

2025 Fall Show Descriptions

SKY SHOW PRAIRIE SKIES

A live-narrated tour of the wonders of tonight’s sky, accompanied by some of the legendary stories of the ancient sky. Find out what constellations and planets are visible tonight from your backyard. This show is updated seasonally and is intended for all ages.

MAIN FEATURE SUPERMASSIVE BLACK HOLES: UNCOVERING THE INVISIBLE

This planetarium show presents the environments of the black holes in an impressive and understandable way to the audience. It shows how the latest observations are compared to theory and simulations to better understand the physics of black hole formation in the context of galaxy evolution.

EINSTEIN’S GRAVITY PLAYLIST

Learn how gravitational waves are formed, how they move through the universe, and how scientists work to hear them.

FORWARD! TO THE MOON

Kari Byron from *Crash Test World* and *MythBusters* launches us on a journey beyond the Earth towards a sustainable future in space. NASA’s 21st century Artemis program, named after the Greek moon Goddess and twin of Apollo, is the next step in our mission to explore the universe. Produced by the Fiske Planetarium.

SEASON OF LIGHT

Trace the history and development of the historical, religious, and cultural rituals from around the world practiced during the winter solstice.

CHILDREN’S FEATURE

DID AN ASTEROID REALLY KILL THE DINOSAURS?

Did a space rock six miles wide slam into the Earth 66 million years ago and wipe out 75% of all living species at that time, including the dinosaurs? Explore the impacts and cosmic collisions across the Solar System in this dynamic new show.

SPOOKY SPACE

Would you like to meet the stars of Halloween? And their terrible counterparts in space? Here is a full dome show for the Halloween season.

ONE WORLD, ONE SKY: BIG BIRD’S ADVENTURE

Explore the night sky with our friends from Sesame Street™. Join Big Bird, Elmo, and Hu Hu Zhu as they take a trip to the Moon. See how the Moon is different from the Earth and learn how to find the Big Dipper and North Star from your backyard.

SANTA’S SECRET STAR

How will Santa find his way home? You, too, can find Santa’s secret star in the sky in this holiday show about the winter sky. Learn about the North Star and how the sky changes as we travel northward.

SPECIAL EVENTS

SENSORY-FRIENDLY MATINEES

The Staerkel Planetarium offers matinee shows with sensory-friendly settings on selected Saturdays. Sensory-friendly shows have “lights up, sound down” settings and a relaxed atmosphere where patrons can come, go, and move around as needed. Sensory-friendly shows are great for guests with autism spectrum disorder, sensory sensitivities, or young children. All are welcome, even if you don’t need sensory accommodations!

JAMES B. KALER SCIENCE LECTURE SERIES

On the first Friday of the month at 7 pm, the Staerkel Planetarium becomes a forum for a local scientist to discuss their specialties. The series was named for UIUC astronomer Jim Kaler, who gave his time to speak in our series every year for over 20 years. Admission is \$2 for everyone.

LASER SHOWS ARE BACK!

The Staerkel Planetarium will host laser shows from October 23 through October 26! Join us for special programs set to pop music and holiday-themed songs each evening. Tickets are \$12 for everyone.

SPANISH LANGUAGE MATINEES

Staerkel Planetarium is also giving public shows in Spanish! On October 4, we will show *Un cielo, un mundo: la aventura de Big Bird* at 3:30 pm and *Astronomía a gran escala* at 4:30 pm. Both shows are presented by a native Spanish speaker. Tickets are \$4.

¡El Planetario Staerkel estará también exhibiendo shows públicos en español! El 4 de octubre tendremos el show “*Un cielo, un mundo: la aventura de Big Bird*”, a las 3:30 pm; y “*Astronomía a gran escala*” a las 4:30 pm. Ambos shows serán presentados por un hispano hablante nativo. Las entradas cuestan \$4.

DARK SIDE OF THE MOON LIGHT SHOW

The sounds of Pink Floyd’s albums ring in the dome again. Enjoy this full dome show on the first Friday of each month at 9 pm and at other selected times. These aren’t for people with motion sickness. Tickets are \$12 for everyone.

GIRL SCOUT WORKSHOP

Get help on your Space Science badge by attending a workshop at the planetarium on October 29 or 30 from 6 pm to 7:30 pm. Advance registration is required! More information can be obtained by calling the planetarium at 351-2568 or visiting our website.

BOY SCOUT WORKSHOP

The planetarium will conduct an interactive Astronomy merit badge workshop. The workshop runs from 6:30-9 pm on November 3. Advance registration is required! More information can be obtained by calling the planetarium at 351-2568 or visiting our website.

EVENT PRICES

	One Show	Two Shows*	Science Lectures
Adults	\$ 8.00	\$ 12.00	\$ 2.00
Parkland students, seniors, and children under 12	7.00	10.50	2.00
Groups (20+)	4.00	6.00	2.00
Light/Laser shows (all ages)	12.00		
Spanish language matinees	4.00		
FOSP Members	FREE	FREE	FREE

*Attend two consecutive shows at a reduced rate.

Private showings are available starting at \$80 on weekdays and \$350 on weeknights and weekends. Call 217/351-2568 for group show information.

ADMISSION RATES AND POLICIES

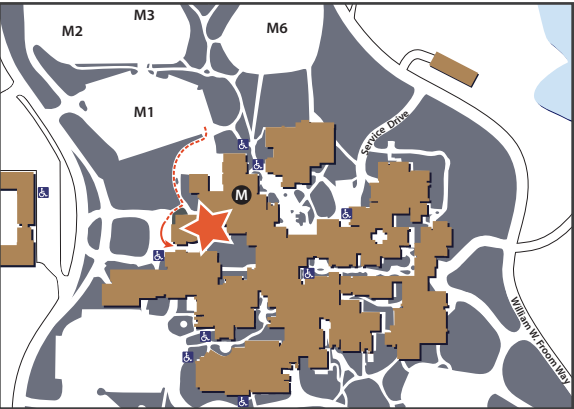
Tickets may be purchased at tickets.parkland.edu in advance or 30 minutes before each show at the door.

KIDS, look for details on our website on how to become a Galaxy Club member!

TEACHERS, book your field trip with us by calling our office at 217/351-2568. Teaching materials and show descriptions can be found online.

WANT TO TAKE HOME A TELESCOPE? You can rent one from the planetarium! Call or email our office to learn more.

SPONSOR A CHAIR! Interested in sponsoring one of the planetarium chairs? \$400 one-time sponsorship for each chair. See our website for this opportunity.



- The William M. Staerkel Planetarium is fully accessible, including wheelchair seating in the dome. Accessible parking is available.
- The closest parking is in lot M1 north of the dome.

 **staerkel planetarium**
AT PARKLAND COLLEGE

fall

2025

events

Photo Credit: Vera C. Rubin Observatory

WILLIAM M. STAERKEL PLANETARIUM

FALL SCHEDULE 2025

Show openings are in bold.

SEPTEMBER

- FRI 5**
7 pm Summer Prairie Skies
8 pm Supermassive Black Holes
9 pm Dark Side of the Moon
- SAT 6**
1 pm Did an Asteroid Really Kill the Dinosaurs?
2 pm Supermassive Black Holes
- FRI 12**
7 pm Summer Prairie Skies
8 pm Supermassive Black Holes
- SAT 13**
1 pm Did an Asteroid Really Kill the Dinosaurs?
2 pm Supermassive Black Holes
- FRI 19**
7 pm Summer Prairie Skies
8 pm Supermassive Black Holes
- SAT 20**
1 pm Did an Asteroid Really Kill the Dinosaurs?
2 pm Supermassive Black Holes
- FRI 26**
7 pm Fall Prairie Skies
8 pm Supermassive Black Holes
- SAT 27**
1 pm Did an Asteroid Really Kill the Dinosaurs?
2 pm Supermassive Black Holes
- SENSORY-FRIENDLY MATINEES
3:30 pm One World, One Sky: Big Bird's Adventure
4:30 pm Cosmic Colors
6 pm Dark Side of the Moon

OCTOBER

- FRI 3**
7 pm Kaler Science Lecture
8 pm Einstein's Gravity Playlist
9 pm Dark Side of the Moon

- SAT 4**
1 pm Spooky Space
2 pm Einstein's Gravity Playlist
- SPANISH LANGUAGE MATINEES
3:30 pm Un cielo, un mundo: La aventura de Big Bird
4:30 pm Astronomía a gran escala
- FRI 10**
7 pm Fall Prairie Skies
8 pm Einstein's Gravity Playlist
- SAT 11**
1 pm Spooky Space
2 pm Einstein's Gravity Playlist
- MON 13 HOLIDAY MATINEES**
1 pm One World, One Sky: Big Bird's Adventure
2 pm Spooky Space
- FRI 17**
7 pm Fall Prairie Skies
8 pm Einstein's Gravity Playlist
- SAT 18**
1 pm Spooky Space
2 pm Einstein's Gravity Playlist
- THU 23 LASER SHOWS**
6:10 pm Laser Beatles
7:20 pm Laser Motown
8:30 pm Laser Michael Jackson
- FRI 24 LASER SHOWS**
6:30 pm Laser Halloween
7:20 pm Laser Stranger Things
8:30 pm Laser Lizzo
- SAT 25 LASER SHOWS WITH MATINEES**
1 pm Laser Taylor Swift
2:10 pm Laser Disney Movie Magic
3:00 pm Laser *NSYNC with Britney
4:10 pm Laser Taylor Swift
6:30 pm Laser Halloween
7:20 pm Laser Billie Eilish
8:30 pm Laser Pride

- SUN 26 LASER SHOW MATINEES**
1 pm Laser Halloween
1:50 pm Laser Floyd: The Vision Bell
3 pm Laser Zeppelin: Whole Lotta Led
- FRI 31**
7 pm Fall Prairie Skies
8 pm Einstein's Gravity Playlist

NOVEMBER

- SAT 1**
1 pm Spooky Space
2 pm Einstein's Gravity Playlist
- FRI 7**
7 pm Kaler Science Lecture
8 pm Forward! To the Moon
9 pm Dark Side of the Moon
- SAT 8**
1 pm One World, One Sky: Big Bird's Adventure
2 pm Forward! To the Moon
- FRI 14**
7 pm Fall Prairie Skies
8 pm Forward! To the Moon
- SAT 15**
1 pm One World, One Sky: Big Bird's Adventure
2 pm Forward! To the Moon
- FRI 21**
7 pm Fall Prairie Skies
8 pm Forward! To the Moon
- SAT 22**
1 pm One World, One Sky: Big Bird's Adventure
2 pm Forward! To the Moon

- WED 26 HOLIDAY MATINEES**
1 pm One World, One Sky: Big Bird's Adventure
2 pm Season of Light
- FRI 28 CLOSED FOR THANKSGIVING**
SAT 29 CLOSED FOR THANKSGIVING

DECEMBER

- FRI 5**
7 pm Kaler Science Lecture
8 pm Season of Light
9 pm Dark Side of the Moon
- SAT 6**
1 pm Santa's Secret Star
2 pm Season of Light
- FRI 12**
7 pm Fall Prairie Skies
8 pm Season of Light
- SAT 13**
1 pm Santa's Secret Star
2 pm Season of Light
- SENSORY-FRIENDLY MATINEES
3:30 pm Santa's Secret Star
4:30 pm Niyah and the Multiverse
- FRI 19**
7 pm Fall Prairie Skies
8 pm Season of Light
- SAT 20**
1 pm Santa's Secret Star
2 pm Season of Light

Closed for the holidays from December 24 through January 4.
Will reopen for public programs on January 9/10 weekend.

For show information or other inquiries:
217/351-2446 | planetarium@parkland.edu
planetarium.parkland.edu

Become a member of the Friends of Staerkel Planetarium. Obtain free show admissions, invitations to special events, and more!



Follow us on Facebook and Instagram!