SALT External Review Committee: Draft Terms of Reference

The external review committee should consist of 3 – 5 astronomers, who are familiar with the operations of a large observatory, and who are not employed by any of the partner institutions. Committee members will receive written reports at least two weeks in advance of their visit to SALT. The committee would visit Cape Town and Sutherland, and will be briefed in person by SALT and SAAO staff including the SAAO Director, the SALT Operations Manager, the Astronomy Operations Manager, the SALT Development Director, and the SALT Business Manager. The committee will have the authority to interview any relevant SALT staff that they deem necessary. Electronic meetings with the SALT Board Chair and members of the Board Executive Committee may also be arranged. Four weeks after their visit is complete, the committee will deliver a written report to the SALT board summarizing their findings. The committee shall be charged with examining all aspects of observatory functions, including:

- management structure
- strategic vision for the observatory
- observatory infrastructure and staff
- effectiveness of end-to-end operations: from proposal to data products
- observational and scientific productivity of the observatory
- productivity of the scientific staff
- human capital development, education and public outreach
- development program
- effectiveness of the SALT-SAAO operations contract, including such items as site services, housing, HR, health, safety and security support
- business and financial management
- corporate governance of the SALT foundation

The committee shall receive the following documents prior to their visit:

- strategic vision from the SALT board
- report from the SALT board chair
- report from the SAAO director
- report from the SALT Development Director
- report from the SALT Operations manager
- report from the SALT Astronomy operations manager
- financial and business report from the Business Manager and Chief Financial Officer
- recent annual reports
- list of SALT publications (from the SAAO librarian)
- curriculum vitae of SALT scientific staff, and principal technical staff

SALT External Review Committee: Timeline, Estimated Budget and Potential Members

The terms of reference for the committee would be finalized in June. Nominations for potential committee members will be accepted until mid-June, and ranked by the BEC by the end of June. Potential committee members would be contacted in July and August, with the committee in place by September. The committee would conduct its site visits in February or March, 2016. The report will be completed by the end of April, 2016, in time for discussion at the May 2016 board meeting.

Each committee members would receive an honorarium for their services, of order $2500 US, or 30,000 ZAR. SALT will provide for round-trip economy-class air travel from reviewer's home and subsistence costs in South Africa. Travel costs would be of order $2000 US, or 24,000 ZAR per member. The total estimated cost for the external review would be of order $22,500 US or 270,000 ZAR.

Darragh O'Donoghue has suggested the following as potential members of the committee:

- Taft Armandroff (director, McDonald Observatory, former director Keck Observatory)
- Matthew Colless (Director of Astronomy & Astrophysics ANU, former director AAO)
- Renee Kraan-Korteweg (Chair of Astronomy UCT, Vice-President IAU)
- Hilton Lewis (director Keck Observatory)
- Kavi Moodley (U of Kwazulu-Natal)
- Larry Ramsey (Penn State, HET board member, former SALT board member)
- Bob Williams (STScI, former director STScI and CTIO)