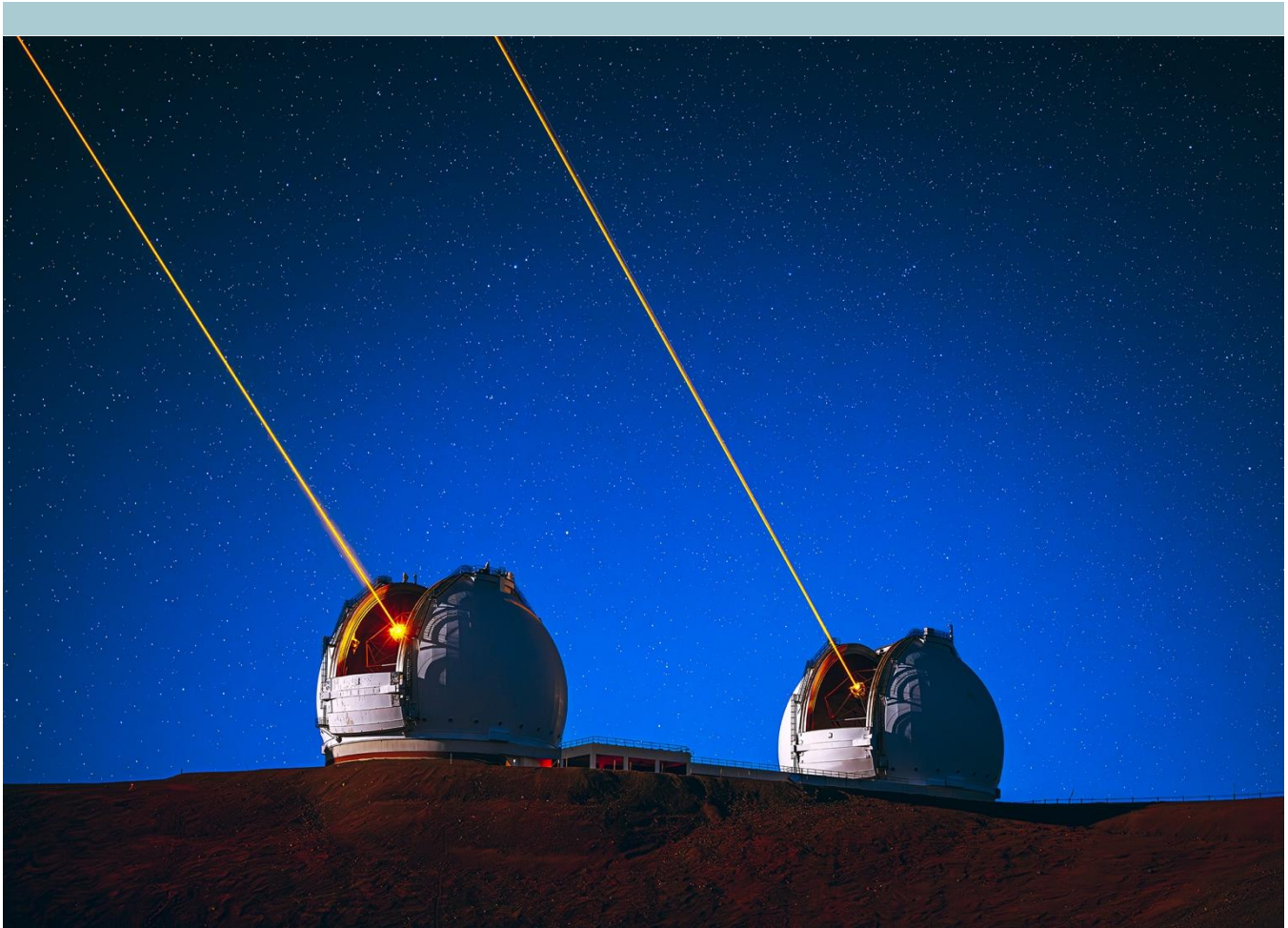




W. M. KECK OBSERVATORY

Chief Financial Officer Leadership Profile

September 2026



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Executive Summary

The W. M. Keck Observatory seeks a strategic, collaborative, and mission-driven Chief Financial Officer to help guide one of the world's premier scientific institutions through a period of significant opportunity and change. Renowned for its groundbreaking contributions to astronomy and discoveries that have shaped our understanding of the universe, Keck operates within a uniquely complex environment that combines nonprofit stewardship, university partnerships, federal funding, scientific innovation, and deep community engagement in Hawai'i.

Reporting to the Director and serving as a key member of the senior leadership team, the CFO will oversee the financial strategy and operations of an approximately \$30 million, 130 FTE enterprise supported through a diverse portfolio of funding sources, including the University of California and Caltech partnership, NASA cooperative agreements, federal grants, private philanthropy, and Board-managed reserve funds. The CFO will be a trusted advisor to leadership and the Board of Directors, translating financial complexity into actionable insight that supports sound decision-making and advances Keck's long-term scientific mission.

The coming decade presents extraordinary opportunity. As a new generation of ground- and space-based observatories transforms the landscape of astronomical discovery, Keck is investing in advanced instrumentation, adaptive optics, and operational capabilities that will ensure it remains a leading contributor to frontier science. The Observatory enters this period from a position of strength, anchored by the exceptional observing conditions of Maunakea, enduring partnerships with world-class institutions, a highly capable and dedicated workforce, a mature yet nimble operating model, a vibrant scientific community, trusted relationships throughout Hawai'i, and a global reputation for scientific excellence. These strengths provide a strong foundation for continued innovation, impact, and long-term sustainability.

At the same time, the observatory is entering an important inflection point. As the organization implements its Keck 2035 Strategic Plan, it must balance competing priorities that not only includes continued scientific competitiveness, but also renewal of aging infrastructure, strengthening of relationships with Hawai'i communities, adaptation to an evolving federal funding landscape, alignment of philanthropy efforts, and ensuring long-term financial sustainability. The CFO will play a central role in evaluating risks and opportunities, modeling scenarios, aligning resources with strategic priorities, and helping leadership and the Board navigate critical trade-offs.

Internally, the CFO will lead the continued evolution of the finance function. Following the retirement of a long-tenured and highly influential CFO, the next leader will have the opportunity to build a resilient financial organization by strengthening organizational capacity, developing key team members, clarifying roles and accountability, and modernizing systems and reporting processes. This is a hands-on leadership role that requires both strategic perspective and operational engagement.

The CFO will also be part of Keck's Senior Leadership Team, which looks beyond day-to-day operations to advance what is most strategic and mission critical. The SLT collectively guides the Observatory's future, strengthening its science, people, partnerships, and connection to Hawai'i while ensuring the institution remains resilient and mission-focused for generations to come.

Success in the CFO role will require exceptional financial acumen, including expertise in financial planning, forecasting, controls, compliance, grants management, and nonprofit finance. Equally important is the ability to lead through influence in a highly collaborative governance environment where decisions are reached through trust, relationships, and shared accountability. The ideal candidate will possess the credibility to quickly earn the confidence of Board members, university partners, fellow senior leaders, and staff while demonstrating humility, adaptability, sound judgment, and a deep appreciation for Keck's culture of stewardship and service.

This is an extraordinary opportunity for a financially sophisticated leader who is energized by complexity, inspired by scientific discovery, and motivated by the challenge of helping a globally respected institution build its next

chapter. The successful candidate will serve as a steward, enterprise leader, and builder, ensuring that Keck's resources, relationships, and financial strategies remain aligned with its mission for decades to come.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see Procedure for Candidacy at the end of this document.

Sections of this document feature 'ōlelo no'eau, traditional proverbs that capture Hawai'i's native intelligence. Reciprocal knowledge exchange is an important part of building relationships with our community.

Role of the Chief Financial Officer

He luelue ka ‘upena e ku’u ai.

The fine-meshed net is the one to let into the sea.

The small things are just as important as the big ones.

Summary

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is responsible for the organization’s financial leadership, integrity, and long-term sustainability. The CFO partners with the Director, senior leadership, and the Board of Directors to set financial direction, maintain strong governance and internal controls, and ensure the availability of accurate, timely, and decision-ready financial information to support the mission and strategic objectives of the organization.

Leadership Approach

The CFO operates with a balance of strategic leadership and practical engagement. While accountable for financial direction, governance, and outcomes, the CFO is expected to engage directly in analysis, problem-solving, and execution when circumstances require, particularly during periods of department transition and development. This approach ensures continuity of critical functions, supports staff growth, and maintains financial integrity within a small and evolving finance organization.

Essential Functions

Financial Leadership and Strategy

- Lead the Finance Department and establish priorities, performance expectations, and accountability for finance leadership roles.
- Partner with the Director and senior leadership to align financial strategy with organizational objectives and long-term plans.
- Identify, assess, and manage financial risks to protect organizational assets and sustainability.

Financial Planning, Budgeting, and Analysis

- Lead and ensure the development of annual budgets, multi-year financial plans, forecasts, and scenario analyses.
- Review and approve planning assumptions, resource allocations, and financial strategies prior to presentation to the Board of Directors.
- Ensure clear, accurate, and timely financial reporting to leadership and the Board.
- Partners with the Chief Human Resources Officer to ensure compensation programs are financially sustainable and aligned with organizational and Board expectations.

Financial Reporting, Controls, and Compliance

- Maintain accountability for the accuracy and integrity of financial statements and financial reporting.
- Ensure a strong system of internal controls and compliance with GAAP, Uniform Guidance, applicable federal regulations, and organizational policies.
- Oversee audit readiness and support the successful completion of external financial and compliance audits.

Treasury and Financial Risk Management

- Direct treasury strategy, cash management, liquidity planning, and financial risk management activities.
- Monitor financial position and ensure prudent stewardship of organizational resources.

Sponsored Awards and Restricted Funds Oversight

- Ensure appropriate financial oversight of sponsored awards, grants, and restricted funds, including compliance with financial reporting and audit requirements.
- Maintain responsibility for indirect cost rate development, documentation, and approvals.

Finance Systems and Data Enablement

- Provide leadership over finance systems strategy to ensure systems support reliable financial operations, reporting, data integrity, and audit requirements.
- Ensure financial dashboards, analytics, and reporting tools effectively support decision-making.

Board and Committee Support

- Serve as the primary financial staff liaison to the Board of Directors and its Finance and Audit & Compliance Committees.
- Support the Board in evaluating significant financial strategies and long-term commitments, including potential capital investments, partnerships, or operating arrangements.

Continuity, Mentorship, and Capacity Building

- Ensure continuity of critical finance functions during periods of recruitment, onboarding, or staff development.
- Provide mentoring, guidance, and support to finance leadership and staff to build capability and confidence over time.
- When necessary, assume or support execution of key financial tasks to mitigate risk, meet deadlines, and maintain compliance, with the intent of transitioning responsibilities as organizational capacity matures.

Fiduciary Responsibilities

- Serve as a fiduciary for the organization's retirement plan, ensuring compliance, due diligence, and prudent financial oversight.

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

Lele ‘o Kohala me he lupe lā.

Kohala soars as a kite.

An admiration for the leadership of Kohala, the district where Keck Headquarters is.

Build a Resilient Financial Organization

The next CFO will have the opportunity to reshape and strengthen the Observatory's finance function following the retirement of a long-serving CFO whose institutional knowledge has been a strong asset to the organization. A key expectation will be to assess organizational capabilities, recruit and develop talent, clarify roles and accountability, and build a sustainable financial infrastructure that is supported by the entire finance division. Fostering a culture of professional development and continuous improvement, the next CFO will build organizational depth, strengthen succession planning, and support knowledge transfer across the organization.

Serve as a Trusted Strategic Advisor

Keck's environment is complex, with funding, governance, scientific priorities, operational needs, and stakeholder interests often intersecting. The CFO will be expected to translate complexity into clear financial insights for the Director, leadership team, Board, and institutional partners. Success will require the ability to frame trade-offs, evaluate risks and opportunities, and help leaders make informed decisions that advance the Observatory's mission. The CFO will identify emerging financial, regulatory, economic, and operational risks, communicate their potential implications clearly, and develop practical contingency plans before risks become crises. This leader will also be expected to strengthen financial literacy across the organization, helping senior leaders, managers, and principal investigators better understand financial implications, compliance requirements, and the rationale behind key financial decisions and controls.

Shape Keck's Long-Term Financial Future

As the Observatory implements its Keck 2035 Strategic Plan, the CFO will play a central role in developing financial strategies that balance scientific competitiveness, infrastructure renewal, workforce sustainability, community commitments, and changing revenue streams. This leader will help ensure resources are aligned with priorities while maintaining the financial flexibility needed to navigate uncertainty and invest in future opportunities. The CFO will lead the Observatory's long-range financial planning process, incorporating scenario planning, risk assessment, and strategic forecasting to support Board and leadership decision-making around key priorities such as scientific instrumentation investments, infrastructure, lease renewal efforts, and future partnership opportunities.

Navigate a Complex and Evolving Funding Environment

Keck's financial model includes support from UC and Caltech, NASA cooperative agreements, federal grants, philanthropy, and Board-managed reserves. The CFO will be expected to understand and optimize this multifaceted funding structure, monitor changes in federal funding and reimbursement practices, assess their implications for cash flow and operations, and help diversify and strengthen financial support through effective stewardship of reserves and philanthropic initiatives. In addition, the CFO will be a key partner in developing contingency strategies that protect organizational continuity and in evaluating future funding and partnership models that support scientific excellence and long-term financial sustainability.

Earn Credibility with the Board and Institutional Partners

Keck's distinctive governance model, which brings together CARA, the University of California, Caltech, NASA, scientific collaborators, and the Board, requires a CFO who can operate effectively in an environment of shared authority and collaborative decision-making. Success will depend on building trust and credibility with Board members, finance committee leadership, and institutional partners, while communicating complex issues clearly and influencing outcomes through expertise, sound judgment, and strong relationships rather than formal authority alone. The CFO must quickly develop a deep understanding of Keck's governance structure, operating model, and stakeholder landscape to support effective decision-making and organizational agility.

Modernize Financial Systems and Business Processes

The Observatory has a significant opportunity to modernize its financial infrastructure, reporting capabilities, and related business processes. The next CFO will lead the evaluation and potential implementation of future ERP and business systems, working closely with the Business Systems Manager and key stakeholders to assess existing platforms, identify opportunities for improvement, and implement thoughtful enhancements that strengthen efficiency, controls, reporting, and decision-making. This includes advancing a more integrated approach across finance, budgeting, payroll, procurement, project management, and timekeeping functions, while identifying responsible opportunities to leverage automation, analytics, and emerging technologies. As executive sponsor of these efforts, the CFO will balance innovation with organizational capacity for change, ensuring modernization initiatives support long-term growth without disrupting mission-critical operations.

Advance a Culture of Stewardship and Service

Beyond technical and financial leadership, the CFO will be expected to embody Keck's culture of stewardship and service. This includes fostering collaboration across the leadership team, helping unite diverse perspectives around shared priorities, and understanding the importance of Keck's relationship with Hawai'i communities. The successful candidate will recognize that stewardship is not about preserving resources for its own sake, but about maximizing the Observatory's scientific impact and long-term sustainability. The CFO will help leaders prioritize competing resource needs, build consensus in a highly collaborative environment, and guide the organization through a period of generational transition, balancing continuity and innovation while supporting the continued evolution of Keck's capabilities, processes, and culture.

Earn Keck's Place In The Community and On Maunakea

Earning trust in the community to earn the privilege of the Observatory's continued presence on Maunakea is a priority of the highest order. Though it is led by the Public Affairs team, the nature of this work is such that every member of the Keck staff must engage. Keck offers a program encouraging all employees to use 2% of their paid work time in community engagement efforts: participants have volunteered at reforestation activities, beach cleanups, mentoring at local schools, served on non-profit boards, with community resilience organizations, and even as volunteer firefighters. The CFO will engage in community efforts and encourage staff to do so.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

Halakau ka manu i ka lā'au.

The bird perches high in the tree.

Said of a highly esteemed person, not easily found.

Required Qualifications

Education

- Bachelor's degree in accounting, finance, business administration, or a related field.

Experience

- Minimum of ten (10) years of progressive senior financial leadership experience, preferably in a nonprofit, research, or federally funded environment.
- Minimum of five (5) years of supervisory experience.

Preferred Qualifications

- CPA certification or license and master's degree.
- Experience with federal awards, Uniform Guidance compliance & audits.
- Experience working closely with Boards of Directors and senior leadership teams.
- Ability to evaluate and guide the responsible use of emerging technologies within a strong governance and control framework.

Required Skills and Competencies

- Strong financial, analytical, and strategic thinking skills.
- Intellectual and technical curiosity, including the willingness to learn the language and operating realities of astronomy, engineering, scientific research, and observatory operations.
- Ability to communicate complex financial information clearly to financial and non-financial audiences.
- High level of integrity, sound judgment, and confidentiality.
- Collaborative leadership style and ability to build effective working relationships across the organization.
- Enterprise-wide financial, operational, and risk perspective.
- Ability to partner with a leadership team grounded in scientific, engineering, community, and operational expertise.

Physical Demands

These physical demands are representative of the physical requirements necessary for an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of the job. This is not a complete list of the physical demands that may be required.

- **Sit:** Remain seated for extended periods, particularly during meetings, strategic planning sessions, and while working on a computer. This can involve sitting for several hours at a time, necessitating comfort with sedentary work.
- **Talk/Hear:** Ability to communicate effectively with staff, management, and technical personnel to exchange information and provide direction.

- **Visual Acuity:** Ability to read technical documentation, computer screens, and electronic instrumentation displays.
- **Mobility:** Ability to occasionally stand, walk, bend, reach, or move between work areas when supporting engineering activities.
- **Mental Focus:** Ability to maintain concentration and focus on detailed tasks for extended periods.
- **Lift/Carry:** Raise or lower an object from one level to another (includes upward pulling) up to 25 pounds.
- **Driving:** Ability to safely operate a motor vehicle to travel between headquarters and the summit facility as required.
- **Summit Work:** Ability to work at the Observatory summit facility (approximately 14,000 feet elevation) in accordance with Observatory safety and health requirements.

Work Environment Conditions

These environmental conditions are representative of what an employee will encounter while performing the essential functions of the job. This is not a complete list of the environmental conditions that may be encountered.

- **Office Environment:** The role is primarily based in a professional office setting, where standard office equipment such as computers, telephones, and photocopiers is used. The office environment is generally climate-controlled, offering a stable and comfortable workspace.
- **Summit Environment:** Work may occasionally be performed at the summit facility located at approximately 14,000 feet elevation, where employees must follow established safety protocols related to high-altitude conditions.

About W.M. Keck Observatory

Ho'okāhi ka 'ilau like 'ana.

Wield the paddles together.

Overview

The W. M. Keck Observatory has the privilege of learning from the universe from a unique site on Maunakea: a place of profound cultural, spiritual, and natural significance. Our work has always required collaboration: across institutions, disciplines, and generations, and with a growing responsibility to listen, learn, and act with care for the mountain and the community to which it belongs.

Described as “the impossible telescope” in its earlier days, Keck Observatory has evolved into one of the world’s premier ground-based astronomical facilities for more than three decades. That transformation has been guided not only by technical ambition but by people working together with shared purpose.

Based in Waimea (also known as Kamuela) on Hawai‘i Island, the W. M. Keck Observatory Headquarters is located in a unique upcountry small town known for its paniolo (Hawaiian cowboy) heritage, natural beauty, outdoor lifestyle, and year-round temperate climate. Rural yet vibrant, Waimea is a multicultural community deeply rooted in Hawaiian culture, offering a distinctive quality of life and strong connection to place and community.

Looking Toward 2035

The coming decade represents a pivotal moment for Keck Observatory and for Hawai‘i astronomy more broadly.

By 2035, a new long-term lease for the Observatory—alongside fellow observatories operating on Maunakea—will need to be successfully negotiated. This period will also bring generational transitions across our workforce, with significant changes in leadership, expertise, and institutional knowledge. At the same time, the global landscape of astronomical discovery will be reshaped by new facilities on the ground and in space, redefining how—and why—we observe the universe.

Our Origins and Governance

The W. M. Keck Foundation funded the construction of the original Keck I telescope, followed six years later by its twin, Keck II. The project was managed jointly by the University of California and the California Institute of Technology. Keck I began scientific observations in May 1993, with Keck II achieving first science in April 1996. Later that same year, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) joined the Observatory as a one-sixth partner.

Today, W. M. Keck Observatory is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization supported by a combination of public and institutional funding and private philanthropy. The Observatory is governed by the [California Association for Research in Astronomy \(CARA\)](#), whose Board of Directors includes representatives from the California Institute of Technology and the University of California, with liaisons from NASA, the University of Hawai‘i, and the W. M. Keck Foundation.

[View Keck 2035: The W.M.Keck Observatory Strategic Plan](#)

Mission

To advance the frontiers of astronomy and share our discoveries, inspiring the imagination of all.

Vision

Our vision is a world in which all humankind is inspired and united by the pursuit of knowledge of the infinite variety and richness of the universe.

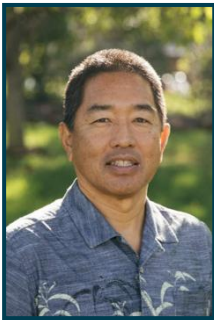
Core Values

Stewardship: We care for our people, facilities, resources, communities, environments, and organizational reputation in a balanced and ethical way, now and for the future.

Service: We prioritize collective impact over individual aims in serving each other, our astronomical community, and the local community to help reach our shared goals.

Leadership

Rich Matsuda, Director



Rich Matsuda is the W. M. Keck Observatory Director. During his 30-plus-year career at the Observatory, Rich helped build and operate the Keck Observatory telescopes, progressing to roles in senior leadership, including Chief of Operations and Associate Director of Community Relations, before assuming his current role.

In addition to overseeing the operation and performance of the Observatory, Rich also serves as the appointed Maunakea Observatories representative on the Maunakea Stewardship and Oversight Authority (MKSOA), the management and governance body for Maunakea that the State of Hawai'i established in July 2022, founded on a mutual stewardship paradigm.

Prior to joining Keck Observatory in 1993 during its construction phase, he worked at Boeing on the design and fabrication of the 777 airplane. Rich holds a B.S. in electrical engineering from the University of Washington.

Born and raised in Hawai'i, Rich is passionate about creating a resilient and sustainable future for Hawai'i's next generations. Drawing upon his relationships and knowledge in astronomy and in the local community, Rich seeks to build bridges between the two, with aspirations of a vibrant future for all.



Maunakea

Maunakea kū ha'o i ka mālie.
Maunakea, standing alone in the calm.

Keck approaches its work with reverence for the wonders of the universe and all they have to teach humanity, and for Maunakea—the sacred mountain on Hawai'i Island unlike any other in the world upon which the Observatory and its users are able to conduct the research they do.

Over its three-plus decades on Maunakea, the Observatory has been successful in meeting, and often exceeding, scientific and technological innovation objectives. During this same period, the socio-political environment in which Keck operates has changed dramatically.

Deep divisions formed in the local community over the acceptance of astronomy on Maunakea, punctuated by intense Native Hawaiian-led protests against the construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT). At the apex of the TMT protests in 2019, it became clear that maintaining the status quo of Maunakea astronomy would not lead to a successful future.

Keck is navigating major systems change and is playing a leadership role amongst the Maunakea Observatories. While the mission of scientific discovery remains steadfast and clear, the situation compels the Observatory's team to work with open minds and hearts to adapt the way that mission is conducted, incorporating what has been learned and what continues to be learned about astronomy's place in Hawai'i.



Procedure for Candidacy

E kaupē aku nō i ka hoe a kō mai.

Put forward the paddle and draw it back.

Go on with the task and finish it.

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

WittKieffer is assisting W.M. Keck Observatory in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by December 4, 2026.

Application materials should be submitted using WittKieffer's [candidate portal](#).

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Zach Smith, Ph.D. and Kim Migoya

KeckObservatoryCFO@wittkieffer.com

The anticipated salary range for the opportunity is \$200,000 – \$250,000.

The W. M. Keck Observatory celebrates the wide diversity of backgrounds and experiences of our local and global community. We are committed to building a culture of inclusivity where everyone is valued, respected, and welcome to be their authentic selves. We strive for an equitable environment that celebrates the contributions of all in our mission.