

2026 Faculty Conference

MAKING COLLEGE LEGIBLE:

**First-Generation Students and the Hidden
Curriculum Across a Century**

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Generation Student Success
Initiatives

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Before we Begin

Today's presentation is built on four premises:

- High standards and transparent expectations can coexist.
- The complexity of navigating college has increased over the past century.
- Academic preparedness and knowledge of how college works are not the same thing.
- Helping students navigate college is a shared responsibility.

Today's Goals

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Compare how the college experience has evolved over the past century
- Recognize examples of the hidden curriculum
- Identify hidden expectations in your own courses
- Apply one transparent teaching strategy this semester

In the 1930 catalogue, the first published, the School is called "A State Normal School for the Training of Teachers of the Elementary School."

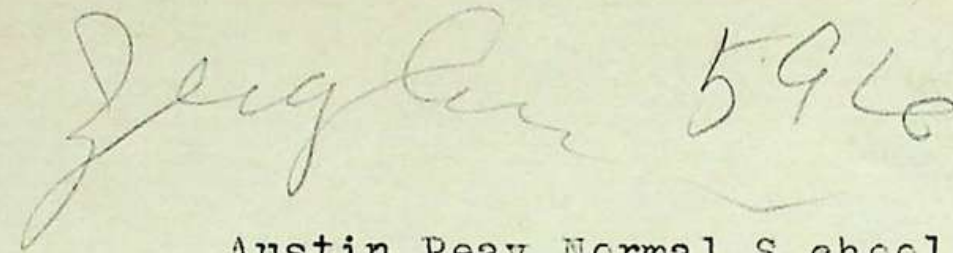
In the 1931 catalogue the School is called "A State Normal School for the Training of White Teachers for the Rural Public Schools of Tennessee." The 1935 catalogue says "A State Normal School ... and A Junior College Giving Two Years of Standard College Work."

**\$65 per
quarter is
\$1299.81
today**

Tuition is free to all students residing in Tennessee, and the expenses of attending this institution will be very reasonable. A total of \$65.00 a quarter should cover the expenses of students living in the dormitories and taking their meals in the cafeteria.

For further information address the president, Mr. J. S. Zeigler, at the college.

Yours truly,



Austin Peay Normal School
Order of Enrollment

(Form No. 1)

1. Fill out Matriculation card at President's or Registrar's office, Room 11 Stewart Hall.
2. Present statement of credits to Dean's office (Form No. 15) and (Form No. 1), Room 12, Stewart Hall.
3. Have classes assigned, (Form No. 12), by your class adviser: Sub-Freshmen Girls, Mrs. Williams; Sub-Freshmen Boys, Mr. Nicholson; Freshmen, Dr. Jackson; Sophomores, Mr. Moffitt.
4. Present Classification Card, (Form No. 1), to Dean for approval.
5. Pay fees at Bursar's Office, and get receipt.

Fees: Registration fee, \$4.00; Student's Activity fee, \$2.00; All courses in Biology and Physics, \$1.00 each per quarter; All courses in Chemistry, \$2.00 each besides the breakage fee of \$1.00; Home Economics, Cooking \$2.00 per quarter; Art, \$1.00 per quarter.

6. Books may be secured at A.C.O. Drug Co., 200-2 Franklin Ave.

SCHEDULE FALL TERM, 1929.

**\$4
registration
fee is \$79.99
today**

ORDER OF REGISTRATION

1. Sophomores will make out their course cards in the Library
2. Freshmen will make out their courses in the sewing room(Room 17, Stewart Building) and in the Dean's office.
3. The dean must O.K. all cards before students complete registration in the registrar's office.
4. Use pen and ink in making out course cards

SCHEDULE - FALL QUARTER - A.J. WHEELER								
COURSE	CAT NO	HOURS	MON	TUES	WED	THUR.	FRID.	SAT
		8-9	⊕		⊕		⊕	
NATURE STUDY	BIOL 112	9-10	✓	NO	✓	NO	✓	NO
		10 ³⁰ -11 ²⁰	⊕	CL	⊕	NO	⊕	CL
NATURE STUDY	BIOL 111	1 ²⁰ -2 ²⁰	✓	CL	✓	CL	✓	CL
AGR	AGR. 143	2 ²⁰ -3 ²⁰	✓	CL	✓	CL	✓	CL
		3 ³⁰ -4 ²⁰	⊕		⊕		⊕	
⊕ Conference hours.								

SCHEDULE - M. LACY - FALL 1932							D.S.
TIME	MON.	TUES.	WED	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.	
8:00	MATH. 121		MATH. 121		MATH. 121	MATH. 100	}
	MATH. 131		MATH. 131		MATH. 131	MATH. 100	
9:00	OFFICE HR. OR D.S.		OFFICE HR. OR D.S.		OFFICE HR. OR D.S.	MATH. 100	
10:30		MATH. 100		MATH. 100		MATH. 100	* D.S. = DEMONSTRATION SCHOOL
11:30		OFFICE HR.		OFFICE HR.			
1:30							
2:30	MATH. 111	MATH. 111	MATH. 111	MATH. 111	MATH. 111		

The First Ten Graduates of Austin Peay Normal School

Miss Eugenia Richardson.....Erin

Miss Catherine Smith

Miss Elizabeth Wyatt

Miss Ida Margaret Bland

Miss Margaret Walker

.....All of Clarksville

Miss Louise Lyle

Miss Louise Winn

Richard Perkins

Miss Mary Robinson.....Dover

Miss Wilma Dement.....Rutherford County

Fall 1921
STUDENTS IN DORMITORY & CAFETERIA

Name	Room	Board	Books qtr.	Material quarter	Laundry Mo.
✓ Nellie B. Covington	\$5.00	\$20.00	\$17.00	\$ 2.00	--
✓ Vernelle Wall	5.00	12.00	15.00	2.00	--
✓ Mary Sue McMillan	5.00	15.00	15.00	1.50	\$ 1.00
✓ Martha Adkisson	5.00	16.00	15.00	.75	--
✓ Sarah Duke	5.00	12.50	11.65	5.00	--
Grady Mullican	1.00	18.50	15.00	1.25	.50
✓ Marie Williams	5.00	15.00	8.00	2.00	1.00
✓ Virginia White	5.00	15.00	11.00	2.00	---
✓ Mrs. K. Shoulders	5.00	21.00	10.00	1.50	1.00
✓ Mrs. R. B. Jackson	5.00	20.00	12.50	2.50	1.00
✓ Cecil Elliott	5.00	9.00	11.75	2.10	--
✓ Pansy Keatts	5.00	25.00	12.00	5.00	--
✓ Jean Spencer	5.00	20.00	14.00	00	00

✓ Pearl Marshall	5.00	15.00	10.00	1.00	.75
✓ Mary Ethel Tucker	5.00	16.00	15.00	3.00	--
✓ Hazel Bibb	5.00	20.00	7.00	2.00	--
✓ Elizabeth Atkins	5.00	16.00	8.00	.75	--
✓ Martha Stokes	5.00	16.00	14.00	5.50	--
✓ Jennie Beth Stokes	5.00	12.00	12.00	2.00	--
✓ Mrs. C. F. Fisher	5.00	20.00	8.50	1.00	1.50
✓ Lavonia Foster	5.00	14.00	12.00	2.50	2.00
✓ Frances Wilson	5.00	18.00	12.00	5.00	--
✓ Sarah Hickerson	5.00	18.00	12.00	5.00	--

Total	111.00	369.00	<u>278.40</u>	<u>55.35</u>	8.75
Average per Mo.	5.00	16.04	2.80 mo	1.80 mo.	0.38

Cost per student 26.25

Cost per student per month- \$26.25
\$524.92 today

APSC 1946 Yearbook



January 25, 1932

Mr. Harley D. Fite
New Providence Demonstration School
New Providence, Tenn.

Dear Mr. Fite:

I am asking that you will permit these young women, Miss Lavonia Foster, Miss Nancy Duke, Miss Jennie Coke, and Miss Lucy Fuqua, to continue to do their work of observation and practice in the school. There is no excuse whatever for their conduct, and they apparently recognize that there is not. They have expressed to me their regret and have said that they had no intention of doing any injury to the school or showing disrespect to it. They, also, pledge themselves that they will not repeat this offense. I believe they will not.

You may make this explanation to the students and patrons of the school.

Yours sincerely,

P. P. Claxton, President

PPC:MLD

January 25, 1932

To the principals, teachers, students, and patrons of the New Providence Demonstration School:

We, the undersigned young women, acknowledge and regret the fault for which we have been suspended from observing and practicing in this school and promise faithfully that this will not be repeated. We, also, ask that we be permitted to continue our work on this condition.

Dec. 5, 1932

Mrs. Jessye H. Childs
Demonstration School

Dear Mrs. Childs:

I am asking Miss Johnnye Gorham to stay through the 9:00 to 10:00 hour occasionally on Tuesdays and Thursdays, at which time she does not have a recitation at the Normal School. Apparently she needs a good deal of individual help. Will you take advantage of this opportunity to talk with her individually about her work? Possibly you can do this between the first and second hour or you can get a little time to talk with her during the second hour while the other students are at work. This individual help is frequently much more valuable than any help that may be given through meeting with groups.

Yours sincerely,

PFC:MLD

P. P. Claxton, President

Cumberland Fcn., Tenn.
January 11, 1932

Mr. P. P. Claxton
Austin Peay Normal School
Clarksville, Tennessee

Dear Mr. Claxton:

I intend to return to Austin Peay Normal School for the spring quarter. I worked in the cafeteria last year and should like to work there again this year. When I left Mr. McCord said that I might have work there this spring. I should like to know if it will be possible for me to get work.

My salary has been small this year, and it is probable that I will go to school all this year. Due to present circumstances it is necessary that I work.

I am enclosing a self addressed envelop for a reply.

Yours truly,
Katherine Nichols

January 15, 1932

Miss Katherine Nichols
Cumberland Furnace, Tenn.

My dear Miss Nichols:

I am delighted to know that you are planning to return to the Austin Peay Normal School for the spring quarter. Apparently, a good number of our former students will be returning for this quarter. I am sorry, however, to have to say that I can not now promise definitely to give you work. In order to make the cafeteria meet expenses we had to cut down service. At present only one girl and Mrs. Johnson are working at the cafeteria slide. We have taken off two other persons with partial promise we will give them the work if there should be need for it. However, we will do the very best we can for you.

Yours sincerely,

PPC:MLD

P. P. Claxton, President

January 5, 1932

Mr. Ralph Anderson
R. 4
Clarksville, Tenn.

Dear Mr. Anderson:

Apparently you have not yet registered for the winter quarter in the Austin Peay Normal School. I am wondering if you are not intending to return this quarter. If so, I shall be glad to know the reason. If you are returning you should register as early as possible so as to lose the least possible amount of time.

Yours sincerely,

P. P. Claxton, President

PPC:MLD



HATTIE CLAY

A.B. Pitt University

Clarkville, Tenn.

APSU Then & Now

Austin Peay Normal School/State College

- 2-year college
- Original mission was “teacher college for rural white schools”
- 34 faculty (1946)
- 219 students (1946)
- Access was relatively limited

Austin Peay State University

- Regional comprehensive university
- Confers doctoral, masters, bachelors, and associates degrees
- 678 faculty (2025)
- >11,000 students (2025)
- Federal financial aid has increased access

Our students have changed. Have our assumptions changed with them?

Imagine This Student:

- First-generation
- Pell-eligible
- 3.8 HS GPA
- Direct admit to nursing program
- Is *academically* prepared for the rigor of college



Would this student be successful in your class?

Imagine This Same Student:

- Doesn't know the proper way to email professors
- Doesn't understand office hours
- Doesn't recognize the importance of a syllabus
- Doesn't know how to ask for accommodations for their disability
- Is experiencing food insecurity and doesn't know he can get help on campus



Would this student still be successful in your class?

Hidden Curriculum

The curriculum is what we teach. The hidden curriculum is everything we expect students to know without teaching it, or what we assume students already know.

College isn't just academic. Students need to learn:

- institutional systems
- professional behavior
- academic culture
- communication practices

Examples of the Hidden Curriculum

Academic

- syllabus
- office hours
- majors/minors

Professional

- proper emailing/communication
- NACE competencies
- networking
- hierarchies

Navigational

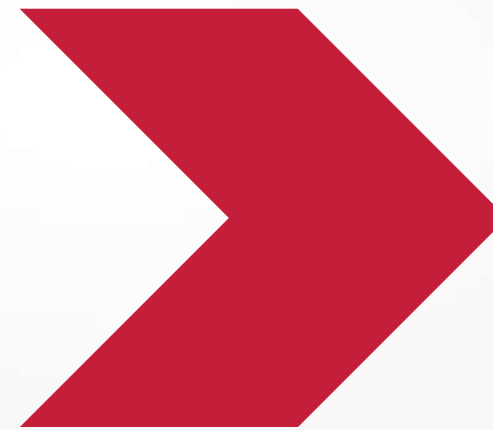
- resources
- advocacy
- jargon

Who taught you these things?

Example Scenarios

Professor Says:

1. Analyze the literature.
2. Visit me during office hours.
3. Participate in class.
4. Revise your paper.
5. Use campus resources.



Student Hears:

1. Do what to the literature?
2. I'm in trouble.
3. I can be on my phone as long as I answer the occasional question.
4. Do I need to rewrite the whole thing?
5. When? How? Where are they?

Where does the Hidden Curriculum End?

Reasonable to Make Explicit

How participation is graded, how to succeed in your course, preferred communication methods, assignment expectations, office hour expectations

Reasonable to expect students to know

Pre-requisite course content, major-specific foundational knowledge, skills taught in pre-req courses, discipline-specific terminology, concepts assessed in previous coursework

Transparency ≠ Lowering Standards

Making expectations clear does not mean making work easier. EVERYONE benefits from transparency:

- First-generation students
- Transfer students
- Nontraditional students
- International students
- Students with anxiety
- Students with disabilities
- Students with autism

The Mission Hasn't Changed

What Hasn't Changed

- High academic standards
- Critical thinking
- Preparing graduates
- Faculty expertise



What Has Changed

- Student demographics
- Technology
- How students access info
- The complexity of navigating college

Not Every Struggling Student is the Same

May benefit from greater transparency

- Asks questions but seems unsure or anxious
- Misses expectations despite obvious effort
- Confused by instructions
- Implements feedback
- Improves after expectations are clarified
- Shows help-seeking behaviors

May need a different conversation

- Attends class sporadically
- Ignores repeated communication
- Refuses or ignores available support
- Demonstrates little engagement with course
- Continues same behavior after support
- Ignores feedback
- Does not seek help or does so inconsistently

**Isn't that
what UNIV
1000 is for?**

Students learn through repeated experiences across campus.

- UNIV 1000 is not required for all students and is only a 1 credit hour course
- Every syllabus is different
- Every instructor communicates differently
- Every academic discipline has its own norms and expectations
- Every course is a new opportunity to develop these skills
- Learning doesn't happen with a single exposure

Student Success is a shared responsibility.

Activity~ 10 minutes

Take 1 assignment from your class and answer the following:

- What assumptions am I making?
- What words can confuse students?
- What am I expecting students to already know?
- What can I explain more clearly?

Would love to hear examples of what you may change!

2026 Faculty Conference

THANK YOU