

Office of Equity and Inclusion Newsletter

February 1, 2023



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

"Honor and Create Black History Every Day"

Dear Friends,

February is the month our nation has set aside to celebrate the legacies and contributions made by so many Black Americans. These contributions have occurred in sports, medicine, engineering, science, and many other important areas.

Black Americans in the United States have a long and complex history. And there are many familiar names that typically become the focal point during this month of recognition:

- Maya Angelou
- Rosa Parks
- Harriet Tubman
- John Lewis
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

However, there are so many more unsung Black American heroes and sheroes who helped shape, mold and impact this country in unprecedented ways. And they often go un-recognized due to lost documented history, and the long standing cultural norms which do not give credit to Black Americans for their work.

~ continued on page 2 ~



"Not everything that is faced can be changed; but nothing can be changed until it is faced." ~James Baldwin~

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Continued ~ Message from Dr. Keith Johnson

Our current political climate feels like an open wound that will not ever heal with book banning, and dismissing "critical race theory" in curriculum initiatives and policies. There is an observable effort to dismantle, erase, dismiss, or even rewrite history. And this effort poses a direct and significant threat to learning about the plight of many Africans and Black Americans in America.

Now, please allow me to introduce you to one of my favorite Black American heroes, my father, Mr. Horace Johnson Sr. He has had a direct and an enormously positive impact on his family, his community and beyond.

Dad was born on March 25, 1931 on a farm in rural northeastern North Carolina in Halifax County. His parents had four children and during that era, farming was a common way of life. When he graduated from high school, his father made the very difficult financial decision to send him to college while his siblings stayed back to help work and manage the family farm.

My father attended college at North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro where he earned a degree in Agriculture and minors in Chemistry and Biology. The university has a long and rich history and has played a significant role in the struggle for Civil Rights for Black Americans in the United States.

While a student Dad became a member of the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity. After graduating, he was drafted into the United States Army and served his country in the Korean War. Upon his return to the United States, he married my mother, Carolyn. Though this union, they had two children, including my older brother, Horace Jr.

After a period of time living and working in Maryland, my grandfather's health began to decline so my parents decided to move back to North Carolina to manage the family farm. After returning home, my father began to see and experience many of the inequities that existed in his own community; such as county commissioners underfunding many interests of Black Americans and other underrepresented minorities, and an open practice of voter suppression.

After many years of pushing back against racism, through his work with the NAACP, National Society of Black Land Owners and the local Black Caucus, he determined that he had to do more. He came to the conclusion that he had to become a policy maker if true change was going to occur. That was enough motivation for him to consider running for the Halifax County Board of County Commissioner. As a full-time farmer, that was a difficult decision.

But in 1983, he decided to pursue the office. On Election Day he visited various polls throughout the county, and personally witnessed ballot boxes that were breached with ballots left out on open display. He quickly realized that voting officials were literally removing ballots that supported his candidacy for commissioner.

Continued ~ Message from Dr. Keith Johnson

During this time period, the voters of Halifax County had not elected a black candidate to the Board of County Commissioners in that century, and they were clearly not going to start then. In 1980, census data revealed that Halifax County had a population of 55,076, of whom 26,811 (48.7%) were white and 26,599 (48.3%) were black. The voting age population in 1980 was 38,051, of whom 20,280 (53.3%) were white and 16,675 (44.1%) were black. In 1980, there were 24,634 registered voters, of whom 15,669 (63.6%) were white and 8,513 (34.6%) were black. The black voter registration rate was 50.8 percent, whereas the white voter registration rate was 77.3 percent.

In 1980 Halifax County had 12 townships, ranging in population from 517 to 20,340. Roanoke Rapids is the township with the largest population, and it is the only township with a white population majority of 79.4%. In 1980, 60 percent of the whites in Halifax County lived in Roanoke Rapids Township, while 85 percent of the county's blacks lived in the other eleven townships.

My dad did not win his first attempt for county commissioner due to the mishandling of ballots that supported him. In 1992, he decided to rerun and was elected and served as a Halifax County Commissioner for thirteen years, he was undefeated in subsequent local elections, and he only resigned after ill health prevailed. My father knew getting into the race for county commission it was going to be an uphill battle, but I strongly believe that he underestimated the pushback from white voters and poll attendants, who went as far as eliminating ballots to avoid changing the demographics of the commission.

During his first run in the 1980s, and after the discovery of the open ballots, my father along with 19 other black registered voters of Halifax County launched a law suit seeking a preliminary injunction concerning the 1984 elections for the County Board of Commissioners. He lead this initiative to ensure that the right to vote for Black citizens of Halifax County was not denied or abridged in violation of Section Two of the Voting Rights Act, and the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.

My father and his co-plaintiffs filed <u>suit</u> on June 6, 1983. The United States filed suit October 6, 1983, asserting a Section Two claim, and in addition, alleging that the County failed to obtain preclearance of two components of its election method in violation of Section Five of the Act.

My father and his co-plaintiffs won their case in the court of law! Their motion for a preliminary injunction was granted by court order on July 2, 1984.

This victory was the most significant election outcome the county has ever experienced. Not only did this outcome change and improve voting practices in Halifax County, North Carolina. This also greatly affected policies and practices throughout the state, and it has been used as case law throughout the nation.

Continued ~ Message from Dr. Keith Johnson

When my dad selected an attorney to represent him in this case, he chose a person who not long before received his law degree from North Carolina Central University, George Kenneth Butterfield Jr. Many of you may have become to know him as the Honorable G.K. Butterfield Jr., U.S. representative for North Carolina's First congressional district and as a member of the Congressional Black Caucus.

My dad went on to win a seat on the Halifax County Board of Commissions and became a policy maker who improved the lives of everyone who lived in that county, including Black Americans. He organized improvements from paving roads to installing water lines, to organizing trash and recycling pick up.

My father continued working for the citizens of Halifax County for many years when he and my mom realized the work of the commission was becoming too much for him due to health challenges. So, my mom, Mrs. Carolyn Johnson, decided to become a county commissioner. My mom continues to serve today honoring my father's legacy while also creating her own.

My father became my mom's biggest cheer leader in her role as commissioner while she continued to challenge the existing board to create positive change for the county. Today, the Halifax County Board of Commission is more diverse than at any other time in its history. My dad passed away in 2009. But he would be proud to see the fruits of his labor that continue as a result of work he started.

ETSU is proud to fully celebrate the contributions made by Black Americans. It is an institution that is striving to celebrate all peoples, while at the same time spotlighting many who help us become a university that is increasingly inclusive. As we continue to move forward in the New Year, it is important that the university continues to press onward with creating a campus environment that lives out the values of the university which include:

- 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.
- COMMITMENT to intellectual achievement is embraced.

Sincerely,

Dr. Keith Johnson

Listening and Panel Session Regarding Tyre Nichols

Last Friday, many of us watched the bodycamera footage and other police-camera video which showed five Black police officers from the Memphis Police Department severely beat 29-year-old Tyre Nichols, a Black man, who was an amateur photographer, avid skateboarder, employee at FedEx, father of a 4-year- boy, and the youngest of four siblings. During a traffic stop, Nichols was accosted at a Memphis intersection by the Memphis SCORPION special unit, which stands for Street Crimes Operation to Restore Peace in Our Neighborhoods. This encounter resulted in Nichols' death three days later in the hospital. The video showed officers kicking, punching, and hitting Nichols with a baton. The death of Tyre Nichols demonstrates an act of senselessness, recklessness, and total disregard for humanity.

On January 20, the five officers were relieved of duty and charged with second-degree murder, two counts of official misconduct, two counts of aggravated kidnapping, one count of official oppression, and one count of aggravated assault. After the release of the video footage, other officers and fire personnel were relieved of their duties pending an administrative investigation.

This type of police brutality continues to plague the fabric of America. This is too familiar to Black motorists who have found themselves begging for their lives at the hands of police officers who have been sworn to serve and protect them. Those in the recent past who have succumbed to violent police encounters include Daunte Wright, George Floyd, Stephon Clark, Philando Castile, Alton Sterling, Freddie Gray, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, and Michael Brown, along with a host of others.

I know many of you may still be trying to process the violent encounter, struggling to make some kind of sense of it. Members of the ETSU community should be aware of support services for those students, faculty, and staff who may have been impacted.

A listening session will be held on Thursday, February 2nd at 5:00 p.m. in the presentation room of the Mary V. Jordan Multicultural Center with a representative from the ETSU Counseling Center and others.

A panel session will be held on Monday, February 6th at 6:00-7:30 p.m. in the ETSU D.P. Culp Student Center Ballroom with representatives from the Johnson City Police Department, ETSU Campus Police and others.

The ETSU Counseling Center provides personal counseling for students, as well as outreach and referrals. Students may contact the ETSU Counseling Center at (423) 439-3333. The Counseling Center is open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday, and is encouraging appointments via Zoom. The Bucs Press 2 service is available 24/7 by dialing (423) 439-4841 and pressing 2 for a counselor.

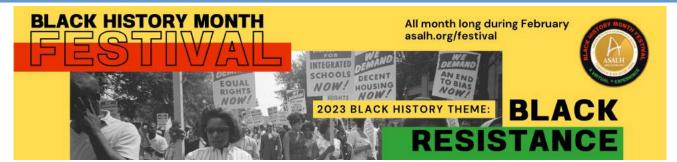
The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a resource for faculty and staff members who need counseling support and referral to other resources. Assistance is available 24/7 by calling (855) 437-3486.

The Dean of Students website is a resource for students and for student referrals. The site includes the most-used resources along with links to other support services. Student referrals may be made to the Dean of Students office by submitting a CARE Report or emailing deanof-students@etsu.edu. For those students living in impacted areas, we recommend reviewing class absence policies in your course syllabi. If your online connectivity or ability to continue your course is affected, please contact your professors. Student Life and Enrollment can help with emergency notifications to professors and discuss academic options. Call (423) 439-4210 or email studentlife@etsu.edu.

Thank you for your continued support regarding equity and inclusion at East Tennessee State University. Please continue to live and share our values as you interact with others on and off the campus of ETSU.

Dr. Keith V. Johnson Vice President for Equity and Inclusion Office of Equity and Inclusion

Black History Month



This year's festival will celebrate the theme of Black Resistance in the past present and future.

African Americans have resisted historic and ongoing oppression, in all forms, especially the racial terrorism of lynching, racial pogroms, and police killings since our arrival upon these shores. These efforts have been to advocate for a dignified self-determined life in a just democratic society in the United States and beyond the United States political jurisdiction.

The 1950s and 1970s in the United States was defined by actions such as sit-ins, boycotts, walk outs, strikes by Black people and white allies in the fight for justice against discrimination in all sectors of society from employment to education to housing. Black people have had to consistently push the United States to live up to its ideals of freedom, liberty, and justice for all.

Historically and today in the 21st century, Black people have worked the political angle to seek their rightful space in the country. Where race is concerned, legislative or judicial action to deal with controversial issues has often come late. The historic Executive Orders 8802 and 9346 were responses to A. Phillip Randolph and the all-Black March on Washington Movement's threat to lead a 50,000-strong Black worker's march into Washington, D.C.

Join the <u>ASALH</u> for a month/long festival of events that will address "Black Resistance" in The Arts, the Black Press and the Black Church.

As the-late Congressman John Lewis advised, "Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble."

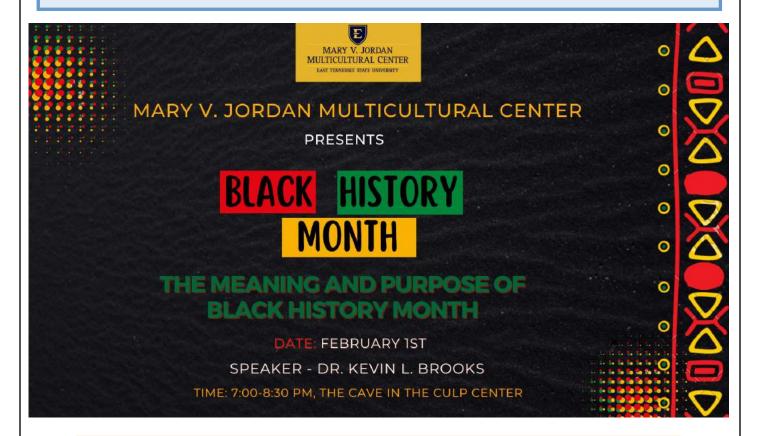
Association for the Study of African American Life and History

The vision of the ASALH is to be the premier Black Heritage learned society with a strong network of national and international branches and partners whose diverse and inclusive membership will continue the Woodson legacy.

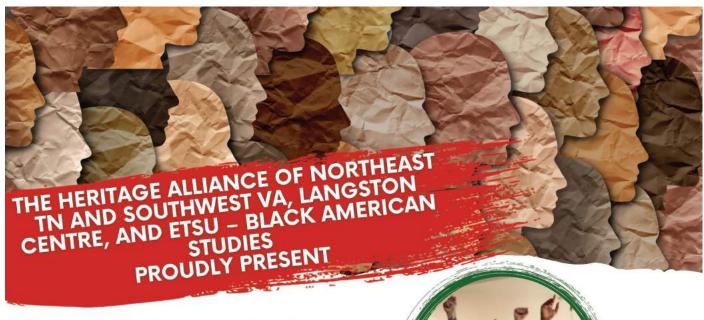
The mission of the ASALH is to promote, research, preserve, interpret and disseminate information about Black life, history and culture to the global community.

The ASALH is head-quartered in Washington, D.C. The Association operates as local, state, and international branches promoting greater knowledge of African American history through a program of education, research, and publishing.

Black History Month







BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2023



Friday, February 3, 2023 7 pm at the Langston Centre - 315 Elm Street, Johnson City, TN 37601 \$10 donation Teams (maximum of 8 people) must register to

Visit www.heritageall.org to register

Seekers Book Club

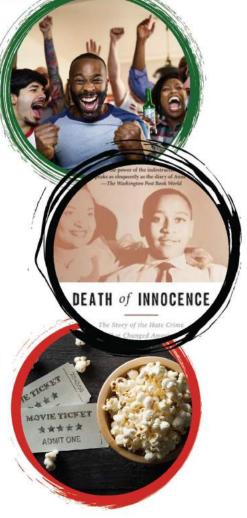
Thursday, February 16, 2023 6:30 pm at the Langston Centre - 315 Elm Street, Johnson City, TN 37601

Book of the Month: Death of Innocence: The Story of the Hate Crime that Changed America by Mamie Till-Mobley Call 423-434-5785 for more information.

Movie & Community Discussion

Thursday, February 23, 2023 6:30 pm at the Langston Centre - 315 Elm Street, Johnson City, TN 37601

Movie - American Experience: The Murder of Emmett Till Call 423-434-5785 for more information.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 423-434-5785 or 423-753-9580

Upcoming Events

		February 2023		
Thursday	Feb. 2nd	Why Appalachia Lags behind the Rest of the United States in the Interface of Jobs, Education, Healthcare, and Behavior Presenters: Dr. Randy Wykoff and Dr. Brian Noland	10:10am- 11:30am	Carter Hall
Tuesday	Feb. 7th	From Disability to Universal Design	10:00am- 12:00pm	Disability Services, 3rd floor Culp
Tuesday	Feb. 7th	Lunch and Learn Learning to Communicate Across Cultures Discussion Lead: Chasity Drew, M.A., PDSO/RO, International Student and Scholarship Services	12:00-1:00pm	Via Zoom
Thursday	Feb. 9th	Breaking the Cycle of Poverty by Strengthening the Health, Education, and Financial Stability of the Appalachian People Presenter: Leslie Salling, President & CEO of United Way of East Tennessee Highland	10:10am- 11:30am	Carter Hall
Friday	Feb. 10th	ETSU Affiliated Social Work Lunch and Learn Series on DEI Speaker: Dr. Deneen Evans, LCSW Topic: Cultural Humility	12:00-1:00pm	On-Line
Tuesday	Feb. 14th	Lunch and Learn DEI & Well-Being Discussion Lead: Dr. Kevin Brooks, Director Multicultural Center/Student Access and Success	12:00-1:00pm	Via Zoom
Thursday	Feb. 16th	Social Determinants of Appalachia Dr. Tom Kincer, Associate Dean for Rural Community Programs and Professor, Department of Family Medicine at Quillen College	10:10am- 11:30am	Carter Hall
Thursday	Feb. 16th	Respect for Students	2:30-4:30pm	Register Here
Tuesday	Feb. 21st	Don't Break Your Heart: Womens' Cardiac Care Presenter: Dr. Cerrone Foster	TBD	TBD
Tuesday	Feb. 28th	Lunch and Learn The Syllabus, an Impact or Barrier to Student Success Discussion Lead: Brelinda Johnson, Ed.D. Vice President, Student Success, Motlow State Community College	12:00-1:00pm	Via Zoom
		March 2023		
Tuesday	March 28th	Lunch and Learn <i>Divisive Concepts</i> Discussion Lead: Brian A. Lapps, General Counsel, Tennessee Board of Regents	12:00-1:00pm	Via Zoom
		April 2023		
Tuesday	April 4th	Lunch and Learn Universal Design for Learning in Higher Education Discussion Lead: Melody Blevins, Ed.D., Project Manager. Access ETSU	12:00-1:00pm	Via Zoom
Wednes.	April 12th	Lunch and Learn "That One Person": Best Practices for Mentoring Students from Historically Excluded Groups Discussion Lead: Jill Channing, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis	12:00-1:00pm	Via Zoom

eConvenings

East Tennessee Higher Education Regional Alliance

USC Race and Equity Center

This professional learning series is for full-time and part-time employees at Alliance member institutions. Each month, nationally renowned equity experts will offer a highly-engaging live session via Zoom on a different racial equity topic. Useful tools and practical strategies will be provided in every synchronous three-hour experience. Every campus can send up to 400 employees to each session – it could be the same 400 people, or a different set each month. While there is no cost, advance registration is required for each individual session.

Understanding and Addressing Implicit Bias

Thursday, January 26 | 1-3pm EST Register at www.uscrec.info/ETHERA 1

Engaging in Productive Conversations About Race and Racism

Tuesday, February 28 | 1-3pm EST Register at www.uscrec.info/ETHERA 2

Understanding the Effects of Racism on Students' Experiences and Outcomes

Thursday, March 30 | 1-3pm EST Register at www.uscrec.info/ETHERA 3

Confronting Explicit Acts of Racism and Racial Violence on Campus

Wednesday, April 19 | 1-3pm EST Register at www.uscrec.info/ETHERA 4

Strategically Recruiting Employees of Color

Monday, May 22 | 1-3pm EST Register at www.uscrec.info/ETHERA 5

Supporting and Retaining Employees of Color

Thursday, June 29 | 1-3pm EST Register at www.uscrec.info/ETHERA 6

Accountability and Incentives for Advancing Racial Equity

Wednesday, July 26 | 1-3pm EST Register at www.uscrec.info/ETHERA 7

Fostering and Sustaining Inclusive Classrooms for Students of Color

Thursday, August 24 | 1-3pm EST Register at <u>www.uscrec.info/ETHERA</u> 8

Meaningfully Integrating Racial Topics Across the Curriculum

Friday, September 29 | 1-3pm EST Register at <u>www.uscrec.info/ETHERA 9</u>

Engaging Students of Color in High-Impact Educational Practices and Experiences

Tuesday, October 24 | 1-3pm EST Register at <u>www.uscrec.info/ETHERA 10</u>

Using Disaggregated Data to Identify and Address Racial Inequities

Thursday, November 9 | 1-3pm EST Register at <u>www.uscrec.info/ETHERA 11</u>

Strategic Planning and Action for Racial Equity

Tuesday, December 5 | 1-3pm EST Register at www.uscrec.info/ETHERA 12

race.usc.edu

Direct all inquiries to Dr. Minh Tran (mctran@usc.edu)





In 1820, Elihu Embree wrote *The Emancipator*. Nancy was his enslaved woman. We know his story.

What about hers?



An orginal, award-winning play by Anne G'Fellers-Mason

Thursday, February 2nd at 7:30 pm

Bach Theatre inside the James C. & Mary B.

Martin Center for the Arts

Admission is free, but donations are encouraged. Call 423-753-9580 or contact Dr. Carter at carterda@mail.etsu.edu if you have questions.

This performance is presented by the Heritage Alliance, ETSU Black American Studies Program, and the ETSU Department of Theatre and Dance.



For tickets/more information:
Contact a Progress Together (Pro-To) Club member or
email us at progresstogetherclub@gmail.com

Dinner is included. A \$20 raffle and silent auction will also be held. Formal/Semi Formal Attire is recommended.

Founded in 1952, the Pro-To Club is Washington County TN's oldest African American civic group.

The 2nd Annual ProTo Club Scholarship Banquet, to be held Saturday, February 11, 2023, at 7:00pm at the Johnson City Country Club supports the Scholarship Fund for High School Seniors.

Email <u>progresstogetherclub@gmail.com</u> for tickets/information.

Dr. Lisa Dunkley, Coordinator for Equity and Inclusion, College of Clinical and Rehabilitative Health Sciences

Dr. Lisa Dunkley was recently appointed as the Coordinator for Equity and Inclusion in the College of Clinical and Rehabilitative Health Sciences. In this newly created position, Dr. Dunkley will support faculty, staff, and students from a rich diversity of backgrounds, including but not limited to diverse academic experiences, socioeconomic levels, cultures, abilities, sexual orientation, gender, races, and ethnicities. Reporting directly to the Dean, Dr. Dunkley will champion policies and actions that reaffirm the College's commitment to being a healthy and inclusive environment.

Dr. Dunkley is an Associate Professor in the Rehabilitative Health Sciences Program in the Department of Rehabilitative Sciences. With a doctoral degree in rehabilitative counseling from the University of Kentucky, Dr. Dunkley brings extensive clinical and research experience as a multiple award recipient for service and inclusion as a strong disability advocating for equity and inclusion of people with disability and chronic illness in all aspects of society. Her research interests are on transition age youth and offenders with disabilities. In addition, Dr. Dunkley is a champion for youth leadership and civic engagement. She values being a mentor for underrepresented youth both nationally and globally.

The establishment of this position with the College is part of the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan's Outreach and Engagement strategic priority. A more diverse, inclusive, and equitable work and learning environment is essential to achieving the College's goals of recruitment and retention of a diverse student body, faculty, and staff. Dr. Dunkley will work closely with the College DEIPAR Committee to create a workspace and learning culture that encourages and promotes diversity, equity, inclusion, and a sense of belonging among all member of the College.



"The good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge." ~Bertrand Russell~

Virtual Roundtable Event Unlocking Student Voice for Retention and Belonging

Unlocking Student Voice for Retention & Belonging Virtual | February, 13, 2023 | 12 PM - 2 PM EST

In an upcoming roundtable, Mentor Collective will share some of the best strategies for finding and implementing actionable student insights into college and university policy. The discussion will feature higher education administrators from around the country—who will join them to collaborate on how student engagement can guide institutional strategy and a deep understanding of the role it plays from practitioner to president.

<u>Unlocking Student Voice for Retention & Belonging (mentorcollective.org)</u>

Meet Diversity Champion, Dr. Lisa Dunkley

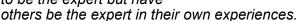
Dr. Dunkley is an Associate Professor in the Rehabilitative Health Sciences Program in the College of Rehabilitative Health Sciences, Department of Rehabilitative Sciences.

The purpose of the East Tennessee State University Office of Equity and Inclusion is to foster community of diversity at East Tennessee State University, be a resource for all stakeholders to become and expand upon diversity, equity, and inclusion skills and abilities. In addition, it is to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of East Tennessee State University and the community. The advisory council is a support to the office and to be a representation of the East Tennessee State University community as the voice of the shareholders.

Diversity is the visible and invisible traits that can be attributable to a person's individual characteristics. This may be based on an intersectionality of traits, character and identifiers (for example., ethnicity, gender, religion, sex, abilities, cultural background etc.). I encourage people to honor the uniqueness of

individuals by being an example, appreciating and learning more about individual preferences and honoring them. I participate in advocacy efforts in supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

I approach discussions about potentially difficult topics by being open and empathetic. Not pretending to be the expert but have





I contribute to diversity, equity, and inclusion in several ways as a faculty member by serving on committees to help with recruitment and retention of faculty, students and staff. I act as a mentor to minority students and faculty. I advocate for equity and inclusion where see fit.

~ Dr. Lisa Dunkley

Viewpoint Diversity Initiatives at ETSU

Diversity of people, ideas, experiences, and contributions is highly valued at ETSU and is embedded in the <u>mission and values</u> of the university. ETSU is committed to promoting a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive living, learning, and working environment for all faculty, staff, students, and visitors.

<u>Learn more</u> about the current programs, events, and resources that foster a community where people come first, are treated with dignity and respect and are encouraged to achieve their full potential.

Office of Equity and Inclusion 109 Burgin E. Dossett Hall P.O. Box 70705 Johnson City, TN 37614 P 423-439-4445 F 423-439-4543

Webpage: https://www.etsu.edu/equity/
Facebook: https://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.