POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

OBSERVATORY OPERATIONS MANAGER

The Observatory Operations Manager (OOM) supervises all operational aspects of the research telescopes and technical facilities at Lowell Observatory. This position reports to the Director of Technology (DoT).

Lowell Observatory operates telescopes at three sites: its expanding Mars Hill campus in Flagstaff, Arizona (both research and public viewing telescopes), Anderson Mesa 10 miles southeast of town (1.1-meter, 0.9-meter, 0.6-meter telescopes, and the Navy Precision Optical Interferometer - NPOI), and Happy Jack another 35 miles southeast of town (the 4.3-meter Lowell Discovery Telescope -LDT, formerly known as the Discovery Channel Telescope). Learn more about these facilities by following this link: https://lowell.edu/research/research-facilities/

RESPONSIBILITIES

Provides managerial leadership for the nighttime operations, telescope facilities maintenance, and operational engineering teams (approx. 15 staff) in the day-to-day operations of Lowell Observatory’s research telescope and technical facilities. Manages operational budgets and major project schedules for these areas. Manages interactions with contractors working on-site, working closely with the Engineering Manager and Technical Facilities Manager. Provides leadership to encourage productivity, initiative, and personal development of employees.

Leads the LDT night operations and NPOI observing programs in close cooperation with the Night Operations Manager, promoting excellence in astronomical research support. Under the supervision of the DoT, works with the Lowell Instrumentation Group, the LDT and NPOI Scientists, and research facilities user groups and partners to ensure that needs are met and to identify and plan for future needs of the facilities. Develops and maintains a collaborative relationship with the Boston University Observatory Manager, Naval partners at NPOI, and the United States Forest Service (USFS) to support cooperation at all levels. Provides operational reports and plans for all stakeholders and provides input for the Lowell Observatory annual report.

Acts as a member of the senior management of the technical group at Lowell Observatory to assist the DoT in leading the technical efforts of the observatory. Keeps the DoT informed of issues at the technical and research facilities. Coordinates with administration and lodging facilities staff to ensure a smooth science user experience.

Works with the DoT, Science, Development, and Marketing and Communications teams to coordinate activities at the technical facilities for official visitors and potential donors.

Works closely with the DoT, Engineering Manager, Technical Facilities Manager, and Night Operations Manager to establish and maintain general operating and safety procedures to ensure compliance with applicable federal and state laws, as well as USFS requirements. Assists in coordination of responses to emergencies that threaten normal
operations of the facilities. As a senior member of the remote facilities staff, the Operations Manager is expected to be a part of the emergency response team for those sites.

Participate in the scientific and research environment of the Observatory by conducting personal research, participating in educational programs, or by supporting the instrument, software, optical, mechanical, or electrical subsystems (approximately 20% of time available for this)

QUALIFICATIONS

The Observatory Operations Manager must be self-motivated with strong attention to detail and able to complete tasks on schedule. They must possess excellent interpersonal skills and ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing. They must have strong organizational skills, as regards both individual work and managing operations and engineering staff. They must be willing to take on new tasks and duties as needed to support the overall mission of the Observatory. Driving in mountainous winter conditions is often required.

EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE

Required: The Observatory Operations Manager shall possess a Bachelor’s degree (or equivalent experience) in a relevant science or engineering field, a minimum of ten years of experience in science/research/engineering operations, with a minimum of four years of supervisory experience that includes managing a technical, engineering, or science team in a high-pressure environment. The OOM should have prior project management experience and be familiar with project management tools and principles.

Desired: A Master’s degree or PhD in physics, astronomy, or earth sciences, or comparable engineering background, is desired. Experience with active and adaptive optics, interferometric facilities, or other similarly complex instrumentation, is a large plus. Experience with MS Project will be considered positively. Significant experience in operation of research telescopes including a minimum of four years of experience with large aperture instruments (2-meter minimum) would be considered a plus.

WORKING CONDITIONS

The OOM works at all of Lowell Observatory’s sites: the Lowell Discovery Telescope, Anderson Mesa, and Mars Hill. Our main location and the telescope locations are at an altitude of approximately 7200 feet elevation. Environmental conditions can be unpredictable with temperature ranges varying between –20°F and +80°F. Inclement winter weather conditions can also be expected which will require some degree of comfort and proficiency with driving in snowy/icy conditions.

Often working at a computer and sitting for extended periods. Moving throughout the campus, on sometimes uneven terrain. Occasional repair and maintenance of systems may require standing, crouching, lifting, reaching as well as climbing ladders, and using safety equipment. The OOM may be called some nights and weekends to assist with system issues that may occasionally arise.

Lowell Observatory has a Covid-19 Vaccination Mandate currently in effect for staff members. You may find more information about the mandate on the careers page of our website.

Status: Full-time, Regular
Compensation: $90k-$120k DOE
FLSA Classification: Exempt
Compensation Type: Salary
Benefit Eligible: Yes
Location: Flagstaff, Anderson Mesa, and Happy Jack, AZ
To Apply:
Please send the following documents to humanresources@lowell.edu

- Lowell Standard Application (www.lowell.edu/careers)
- Letter of interest addressing your qualifications
- Resume

Applications submitted by March 6th 2022 at Midnight will receive priority attention. Position Open Until Filled

*Benefits Overview: In addition to 11 scheduled paid holidays, Lowell Observatory offers a Flexible Paid Time Off policy for all full-time, benefit eligible employees which allows you to determine how much time you need to rest and enjoy yourself outside of work. Paid time off also includes paid Parental and FMLA leaves. The cost of premiums for medical, life & long term disability insurances for benefit eligible employees is 100% paid by the company, and includes a contribution to either an H.S.A or HRA account for first dollar medical expenses. A portion of dependent medical insurance is paid by the company. Up to a 5% match on retirement contributions after 6 months of employment and funds in lifestyle spending account provided by the observatory.

Employment is subject to passing a background check

Lowell Observatory is proud to be an equal opportunity workplace and is an affirmative action employer. We are committed to equal employment opportunity regardless of race, color, ancestry, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, age, citizenship, marital status, disability, gender identity or Veteran status. Lowell Observatory has always been, and always will be, committed to diversity and inclusion. We seek individuals from all backgrounds to join our teams, and we encourage our employees to bring their authentic, original, and best selves to work.

Lowell Observatory sits at the base of mountains sacred to tribes throughout the region. We honor their past, present, and future generations, who have lived here for millennia and will forever call this place home.

Lowell Observatory is committed to providing access, and reasonable accommodation in its services, programs, activities, education and employment for individuals with disabilities. Our non-smoking campus is at an elevation of 7,200ft/2200m, and the LDT is 40 miles south of Flagstaff at an elevation of 7,800 ft/2370m. If you need a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process, please notify the Human Resources office for assistance.

Version January 2022/HR