

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

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To: UW Executive Council, Deans, Directors, and Department Heads
From: Myron Allen
Subject: Closure of the Geology Museum
Date: 15 June 2009
Copies: UW Board of Trustees

Because the issue has generated both controversy and confusion, I would like to summarize the plans for closure of the UW Geology Museum, identified in President Buchanan's memo of June 4 on budget reductions. I have discussed these plans with Dr. Oliver Walter, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and Dr. Art Snoke, head of the Department of Geology and Geophysics.

The effect of the budget reduction in the Geology Museum is to remove state funding for staff and support services. The total section 1 funding involved, including employer-paid benefits, is about \$80,000/year. Dean Walter, Professor Snoke, and I have agreed on the following principles for managing this reduction:

1. As a result of the funding cut, it will no longer be possible to keep the display collection in the Geology Museum open to the public on a daily schedule.
2. There will be no change in the ownership of the museum's exhibits and specimens.
3. The display collection will remain intact, in its current facility, with proper care of the specimens and exhibits. Exceptions are possible in cases where the Department of Geology and Geophysics determines that proper care requires other means of storage or display.
4. The display collection will be accessible to UW faculty members and their students for purposes of university-level teaching and research.
5. The Department of Geology and Geophysics will determine the extent to which it is possible, with the department's remaining staff and other available resources, such as gifts, to permit visitors to view the display collection for purposes unrelated to UW teaching and research. There is no expectation that the department will facilitate visits of this type at the expense of its teaching and research missions.
6. The research collection in Geology and Geophysics, which is different from the display collection and not subject to the budget reduction in the Geology Museum, will remain intact and available to scholars and researchers on the current basis, under the current system of management. In cases where specimens from the research collection are currently on display in the Geology Museum, the Department of Geology and Geophysics will determine whether leaving them on display best accommodates the requirements for proper care and storage and appropriate scholarly access.

The university's degree programs in Geology and Geophysics will remain in place. Indeed, one of the objectives of making the many difficult decisions announced in President Buchanan's June 4 memo is to minimize the impact of the state-mandated budget reductions on UW's degree programs and the areas of distinction in teaching and research identified in *University Plan 3*.

As with every other measure implemented for the \$18.3 million/year cut in UW's state funding, closure of the Geology Museum entails a regrettable reduction in one of the institution's many fine programs. Every UW administrator would strongly prefer not to make cuts of this nature. However, to the extent that we fail to make targeted reductions, we risk steady, unfocused erosion of the university's academic core.