

November 3, 2016

Report to the DDA Committee from the Awards Review Committee

1) Background & procedures

In the summer of 2016 the DDA Committee appointed the Awards Review Committee (ARC) to review procedures for the annual Brouwer Award, and to recommend procedures for a new early career award. Committee members (listed below) were contacted and agreed to serve by the beginning of August. Following preliminary discussions in August specific agenda items were assembled for committee discussion. The committee held two teleconferences on Sept. 16 and 30. Subsequently, the draft report was edited and modified via e-mail correspondence. Consensus was achieved on the major issues, and those findings are presented in this report.

2) Charge to the ARC

The full instructions to the committee are copied in the appendix below. The specific charges to the committee are copied here for reference.

Charge to the ARC:

1) Establish guidelines for a new DDA Early Career Award, including but not limited to the eligibility rules and nomination process. The inaugural award is planned to take place in 2017.

2) Review and if necessary revise the process by which Brouwer Award candidates are nominated, as well as the procedures involved in reviewing the nominations and selecting the candidate.

3) Develop a set of best practices for the procedures involved in selecting all DDA awards to ensure that the nomination slate reflects the diversity of the DDA membership, that conflicts of interest are minimized, and that the deliberation process is fair and ethical.

3) Recommendations of the committee

Topic: Direct conflicts of interest in the awards process

Considerations: The Brouwer Award evidently has no specific procedures for avoiding conflicts-of-interest (COI), and some of the traditional procedures might allow at the least the appearance of conflict.

Recommendations: The DDA awards procedures should include COI procedures like those used by the NSF in proposal evaluation. Specifically,

- Nominees for a given award cannot serve on the relevant award committee, be involved in the award review by the DDA Committee, or be involved in the award deliberations in any way.

- Former Ph.D. or postdoctoral mentors, recent close collaborators, and colleagues from the same institution should not be involved in the selection of a nominee. They should recuse themselves from the discussions of and voting on the nominee in the awards committee and the DDA Committee.

- Similarly, DDA Committee and Awards Committee members should not be involved in the consideration of a candidate for whom they have written a letter of support.

- The DDA Committee, like the AAS, should recommend the document "Avoiding Implicit Bias," from AWIS, be circulated to award committee members. Current AAS conflict of interest guidelines should also be provided.

The ARC considered suggestions for restrictions on nominations from DDA committee or awards committee members. However, it was felt that these committees have a recruiting mandate as well as a selection duty, and the former would be needlessly constrained by such restrictions.

Topic: Complex procedures raise the appearance of conflicts-of-interest

Considerations: Current Brouwer Award rules have the awards committee provide a rank-ordered list of several finalists, with the final selection determined by the DDA Committee. There is no policy of consulting the awards committee before changing the rank-ordered list at the level of the DDA Committee. This could give the impression of favoritism or conflicted judgments by the officers of the Division in over-ruling the studied conclusion of the awards committee. Moreover, there seems no compelling reason for the two-step selection process.

Recommendations: The awards process should be revised to follow that of the AAS. Specifically,

- DDA awards committees should recommend a single recipient, or no recipient, to the DDA Committee, except in very unusual circumstances. The DDA Committee may consider or obtain additional background information, before approving the selection. If for some reason the DDA Committee cannot accept the nominee, for example, on obtaining information to the effect that the nominee does not adhere to the professional standards of the Division and the Society, then the matter should be referred back to the awards committee for an alternate recommendation, if possible.

Topic: Awards committee deliberations via e-mail

Considerations: With awards committee members in different time zones, this mode of operation can be quite convenient. On the other hand, the confidentiality of this

procedure is very questionable; e-mails can remain in computer systems for long periods, and are vulnerable to hacking and accidental sharing. These risks, in turn, can inhibit or constrain the willingness of committee members to be completely open and forthright in their contributions to the discussion.

Recommendations: *As a matter of best practice, all DDA Awards Committees should have at least one teleconference to openly and frankly discuss the merits of the nominees. Teleconference should be arranged to be as confidential as possible, and should not leave a record that could be easily opened accidentally or by external agency.*

Topic: Timescale for the continued consideration of awards nominations

Considerations: The current Brouwer Award rules state – “Previous nominations from the past 5 years shall be automatically considered without renomination.” This timescale, and the implied 5 time consideration of a given nominee, seem excessive. It is also not consistent with other AAS prizes, which usually retain nominations for 3 yrs. Candidates can also be re-nominated at a later date, which, with updated materials, seems the more sensible approach.

Recommendations: *Award candidates will automatically be considered for 3 years without the need of re-nomination.*

Topic: Inclusion of previous award winners on awards committees

Considerations: The current Brouwer Award rules mandate the inclusion of the last award winner as a committee member. This rule has the potential to perpetuate favoritism in a certain subject area or within particular subgroups. It does not seem necessary to maintain a high level of achievement among awardees. The ARC feels that it is a good idea to frequently include past winners on the awards committee, but the present rule is too rigid; a specific directive on how to include past winners is not necessary.

Recommendations: *Eliminate the requirement that the immediate past awardee be included on the Brouwer (or other) award committee. Continue to have 5 members on the committee, with the understanding that traditionally a past awardee is invited to membership of this committee.*

Topic: Self-nomination for DDA awards

Considerations: The AAS now allows self-nomination for all its prizes. This is a means to broaden the pool of nominees, and make the process more open and fair. The committee sees no reason why the DDA should not follow this practice.

Recommendations: *All DDA awards should be open to self-nomination, and self-nominations should be treated on an equal basis with all other nominations. The DDA should make this policy widely known, as well as vigorously solicit nominations of all*

types for its awards. The nominations' provenience (whether self or not) should be 'blinded' to the selection committee members, as far as possible.

Though somewhat beyond the charge of the ARC, we also recommend that the expanded nomination spirit of the above recommendation be extended to the Duncombe Award. Specifically, that instead of requiring a letter from 'an advisor,' the application should require only one letter of recommendation from a senior colleague.

The following recommendations concern the new Early Career Award of the DDA.

Topic: Committee and policy for the Early Career Award selection

Considerations: The ARC feels that it would be best to have a separate committee to evaluate candidates and recommend the awardee for the new prize. The alternative would be a single, and probably enlarged, committee for both the Brouwer and the new award. However, given the very different natures of the two awards, the potentially large workload, the difficulty of arranging teleconferences with a larger committee, this did not seem optimal. Nevertheless, for reasons of simplicity and consistency, it was felt that procedures of the Early Career Award committee should parallel those of the Brouwer committee as closely as possible.

Recommendations: *The Early Career Award nominee will be selected by an Early Career Awards Committee with 5 members appointed by the DDA Committee, and including the Division Chair. The DDA may establish the tradition of having past award winners represented on the committee, like the Brouwer Award Committee. Committee members will serve terms of three years, and these terms will be staggered so that one or two members are changed each year. Members of the initial committee might have various terms to facilitate this staggered change. Detailed procedures of this committee should closely follow those of items III-VIII of those of the Brouwer Award, subject to revisions suggested above.*

Topic: Criteria or Basis for the Early Career Award

Considerations: The Brouwer Award is based on the following criteria:

- a excellence in scientific research
- b impact and influence in the field
- c excellence in teaching and training of students
- d outstanding advancement and other support of the field through administration, public service or engineering achievement.

The last two do not seem particularly appropriate for the early-career stage, while the first two are very appropriate. The latter two could be replaced with a criterion for promise of continued excellence.

Recommendations: *The DDA Early Career Award shall be granted on the basis of the following criteria:*

- a excellence in scientific research in dynamical astronomy or closely related fields,*
- b impact and influence in the field,*
- c promise of continued excellence in research, teaching and the advancement and support of the field of dynamical astronomy.*

Topic: Eligibility for the Early Career Award

Considerations: ‘Early career’ is a rather amorphous concept. Among the other divisions: the DPS Urey recipient must be less than 37 years old or less than 6 yrs. past the Ph.D., the HEAD has a dissertation prize, but no early career award, and the Solar Division’s Karen Harvey recipient must be under 36 years old or less than 10 yrs. past the Ph.D. Neither of these early career awards require membership in the division. The Newton Lacy Pierce Prize of the AAS must go to a recipient of under 36 years in age, and AAS prize winners must be members of the society. None of these awards has provisions for time extension under special circumstances. The ARC does not see the need for a specific age requirement, and proposes to deal with special circumstances most simply by allowing a relatively long time interval since Ph.D. Since one of the purposes of this award is to help launch promising careers, we do not recommend following the DPS in allowing posthumous nominations.

Recommendations: *Candidates for the Early Career Award of the DDA must have held a recognized doctorate for not more than 10 years at the end of the calendar year of the award. However, in special circumstances, the committee may extend this time limitation by a moderate amount. Candidates may be of any nationality, and need not be members of the DDA.*

Beyond these award-specific recommendations, the ARC has a couple more general recommendations.

General recommendations of the ARC:

- The DDA Committee should review the diversity and balance of award nominees and awardees every few years. They should maintain statistical information and take action to correct imbalances as needed.*
- The DDA Committee should occasionally constitute an Awards Review Committee to review awards procedures in light of contemporary best practices, consistency with AAS policies, and changing needs of the Division.*

Members of the 2016 ARC:

Rachel Kuzio de Naray (Georgia State University)
Man Hoi Lee (University of Hong Kong)

Renu Malhotra (University of Arizona)
Curtis Struck (Iowa State University), Chair
Dimitri Veras (University of Warwick)

Appendix: Instructions and Specific Charge to the Committee

See next page.

Charge to the Awards Review Committee

The Awards Review Committee (ARC) has been constituted to (a) review the nomination and selection process for the Brouwer Award; and (b) to work out guidelines for a new DDA Early Career award that the DDA Committee has voted to institute. We request you to volunteer or to vote amongst yourselves for a Chair for this committee. The ARC is requested to meet via videoconference or teleconference and to submit its report to the DDA Chair by November 15th, 2016. It is anticipated that an announcement of the new Awards procedures will be made in early December 2016 (in the DDA Dispatch and AAS newsletter). The committee that is currently called the "Brouwer Award Selection Committee" will be reconstituted as the "DDA Awards Selection Committee" (hereafter DASC) and will review nominations for both awards. Therefore, recommendations should also be made regarding achieving a balanced membership for the DASC.

Charge to the ARC:

- 1) Establish guidelines for a new DDA Early Career Prize, including but not limited to the eligibility rules and nomination process. The inaugural award is planned to take place in 2017.
- 2) Review and if necessary revise the process by which Brouwer Award candidates are nominated, as well as the procedures involved in reviewing the nominations and selecting the candidate.
- 3) Develop a set of best practices for the procedures involved in selecting all DDA awards to ensure that the nomination slate reflects the diversity of the DDA membership, that conflicts of interest are minimized, and that the deliberation process is fair and ethical.

Early Career Award Issues:

Defining "Early Career": Information on the awards offered by the AAS and AAS divisions shows (see attached document) that there is a range of definitions for what constitutes "Early Career". For the award to have greatest impact on the career of the awardee, it is probably best if it is awarded to a person 10 years after they receive their PhD. To be inclusive of people who may need to take breaks from academic research (for family or other types of service) the following wording or something similar may be considered *"To be eligible for consideration for the DDA Early Career Award a candidate should have worked in astronomy or planetary science for no more than 10 years (not counting time taken off for family, service/work outside astronomy) following the receipt of the PhD degree by the nomination deadline"*.

What the award should recognize: The Awards Review Committee should list the criteria that should be met by the nominee and the details of the nomination package that should be submitted: e.g. C.V., bibliography, 3 letters of

recommendation, and a nomination letter from a DDA member. For example, the requirements could focus on a *single or a few outstanding research contributions* or a body of work. In contrast, the Brouwer award recognizes a lifetime of work, mentorship and training of students, service and leadership to the community.

Naming the Award: At the present time the DDA Committee's view is that the award should simply be named the "DDA Early Career Award". This is primarily with the view to increase the visibility of the DDA as a Division. Once the Award is established, the leadership may consider naming it after a prominent dynamicist. The DDA Committee considered several names, but felt that naming it after the Division is also a good option.

Brouwer Award Issues and issues regarding both awards:

Nominations: The current Brouwer Award Selection Rules (available on the DDA Website <https://dda.aas.org>) state that "**The BASC should actively seek to assure a good range of high quality nominees for selection. This includes making nominations, re-nominating candidates who previously have been regarded favorably by the committee, and completing partial nominations.**" The ARC should clarify this statement to ensure that there is no conflict-of-interest. While it is certainly important for the DASC to monitor the quality and breadth of the nominee pool for both awards and reach out to community members to encourage them to nominate qualified candidates, there is a need to ensure a clear separation between the nomination process and the selection process. This also implies that neither the members of the DASC nor members of the DDA Committee (i.e., the officers of the DDA and committee members) should nominate candidates during their tenure as officers. If they nominated a candidate prior to becoming an officer or member of one of these committees, guidelines should clearly state what their voting rights are. It is preferable that the specific conflict of interest guidelines be specified, including statements of whether former students/postdocs or long-time collaborators of a nominee should be eligible to vote, keeping in mind that the DDA is a small community.

Additionally, the AAS has recently instituted guidelines to ensure that self-nominations are not distinguishable from 3rd party nominations. Wording concerning the language in the nomination letters is specified on the AAS website (<https://aas.org/grants-and-prizes/prize-nominations>), and similar language should be adopted by the DDA to make it possible for people without large networks to nominate themselves without prejudice.

Composition of the DASC: The current Brouwer Award rules state that a winner of the Brouwer Award will serve for one year on the Brouwer Awards Selection Committee. It is the view of the AAS leadership (Executive Officer Kevin Marvel & AAS Secretary Fritz Benedict) that this automatic inclusion of a past winner in the selection committee could serve to perpetuate an "old boys' network". However, if women and minorities awardees are also on the committee, this may

be helpful for identifying other worthy women and minority candidates. The ARC is asked to discuss this issue and advise. It was felt during discussion in the DDA Committee that DDA Early Career Awardees should probably not be included on future selection committees to avoid conflicts of interest with worthy competitors.

Removal of Candidates from Nomination Pool: It has been noted that in light of enhanced scrutiny of the ethical standards to which all scientists in our community are expected to adhere to, it is important to make sure that the DASC have in place a mechanism to remove a candidate from the nomination pool should information be received regarding violations of ethical or moral codes of conduct that have been adopted by the AAS. The ARC is requested to make a recommendation regarding the process by which information should be gathered, shared with members of DASC, and verified, and the process that should be adopted for removing a candidate from the nomination pool..

Nomination, Review and Selection Timelines: We anticipate that the DASC will follow a schedule that is similar to the current Brouwer Award Selection process. Nominations are due by March 1st. The DDA Committee recently instituted a new rule for the Brouwer Award Selection committee stating that the committee may not consider a slate of candidates that does not contain at least one female candidate. A similar rule should probably also be adopted for the Early Career Award. In order to ensure that an adequate number of nominations is received by March 1st, there should probably also be a Feb 1st deadline of "Notice to Nominate". The committee meets via Teleconference/Skype (AAS advises that NO email discussion of candidates is done). The Chair of the DASC makes recommendations for the top two candidates for both awards one month prior to the DDA Annual Meeting. The final selection is made by the DDA Committee, which will review the nomination packages of the top two candidates for both awards and vote on the winners at the committee meeting held prior to the start of the DDA Annual Meeting.