

Austin Peay State University

Austin Peay State University was proud to host the 128th meeting of the Tennessee Academy of Science on November 17th, 2018. Attendees participated in poster and oral sessions as well as a plenary session in the Sundquist Science center.

Austin Peay is a four-year public university offering nearly 60 majors and many areas of concentration of study. After humble beginnings nearly 100 years ago, APSU became a

doctoral-level institution in 2018 after developing a Doctor of Education degree. Located in Clarksville, Tennessee, it is named in honor of a former Tennessee governor. Today, faculty and staff strive to achieve the University's vision of creating a collaborative, integrative learning community for their 10,000+ students. For more information regarding APSU, please visit the university website, apsu.edu.

Tennessee Academy of Science Distinguished Science Teacher Award 2018

At the 2018 Meeting of the Tennessee Academy of Science, Dr. Preston MacDougall, Director of the Tennessee Junior Academy of Science, presented the Distinguished Science Teacher Award to **Mrs. Diana O'Neal**, from Sulphur Springs School in Washington County, Tennessee. Diana O'Neal is a 6th, 7th, and 8th grade science teacher and has taught middle school science for 14 years. Prior to that, Diana earned an Associate's Degree in Dental Hygiene from ETSU and worked for 25 years in the dental field before returning to college and receiving a Bachelor of Science in General Studies and a Master of Arts in Education from ETSU. She is truly a life-long learner! Diana enjoys attending and presenting at NSTA Conferences and TSTA Conferences, as well as serving on the Science KEY (Keep Educating Yourself) Leadership Team. Leading by example, Diana displays a passion for educating herself, and her overarching goal is to convey that same excitement and desire for learning to her students.

Diana's teaching philosophy is inspired by Socrates, who said, "I cannot teach anybody anything; I can only make them

think." The challenge of reaching *all* students in her classroom and throughout her school is the reason she seeks opportunities to be the student herself; attending professional development and taking courses to improve her knowledge base. She wants her students to understand that she continues to be a student of science just as they are. Her nitty-gritty goals in science education include development of problem, project, and phenomena-based learning units using authentic situations that encourage students to take ownership of their learning and develop 21st century skills and a growth mindset. Students need to literally experience science *in their hands*. Students have to use the tools, design the experiments, research and collect evidence, and draw conclusions based on *their* data. They need to be less concerned about right or wrong answers and success or failure to realize that learning has meaning in their lives. She wants her students to apply their knowledge and skills—using problem solving strategies and logical thinking skills practiced through student-centered learning – throughout their lives. Please join us in congratulating Diana for her exemplary science teaching!