

## **Science Steering Committee Charter**

### **Statement of purpose:**

The Science Steering Committee (SSC) is a committee of the California Association for Research in Astronomy (CARA) Board of Directors and plays a key role in the governance of the W. M. Keck Observatory (WMKO, also referred to herein as “the Observatory”). The SSC advises the CARA Board and the WMKO Director on those aspects of the Observatory that affect its scientific capability and productivity.

### **Membership of the SSC and Terms of Appointment:**

The membership of the SSC is comprised of members, observers and ex-officio members. Only members can vote on SSC actions. The full membership attends the open session, but only members and ex-officio members attend the executive sessions. Co-chairs may choose to invite others to attend the executive session.

Members are proposed by the directors of their respective institutions. Observers are nominated by their respective institutions and proposed for approval by the directors of Caltech Optical Observatories (COO), University of California Observatories (UCO) or WMKO depending on the affiliation with the observatory. All members and observers must be confirmed by the CARA Board Executive committee, on the advice of the COO, UCO and WMKO Directors.

Members serve for a 3-year term and can be re-appointed at the conclusion of that term. There are two co-chairs of the SSC, one each from the California Institute of Technology (CIT) and the University of California (UC) appointed to serve 3-year renewable terms. The SSC co-chairs attend CARA Board meetings to present scientific advice and recommendations related to the W. M. Keck Observatory.

### **The members (3-year term) of the SSC include:**

- 3 representatives each from UC and CIT; one of whom is a co-chair from each institution
- 2 representatives from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
- 1 representative from the University of Hawaii (UH) Institute for Astronomy (IfA)

Members of the SSC attend both the open and the executive sessions and can vote on SSC actions.

### **Ex-Officio members of the SSC include:**

- There are 6 ex-officio members of the SSC: the current Directors of: UCO, COO, NASA Exoplanet Science Institute (NExScl), UH IfA; the WMKO Director and the WMKO Chief Scientist.

Ex-officio members of the SSC attend both the open and the executive sessions but have no voting rights.

### **The non-voting members (3-year term) of the SSC include:**

- Representatives of affiliated institutions that are currently in a scientific collaboration with the Observatory. Currently these institutions are Northwestern University, University of Notre Dame, Swinburne University of Technology and Yale University.

Non-voting members participate in only the open session of the SSC.

### **Responsibilities: and Authority:**

The SSC will advise the CARA Board and the Observatory Director of its discussions and conclusions. The specific responsibilities of the SSC are:

- The SSC will help develop the scientific aspects of the Observatory strategic plan, in collaboration with the Observatory Director and Chief Scientist.
- The SSC will evaluate the scientific priorities for new instrumentation and major instrumentation upgrades
- The SSC will provide formal advice to the CARA Board and the Observatory for instrumentation development and operations.
- The SSC will advise the Observatory Director on the scientific priorities for telescope operations and development.
- The SSC will advise the Observatory Director on science observing policies.
- The SSC will be consulted in the preparation of those aspects of the integrated Observatory budget that address the science priorities.
- The SSC will represent the interests of the scientific community to the CARA Board and the Observatory and will proactively engage and inform the community regarding Observatory matters.
- Upon request from the CARA Board, the SSC will provide an assessment of the state of the Observatory.

### **Meetings:**

The SSC holds quarterly 2-day meetings: typically, the first full day entails presentations and discussion with a second half-day for further discussion and to complete documentation of the meeting minutes and reports. The winter, summer and fall SSC meetings are scheduled just prior to the CARA board meeting. The spring SSC meeting is usually held in the month of April. Meetings alternate between CIT and UC campuses with the exception of the fall meeting that is held at the Observatory headquarters. Web-conferencing capabilities are available at all meetings for those needing to participate remotely. The open-meeting session is open to the Keck Observatory community.

Special ad-hoc meetings may also be called by the CARA Board of Directors or the WMKO Director.

The meeting agenda is developed by the SSC co-chairs with input from the Observatory Director and Chief Scientist.

The Chief Scientist may be delegated by the Observatory Director to act as the focal point for Observatory/SSC interactions.

### **Documentation:**

The SSC co-chairs, with support of WMKO administrative assistance, will maintain the content of a website and includes, at a minimum, the following information and documentation. Meeting documentation will be completed and posted within two weeks of the SSC meeting.

- Meeting dates and locations
- CARA Board-approved approved Charter for the SSC
- Membership roster with contact information
- Keck Observatory community information arising from the SSC meetings
- Presentations and minutes listing key issues, decisions and actions intended for all SSC members (regular and ex-officio) and SSC observers in a password protected site
- Executive site (password protected) with those presentations, decisions and actions restricted to voting members and ex-officio members