

RITTER PLANETARIUM & BROOKS OBSERVATORY HIGHLIGHTS

★ Visited by over half a million people since 1967.

★ Have a library of over 25 developmentally appropriate programs integrated with the Ohio and Michigan science standards and benchmarks.

★ Provide classroom support in both the planetarium and the observatory to over 1,000 undergraduates annually.

★ Now feature a video projector in the planetarium theater to display graphics and images from Hubble Space Telescope and other sources.

★ Now feature NASA ViewSpace high-definition, automatically updated television display in the lobby.

★ Have an active community advisory board that meets twice a year.

★ Host or co-host public lectures by astronomers, authors and scholars.



Excitement Under The Stars!

A pristine view of the night sky is a rare and exhilarating experience that has inspired much of mythology, philosophy, poetry, and art, and sparked the first flames of science. Thus, Ritter Planetarium and Brooks Observatory stand at a cultural crossroads and are poised to take their 25,000 annual visitors on rewarding journeys in many directions along the highways of science.

In recent years, Ritter Planetarium—Brooks Observatory have increased the number and quality of their original programming. Some of the subjects have been the discoveries of extra-solar planets, the mythologies of Native Americans, and the search for life beyond Earth.

Grant awards and gifts have made possible the installation of a high resolution video projector, the purchase of new programs, the training of area K-12 teachers in astronomy, and field trips for underprivileged students.

In the future, we hope to replace our aging Spitz star projector with a new central projection system, install additional interactive lobby displays, upgrade equipment at Brooks Observatory, and install new digital production equipment.

Many of our student employees have gone on to rewarding positions at planetariums throughout the country. Equipment upgrades will allow us to continue training future astronomy educators well into the 21st century.

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Ritter Planetarium & Brooks Observatory

Excitement Under The Stars!



Our Mission:

To provide educational and entertaining activities for the dissemination of material related to astronomy, the sky, and the place of our Earth in the Universe, and to provide opportunities for the public to view celestial phenomena with medium-sized telescopes.



Ritter Planetarium is the ideal place to learn about the sky and constellations, ancient mythology and cutting edge science, historic space flights and the future of humanity in the cosmos. The planetarium is a space theater with a 40-foot dome, a Spitz A3P star projector, and seats for ninety-two visitors. The audience is visually immersed in a recreation of the sky as it appears from anywhere on Earth at any time, past present and future.

Slide projectors, special effects, and a sound system provide added abilities to inform, entertain and inspire an audience.

The lobby features up to date, interactive displays on astronomy and space science.

Brooks Observatory is located on top of McMaster Hall, next door to Ritter. The main telescope is a Brashear 6-inch brass body refractor permanently mounted inside a dome. There are several other mounts for auxiliary telescopes.

Guests are awed by the views of the Universe available from the observatory: planets, the Moon, star clusters, nebulae, and galaxies!

Services for the UT Community

Ritter Planetarium is a teaching facility. We hire and train UT students in all aspects of our mission. Student employees gain experience with public speaking, teaching techniques, observing, script writing, program production, and leadership.

Over 1,000 astronomy students visit the planetarium and the observatory several times each year as part of their introductory astronomy classes.

Our facilities are used to enhance a wide variety of courses including astronomy, education, communications, and geography.

Perhaps most importantly, we serve as an ambassador to the local community, giving a positive campus experience to 25,000 people annually.



Services for the General Public

Ritter Planetarium delivers a wide variety of entertaining and informative astronomical programs every weekend. Our evening programs are designed for a general audience, while our afternoon shows appeal to children of all ages.

There are many opportunities to look through our telescopes each year. Free observing sessions are offered after each evening public program, weather permitting. Several special observing-only nights are scheduled each year as well.

The planetarium offers extended workshops on buying telescopes, astrophotography, beginning and advanced observing, plus the Parent/Child Space Academy, a very popular family workshop.

Larger groups are invited to schedule a private show, observing session or even rent the facility for special events.

Services for the K-12 Community

Ritter Planetarium offers visiting school groups a wide choice of live and multi-media programming.



Our curriculum based programs include topics such as Moon phases, the seasons, our solar system, cosmology, and the night sky. Many of our programs touch on other disciplines as well, like history, Earth science, mythology, and multi-cultural studies.

Additionally, students can tour the Ritter research telescope or the heliostat—a solar telescope. They can also make a game of exploring the lobby displays by finding items in a scavenger hunt .

Area educators benefit from teacher workshops, in-class activities, resource kits, and on-line teacher guides.



Services for Scouting Groups

Ritter Planetarium offers monthly programs for Boy Scouts and Jr. Girl Scouts. The two hour program and handouts provide them with the tools to earn their respective astronomy badges. The Cub Scout and Brownie program is a one and a half hour program, more suitable to their ages. Ritter staff members are also available to speak at large scout gatherings.

Giving Opportunities

People interested in supporting Ritter Planetarium's mission of presenting astronomy in an entertaining and informative way are invited to join the Friends of Ritter program through the University of Toledo Foundation. Details on this program, and all that Ritter Planetarium—Brooks Observatory has to offer can be found on the web at:

www.rpbo.utoledo.edu