

## Questions and Answers for NOAO Search Process

### 1. Facts and Figures about NOAO

- a. NOAO has 323 employees (FTEs) split between Tucson, Arizona (216) and La Serena, Chile (107). Of these, 26 FTEs are funded outside of the core NSF budget (grants, partnership revenue, etc.) and 20 are tenured scientific staff.
- b. The annual NOAO budget is set each year by the NSF through the federal budget process. The FY07 (Oct 1, 2006-Sept 30, 2007) NOAO budget included \$24,579,000 (NSF core) plus an additional \$13,601,000 in supplemental funding (grants, partner contributions, tenant fees, TSIP, and other supplements).
- c. NOAO operates telescopes directly on both Kitt Peak (Mayall 4m, 2.1m) and Cerro Tololo (Blanco 4m). It also operates telescopes as a partner in consortia on both Kitt Peak (WIYN 3.5m, WIYN 0.9m) and Cerro Tololo (SOAR 4.2m, SMARTS telescopes). NOAO also allocates the U.S. portion of the time on the Gemini telescopes and, through TSIP, allocates small numbers of nights on several non-federal telescopes with apertures between 3.5m and 10m.

### 2. What are the salary and benefits for the position?

- a. The salary will be a subject of direct negotiation between the President and the candidate, and ultimately approved by the Board.
- b. The benefits will be part of the overall employee package for NOAO.

### 3. Who actually hires the Director?

- a. The Director is appointed by the Board, normally for a 5 year term at which point a review and formal re-appointment is carried out.
- b. The Director reports to the Board through the President. The President carries out all of the supervisory tasks and does the performance review for the Director.

### 4. What are the minimum requirements for experience?

- a. We have no minimum requirements. Obviously some demonstrated management experience is beneficial, scientific standing is beneficial. But there are no real discriminators, we will hire the best based on balance.

### 5. How much flexibility will the Director have in personnel hiring, firing, organizational changes, etc.?

- a. The Board will tend to give maximum flexibility to the Director.
- b. Tenured scientific staff can only be terminated for cause or by an action by the Board. However there is post tenure review process in place that requires sustained performance.
- c. Associate Directors, such as site directors, are selected by the Director but approved by the Observatory Council Based on recommendations by a search committee and the NOAO Director, the Observatory Council approves the appointments of the NOAO Deputy and Associate Directors.
- d. Although AURA's renewal proposal contains an organizational alignment we believe is responsive to NSF guidance following the Senior Review, many other

possibilities exist and AURA will work with the NSF to gain agreement if major changes are proposed.

**6. When does the Director need to be physically on board?**

- a. We would like to expedite the process because beginning early next year we will be doing final negotiations on our renewed cooperative agreement.
- b. The new agreement is intended to be in place April 1, 2009 and run through March 31 2014.
- c. Next year will be crucial for the new director in establishing his/her imprint on this new agreement and working with the next Decadal Survey.

**7. What is the budget outlook for NOAO?**

- a. We have gotten budget guidelines from the NSF for the purpose of writing the proposal; however the National Science Board will approve the final five year budget.
- b. The budget represents a steady growth of 3% over the next five years for a total of \$149M over this period. This is a very useful increase over what we got over the last five years.

**8. What has been the impact of the Senior Review on the outlook for NOAO?**

(See <http://www.aura-astronomy.org/nv/AURA%20response%20to%20the%20senior%20review.pdf> and other material on the AURA website for AURA's response to the Senior Review. Also, see the Director's Office section of the June, 2007 NOAO Newsletter.)

- a. Overall, AURA and NOAO have found within the Senior Review the basis for an effective program of leadership for the national observatory. The role of "providing access to high-performance telescopes of all apertures" has been interpreted (with NSF ratification) as a charge to create a balanced program, not a limited one.
- b. Although the Senior Review recommended some budget reductions in administrative costs, scientific staff, and mountain operations costs, we have worked closely with the NSF to identify what is reasonable and possible at this stage, and we are participating in a series of "cost reviews" to look at unresolved issues.
- c. The Senior Review also recommended increases in certain areas such as deferred maintenance and telescope improvements. The NSF has provided increases in the FY08 budget for NOAO to carry these out. If indeed cost savings are found in, for example scientific staff, instrumentation, etc, these will be put into other areas of improvement along the lines recommended by the Senior Review.
- d. AURA has also been asked to withdraw from the direct partnership with the Thirty Meter Telescope project and play an national program manager role for the GSMT, including both TMT, the Giant Magellan Telescope, and ESO's ELT project. This is ongoing and understood by all parties.