

“March for Science”

Replacing test tubes with picketing signs, an estimated 500 people gathered in downtown Toledo last Saturday to reinforce the importance of science and fact-based reasoning at Toledo’s March for Science.

The event was in accordance with a National March for Science in Washington, D.C. and satellite marches in cities across the globe.

Coinciding with Earth Day, the demonstration was in light of recent proposed cuts to federal research funding and changes to environmental policy.

“The March for Science champions publicly funded and publicly communicated science as a pillar of human freedom and prosperity,” stated the local event’s webpage. “We unite as a diverse, non-partisan group to call for political leaders to enact evidence-based policies in the public interest.”

The March for Science Toledo began with a rally at International Park next to the Maumee River and included several speakers in the local science community. The Northwestern Ohio Chapter of the Association for Women in Science and Imagination Station co-sponsored the event.

“We want you to learn something today,” said Susanne Nonekowski, head of the Northwestern Ohio Chapter of the Association for Women in Science. “The goal of the march is to accelerate science and encourage people to learn about the scientific method and have respect for the validity of scientific evidence.”

Attendees holding signs with slogans like, “There is no planet B” and “Demand Evidence” marched across the Martin Luther King, Jr Bridge. and down to the Imagination Station.

Community member Marilyn Lazarus, who attended the march, said she saw the demonstration as an opportunity to express her concern over the current proposed funding cuts.

“I’m here because this is my passion,” said Lazarus. “I think that with the present administration we’re rolling backwards, and we need to keep moving forward.”

Others viewed the march as their chance to voice specific grievances to the federal government regarding environmental policy.

“I’m scared of what Trump is going to do to the EPA,” said participant Jeanne Dennler. “I’m here to be counted as part of the resistance.”

Many, including former distinguished University of Toledo Professor of Astronomy Adolf Witt, kept politics out of their rhetoric but were instead there in support of scientific research in general.

“I’m not going to say anything political,” Witt said. “But, obviously if our civilization is to continue, our policies have to be based on fact. On the truth. That’s what science is all about.”

The organization’s main website announced further plans once marches concluded.

“March for Science has mobilized an unprecedented coalition of people committed to championing the role of science in supporting our common good,” stated the website. “Now our work continues as we transition into a non-profit organization.”

Toledoans may join the continued movement by logging on to satellites.marchforscience.com and registering as a member in the local area.