

**Delta College
Board of Trustees
Dinner Meeting
August 13, 2019
Delta College Main Campus Room N7**

Board Present: M. Benecke, A. Buckley, R. Emrich, S. Gannon, D. Middleton, M. Nash, M. Rowley, M. Thomas

Board Absent: K. Lawrence-Webster

Others Present: D. Allen, A. Balan, N. Bovid, L. Brown, T. Brown, P. Clark, E. Clement, A. Cramer, M. Crawmer, R. Curley, R. Curry, K. Dehne, M. Dehne, S. DuFresne, J. Foco, P. Fox, J. Garn, J. Goodnow, L. Krukowski, S. Lewless, C. McMath, D. McQuiston, J. Miller, M. Mosqueda, S. Roche, E. Roth, D. Sabourin, K. Schuler, A. Sovis, C. Thomas, A. Ursuy, R. Utt, B. Wesolek

Press Present: J. Hall, WSGW; J. Paxson, WSGW

Board Chair, D. Middleton called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm. She then turned the meeting over to Dr. Jean Goodnow who introduced the presenters Aurelian Balan, Associate Professor of Physics and Kevin Dehne, Associate Professor of Physics to present on the future Delta College Observatory.

A. Balan noted that Delta College currently has a connection with Eastern Michigan University in taking students to Fish Lake once a semester for observing. This has been happening for close to 20 years. This also provides an opportunity for Delta students to collaborate with students from several different colleges.

K. Dehne noted the recent 50th anniversary of the moon landing. He noted that this sparked the love of science and astronomy for him as a child. A. Balan noted that the observatory would not be a planetarium, but housing for telescopes and other equipment. Both noted that observing is a mandatory part of the astronomy curriculum. During each semester six to eight observing sessions are scheduled. Ten to 70 students and their guests attend each session. For special events such as a lunar eclipse there are up to 150 people. These observing sessions currently take place in the Boulder Walkway (between D wing and E wing) which provides the opportunity for around 450 students each year.

K. Dehne and A. Balan then discussed the need for an observatory at Delta College. This included more involvement from the students, mentoring of other institutions, new Delta College classes and a potential boost in student enrollment. The observatory could also be used for community observing events and act as a tourist attraction.

The telescope being proposed will be the largest public observatory in the state of Michigan. The telescope is made by PlaneWave Instruments which is designed and manufactured in Adrian, Michigan. The specific model is a CDK700 that features a 28" mirror. A. Balan shared a comparison chart showing the difference in the size of mirrors on a telescope. The larger the mirror, the farther away you can see and the brighter objects will appear.

Other reasons for building the observatory would be for collaboration with the Bay City Planetarium; to meet and exceed our current class learning outcomes and student accessibility; being the only fully ADA compliant observatory in the state of Michigan; and to set Delta College apart. Delta's rural location is an advantage in having fairly dark skies.

The observatory has been part of the Science Division's strategic goals from 2012/2015. This project aligns with two strategic focus areas including student success and community focus. Developing this accessible facility while utilizing existing telescopes would provide research and real world opportunities for students.

A. Balan shared with the Board a rendering of the facility that would be built on the west hill. The facility would stand out on campus; provide darker skies as it would sit above the surrounding campus light; and offer a better view of the sky with fewer horizon obstructions. The facility will also offer a classroom and concrete pad for other instruments. K. Dehne spoke about the life span of the observatory and maintenance. He noted that there would only be regular building maintenance and in regards to the telescope a re-coating of the mirrors over time.

Finally, A. Balan and K. Dehne thanked various staff for their help in this proposed project.

There being no further business, the dinner meeting was adjourned at 6:51 pm.

Talisa Brown, Assistant Board Secretary

Andrea Ursuy, Board Secretary