



Office of Equity and Inclusion Newsletter

December 1, 2020



A Message from Dr. Keith Johnson, Vice President of Equity and Inclusion

“Access is Not a Privilege, It is a Right”

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This was a landmark civil rights law, which guarantees equal access to public resources and employment to disabled people, signed into law by then-President George H.W. Bush in 1990. Though we can celebrate many achievements, much work remains.

We are at a place in this country where we have been thinking about different communities that have not had justice in the same way, and have experienced discrimination disproportionately. Too often, we do not think of people with disabilities in the context of these conversations. In fact, when we discuss discriminatory practices and disparities, typically, we are referring to housing, education, health care, generational wealth, longevity, health maladies, and employment. In the context of these disparities, race becomes the underlying

factor. However, though these are critical concerns for the health and wellbeing of our country, let us not forget about our citizens who experience difficulties due, in part because of the lack of accessibility to our world in many ways that so many of us take for granted. Disability is ubiquitous. It does not discriminate based on race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomics, athleticism, religious preference, or even popularity. Though the focus of this piece is on a specific disability, please understand that disabilities or “different abilities” come in many forms ranging from neurodiversity to cognition diversity. Not every different ability is visible by our vision senses nor are they all physical. However, those who have them may experience the side effects that are imposed on them through less inclusive practices by those who don't.

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**When you have a disability, knowing you
are not defined by it is the sweetest feeling.
~ Anne Wafula Strike ~**

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Continued ~ Message from Dr. Keith Johnson

Intersectionality has become a buzzword of late when discussing inclusive excellence. That is, being a part of multiple demographics groups; i.e. female, gay, Hispanic, handicapped, etc. I cannot imagine what life would be like being a Black American male and being disabled. Some of the encounters that I have experienced potentially could only be understood if my shoes fit your feet.

There is a population of individuals who do not have equal rights from something as simple as the ability to enter a building or even advancing to an upper floor in a building because the facility is not structurally designed for that purpose. Many years ago, I taught a freshman orientation course and I added components of equity and inclusion in the course. One particular assignment included having students navigate around the ETSU campus in a wheelchair and having an observer observe and document the experience. Students who participated in the assignment had a life-changing experience. They learned that there were crosswalks/sidewalks that ran parallel to parked vehicles. Drivers approaching the crosswalk could not see persons in a wheelchair because the height of the vehicles was higher than the person riding in the wheelchair. As a result, there were a couple of narrow escapes that could have led to an injury. In addition, some sidewalks did not have a curb cutout. Also, there were several scenarios where a person in the wheelchair could not enter a building because there was no ramp for entry. In Wilson Wallis Hall, students were asked to advance to the upper level of the building. What appears to be a simple task, turned out to be impossible without the assistance of the observer. The elevator is a freight elevator that has manual doors that open and close like a guillotine, vertical rather than horizontally. In order to open or close the manual doors, a person will have to be in a standing position, which is impossible for someone who does not have that ability to do so.

Thirty years ago when the ADA was established, it was meant to be the beginning of greater things to come. Its establishment was to start meeting basic needs, which implies the bare minimum. Though the law exists, it is still our responsibility through our leadership roles in organizations, institutions, and special interest groups to use our power, influence, and authority to make our community, which includes our site plans around buildings, parks, facilities and other places that we so much enjoy accessible for all of our citizens, including those with disabilities.

ETSU continues to strive to become a community where we value ALL our faculty, staff, students where:

PEOPLE come first, are treated with dignity and respect, and are encouraged to achieve their full potential;

RELATIONSHIPS are built on honesty, integrity, and trust;

DIVERSITY of people and thought is respected;

EXCELLENCE is achieved through teamwork, leadership, creativity, and a strong work ethic;

EFFICIENCY is achieved through wise use of human and financial resources; and

COMMITMENT to intellectual achievement is embraced.



Candy Massey ~ Staff Member Spotlight

"I think you may have a learning disability." That's what my instructor said when I was working toward my associate's degree in computer science at Northeast State Technical Community College. I was in my mid 20's and trying to attend school and work full-time. At his insistence, I went for testing through Vocational Rehab. I had often just thought I was "dumb" in high school. No one reached out and thought I might have a learning disability. When the results came back that I had dyslexia, which is what the instructor had thought, I was both sad and happy. Sad that I had a disability and happy that at least it explained why I struggled.



From that day forward, I had to learn how to deal with this disability. I started researching what dyslexia was and found that I was not alone. For a long time, I was terribly embarrassed about having this disability and felt like it made me a lesser person. I felt that everyone was so much smarter than I was. Why does it take me so long to write a paper or even write a simple email or read this chapter or a memo?

I just have to do things a little differently and it takes me a little longer. After learning about the disability, the hardest thing was to start asking for help when I needed it. The Disability Services department at Northeast State and here at East Tennessee State University were remarkable in assisting in how to navigate through this new process I found myself in. I started getting my textbooks on tape. I researched techniques to help with note-taking and in some of my classes, I started recording. I worked with Disability Services to assist on time issues for tests.

I desperately wanted to continue my education but knew it was going to be really hard. No one in my family had graduated from college before and that was an accomplishment in itself. I could do it, but I needed to break it down and do it in small chunks. I started with my Associate's Degree from Northeast State and graduated at the top of my class. Then I transferred to East Tennessee State University and graduated with my Bachelor's Degree with cum laude honors and went on to complete my Master's Degree.



I have been at ETSU on and off since high school. I have worn many hats and worked many jobs. My current role is with Information Technology Services as the Project Management Coordinator. I also serve as the current Staff Senate President. I use dictation software to help me write. I use the read-aloud feature to read me my emails and memos. Where I get myself in trouble is when I get in a hurry and do not use my tools or when I get too stressed out and don't slow down. My best friend often tells me to slow down and use your words. I can do IT and I am not stupid I just need to slow down. One

thing about disabilities you can't see, they are still a struggle. ~ *Candy Massey*.

What lies behind you and what lies in front of you,
pales in comparison to what lies inside of you.

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson ~

Matthew Bennett ~ Student Spotlight

My education experience at ETSU has been difficult but rewarding. There have been a few communication roadblocks as per my disability, but I was able to overcome these barriers with advice from my colleagues and the wonderful folks at Disability Services. I discovered my disability at a young age yet with proper therapy I learned how to handle certain difficulties related to my disability. My disability affects me daily through my desire for structure, hence my enjoyment of education with class schedules and the sort to structure my life around. I like to think my poetry publications help enforce the notion that I am more than just a person with a disability. Through my poetry I try to show that I am not this “other” or a spectacle that should be put on a pedestal, I am only human. I think it is important that we reframe disability in a way that is understanding and respectful of all levels of ability. I think we, people with disabilities, just want to be treated as human and not less than or greater than. ~ *Matthew Bennett*



Kamyl Harvey-Bogan ~ Student Spotlight



Kamyl Harvey-Bogan is an MD Candidate at Quillen College of Medicine. She was born and raised in Memphis, TN. Kamyl is married to Linzie Bogan, II, who currently serves as a Naval Officer in Mayport, Florida.

Kamyl received her Bachelor's of Arts in Psychology with a minor in music, specializing in operatic performance. While at Vanderbilt, Kamyl was a Chancellor Scholar who was active in the Psychology Honors Program, a founding member of the Disability Awareness Partnership, a Liaison Educating & Advocating for Psychological Support (LEAPS) member, and a vocalist in Harmonies for the Elderly. At Quillen, she currently serves as the Promotion Representative and as a member of the Student National Medical Association.

She has volunteered with the Living Word Fellowship Vacation Bible School, as a teacher, for many years and has also served at the Rise Up After School Program and Family Promise for families who are experiencing homelessness.

Kamyl aspires to meet the needs of her community by becoming a psychiatrist and providing personalized care. Kamyl plans to work in community psychiatry and to also assist those experiencing homelessness. She also hopes to provide avenues to reduce stigma and to educate those in underserved communities about the complexities of mental health and psychiatry. She envisions that this work will include alliances with religious groups. Kamyl's previous work as a researcher and a peer advocate for a psychological counseling center impressed upon her the need for informed access of care and assisting patients as they navigate through healthcare. She believes that strengthening health literacy, operating in transparency, and building genuine relationships is crucial for improving patient autonomy and outcomes and reducing health disparities.

Kamyl's experiences with arthritis have also taught her that each patient is multifaceted and has a unique health experience. Her perspective challenges her to respect and learn from the differences of each patient and learn how their biological, psychological, and social experiences interplay and affect their overall health. Kamyl's ability to connect with her patients from the wheelchair provides opportunities to demonstrate that differently-abled individuals can be innovative and navigate the field of medicine to effectively serve patients. As she continues her career, Kamyl hopes to mentor individuals and encourage them to persevere through challenges, whether they be societal barriers or physical disabilities.

ETSU Disability Services

ETSU [Disability Services](#), located in the D.P. Culp Student Center, suite 390, offers a variety of accommodations and assistance to students, faculty, and staff.

Mary Little, M.Ed., CRC, Director and ADA/504 Coordinator, littleme@etsu.edu and Laurel Singleton, MSW, singletonlb@etsu.edu are available to provide assistance consistent with the mission of Disability Services to provide services and to promote an accessible environment which allows an equal opportunity for participation in educational pursuits and other campus activities.

Some of their services include:

- The **MentorMe! Program** - designed to aid students in their transition to higher education by providing support and assistance in developing skills critical to the college student such as time management and organizational skills. Undergraduate or graduate students registered with Disability Services are eligible to participate.
- The **Sensory Room** is designed to be a calming room for neurodivergent students whom may experience sensory overload, feel overstimulated, and/or need a moment to step back. The room is furnished with comfortable seating, soft lighting and a variety of sensory integrating items such as fidget toys and weighted blankets.
- **Technology Tips and Resources** - Students are encouraged to use assistive technology for greater independence by enabling them to perform tasks they may be unable to accomplish or have difficulty accomplishing. There are a variety of free apps such as Natural Reader (text-to-speech), Otter.ai (audio to text transcription), and Habitica (habit-building and productivity) that staff can assist with. Disability Services also provides notetaking software to eligible students and maintains a lab equipped with adaptive equipment, screen reading software, and other assistive technology available for use by students with disabilities.
- **Resources for Faculty and Staff** - Disability services can provide guidance for instructors to help address questions and concerns regarding accommodations in the classroom and testing.
- **Accommodations for Faculty and Staff** - Under Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act, employees with disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations, which can be a modification or adjustment to a job, the work environment, or the way things are usually done during the hiring process. The ADA Coordinator can work with any faculty or staff person seeking workplace accommodations due to disability.



[Click here](#) to learn about Disability Services Student Organizations *Outside the Box* and *Delta Alp Pi*



Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is about equal opportunity, freedom from discrimination, and about full participation.

This year marks the 30th Anniversary of the signing of the ADA into law. To learn more visit [ADA.gov](https://www.ada.gov).



What is Disability/Disability Inclusion?

A disability is any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions). There are many types of disabilities that affect a person, such as: Vision, Movement, Thinking, Remembering, Learning, Communicating, Hearing, Mental health, and Social relationships.

Although “people with disabilities” sometimes refers to a single population, this is actually a diverse group of people with a wide range of needs. Two people with the same type of disability can be affected in very different ways. Some disabilities may be hidden or not easy to see.

According to the World Health Organization, disability has three dimensions:

1. **Impairment** in a person’s body structure or function, or mental functioning; examples of impairments include loss of a limb, loss of vision or memory loss.
2. **Activity limitation**, such as difficulty seeing, hearing, walking, or problem solving.
3. **Participation restrictions** in normal daily activities, such as working, engaging in social and recreational activities, and obtaining health care and preventive services.

Learn more at: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/disability.html>

Including people with disabilities in everyday activities and encouraging them to have roles similar to their peers who do not have a disability is *disability inclusion*. This involves more than simply encouraging people; it requires making sure that adequate policies and practices are in effect in a community or organization.

Disability inclusion means understanding the relationship between the way people function and how they participate in society, and making sure everybody has the same opportunities to participate in every aspect of life to the best of their abilities and desires.

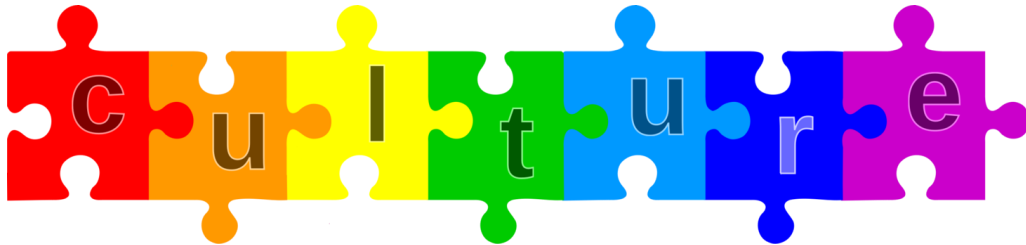
Read more at: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/disability-inclusion.html>

ETSU Cultural Competency Grant Opportunity

Cultural competence is having an awareness of one's own cultural identity and one's views about differences, and the ability to learn and build on the varying cultural and community norms of students and their families. It is the ability to understand the within-group differences that make each student unique, while celebrating the between-group variations that make our country a tapestry. These understandings inform and expand teaching practices in the culturally competent educator's classroom. Cross-cultural competency has been named among the 10 most important skills for the future workforce by the U.S. Department of Education. Employers value culturally competent employees in designing, developing, and marketing their products and services to culturally diverse customers.

Culturally trained faculty and staff can prepare students with cultural competencies by including inclusive pedagogy techniques in and out of classrooms.

ETSU Office of Equity and Inclusion invites project proposal for infusing cultural competency learning outcomes in courses. Only tenured and tenure-track faculty are eligible. Faculty can request up to \$1000 and the project must be implemented in Spring 2021 semester. Please click [here](#) and complete the application form. Applications due December 18, 2020. Send questions to Dr. Moin Uddin at uddinm@etsu.edu.



12 Cognitive Biases Explained

Cognitive biases, such as:

- 1) Anchoring Bias;
- 2) Availability Heuristic bias;
- 3) Bandwagon Bias;
- 4) Choice Supportive Bias;
- 5) Confirmation Bias;
- 6) Ostrich Bias;
- 7) Outcome Bias;
- 8) Overconfidence;
- 9) Placebo bias;
- 10) Survivorship Bias;
- 11) Selective Perception Bias; and
- 12) Blind Spot Bias

are flaws in logical thinking that clear the path to bad decisions, so learning about these ideas can reduce errors in your thought process, leading to a more successful life. Watch this [ten minute video](#) from Practical Psychology which explains these cognitive biases.

Upcoming Events

January 2021

Monday	January 18	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day		
Tuesday	January 26	Lunch and Learn Session <i>Make Your Classroom More Inclusive</i> Discussion lead: Dr. Taine Duncan, Associate Professor & Director of Gender Studies, University of Central Arkansas	12:00-1:00pm	Join Zoom Meeting

February 2021

Wednes.	February 17	Lunch and Learn Session <i>Working With First Generation Students</i> Discussion lead: Dr. Michelle Hurley, Assistant Director McNair Program and Ms. Meagan Stark, Retention Coordinator TRIO Program	12:00-1:00pm	Join Zoom Meeting
Tuesday	February 23	Lunch and Learn Session <i>Debiasing Techniques</i> Discussion lead: Dr. Antonio Rusinol, Associate Professor, Biomedical Sciences, COM	12:00-1:00pm	Join Zoom Meeting

March 2021

Tuesday	March 2	Lunch and Learn Session <i>New Models of Recruitment and Retention</i> Discussion lead: Dr. John Kuykendall, Dean and Associate Professor, School of Education, University of Indianapolis	12:00-1:00pm	Join Zoom Meeting
Tuesday	March 9	Lunch and Learn Session <i>Recruiting and Retaining Diverse Populations</i> Discussion lead: Ms. Jessica Wang, Director of Student Success, Clemmer College	12:00-1:00pm	Join Zoom Meeting

April 2021

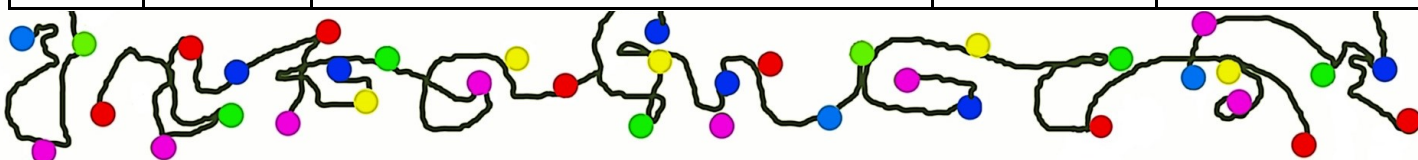
Tuesday	April 6th	Lunch and Learn Session <i>Social Learning and Social Justice</i> Discussion Lead: Deidra Rogers, Lecturer, Department of Counseling & Human Services, Clemmer College	12:00-1:00pm	Join Zoom Meeting
Tuesday	April 27th	Lunch and Learn Lecture Series <i>Coping With Crisis</i> Discussion lead: Tonya McKoy, Ph.D., LPC-MHSP/AS, NCC Licensed Professional Counselor	12:00-1:00pm	Join Zoom Meeting

Spring/Summer 2021

Spring	2021	Corazon Latino	TBA	
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Fall/Winter 2021

Fall	Sept. 20-22	3rd Annual Equity and Inclusion Conference	TBA	
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Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council Member Spotlight

Jessica (Jessie) Wang started her job as the Director for Student Success at Clemmer College on July 1st. Jessie comes from Harvard University where her background is in fostering historically underrepresented student success at predominantly white institutions of higher education, concentrating on both students of color and first-generation students. Jessie received her Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Emmanuel College in Boston, MA before receiving her Master's degree in Higher Education from Harvard University. As an undergraduate student, Jessie served on the Student Government all four years, and was elected as President in her senior year. As a freshman, she worked to push through a



position for a Diversity and Inclusion Representative on the Student Government after noticing a lack of representation within it. Jessie attributes her early and ongoing passion for cultivating environments of equity and inclusion to her experiences growing up in Miami, Florida as an Asian American, where the Asian population numbers just 1.5%. "After only 4 months here, I already know the community at ETSU truly is a special one",

Jessie shares; "I'm thrilled to be joining an advisory council full of talented and passionate individuals, all dedicated towards working to ensure that our community is inclusive and equitable to all, so that everyone can share in the same positive experience that I've had."

Equity and Inclusion Conference Information Translated into Braille



Information about the 2nd Annual Equity and Inclusion Conference held on September 22-23, 2020 has been translated into Braille.

Anyone wanting access to the reading material should email Kim Maturo at maturo@etsu.edu.

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www.facebook.com/etsuequity/

Instagram and Twitter - [etsu_equity](#)

We would like to hear from you.

If you have an announcement, event, accomplishment, etc. you would like to have published in the newsletter send them to Kim Maturo at maturo@etsu.edu.

To add a name to our mailing list, please email Kim Maturo at maturo@etsu.edu.