

Orientation & Expectations for Visits to the Whitworth Ferguson Planetarium at SUNY Buffalo State

Updated January 23rd, 2023

To help ensure your visit to the planetarium is a wonderful and safe experience for all, we have established the following norms and rules for our guests.

Etiquette in the Dome:

- There is a strict limit of 48 guests in the planetarium. Guests may not stand or sit in the walkways.
- Food and drink are NOT permitted in the planetarium.
- We ask visitors to walk slowly as they find their seats to let eyes adjust to lower lighting levels.
- We love interacting with the audience and will often ask questions during live portions of our programs. As sound carries very easily in the dome, talking should otherwise be minimal with voices kept to whispers when a show is playing or the presenter is speaking.
- We allow guests to take pictures and videos during most shows, as long as flash is not used.
- LED/light up shoes and other illuminated gear are discouraged as they are a significant distraction in the darkened dome.
- If a guest needs to exit the dome during a program, they must follow directions provided by the planetarium educator to do so safely and without flooding the room with light.

Etiquette in the atrium:

- As classes and other events may be happening in other areas of the building, and to help ensure everyone is safe, we ask visitors to remain in the first-floor atrium area.
- There are many steps near the atrium, and they are especially tempting for little ones to run up and down, so adults should keep an eye out for that potential hazard!
- Visitors should not enter classrooms or touch anything unless it is part of the presentation.
- If a group is using tables/chairs provided by the college, the organizer is responsible for both set up and tear down within the reservation time limit.
- No alcoholic beverages are permitted unless arranged with Buffalo State's Catering/Events Management.
- Decorations should be restricted to tables. Tape cannot be used on our walls.
- The atrium should be left as it was found, with tables and chairs put away and the area clean.

Age restrictions:

The planetarium is an environment with very different sights (and darkness!) and sounds that may overwhelm some visitors.

- Our rule of thumb is that lap infants will not be allowed entry to any show not specifically designed for our youngest audiences.
- We recommend that children under 5 not attend our public shows and we rely on parents/guardians to know what their child is ready for.
- Children below 5 are NOT permitted at laser shows unless specifically indicated.

Accessibility:

- The building and planetarium are fully wheelchair/mobility aid accessible.
- Assisted listening devices are available for use at no charge. Please plan to leave a license or credit card during your program in order to borrow an assisted listening device. All assisted listening devices are sanitized between uses.

- For private programs, we regularly work with organizers to adapt music, lighting, etc. to levels best for our guests.
- Please email us at planetarium@buffalostate.edu if you have questions or need assistance with wheelchair seating or any other accommodations.

Payment:

- Tickets for public shows should be purchased through our Eventbrite page: wfplanetarium.eventbrite.com
- Payment for private programs can be made in cash or via check made out to SUNY Buffalo State in advance or on the day of the group's visit.
- We do not charge a reservation fee for private events. However, in the event of a late cancellation – less than 5 days prior to the scheduled visit -- a charge of 15% of the total projected cost will be incurred.

Upon arrival:

- Visitors to public programs may park for free in lot I-37, off Iroquois Drive, directly next to the Science and Math Complex. Overflow parking can be found nearby in lot I-39.
- For private programs, organizers must provide a count of the number of private vehicles arriving with their group at least one week prior to the program so that the appropriate parking permits can be secured.

