

Bishop's University Astronomical Observatory October 2009

If you look up from the “small quad” behind Hamilton building, you will see two new additions to the campus. The first is an observing deck that was built on the roof of Nicolls adjacent to the Observatory and the other is Bishop's first-ever solar panel mounted next to it.

The deck was built late last summer and completes the final phase in the construction of the Bishop's University Astronomical Observatory. The deck allows guests to get a completely unobstructed view of the entire night sky. It is especially useful when large groups come to visit the Observatory. While part of the group is observing in the Dome, the rest will be using portable telescopes on the deck. The Observatory is only three years old and to date we have already welcomed nearly 2500 visitors.

The deck itself uses state-of-the-art LED lighting to minimize energy consumption while ensuring the safety of our visitors. The solar panel and battery system provide sufficient energy to easily light the deck and will ultimately be used to power everything in the Observatory. Bishop's has also embarked on the *Dark Skies* project to replace a significant fraction of its exterior lighting with more energy efficient fixtures that reduce the level of light pollution. The installation of the solar energy system and the replacement of lights are concrete examples of Bishop's commitment to sustainable development and of our recognition that the campus must be a more environmentally-friendly energy consumer. In this regard, Bishop's is actively trying to replace its natural-gas burning boilers that heat the entire campus with a system that has a smaller carbon footprint. This is part of the multi-million dollar Energy Services Contract initiative and you will be hearing a lot more about it in the coming year.

New Observatory Deck

