

Resolution to Protect and Reopen the Rauch Planetarium as a Community and Educational Resource

Short Title: Reopen Rauch Planetarium

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Referred To: Services Committee

Version:

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WHEREAS, The University of Louisville is, first and foremost, an educational facility focused on the success and enrichment of its students and community,

WHEREAS, the Gheens Science Hall and Rauch Planetarium has been a beloved community resource since the opening of the original Rauch Memorial Planetarium since 1962,

WHEREAS, the Gheens Science Hall and Rauch Planetarium continues to serve as an educational facility for astronomy courses,

WHEREAS, the Gheens Science Hall and Rauch Planetarium provides a unique and engaging space for public talks,

WHEREAS, the Gheens Science Hall and Rauch Planetarium was the focus of at least one PhD awarded by the University of Louisville^[1] which demonstrated the positive outcomes on learning by having the planetarium integrated into courses and concludes the planetarium should be protected and allowed to continue its mission,

WHEREAS, previous attempts to close the Gheens Science Hall and Rauch Planetarium have been met with intense public backlash and embarrassment for the University,

WHEREAS, the Gheens Science Hall and Rauch Planetarium served over 10,000 children a year prior to its closure in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic,

WHEREAS, these children come from a wide range, across multiple counties, and a wide socio-economic background, allowing the University to reach a diverse audience including underprivileged children,

WHEREAS, Gheens Science Hall and Rauch Planetarium provides an important exposure to over 10,000 children per year to UofL and is thus an important tool in the UofL strategic plan goal of increasing enrollment^[2]

WHEREAS, the planetarium was named for Rabbi Joseph Rauch, who for many years served the community and UofL as a member of the board of trustees^[3],

WHEREAS, a number of other R-1 universities run planetariums successfully for the benefit of their students, regional schools and the community,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that on behalf of the Student Body, the Student Government Association of the University of Louisville, calls on the University to protect, preserve, and reopen the Gheens Science Hall and Rauch Planetarium, to allow and aid in the search for funding, and once this funding is secured to staff appropriately for the success of this important community and educational resource.

[1] Thornburgh, William Raymond, "The role of the planetarium in students' attitudes, learning, and thinking about astronomical concepts." (2017). Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Paper 2684. <https://doi.org/10.18297/etd/2684>

[2] <https://louisville.app.box.com/s/7lg0ffrus102sit8c9etkooln1dy4com>

[3] <https://www.newspapers.com/article/the-courier-journal-gheens-planetarium/143001855/>