New equipment improves planetarium show

A star may burn brightly for billions of years, but the equipment it takes to reproduce that light show in a man-made setting quickly ages and becomes obsolete. That is why the Physics Department turned to the L. Russell Kelce Planetarium Maintenance Fund for a major upgrade in planetarium equipment this year.

Early this year, the department purchased a Sony CRT video/data projector, a laserdisc player and several special-effects laser discs. They also purchased a universal theater control system (UTCS).

Todd VanGordon, who directs the planetarium programs, said the new equipment has allowed the planetarium to take a major step forward.

"Previously, planetarium presentations only involved 35 mm slides and still pictures," VanGordon said. "The new equipment gives us the capability to use animated images and moving pictures during presentations. We also purchased, with the help of the Pritchett Trust, several special-effects laserdiscs that have a number of animated comets, novae, galaxies, black holes, asteroids, computer generated spacecraft 'fly-bys' of planets, and other phenomena."

VanGordon said the new equipment allows one person to operate all of the seven slide projectors at once. The laserdisc/video projector system can be programmed and controlled by a computer, allowing the slide projectors to fade in, fade down, advance slides or turn several or all of the projectors simultaneously.

This is a big advantage over manual operation, VanGordon said, because "I only have two hands."

(see Planetarium, pg. 2)

Regents approve new Justice Studies degree

The Department of Social Science’s new bachelor of science degree in Justice Studies represents a new approach to the discipline that is rapidly catching on across the country, according to Dr. Kathleen Cameron, a member of the faculty and the person in charge of the new program. The Kansas Board of Regents approved the new degree program this fall.

"The interdisciplinary degree is just catching on," Cameron said. "The older programs that focus on occupational training are probably going to die out in favor of degree programs more like ours." Although the degree was just approved this fall, Cameron is already fielding calls and e-mails from across the country from people interested in PSU’s new degree.

What makes PSU’s new Justice Studies degree so unusual, Cameron said, is its development as an interdisciplinary liberal arts degree with foundations in sociology, political science, philosophy, and social work. It does not include what Cameron calls the "cop shop" occupational classes such as handling weapons and fingerprinting. Those are skills that can be and usually are taught to new recruits at state-run law enforcement academies, Cameron said.

With an emphasis on law and the social sciences, PSU’s Justice Studies degree is one in which students develop an understanding of the nature of justice and analyze controversial justice related issues through critical inquiry and social science investigation. An important emphasis of the program is theories of justice and legal studies. Students can expect to study justice issues relating
NSF grant helps undergraduates participate in original research

A National Science Foundation grant gave a number of undergraduate students a rare opportunity to participate in original research at PSU last summer. Traditionally, original research is an area restricted to graduate students, but the NSF, concerned about a shortage of students choosing research career paths, hopes programs such as that offered at PSU last summer, will encourage more students to consider research careers.

The PSU/NSF Interdisciplinary Materials Research Experiences for Undergraduates Summer Program was under the direction of Dr. Christopher Ibeh, a member of the faculty in the PSU Department of Engineering Technology. Ibeh said nine applicants from Kansas and Missouri were selected for the program. The program was challenging, Ibeh said, but the students selected were up to the challenge because “we got the cream of the crop.”

Jason Newberry, of Anthony, Kan., was one of those students. Newberry spent his summer doing research on non-linear optical polyurethanes under the supervision of Dr. Gerald Caple, chairman of the PSU Chemistry Department.

Newberry, a junior pre-med major, said the research experience broadened his horizons.

“This has given me a new insight into research,” Newberry said. “It is helping me decide on my future.”

Chris Gab, of Independence, Kan., conducted research on thermal decomposition studies of polytetrafluoroethylene, under the supervision of Robert Pavlis, a member of the faculty in the Department of Chemistry.

Gab, a plastics engineering technology and chemistry major at PSU, said his research has practical applications in the detection of toxic compounds in homes and vehicles.

“It’s been really challenging,” Gab said. “This has taken me into an area I’ve never even looked at.”

Students Jonathan Shull, Webb City, Mo.; Ashley Noeller, of Fredonia, Kan.; and Ryan Willis of Oswego, Kan., had similar reactions. Shull looked at the morphology of blended polymers under the direction of Physics Department Chairman Dr. Charles Blatchley and Dr. Zoran Petrovic, a member of the faculty and a researcher in PSU’s Center for Design, Development and Production.

Noeller did research on a combined electrochemical and FT-IR spectroscopic study of corrosion of iron and nickel. She was supervised by Dr. Dilip Paul, a member of the faculty in PSU’s Department of Chemistry. Willis researched the use of surface plasmons on thin metal films as a detection method.

Each of the students agreed that the research experience was both challenging and exciting. It is too soon to tell whether this interdisciplinary effort will produce additional researchers, but both students and faculty agree that the participants have had opportunities opened to them that they never expected were possible.
Chemistry puts new technology in undergraduate hands

On a typical, quiet afternoon in the Chemistry Department, two students are busy running an experiment on a polymer. It is not likely that they have given much thought to their unusual situation.

"Two undergraduate students, unsupervised, working on a quarter-million-dollar piece of equipment," Dr. Gerald Caple, chairman of the Chemistry Department, notes as he opens the door. "There probably isn’t another institution in Kansas, or maybe in the country, where undergraduate students have this opportunity."

Caple is referring to PSU’s new nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) instrument, which was purchased earlier this year with the assistance of a National Science Foundation grant and university support. The NMR, similar to MRI instruments used in the health care field, gives students and faculty a powerful study and research instrument, particularly in the field of plastics and polymers.

A number of colleges and universities have NMR instruments, Caple said, but PSU’s is more advanced than most.

"This is the most sophisticated solid state piece of equipment around," Caple said.

Having hands-on experience with the new NMR gives students a real advantage with employers who use this type of equipment, Caple said.

"Our goal is to expose students to the best instrumentation possible," Caple said.

One reason the university pursued the NSF grant and invested university resources in this particular piece of scientific equipment, Caple said, is the institution’s expanding involvement in plastics and polymers research.

"With what’s going on in plastics engineering technology at the Kansas Technology Center, the polymer researchers at the Business and Technology Institute and the Chemistry Department and other related departments, this institution is developing a real focus on plastics and polymers research," he said.

Caple is clearly proud that the sophisticated NMR instrument is accessible to undergraduate students. At other, larger institutions, undergraduates rarely have an opportunity to work on an NMR instrument.

"We can offer some unique opportunities for undergraduate students," Caple said.

"The NMR is one, but not the only example in which students, not technicians, are able to learn by using the equipment."

Caple said the acquisition of the NMR is evidence of the university administration’s desire to "move forward and to stay ahead of the pack."

"Clearly, there are some nice things happening here," Caple said.

Arts & Sciences authors honored

Of the 12 authors honored for publishing books at PSU’s 15th annual Faculty Author Reception, six were from the College of Arts and Sciences. The reception, sponsored by the Division of Learning Resources and the Friends of Leonard H. Axe Library, was held on Nov. 5, 1998.

Arts and Sciences faculty authors honored were: Dr. Richard Davis, music, who wrote “A Beginning Singer’s Guide;” Dr. Marjorie Donovan and Dr. Harry Humphries, social science/sociology, who wrote “Sociology: Relationships That Make a World;” Dr. Stephen Timme, biology, who published “A Field Guide to Medicinal and Useful Plants of the Upper Amazon;” Dr. Donald Wayne Viney, social science/philosophy, who edited “Questions of Value: Beginning Readings for Philosophy;” wrote “A Brief Guide to Logic and Critical Thinking for Nonvulcans;” and published his translation of Lequyer’s works, “Translation of Works of Jules Lequyer;” and Dr. Kelly Woestman, history, who wrote “Instructor’s Resource Manual (for) Making America: A History of the United States." Dr. Evan Hause, music, was honored for producing “Adventures of Freddy," a compact disc for which he composed and performed the music.

Cynthia Pfannenstiel, coordinator of public services at Axe Library, said between 50 and 70 people attended the informal reception. In addition to the books and CD, 69 articles, poems and reviews by 50 faculty were on display. Fourteen authors from the College of Arts and Sciences were responsible for 27 of those 69 works.

For more information on these authors and their scholarly endeavors, please visit Axe Library’s web site: http://library.pittstate.edu/fac-author/index.html.
Degree (from pg. 1)
to economics, crime, violence, youth, gender and race, and ethnicity.
"Each discipline has a role to play," Cameron said. "We all contribute and each member of the faculty brings their own specialty into the classroom. That's why I like it so much."

Many Department of Social Science faculty members worked on developing the Justice Studies curriculum, including Drs. Bradley Cameron, Marjorie Donovan, Harry Humphries, George Lord, Mark Peterson, Donald Viney, and Paul Zagorski.

In designing the new degree, Cameron surveyed police chiefs and sheriffs across the state. She asked them what kinds of things they wanted students to learn on campus and she was pleasantly surprised by their response.

"Although most police chiefs in the state do not have college degrees," Cameron said, "they told me they wanted recruits who have a liberal arts degree. Hands-down, they said they wanted people with good interpersonal skills."

The degree is designed for persons interested not only in law enforcement careers, but also related careers, including the legal profession. Those going into law enforcement with this degree will be more marketable, Cameron said.

Cameron graduated from Pacific Lutheran University with a bachelor of arts degree in Sociology and Philosophy in 1986. That same year she was accepted into the newly formed Ph.D. program in the School of Justice Studies at Arizona State University, a highly selective doctoral program (only seven students were invited from throughout the U.S. as the first Ph.D. class). For the next 10 years, she raised two sons as a single mother and worked with various community partnerships and was employed at the battered women's shelter. In December of 1996 she completed her Ph.D. She came to Pittsburg State University in 1997.

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PSU Preschool fills niche

The on-campus preschool at Pittsburg State provides not only a high quality, valuable source of education for young children, but also an important laboratory experience for majors from both the College of Education and the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS).

Currently, according to Vicki Wilbert, the director of the preschool lab, there are about 15 4- and 5-year-olds enrolled in the preschool. The children attend from 8:20-11:20 a.m. each day.

Wilbert said there are usually about 18 student teachers involved with the preschool.

"At first I do all of the teaching and the students observe," Wilbert said. "Then we do some group teaching and finally each student teacher will teach."

A strong cooperative effort between Family and Consumer Sciences and Education means that students in the early childhood option of the FCS degree program as well as Education majors specializing in early childhood education are required to take the FCS courses, "The Preschool Child" and "Preschool Laboratory."

Dr. Duane Whitbeck, a member of the FCS faculty and the person in charge of the early childhood program, said cooperation between the College of Education and Family and Consumer Sciences helps students in both areas.

"Because we both educate students who are preparing to be early childhood educators it is important that we each lead with our strength as well as communicate with each other about the program we are offering students," Whitbeck said. "Because my own background includes work in early childhood education at both the birth-to-five and at the five-to-eight age levels, I would feel equally comfortable teaching in either department. This I think also builds a comfort level when talking about issues that effect both the departments and the students."

Whitbeck said that one example of the collaborative efforts between Education and FCS is the formation of the Early Childhood Student Organization, which has been involved with service to the community through providing child care to parents who attend Parents University in the fall. The organization provided informational displays for the Week of the Young Child at the Pittsburg mall in the spring and it has brought in early childhood professionals to talk about work opportunities in the area and to share practices they are using in their employment. The two departments share the adviser responsibilities for the organization.

Whitbeck said there is a shortage of skilled child care and education workers in all areas of the country.

"Many are trained only with a CDA certification, which is merely the beginning level," Whitbeck said.

(see Preschool, pg. 8)
History and Social Science prepare for moving day

Soon it will be moving day for the Social Science and History departments. Since last summer, Russ Hall has slowly emptied in anticipation of the remodeling of PSU’s oldest building. The first office to move to temporary quarters in Whitesitt was the President’s Office. Most administrative offices have followed as space has become ready.

Social Science and History will begin the spring semester in Russ Hall and will move with their classes into renovated space in Whitesitt in the middle of the semester.

“Without a doubt, it’s going to be tight, getting all of us into Whitesitt Hall, but the Physical Plant and the contractors have done a good job of getting this building ready for us,” said Vice President for Academic Affairs Robert Ratzlaff. “We can handle this for the two years that it will take to remodel Russ Hall and when we move back, Whitesitt will remain as very good academic space.”

The Russ Hall and Whitesitt improvements are part of a larger statewide initiative to improve university classrooms. A Board of Regents plan known as Crumbling Classrooms will invest more than $17 million in academic buildings on the PSU campus over the next several years.

Kerry Beyeler, director of Facilities Planning, said those projects include: Grubbs Hall, $1.74 million; Hughes Hall, $1 million; Russ Hall, $7.35 million; Whitesitt Hall, $1.3 million; McCray and Kelce, $900,000; and Yates and Heckert-Wells, still undetermined.

Ratzlaff said the classroom improvements are closely tied to academics.

“We have to create classrooms for the 21st century,” Ratzlaff said. “That includes all kinds of things from a more comfortable place to learn, better sound and a variety of instructional media.”

The first project to be completed under the program, Beyeler said, was Grubbs Hall, which received ADA improvements, including an elevator, and a new heating, ventilation and air conditioning system.

Not everyone may recognize a new heating and air conditioning system as a classroom improvement, Beyeler said, but anyone who has taught or has been a student in that building will recognize it as such.

The work in Whitesitt Hall is actually a collection of about 11 projects, Beyeler said, but he classifies them generally as permanent, temporary or fire safety. The Whitesitt work will net the university 10 permanent classrooms and 30 permanent offices, even after the current occupants move back into Russ Hall sometime in 2000-2001.

“We’re looking at bidding Russ Hall in mid-January,” Beyeler said. “and the actual work will take almost two years.”

Still on the drawing board is ADA and classroom work in McCray and Kelce and “beyond that, there is ADA and classroom work to do in Yates Hall, the Library and Heckert-Wells.”

In the end, Beyeler said, “there will be some impact on virtually every classroom building on campus.”

Although the Crumbling Classrooms investment is undeniably large, the needs always seem to outstrip the resources, Beyeler said.

“As much as it was,” Beyeler said, “It does not do a complete job in all the buildings. We have a lot of other major problems that need to be addressed.”

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It takes a village to educate a Gorilla

John Couper watched little Abramu prepare for his first day of school. The boy was excited about his new haircut, clean clothes and school supplies, and full of questions and expectations as his brother, Ben, teased him and his mother, Imakulata, fussied over him. Though these preparations reminded Couper of his own first school day, he saw many differences: Abramu’s home is made of mud and grass, he has no shoes and, after school, he rushes home to help grow the family “groceries.”

Couper, a Pittsburg State University instructor of mass communication, left his Joplin home to live beside Abramu and 1,300 other members of the community called Ilakala in the East African nation of Tanzania. Couper was there to gather data about how people learn about and understand the world. During almost a year in the village, he also gathered many new friendships and ideas about how people are similar and different in places that seem to have little in common.

“People in Ilakala earn from $15 to $200 a year, much less than the dollar a day the U.N. calls absolute poverty,” says Couper. “Even so, like Americans they do what they can to improve life for their families, using the resources they have: sweat, a sense of humor, and problem-solving genius. There aren’t store-bought toys or televisions in Ilakala, so kids make all their own toys and entertainment.”

Couper enjoyed many parts of village life. The food was fresh and tasty, the air clean, and people depended on themselves and each other. However, he missed being able to check whether someone was at home before arriving for a visit, turning on a tap for drinkable water, and buying something without negotiating a price.

“The easiest way to imagine how people live in Ilakala is to think about the pioneers who settled the Midwest: self-sufficient, inventive, and mutually dependant,” Couper noted.

Couper is sorry that most Americans think of Africa as little more than a place of war, disease, and famine. To help correct this distorted picture, he produced a weekly radio series that explored everyday life in Ilakala. The series, “Voices from an African Village,” aired weekly on KRPS, PSU’s public radio station, for 15 weeks this spring. KRPS also gave Couper part of their Web site (www.krps.com), where people anywhere in the world can see pictures and explanations about each of the 15 radio programs. Visitors can even listen to segments about healthcare, food, homes, news, and other parts of daily life in one of the poorest places of the world. Couper is also selling tapes with all 15 segments.

Couper said he encountered a lot of drama in village life. “Most people have terrible problems, especially disease. When I was there, a villager was eaten by a lion, and poisonous snakes were common. But even in this tough place to live, life isn’t miserable. People laugh all the time, and make tremendous friends and parents. Americans should also realize that the foreign aid we send there is much less than the money Tanzanians send to the U.S. banks and corporations.”

Sitting in his Grubbs Hall office, Couper insists that “in a similar way, Abramu and the other people in Ilakala gave me a lot more than I was able to give them. I hope that Americans can learn how much Africa can offer us.”

John Couper, a PSU alumnus, is a member of the Communication Department faculty. His series, “Voices From an African Village,” including text photos and Real Audio, is available at the KRPS website at: <www.krps.org/>. 
Military Science increases recruitment efforts

The PSU Military Science Department has increased its recruiting efforts across the state and specifically at community colleges. LTC Mark Johnson, department chairperson, said the heightened efforts are already paying dividends.

“We will have more than 10 new students enrolling for the spring semester,” Johnson said. “These students will be taking ROTC classes and are eager to get to work earning their commissions as U.S. Army officers.”

Johnson said the recruitment effort does more than increase enrollment at the university.

“This gives more students the opportunity to become officers in the U.S. Army. It helps them develop leadership and confidence skills that serve them the rest of their lives and it produces leaders in American society, which is what our program is all about,” Johnson said.

Johnson has another goal for the summer -- to set a national record for the number of students from one university that are sent to Army ROTC summer camp, a 35-day camp held at Fort Knox, Ky. Currently, that record (25) is held by California State University at Fullerton. Johnson believes Pittsburg State has a very good chance of beating the Cal State mark. Currently, there are more than 100 students in ROTC.

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Preschool (from pg. 4)
He said PSU students who are also parents are a good example of the need for more skilled child care and education workers.

"Students on campus are constantly juggling their schedules and those of their children to provide adequate care and educational opportunities. These children need the best start possible," Whitbeck said.

Nationally, according to Whitbeck, only about 11 percent of infant care programs and only about 17 percent of preschool programs are considered to be of high quality.

"It is not just an issue of needing more workers," Whitbeck said, "but also of continuing to train those entry level people to improve their skills."

Whitbeck said that although the quality of the instruction in PSU’s preschool laboratory is high, some facility improvements need to take place in order to satisfy requirements for accreditation through the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs.

"The one area we are lacking is an adequate playground facility," Whitbeck said. "For over 20 years the labs have used the grassy area between Hartman Hall and Chandler Hall. This includes dodging students on the way to and from classes, service vehicles, and the normal campus activity. It also means we are not able to have adequate climbing and activity structures. Changes on campus may make it possible to have playground space near our building and we have submitted a proposal to have a playground built when that space becomes available. The next need will be for financing the equipment."

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Alumni News

Class of ‘57
Elizabeth Bain Huddleson - completed a master's degree in library and information science at San Jose State University and began teaching music classes for Elderhostel in Santa Barbara, Calif. Ms. Huddleson belonged to the Sigma Alpha Iota music fraternity when she was at Pitt State (then KSTC) and would enjoy hearing from former classmates. Her e-mail address is lhuddles@wahoo.sjsu.edu or they may write to her at P.O. Box 943, Goleta, Calif. 93116.

Class of ‘75
Catherine (Slattery) Rhyne - is currently the chief nursing officer at Alaska Regional Hospital in Anchorage, Alaska. Catherine has one son, Eric, who is 22.

Class of ‘87
Kevin Ray - is a sports talk host and commentator for All Sports-KMVP-860 AM in Phoenix, Ariz. He hosts the morning show with Ron Wolfley and does Arizona State University football pre- and post-game shows as well as play-by-play for ASU women's basketball. He and his wife, Marci, have a daughter, Devon.

Class of ‘91
Joy Clumsky - is an English teacher at Lawrence High School, where she teaches creative writing, American Literature I and American Literature II. She is also an award-winning writer. Ms. Clumsky won the Editor's Choice Award from the Poetry Guild for a poem she wrote, first place from "Kansas Voices" for a short story and first and second place prizes for freelance poetry from the Kansas Authors Club. She was named a Distinguished Teacher by the University of Kansas. Mrs. Clumsky is married to Dr. Monte Clumsky, a dentist and implant surgeon. They have one daughter, Monique.

Class of ‘96
Kelly (Katzer) Hinton - is a clinical caseworker assistant in Nevada, Mo. She is married to Eric Hinton.

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