



Search for the Chief Operating Officer

The Kavli Foundation
Los Angeles, CA

“The Kavli Foundation is dedicated to advancing science for the benefit of humanity.”

-The Kavli Foundation Mission

The Kavli Foundation seeks a dynamic and experienced administrator motivated to make a positive difference in the world to serve as its Chief Operations Officer (COO). The Kavli Foundation is a highly respected basic science foundation with an endowment of nearly \$600M and an international presence. The foundation is focused on catalyzing breakthrough research globally in four pivotal fields of science: astrophysics, nanoscience, neuroscience, and theoretical physics. In two short decades, the Foundation has become an eminent, exceptionally well-developed private, non-profit grantmaking institution, with an energized and impressively competent staff of ~30 individuals and an enabling Board of Directors. The Foundation has recently pivoted to a different funding model that requires maturation of operational systems aligned with their strategic direction. The COO will play a critical leadership role in strengthening, designing, and stewarding the Foundation’s administrative infrastructure in service of advancing science for the benefit of humanity.

The COO will be responsible for developing and implementing an operational structure that is aligned with The Kavli Foundation’s overall goals, strategies, and objectives. The COO will be a critical partner to the President in formulating best practices and approaches in support of the Foundation’s mission and will have the opportunity to reimagine the Foundation’s organizational structure and establish business process flows to optimize efficiency, function, and impact. This will include close collaboration with the Foundation’s leadership team to develop and implement plans to enhance operational infrastructure and excellence.

In doing so, the COO will reimagine and oversee business operations and functional departments, including finance and accounting, information technology, systems and facilities, general operations and administration of activities to ensure efficiency and economy. The COO will drive continuous improvement initiatives, lead organizational efforts, and manage cross-functional teams to execute projects and initiatives, collaborating with the president, the leadership team, and the Board of Directors to deploy a total annual budget of ~\$37M.

Reporting to the President, the Chief Operating Officer will be a strategic and hands-on administrative manager and leader. The COO must be able to work autonomously while also collaborating with the President, the Board of Directors, and other Foundation staff to optimize organizational structure and function. The Foundation seeks a COO who strives to embody the Foundation's aspirations, share its enthusiasm, and use its assets to pursue novel ways to enable and optimize operational excellence.

Qualifications and Characteristics

The successful candidate must demonstrate, through ideas, words, and actions, a strong commitment to the Kavli Foundation's common set of goals: programmatic impact; organizational culture; operational excellence; and governance.

This position requires a leader with vision, breadth, drive, and an entrepreneurial spirit. A compelling combination of organizational leadership and management skills, and the interpersonal ability to lead and inspire confidence across different stakeholders is needed. The desired qualifications and experience of an ideal COO include the following:

- Bachelor's degree, preferably in business, organizational development, or finance and accounting;
- master's or other advanced degree preferred.
- A minimum of 10+ years of senior level or higher operations experience, preferably at a nonprofit organization.
- Significant operational experience in evaluating, developing, and implementing organizational policies, and systems.
- Superb business acumen and sound understanding of business strategies, financial planning, analysis, and budgeting.
- Solid understanding of endowment investments is highly desirable.
- Accustomed to prioritizing, executing, and achieving results in lean environments; always ready to engage and lend a hand where needed.
- Solid experience and understanding of information technology and systems and infrastructure, including cybersecurity.
- Superior project management skills.
- Exceptional communication and interpersonal skills.

About The Kavli Foundation

The Kavli Foundation was established in 2000 by [Fred Kavli](#), a Norwegian-American entrepreneur and champion of science, with a vision to advance science for the benefit of humanity. The Foundation aspires to this vision through its mission to stimulate basic research in the fields of astrophysics, nanoscience, neuroscience, and theoretical physics; strengthen the relationship between science and society; and

honor scientific discoveries with The Kavli Prize, a partnership with The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters and The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research.

The Kavli Foundation funds basic [scientific research](#) in astrophysics, nanoscience, neuroscience, and theoretical physics as well as programs in [science and society](#) through a strategic mix of grantmaking and partnerships, designed to push the boundaries of science. The Foundation supports basic science through strategic investment in emerging scientific research in these fields, aiming to catalyze the growth of high risk/high reward work. Previously, 20 [Kavli Institutes](#) located at world-class universities internationally were endowed to support basic research in the four key fields. The Foundation's total staff numbers approximately 30. The Foundation's endowment is currently valued at approximately \$600M.

Through the Foundation's [Science and Society Program](#), The Kavli Foundation goes beyond scientific research to strengthen the relationship between science and society. This was achieved most recently by establishing the [Kavli Centers for Ethics, Science, and the Public](#) and previously through endowment of the [AAAS Fred Kavli Journalism Awards](#) and other programs. All Foundation programs seek to establish partnerships with academies and societies, philanthropies, and federal funding agencies to ensure the people, processes, and products of science contribute meaningfully to society.

In partnership with The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters and The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, the Foundation honors scientists with [The Kavli Prize](#) in celebration of breakthroughs in astrophysics, nanoscience, and neuroscience. This signature international prize is awarded every two years by the Norwegian Academy.

These efforts are united through The Kavli Foundation's guiding principles, and a drive to identify promising ideas and catalyze opportunities that unlock the benefits of science and create lasting impact for science and society.

"The Kavli Foundation supports basic science because we believe in its long-range benefit to humanity. We are looking for benefits that may lie far into the future, benefits that may be hard to predict, but as we look at the past, the benefits of science have been proven over time. The fruits of research are not always immediate and are often not predictable. Often the benefits are the result of unpredictable outcomes of an exploration that was initially motivated purely by intellectual curiosity." – Fred Kavli

For more information about The Kavli Foundation, please visit: <https://www.kavlifoundation.org/>.

Leadership

[Cynthia M. Friend, Ph.D.](#), is the president of The Kavli Foundation. Prior to joining the foundation in January 2021, Dr. Friend had a distinguished career as a scientist, academic leader and educator at Harvard University. She joined the Harvard faculty in 1982 and served in numerous leadership positions, including Chair of the Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology, Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts and

Sciences, Director of The Rowland Institute, and Director of the Harvard Energy Frontier Research Center for Sustainable Catalysis. She also held the role of Associate Lab Director at SLAC National Accelerator Lab at Stanford University, a preeminent international facility for X-ray science. Friend is the Chair of the Basic Energy Sciences Advisory Committee, a Federal advisory committee for the Department of Energy. Friend is also currently acting as Director of Physical Sciences at The Kavli Foundation.

Dr. Friend and her research group at Harvard University focused on addressing global challenges in reducing energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions. Her work has been recognized through numerous awards and through her election to the National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Friend was an advisor for more than 75 researchers and led efforts to change policies in universities and other organizations to promote diversity.

Dr. Friend earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry at the University of California, Davis, and a Ph.D. in chemistry at the University of California, Berkeley. Her post-doctoral research was conducted at Stanford University.

Compensation and Location

The anticipated salary range for this position is \$300,000-\$340,000. Salary is commensurate with the background and experience of the individual selected.

The Foundation is located in the Culver City neighborhood in Los Angeles, adjacent to the Silicon Beach technology area. The COO is expected to consistently be on site at The Kavli Foundation's offices several days a week.

Applications, Inquiries, and Nominations

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Applicants should submit a resume and cover letter. For best consideration, please apply by **February 23, 2024**. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be submitted via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/kavli-foundation/chief-operating-officer>.

Cati Mitchell-Crossley, Evan Layne, and Thea Kosmack
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An applicant or employee's protected status or characteristic(s) shall not adversely affect the individual's employment opportunities with The Kavli Foundation. All employment-related decisions, including hiring, firing, promotion, demotion, job assignment, training, scheduling, transfer and compensation, shall be made without

regard to an employee's protected status or characteristic(s). Discrimination in any form will not be tolerated. The Kavli Foundation is committed to extending equal employment opportunities to all applicants and employees on the basis of individual merit and qualifications. In addition, it is the policy of The Kavli Foundation to reasonably accommodate known disabilities to the extent required by law.