

Physics-Astronomy Library Testimonials

For me personally, the library is irreplaceable because it is compact, subject-specific, and conducive to browsing in a way that general purpose libraries like Szuzallo are not. Concentrated browsing is essential for finding the right books and journal articles because, in research, one often does not quite know what to look for. If the PA materials are mixed into the stacks at a general-purpose library, researchers like myself will find it harder to do our jobs. I add that the quality of the library's materials and its polite charm was a factor in my choice to attend the University of Washington. Many of our peer physics departments do not have an equivalent library, so ours adds to the impression that UW makes and is important for attracting quality students and faculty.

— Mike Famulare, Physics graduate student

As to the closing of the Physics and Astronomy Library, my name is Keira Brooks and I am a junior double majoring in physics and astronomy. I thought that I might share with you how I use the library and why I feel that it is important to keep this specific library open to students and faculty. As a double major in physics and astronomy I usually have a course load full of multiple physics and/or astronomy classes on a quarter by quarter basis. The Physics and Astronomy Library is a place where I can work without many distractions and have many resources at my disposal. Since most of my classes are in one of the physics and astronomy buildings, I generally stay in that part of campus all day. By moving the resources to another library, it will not only be a inconvenience for me to get the same and have the same study atmosphere close by, but I would also be less likely to use the library. Because my classes are all located in the same area I also spend a lot of time working in other parts of the physics and astronomy buildings in groups. When I need to look something up in a specific book or journal it is very nice to be able to just take an elevator ride up to the 6th floor and quickly look up a reference. To me, the loss of the Physics and Astronomy Library would significantly affect my school work.

I feel that by closing the Physics and Astronomy Library you will be doing a great injustice to students who use the library on a daily basis to get the help they need and to be successful at the University of Washington. I hope that you will try to find other means to fulfill your budget cuts without taking away a library that is so

important to physics and astronomy faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, as well as students who are taking the introductory physics courses.

Thank you,
Keira Brooks

— Keira Brooks, Physics and Astronomy undergraduate

I am a sixth year graduate student who has made very heavy use of the library during my time here. The availability of such a wonderful space was an important point when I made the decision to attend UW over other schools. Here are a number of points I think are important to address:

- There are huge gaps in our electronic holdings of journals. I frequently use Nuclear Physics B, Physics Letters B, Annuals Reviews of Physics and Physics Reports, all very major publications. I need convenient all-hours access to these journals, and I need to photocopy these journals using departmental copy machines. Not having easy access to these is a major block to research.
- Our department is consistently ranked in or near the top ten research universities. All other institutions in our class have dedicated branch libraries for physics. We would take a significant blow both to the quality of or research and our ability to recruit students and faculty without the library.
- I feel that the decision to consolidate the library resources without consulting the primary users indicates that the library committee does not understand the degree to which this change will affect student life or research.

— Chris Spitzer, Physics graduate student

I use the Physics and Astronomy library on a regular basis, about twice per week, to look at textbooks, books, conference proceedings, journals, and magazines for the purposes of teaching courses, looking up articles that cannot be found online, and looking up background material for research that is frequently difficult to find in the scientific literature. I place books on reserve for my courses in the Physics & Astronomy library which is a convenient location for my students to check these books out, some of whom do so on a regular basis.

One consideration that ought to be included in the cost equation is the time savings for the physics and astronomy department in having a library that takes only a minute to get to (without having to walk through the Northwest rain to a building across campus). If I look up a reference in another library on campus, I usually end up losing 1/2 hour of time; if I must go to another building every time I need to access a library, this would constitute a loss of 1 hour per week given my pattern of usage. As faculty members are paid salaries which equate to \$30-75 per hour, assuming other faculty have similar library use patterns as myself, this cost in time adds up to about \$100k per year for the 50 faculty housed in our building. This is time that could be spent on preparing courses, writing research grants (which bring in much of the funding to this University, which helps to support research, including paying graduate and undergraduate students, as well as overhead), and carrying out the research which makes this a premier research university. This does not include the heavier use by graduate students and undergraduates in physics and astronomy who spend the bulk of their time in our building.

Please consider keeping the Physics & Astronomy library open.

— Professor Eric Agol, Astronomy Faculty

There have been numerous times where access to old journals was invaluable to me. My experience has been that anything older than the '90s is difficult to find electronic access to. Furthermore, the fact that physics is more deep than broad means that students such as myself spend most of grad school “catching up” to modern times by pouring over physics from the '60s-'90s, which is almost entirely located in these old journals.

I can guarantee that if the journals are moved and become more difficult to access, I will not have time to find and study them. My access to this resource will thus end. This would certainly negatively affect the quality of my research. I would like to add my voice to the many who are seeking a compromise in the closure of the Physics library.

Sincerely,
Daniel Bolton

— Daniel Bolton, Physics graduate student

As an instructor in the physics department, I echo the statements made by the students in this thread: they, and we the teachers, are heavy users of the physical space of the library and the physical materials, such as older journals, monographs, and reference matter. People in our situation are very often trying to find out about a topic for the first time, or become schooled in a matter that has a long history. While it is true that much material can now be found electronically, there is not yet a substitute for being able to look through a stack of books and papers. If these materials are moved offsite, the efficiency of this task will be greatly reduced, and it will slow the work of learning and research.

— David Pengra, Senior Physics Lecturer

My name is Charlie Hagedorn. I am a fifth year graduate student. I feel that the Physics/Astronomy library is worth keeping. An in house library is a jewel for a Physics Department to have. Research materials close at hand, readily browsable subject-oriented stacks, a physics oriented and aesthetic space to sit and think deep thoughts, and the presence of competent library staff all contribute to making UW Physics a place where research gets done. There is significant intangible benefit to the presence of a library on the Physics campus. A fine Physics library was among the many reasons that I chose to attend UW - it is a sign of a healthy and active department.

Electronic resources are excellent at bringing material to a researcher's desk, but they do not replace a library.

If costs must be cut, consider temporarily reducing the number of hours the library is open to the general public in order to preserve the space and infrastructure. Upper division students, graduate students, and faculty should all have keys to the library anyway, so the primary users could still make use of the specialized resources on the sixth floor.

It is worth noting that Cornell University just lost their Physical Sciences Library to very similar consolidation without significant input from the Physics Department and its community (faculty, graduate and undergraduate).

Thank you for your consideration!

— Charlie Hagedorn, Physics graduate student

I am a PhD student researching in astrophysics. While much of the material I use on a daily basis – new results, review articles, relevant literature – appears in online

journals, the broad scope of my field frequently brings me into contact with new, fundamental material I need to learn, and learn quickly. In confronting this need, the library is a superb resource.

The specialized collection of books, in close proximity to my office, provides the most efficient way to access such new material. I go up, find the 10 or so relevant books, and skim through them. In one fell swoop, I learn

1. the scope of the material;
2. the basics I need to know;
3. other subjects that may be relevant.

I complete this whole process, sometimes checking or signing out a book for further study, in short order. Contrast this to hours I have spent chasing for a fundamental tidbit through a web of references in the (sometimes online) literature. The importance of this ordered, topical collection in paper format and in the building cannot be overemphasized.

This utility may be hard to quantify, as sometimes the only record of such a search remains in my head. But this use has been very important to my development as a physicist, and I hope it remains for both the remainder of my career here and for future students.

Cheers,
Matthew

— Matthew Kerr, Physics graduate student

My name is Brian Smigielski and currently I am a 6th year graduate student. There are many numerous reasons to keep the library open that are not addressed or eluded to at all in the report assembled by the Task Force.

Firstly on a matter of aesthetics, the university as a whole has an investment in the library. The location for it was specifically chosen to provide an ideal study and working environment to students and faculty; our best space in the building was allotted just for it. Moreover, because UW hosts the Institute for Nuclear Theory (INT) which allows scholars from around the world to participate in workshops and seminars, these academics also have full usage of our library with which to conduct their research. In addition, many of my own students always tell me they love to

study in the Physics Library because of its location and layout. The environment is conducive to getting work done and is an already existing microcosm of a “research commons” as outlined in the Task Force report.

Secondly, because of the nature of research done in the department, it is essential all the journals are housed in the same place. It allows for easy access especially because many of the older journals which are certainly not online, are frequently used by my students and faculty. In addition, many people who do work or study in the library do not need to check out books but rather work in the library itself with the books open to the relevant section. Surely this negates much of the data the Task Force has provided about how books checked out are proportional to usage.

Thirdly, it does not make sense financially to fully upgrade to online versions of every journal. Since the very inception of this Task Force was to save money, due to the recession, the cost of adding subscriptions of all the paper journals we now have will far outweigh the cost of savings the Task Force hopes to achieve. This too was not taken into account in the report.

Fourthly, because the Physics Department was not even consulted in such a drastic change, the Task Force has absolutely no clue what the needs and resources of researchers are. It is an affront to myself and my colleagues that the Physics Department was not even included in part of the conversation about how to cut costs and save money. The drastic conclusions that the Task Force has come to (and consequences it will engender) do not equate with the measure of savings the Task Force wishes to achieve. In fact losing the library will be a detriment to us all in the department as well as the students outside the department.

Lastly, and perhaps the most important point, the quality of the library is what drew myself and my colleagues to attend schools here. If UW hopes to remain a competitive learning and research environment in the sciences, then it is necessary to have our own library which has functioned incredibly well since its opening a decade ago. It is unreasonable to assume that a “Research Commons” as explained in the report will facilitate interdisciplinary work. Many projects that respective departments undertake are very specific to their own field. For instance, it is very unlikely that a mathematician trying to prove a theorem is going to need to work closely with a cell biologist. I think the idea of a Research Commons is a pipe dream which does not reflect actual academic progress.

Thank you,
Brian Smigielski

— Brian Smigielski, Physics graduate student

The Physics-Astronomy Library provides me with a location that is quiet, out of the way, and stocked with the resources that I need in order to academically succeed. As a recent addition to the Physics and Astronomy Departments, I use the library as a means to stay connected with my parent departments and their ongoing developments as I am currently not enrolled in classes offered by either department. Because it is not in the midst of the University of Washington campus, there is not the competition for quiet study space that I have found in the main libraries. Additionally, there is not the presence of the noisy distractions present at Mary Gates Hall.

If this library is closed down, I fear that my academic performance will suffer because of it and it brings up the obvious question of will it reopen and when? It is far harder to reopen a closed library when the budgetary means to support it are present than it is to close a library when those means are not present. Will this library have to fight for funding against other departmental projects such as the English Department's Writing Center? Will there be a guarantee of this library reopening with the same amount of content and services, or is its closing just another casualty of the irrational and emotion driven, knee-jerk reaction to a down economy brought about by poor long-term fiscal planning on the part of the University of Washington?

Sincerely,
Victor Aque

— Victor Aque, student

Within the past two months i have three times noted conference proceedings on the new book shelf of the Physics Astronomy Library that concerned my research and have taken them home to read as soon as they were available for circulation. If the astronomy books were in a building across campus I doubt if i would have ever have found them.

— George Wallerstein, Physics Professor Emeritus

The library is a space of intellectual reflection. It is a place conducive of academic thought, it is an integral part of a good physics and astronomy department. The

beautiful sixth floor library offers an ambiance that offices, hallways or seminar rooms do not offer. Taking the space of the library away from Physics and Astronomy amounts to an amputation of an intellectual limb. Losing the library makes the Physics and the Astronomy Department a lot less attractive, and also makes the entire University a lot less fun to work for. I urge you to not break that spirit.

Thank you.

— Jens Gundlach, Physics professor

The Physics-Astronomy library serves 3 valuable function for me as an Astronomy Professor:

1. it contains convenient access to research materials (books, proceedings) not available on-line. I don't have time to go across campus to find out simple things I need to look up;
2. it provides easy access to much needed on-line journals and ensures our subscriptions to the ones that have high priority for us (a general UW wide library does not have the connection ease and the knowledge of our necessary subscriptions that our personal library and librarian does);
3. it provides an easy access point for my undergrad students to access reserve books, look up materials in a variety of texts and a quiet study space (OUGL and Suzzallo are often overcrowded and our students use our facility instead).

We offer our astronomy majors the experience of a small, concerned department within a large university. The PAB library enhances this atmosphere — one which a large central facility cannot duplicate. These kinds of things are priceless and need to be considered in any plan to address “efficiency”.

— Paula Szkody, Astronomy professor

To whom it may concern,

I'm a third year physics graduate student, and am shocked and saddened by the news of the closing of the physics-astronomy library. In addition to being a vital resource for teaching and research materials, the library is one of the prettiest places

on campus. It represents a significant recruiting and retention advantage for the physics and astronomy departments.

As a graduate student, closing the library would adversely affect my research. I browse through sections of books, often skimming through many to get information I need without necessarily checking anything out. The way the library is organized allows it to be a starting point for researching a topic, rather than simply used for checking out a specific book. In teaching and taking courses, books kept on reserve are an invaluable resource.

The library is also a comfortable study space, situated in the top floor of the building, with terrific views of the city. The environment makes for one of the best study spots on campus, and is used a great deal by graduate and undergraduate students in physics and other majors. It is a jewel of the department, and an important factor in making UW a premier national research institution.

If the library is closed and its resources moved elsewhere, the uniqueness of the study and research space will be lost. I and other students will waste significant amounts of time hunting down old journal articles, finding readable textbooks on a certain topic, and pursuing other tasks that are extremely efficient in our streamlined branch library. The undergraduate students who have no office space will lose a crucial workspace, and we will all lose one of the jewels of our campus.

It is understandable that cuts must be made, but to recommend the elimination of a department's crucial resource without any input from those who rely on it is a shortsighted mistake.

— Jason Dexter, Physics graduate student

The library has been an enormous use to me during my time at the University. Many of the journals which I make use of in my research, both theoretical and experimental, are quite old and unavailable in electronic form. Without access to those journals, my research would be very much hampered. Furthermore, the 'perusability' of the Physics and Astronomy stacks, coupled with the uniquely knowledgeable staff, has been similarly invaluable. Much of my research is conducted by bouncing from journal to journal, searching for the original citation or gaining the perspective of another author. Although I only infrequently check materials out of the library, I very frequently make use of it for these and other purposes.

— Jared Nance, Physics graduate student

I am a theoretical physicist and use the library very often and for various purposes.

- To look up something I need for my research in a book or an old journal. Having all the physics books and journals located in the building and concentrated in a few nearby shelves saves a lot of time in comparison to what it would take to find them in the main library.
- To put books on reserve for my classes. Having reserve books near the physics study center and near instructor's offices is very convenient for the students who can get access to reserve materials before they come to office hours.
- To browse the current journals. Again having the current journals near the office saves a lot of time.
- To work in the library. Many graduate students and faculty work in the library. The excellent and convenient location of the library is an ideal setting to escape from the many distractions of the office and concentrate on research or study. This significantly increases the research productivity of the students and faculty, especially for theorists.

I think moving the library out of the building would be a major setback to the productivity and the atmosphere in the Department.

Sincerely yours,
Anton Andreev
Associate Professor, Department of Physics

— Anton Andreev, Physics associate professor

I regard the library as essential scholarly space for the Physics and Astronomy departments. It is an integral part of what makes this a first class Astronomy department at a first class University. We use the library heavily as a recruiting tool for potential graduate students. In addition to the nominal function of accessing resources (books, journals) our students use the library for study and our faculty use the library reserves extensively for classes. For libraries to define themselves only as information access points is for libraries to make themselves irrelevant in the future, since we all be able to access information directly from the web. A library embodies the reasons we are scholars.

Removing the library is removing the heart of the academic, scholarly enterprise.

— Suzanne Hawley, Chair of the Astronomy Department

I'm a 6th-year graduate student in physics, doing research in astronomy.

When I visited the department as a prospective grad student, the Physics-Astronomy library caught my eye as both a lovely space and convenient access to books and periodicals. It was a factor in my deciding to come to UW. This is an effect that the UW library system can't understand, and is one of the reasons it needs to consult with the Physics and Astronomy departments on this issue.

As a junior graduate student, I often spent time studying in the library. However nice one's officemates are, sometimes they want to talk with friends, need to talk with students, or engage in some other distracting activity. It was especially handy to have while studying for the qualifying exam, since numerous physics books were at hand. Its convenience as a study space for physics/astro students relies heavily on its current location.

As a senior graduate student, I often use the library to find answers to specific questions. This depends on the full collection being available and contiguous. I generally don't know which of the many books in a particular subfield will have the answer to my question, and must browse. This activity would be significantly inhibited if the collection were broken up, and even more so if books were sent to off-site archives. (The one time I requested an archived book, it took several days for me to get it and then discover it didn't answer my question. Worse, I typically wouldn't have any idea what books to request.)

I certainly understand budgetary constraints set by the University and by the state legislature. I remain unconvinced that this decision is sensible in the long term, and it is most certainly not sensible in the short term (on the scale of the biennium, WA's budget). What is most distressing is that no one in the physics/astro community was consulted or even informed about this process until a decision was made. This is thoroughly ridiculous. Librarians have significant expertise, but they can't know everything, and indeed seem to know very little about several of the issues involved here.

The library should stay where it is. In the even that it truly is necessary to close it, the relocation of materials MUST be made in heavy consultation with the physics/astro research community.

— David Syphers, Physics graduate student

The way I most frequently use the library is as a quiet space to work when my office space is being used for meetings or telecons by my officemate. The library space is the only place in the building where people without their own (unshared) office space are guaranteed a quiet working environment. Post-docs and students both benefit greatly by having this resource at their disposal. Having that space available effectively doubles the office space in the building for students by making it possible for everyone to have access to a quiet work space even if they share an office with someone who is often on telecons or meeting with collaborators.

— Benjamin Williams, graduate student

One of the memories I have of campus when I visited as a grad student prospective 3 years ago was the memory of the library actually! It is really a unique place, and no other phys/astro depts across the country have access to a place like it. So, what I'm trying to say, is that it's actually an asset and can make a lasting impression when recruiting grad students.

Not to mention that the proximity and accessibility make it a lot nicer for me to go for reference. If the books were kept elsewhere, it would limit my productivity as it would likely take at least 30 minutes for me to go find a single book among all the other stacks.

The quiet atmosphere and the solace make it a great place to escape and study/do homework. If it's made into a study space with no books, I'm afraid it would turn into a social hall with no feeling of academia. Trust me, this happened to a floor in my undergrad (U of C) library!

Please keep the library as it is.

— Adam Kowalski, Astronomy graduate student

The Physics Library is a miraculous place for study, browsing, for folks of different interests and generations to meet! Should this collection be "scattered" there will be a major loss in upper level UG and certainly for beginning Graduate education. And it is entirely unclear how money will be saved by destroying a wonderfully designed and functional setting for all of the above.

— Bill Reinhardt, Chemistry professor

My name is Eric Lee-Wong, I'm a 3rd Year undergraduate majoring in Physics and Astronomy. As an undergrad I on a day to day basis use the Physics and Astronomy Library as a reference for information for my classes, as well as a place to study. Furthermore, as the physics and astronomy department is world renowned in research and heavily involved in the trading of knowledge and expertise with numerous crossborder/international research conglomerates, the library adds a sense of professionalism that lends to our reputation as a center of education and a front runner of research. This aspect of the library alone is a priceless asset to the entire school, the publications and resources shelved here alone do more than lend an air of international cooperation, unknown to most departments, and it is essential for any aspiring researcher to have resources on hand. I have nothing wrong with expanding the library system electronically, but not at the expense of losing the ability to have access to international publications/and or books that probably wont be compatible with the new system that is being proposed. Personally, the library is a sanctuary for those wishing to be surrounded by wisdom and serenity of the tower, away from the hustle and bustle of daily classes, and my friends and I regularly come here to do research and homework late and early in the day. Changing the 6th floor into a common study room would detract from the very meaning of this floor, and frankly there is already a common study area in the physics building and that is in the basement of PAA. There is no need to remove this library that is referenced by us the students and professors of this department, but by also scientists around the world. Keeping the library, but making it more efficient and less costly is well within the reach of the budget, considering the heavy thought into digitizing the administrative and organizational structure of the library; cuts can be made without the loss of this mecca knowledge that is used regularly by all who work in this building.

— Eric Lee-Wong, Physics and Astronomy undergraduate student

I have used the library, particularly its print materials, in a very extensive manner. In order to do quick and effective research, I will often need to find articles that the university does not carry in online format. The immediate location of the library enables the research mission of the department to continue quickly and effectively. Furthermore, I disagree with the notion that a "Research Commons" will be effective at all. Most research is done in labs, and in collaboration with others who have

free reign to discuss elements, not in a library environment. It is useful to have the collaborative and research space in immediate vicinity to where we spend most of our days, not at a location that is farther away from where I normally spend my time.

— Jared Rinehimer, Physics graduate student

The PAL has been an instrumental resource in my graduate studies, and I hope will be even more invaluable when I begin doing research. The availability of resources (texts, monographs, etc) 24 hours a day every day of the week makes the PAL a resource that is unrivaled in ease of use and convenience. The PAL is one of the (many) standout features in the physics department, and was a part of my decision to attend the University of Washington. I would sorely miss it, if it were to be taken away.

— Will Dowd, Physics graduate student

The library is an important place, because it represents a space where one can go to read in quiet and peace. It is important to cooperate with other disciplines and scientists, but forcing us all in the same library won't do the job unless we already know each other.

— Jakub Scholtz, Physics graduate student

As a Nuclear Physics graduate student I constantly have to look up papers multiple articles that are not available online. This to me is far more important than have to look up books and it would be a great inconvenience for researchers to have to go across campus to gather a copy of a given article when this is a daily occurring matter. I am afraid that moving all the article resources could negatively affect the research environment of this department. This seems to be a very short-sighted decision that does not take scientists' interests into account.

Sincerely,
Raul Briceno

— Raul Briceno, Physics graduate student

As a graduate student in the physics department, I find the Physics-Astronomy Library to be an invaluable resource to have here within the department. I use the library frequently, and its convenient location is what enables me to do so. Not only is the immediate access to Journals and Books of great value, the atmosphere the library creates is also ideal for studying, TA grading duties, and any other reading I need to do. I strongly oppose the closing or relocation of the Physics-Astronomy Library. This would be a great loss to the undergraduate students, graduate students and faculty who are taking classes, conducting research or teaching classes here in the Physics Department.

Sincerely,
Mike Dziomba

— Mike Dziomba, Physics graduate student

As a graduate student in the physics department, I find the Physics-Astronomy Library to be an invaluable resource to have here within the department. I use the library frequently, and its convenient location is what enables me to do so. Not only is the immediate access to Journals and Books of great value, the atmosphere the library creates is also ideal for studying, TA grading duties, and any other reading I need to do. I strongly oppose the closing or relocation of the Physics-Astronomy Library. This would be a great loss to the undergraduate students, graduate students and faculty who are taking classes, conducting research or teaching classes here in the Physics Department.

I'm a first year and I have already found the PA library to be incredibly valuable. The impressive PA library, both in terms of the amount of resources it contained and its place as an integral part of the PA building complex, did weight in to my decision to attend the UW. I certainly can't be the only one.

It hasn't failed me either. Often we work late on campus and having resources available to me in the same building rather than a walk away to a different part of campus is very much appreciated late at night. Plus, having the library right here means that I don't have to check out books. I can simply use what I need in the library and leave it there when I'm done for other students to use. Should I need it again the next day I can simply return to the library for a few minutes.

I don't want to lose our library. The walk to Suzzallo might not seem that far, but at 10:00 pm or 11:00 pm when it's dark out it is, especially when you need to look something up in a book and it would only take a few minutes. Additionally it will inevitably take longer to find the resources needed when they are mixed in with those in a larger library and certain popular ones will be more likely to be checked out by students who might not mind returning to the 6th floor when needed but who certainly don't want to keep walking to Suzzallo.

— Rachel Rosten, Physics graduate student

Just want to say the library is an indispensable part of my research and life in the physics building. I'd like to sacrifice other things even part of my salary to save it.

— Wei Chen, Physics graduate student

My name is Jon Walsh, and I am a graduate student in the physics department. I have used the library on a consistent basis for three main purposes: to find books for a research topic, to access print issues of journals when digital ones are not available, and as a nearby study space. I often use the library after hours, and many of my colleagues do the same.

Reading the Task Force's report on the library system, I am astounded that researchers who will be using the system's resources were not consulted, and that members of the physics department were not consulted on the library closure. The proposed long term plan for the library system makes little sense to me as a researcher, as I use the library as a local resource and do my collaborative work in the department meeting spaces. A centralized library system would be useless to me, and many others, as there is no need for a university wide collaborative meeting space.

Aside from the utilitarian uses of the library, it is a wonderful space in the department that sets us apart from even the highest tier private universities. Many students from our department and others throughout the university use the library as a study space that is both comfortable and beautiful. It would be a shame to let such a misguided plan for the future of the library system close this terrific place.

— Jon Walsh, Physics graduate student

Having the 2 hour reference textbooks within the physics building seems absolutely crucial to me. In addition, the library is the only place I can escape to when the 2nd floor offices are busy for guaranteed peace and quiet. Often this is after hours, and with most other libraries on campus closed, the physics and astronomy library would be sorely missed.

— Daniel Scislowski, Physics graduate student

I am a second-year graduate student in physics. The physics-astronomy library is a key resource for both coursework and research, the value of which would be degraded by moving the collection out of the building.

One of the most important aspects of having the physics collection in its own, coherent space is browsing. If the collection is split or immersed into some larger collection, it will be more difficult to take a random walk through the physics books. While this may sound like an idle concern, it is a key element to finding and connecting concepts with which you were previously unacquainted, which is invaluable to good research.

The perception that physics information is all online now is fatally flawed. Back issues of many important journals are only available hardbound in the physics library. For my research in particular, I frequently have need of pre-1995 issues of nuclear physics B, which is not available to UW affiliates online. In addition, online resources are no replacement for advanced textbooks or monographs. At present, faculty and graduate students have 24-hour access to these key materials. I have certainly come in after hours when such resources would not have been available if they were beholden to the schedule of some central library. You never know when inspiration will strike.

I frequently find myself running upstairs to use the copious reference books. It is infeasible for a student to have a personal collection of key reference books (tables of integrals, large data books, etc.) With the library in our building, these frequent trips to reference materials make a very small impact on my productivity. If each such need entailed trekking across campus, my work would decline.

Finally, the value of the library as a study space cannot be overstated. However, if the 6th floor were simply a place to study, it would not be the same. Frequently, “studying” involves consulting a variety of texts in the library (which are likely not checked out later to make it into circulation statistics) for help answering questions, both in coursework and in research. The library is a valuable study resource not simply because it is a beautiful, quiet space, but also because it is filled with exactly the resources that you can peruse to break mental logjams. My coursework and

preparation for the qualifying exam would have been less valuable to my development as a physicist without our library as a space for learning.

— Alan Jamison, Physics graduate student

My name is Caleb Strickland, and I'm a junior double majoring in physics and astronomy. I use the physics/astronomy library often, because it is extremely quiet, has beautiful views, and it is convenient since all my classes are located in the physics/astronomy area. For me, a negative consequence of consolidating this library is the large number of books and journals that will be placed into storage. When I need a break from studying, I will often randomly browse through the books and journals, looking for anything that might pique my interest. This is an important way for me to get exposure to new topics and to see how the topics I'm learning about are being applied to research.

— Calib Strickland, Physics and Astronomy Undergraduate

I can't imagine the PAB without the physics library. I use it as a quiet place to study as well as a source of supplemental materials for class and research projects.

— Rachel Giessen, Physics graduate student

I am a third year graduate student. I use the Physics and Astronomy Library in many ways, few if any of which would be adequately provided by a centralized library and a putative "Research Commons". Let me summarize a few:

- Convenient access to printed material. There is a huge amount of physics reference material, both journals and books, that are not available online, or not for a reasonable price. These stacks need to be maintained somewhere, and I do not see a significant cost savings in moving them somewhere else.
- Quiet, well-appointed work area. Let's face it: graduate student offices aren't that great. The PAL provides an excellent alternative.
- Sheer beauty. The PAL is a magnificent library that serves to attract and retain students, both undergraduate and graduate. It is a beautiful facility that is an asset to the department and the University.

Please consider reviewing the Task Force's recommendations, preferably with the input of the people who actually use the libraries this time.

— Chris Vermilion, Physics graduate student

I am a 5th year graduate student and I have been used the library frequently since I started here. Although there are numerous online resources available, I still check out books very often. For a guy working in the underground labs, having such a nice place to sit and read is one of the most pleasant things I can think of on this campus.

— Gang Shu, Physics graduate student

The Physics-Astronomy is very useful for us in plasma physics research. There are many very important papers and other references that are not on line. I strongly support keeping this library.

— Tom Jorboe, Aeronautics and Astronautics professor and adjunct Physics professor

I use the library as a study area on steroids. I am able to work on homework while there, and find alternative presentations of material that I am having difficulty with. Its proximity to my classes allows me to look up an article that was mentioned in class, or a topic that I want to learn more about, all in the hour between my classes. As an undergraduate physics major who is still trying to figure out what he wants to study in graduate school, I can use the hard copies of the journals to look at what interesting physics is happening today. The physics library is an integral part of how I study from day to day, and having access to resources like that are what make the physics department as attractive as it is. If the physics library was to go away, that would probably affect my decision to apply here for graduate school, as I'm sure it would for many others.

— Andrew Spott, Physics undergraduate major

The Universities Physics and Astronomy departments are first tier. This move will undermine the reputation of the two departments, nationally.

It is important to take into consideration the small savings that may or may not accrue with the Physics Astronomy Library closure with the deleterious effect this will have on the reputation of the physics and astronomy departments, as compared to other premier universities. In simplest terms, the savings from outright closure are minimal (especially in light of the alternatives of volunteer staffers and reduction of services, versus elimination altogether). The long term cost in reputation will not be a selling point to attract qualified candidates or faculty after this budget crisis passes. It will compromise grant proposals they bring. It will more than offset any short term savings with long-term perceptions of second tier status for the departments. Budgets can improve in a year's time. Injured academic reputations take longer. Recruitment of world class graduate students and faculty suffer. It's all connected.

It also takes much longer, and costs much more, to restore and reassemble any library (let alone a good one) where none presently exists, than simply sustaining it. When this budget crisis passes, as it invariably will, the added costs to restore the functionality and service of this library will be considerably more than simply having kept it around in the first place. Or, do the physics and astronomy departments plan to never have their own library again, ever? Absent that extreme alternative, maintaining the present library with some basic cost savings measures (e.g., more volunteer services, fewer purchases, reduced hours of operation), is by far the more sensible option, not dismantling it, which is the short-sighted, ultimately more expensive alternative.

— Carlo Caraccioli, Physics graduate student

I am a fourth year graduate student in the physics department, and I use the library about once a week on average. Very often this includes either looking at physical copies of the journals there, or picking up physical copies of journals, which have been delivered there from other libraries. In my experience, the electronic copies of many journals are insufficient. One reason for this is that the scans are too low quality to see the images. The fact that many electronic journals are useless should be considered when making decisions about the fate of the physical copies.

Typically, when I browse journals in the physical collection, I read them in the library and then leave them for reshelving without ever checking them out. As such, there can not be accurate records for how often the physical copies are used. The changes to the library this year, moving many physical copies of journals out, has been a major annoyance.

Lastly, as a basement dweller, the library is the only place I can go to work comfortably in the physics building and experience natural light. Fluorescent bulbs do not foster creative thought, and the loss of that space as a work place would severely hurt my productivity.

In summary, the loss of the library as a physical location for books and studying would be a severe one, which would decrease productivity and creativity in the physics department.

Thank you
Tracy Lovejoy

— Tracy Lovejoy, Physics graduate student

I am a 5th year graduate student, and use the library on a weekly basis. The proximity to my working office makes it possible to consult references with a minimum of disruption. I frequently consult Nuclear Physics articles that are not available in an electronic format.

— Andrew Lytle, Physics graduate student

I came to the UW for an REU during the summer of 2005, and I often went upstairs to the library to read or analyze data. I remember so enjoying the view while working, and those fond memories were certainly a piece of what made the UW an endearing and exciting place to come back to for graduate school.

I have often struggled to navigate the UW Libraries website; for example, when looking for copies of old dissertations. The Physics-Astronomy Library staff's helpfulness and easy access has been invaluable to the ease of obtaining the data I need when I need it. I also extensively use the Physics-Astronomy Library book delivery — a confirmation that walking across campus in order to use resources would certainly become an inconvenience.

— Amy Robertson, Physics graduate student

There are all those who love and rely on the library, but there must also be people like me: I don't use the library as much as I should or would like, but if it goes

to Suzzallo I will never use it. Being able to browse through a wall of classic and obscure monographs on a whim is precious, and the pressure on our time nowadays is far too great for us to feel justified in 15 minutes of walking just for idle scientific curiosity: Wikipedia and subscribed e-journals will end up setting the limits of our knowledge absolutely. Closing our library would be several ratchet clicks towards a new scientific dark age. We have to do what it takes to save the library, and most importantly the monographs/textbooks and everything that is not online.

— David Cobden, Physics associate professor

As a visiting scholar, I found the physics library to be a very efficient place to gather materials last year in putting together a new research program which I was only somewhat familiar with. The combination of computer reference stations, journal and text stacks, encouraging study areas/desks, and librarian on hand within 10 to 30 feet of each other was truly wonderful. I can't imagine a decent physics department without such a resource. In comparison with the UCSD, UCLA, UCI, Stanford, Lawrence Berkeley Lab, SLAC, and Fermilab physics libraries, I find only the SLAC library on a par with UW Physics in terms of atmosphere, convenience, and specialization which all contribute to efficiency.

— Eric Berg, visiting scholar

As a graduate student in physics department, in studying and doing research Physics/Astronomy(PA) library is one of the most powerful sources to me. I can access to a bunch of journals and books related to my research. Even though most recent articles can be found from electrical journal systems, there is still a restriction to see many old, but important papers(i.e. Nuclear Physics B, Phys. Lett. B, etc.). Moreover, PA library is very convenient to access whenever I need. Sometimes I study even at night and drop by the PA library to look at the relevant journals and books. I think that PA library is definitely one of the most important facilities in physics department. Finally, I want say that "I am very proud of the unique, beautiful and convenient Physics/Astronomy Library".

— Jong-Wan Lee, Physics graduate student

Quoting from the UW Libraries web pages, “The University of Washington Libraries enriches the quality of life and advances intellectual discovery by connecting people with knowledge.” Let me underline “connecting” - that and the collection itself are the key elements of the library’s existence and service role.

My use of the library is limited to spontaneous browsing of the book collection “Browsing” means that there is no record of my use of the library. (Note that I read all journals on line.)

If the P-A library moves to Nat Sci then the astronomy collections will be a 400-meter walk from my office. In this case the issue of convenience really matters...the distance undercuts how I use the library. That is, the ‘connection’ is so badly compromised that the function of the library is all but lost for my research needs. I expect that I’d browse the stacks only when I have an hour to kill, which is essentially never.

I would far rather see the PAB library remain within a short walk with its hours cut in half, or open two days a week, than brave the elements to browse a few books and xerox a few pages a few times per year.

— Balik Bruce, Physics graduate student

As a newcomer to the UW community, I have a few brief thoughts. Every university I have been to has boasted a physics/astronomy library, and as a prospective student/faculty, I would be surprised to learn that UW did not have one.

Physics/astronomy library facilities were extremely valuable as I studied and did problem sets for undergrad/grad classes, and especially as I prepared to take qualifying exams. At times, I would browse through the collection (conveniently co-located) to look for assistance with a particular problem. The quiet, focused study area and convenient location were important, too: I could use it to study between classes and faculty office hours. Frequent “commutes” between my work group, professors’ offices, and library study space would have been prohibitive.

In my experience, physics/astronomy libraries have served as convenient places to find information (all stored together, not spread across a large library), find other students studying the same stuff you are, collect/archive information useful to many (e.g., examples of qualifying exams from past years), and enable brief study time between classes (that would otherwise be wasted walking across campus). Shouldn’t intangible benefits like these be encouraged?

— Rob Gibson, Astronomy post-doc
