

Tears for PASCAL

PASCAL, and more specifically its potential disbandment, got a lot of attention toward the beginning of the year. This concern seems to have tapered off in the whirlwind of holidays, the beginning of a new semester and rush, but the issue is still as big as ever!

If you have not yet heard, PASCAL, the Partnership Among South Carolina Academic Libraries, is in serious danger of going bankrupt. Legislators cut funds 90 percent for this fiscal year, and if it weren't for some ex-



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cess monies, the entire program may have already dismantled. Budget cuts have already been made, but if PASCAL cannot find a way to glean further support, it will cease to exist in July 2009.

As I wrote in a news article earlier this academic year, PASCAL provides rapid book delivery service and many electronic resources for 230,000 South Carolina college and university students and employees, those at Furman included. Its funding is obtained through membership dues and is supplemented with state monies.

Many students use PASCAL and do not even realize it. PASCAL provides Furman students with access to all

of its resources through the James B. Duke library website, and it is the primary source for obtaining volumes not available in our library of nearly 450,000 books (The interlibrary loan program is only a back-up to PASCAL). A PASCAL logo with a red "This service is endangered" sign has recently been instated on affected webpages — look for it!

To buy membership into the electronic resources — barring any rapid delivery volumes — without PASCAL, it would cost Furman University alone over \$85,000. It would be nonsensical, especially given the current state of the economy, to not continue to buy into PASCAL. However, we soon may no longer have that option.

As students, there are two major things we can do to aid in preventing this: speaking with legislators directly and posting testimonials on the PASCAL website. Faculty and staff as well are urged to articulate the impact that PASCAL has made on their work and their ability to teach.

We need to act now! Even just talking about it to your friends and getting the word out is effective — who knows, it may spur others into taking action. By visiting the PASCAL website, you can quickly enter in your own story. PASCAL is such an under-appreciated, precious resource. Let's band together and let the South Carolina government know just how much it helps us!