

Anatomy of a BLACK HOLE

RYAN GULA
science editor

Something no one can look inside, and which no one can figure out except through advanced mathematics.

Black holes. Perhaps a topic which may not draw crowds at a college campus, but on Thursday, Dr. Darren Williams spoke to a standing-room only OBS 101 in his event, "What's in a Black Hole? Better Ask Hawking."

Every seat in the lecture hall was occupied, and audience members lined the aisles and watched on a TV in the lobby as Williams explained the basics of black holes.

"A black hole is a dead star compressed to ultra high density," he said. "No one can see inside a black hole, but we can use mathematics to study what's there."

The curious crowd

varied from third graders, to students seeking extra credit, to retired professors seeking the latest details on black holes.

Freshman Laura Spiridon said that her environmental science class offered extra credit, but other students cited the same from physics classes, amongst others.

Many Penn State teachers also attended the event in hopes of broadening their own knowledge while ensuring students who attended received their extra credit.

During the talk, Dr. Williams tried to cover a wide base by starting with the principles discovered by Newton, then those expanded by Einstein while finishing with the theories of Hawking.

He finished the presentation with a picture of Hawking meeting the pope, an image he likened to a humble and frail Hawking in a wheelchair representing science and its developing theories while the pope stood for religious beliefs and spirituality.

Afterward, questions were asked by many in the audience regarding a wide variety of topics

related to space and its properties.

Following this question and answer session, the school concluded the evening outside under clear skies with their telescope.

Community members each took turns looking into the lens as it focused on the Moon, Mars, and even Saturn.

Additionally, several astronomers from the surrounding area brought their telescopes and let kids of all ages gaze into the vastness of space and look at the stars.

Penn State Erie has hosted several of these events through the year, the next of which is scheduled for April 15th.

It is titled "Dark Energy in the Universe" and will be presented by Dr. Roger Knacke in RE-DC.

It too will be followed immediately by an open house of telescopes weather permitting.

OBS renovations move some science finals

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Science students checking their final schedule might find an unusual location for their biggest exams this year: the Junker Center.

For the first time at Penn State Behrend, some finals are being relocated from the Otto Behrend Science building to Junker.

The move comes from a decision by the school to allow construction crews to begin major work on the newly remodeled science labs that will be completed in the fall of 2010.

The school plans on holding three consecutive finals in the Junker Center gym.

The overhead curtains in the gym will be down, creating three sections for finals to be taken there simultaneously.

The planned renovations are very difficult to complete over the course of

several weeks and light work is set to begin on April 12th.

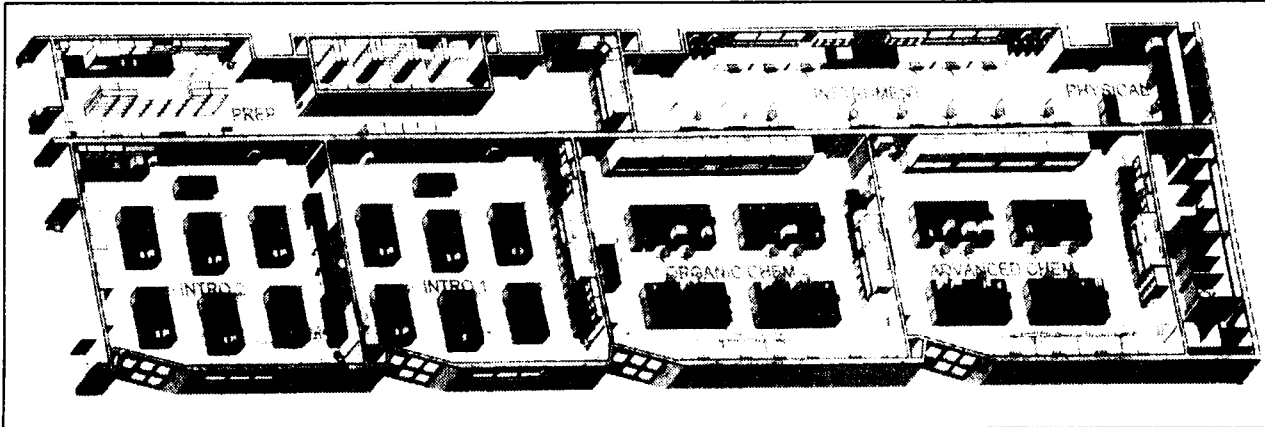
This means that some labs will be cut short this semester and some delayed at the beginning of the fall semester.

Currently, Behrend plans to complete intro level labs in time for fall classes. More advanced labs will be delayed for a period of time that has yet to be determined.

Knacke says that the winning bid for

construction will be awarded around early to mid April.

Some much more minor renovations to OBS can already be seen, such as the new paint and audio-visual systems installed over spring break.



The \$2.5 million makeover to the Otto Behrend Science building's labs will relocate a handful of finals from OBS to Junker.

Top Science News:

Velociraptor relative uncovered in Mongolia

Chinese scientists recently uncovered the closest known relative to the velociraptor.

The 1.8 meter long Linheraptor Exquisitus was found as a complete skeleton in near-perfect condition in sediments dating to the Upper Cretaceous period.

Scientists believe it to be highly evolved and consider it a dromaeosaurid, a name meaning "running lizard." The fossil itself is believed to be between 145 and 65 million years old.

Aswan High Dam eroding Nile Delta

The Aswan High Dam, Egypt's greatest feat of engineering, is now believed to be contributing to coastal erosion along the Nile Delta.

The erosion may force millions of Egyptians to leave the once fertile delta soil.

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