

Motion to the Physics Faculty Meeting, May 06, 2009

Presented by the Emergency Physics Library Committee (EPLC).

We, the Physics faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, in order to protect our teaching and research programs, hereby express strong objections to the announced plan to close our Physics-Astronomy Library.

Whereas:

1. The Physics-Astronomy Library (PAL) is a fully integrated facility inside our department that “fosters a community of scholars for graduate students, teaching assistants, faculty, and undergraduates performing research, and is a technology-rich space supporting group research, meetings, seminars, and presentations.”
2. Our PAL floor is one of the very rare UW branch libraries specifically designed for its purpose, and its destruction would be an irreversible process.
3. The PAL attracts many undergraduates and others who find it a quiet, convenient, beautiful place to study and read, and is the only such place in this part of campus, and one with excellent disability access.
4. A “Task Force on New Models of Service Delivery” was formed in mid-January of this year, charged to investigate consolidation of the libraries; the Physics-Astronomy community, as well as the faculty as a whole, was neither consulted nor informed about this process.
5. The task force report expresses a centralist, long-term library vision which seems to carry basic misconceptions about the processes and methods of scientific research.
6. Our unique library space is an extremely valuable asset in any reasonable future library scenario.
7. The PAL gives easy and integrated access to the print versions of monographs and older periodicals still inaccessible online, a crucial present and future function.
8. Though small, the PAL is as efficient as Suzzallo in, e.g., gate count, circulation, and renewals, when measured in per staff units, while our reserve collection is utilized 6 times more efficiently than that of Suzzallo; refuting any notion that closure leads to significant cost savings.
9. A 12 percent budget cut to the libraries is too large, because the UW library has a dual function, supporting both our teaching and grant supported research, and its costs should therefore be shared between teaching budgets and indirect cost generated funds, which is currently not the case.

Be it resolved that:

1. The current plan to close PAL as of the Summer of '09 be rejected.
2. The Physics-Astronomy community works together with the UW Libraries to find efficient ways to absorb the current budget cuts in terms of short term reduced Physics-Astronomy Library services.
3. Closure of our library is inappropriate both from a short term and long term perspective.