sponsored public viewing nights, unless a non-student is explicitly asked to open.
 - 5.3.5. A CAS undergraduate or graduate student must be present at every CAS public event, unless a non-student is explicitly asked to open.
 - 5.3.6. All non-Friday night public events at the Observatory must be coordinated with the Department.
- 5.4. Lecture Series
- 5.4.1. CAS will hold a series of public lectures every semester, geared towards a general public audience. Notice of lecture subjects and dates will be announced and advertised as soon as is practicable.
 - 5.4.2. This is intended to be a professional lecture series. Cornell faculty, research staff, postdocs, and graduate students interested in discussing current astronomical research will be given preference over other potential lecturers. Undergraduate students wishing to present on their research in an astronomy-related field may do so if approved by the Outreach Coordinator and other Officers.
 - 5.4.3. The Outreach Coordinator (with assistance from the President) is responsible for contacting potential lecturers at the beginning of each semester and for organizing the Lecture Series.
 - 5.4.4. Lectures should be held on Friday evenings, beginning approximately one hour before the scheduled opening time for public viewing nights. The official hour will be up to the Officers, and individual lecturers may adjust the time to avoid schedule conflicts.
- 5.5. Training Sessions
- 5.5.1. CAS keyholders are responsible for running training sessions for other CAS Members.
 - 5.5.2. All CAS Members have a right to receive training; however, if demand for training sessions is high, the CAS Officers may establish criteria for training more promising candidates first.
 - 5.5.3. The CAS Keyholders and Officers are responsible for developing and maintaining lists of targets suitable for training throughout the year.
 - 5.5.4. In all practical circumstances, trainings should be conducted by CAS undergraduate or graduate students of Cornell University.

6. CAS Communications

- 6.1. The Officers are collectively responsible for maintaining the CAS emailing lists, including an internal members list, a general public list, and an alumni list.
- 6.2. The Officers are responsible for maintaining a current and orderly website.
- 6.3. Any other official CAS social media platforms must be controlled by at least one of the current Officers.

- 6.4. The President is responsible for ensuring that these duties are satisfied and are delegated among the other Officers. If the President fails to complete these duties, then the Outreach Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that CAS Communications remain professional and updated, and for delegating responsibility to the other two Officers.

7. Use of the Observatory

- 7.1. A standard opening and closing procedure outline shall be posted in the dome room for Members to easily access at all times.
- 7.2. CAS Keyholders may use the observatory for personal observing, provided it does not conflict with CAS or Department activities and provided that the Member leaves the observatory in good condition.
- 7.3. A Member wishing to conduct public outreach at the observatory outside of the purview of CAS should work with the Cornell Astronomy Department. CAS will not be responsible for such events.

8. CAS Documentation

- 8.1. All official CAS Documents (Constitution, Bylaws, Opening Instructions, etc) shall be saved in an easily editable format for future revisions. Acceptable formats include .rtf, .txt, and .doc. Unacceptable formats include .pdf.
- 8.2. CAS shall maintain a guestbook, which guests may voluntarily sign. Finished guestbooks shall be kept in the Fuertes Office so that they can be accessed by Members and visitors in the future.
- 8.3. CAS shall maintain a logbook of activities. All CAS events should be logged in the logbook, and the entry should include:
 - 8.3.1. The date
 - 8.3.2. CAS Members present
 - 8.3.3. Any lectures given
 - 8.3.4. Rough list of astronomical objects observed
 - 8.3.5. Any training conducted
 - 8.3.6. For public events, an estimate of total visitor attendance