



Office of Equity and Inclusion Newsletter

July 6, 2022



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

“Mental Health and Minorities”

Dear Friends,

July marks a time when families vacation and celebrate a myriad of national holidays. July Fourth or Independence Day for the United States is one of the largest recognized patriotic holidays of the year. But many other days in July are also celebrated on a smaller scale, including: World Chocolate Day, Embrace Your Geekness Day, Marine Corps Creation Day, National Parents Day, Nelson Mandela International Day, National Strawberry Sundae Day, National Sugar Cookie Day, and Tell the Truth Day.

July is most importantly National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month, a time to focus on the unique struggles that ethnic and racial minorities experience with mental illness. People of color, specifically Black people are more reluctant to seek mental health and substance-use treatment than white people. And these last years of the COVID-19 pandemic have made access to such services even further out of reach and inaccessible for minorities. This causes unnecessary suffering for families and entire communities that struggle to support a loved one who is sick.

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***“Make Your Mental Health
a Priority. You deserve it”***

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Continued ~ Message from Dr. Keith Johnson

And minority mental health struggles is a global problem. More than four percent of the world suffers from depression. That equates to more than 300 million people. This also suggests that one in four people will have a mental illness. And nearly half of the Global North receives no mental health treatment. And worse still that figure roughly doubles in the South. But given the magnitude of the mental health dilemma in the greater, global world, I will limit my discussion to a few select populations in the United States.

According to many data sources, African Americans have monumental struggles with mental and behavioral health. For example, in 2019, suicide was the second leading cause of death for African Americans, ages 15 to 24¹. In addition, in 2018, the death rate from suicide for African American men was four times greater than it was for African American women.

Poverty level also affects a person's mental health status. African Americans living below the poverty level, as compared to those living above, are twice as likely to report serious psychological distress.

The Asian American population has also experienced many struggles with mental and behavioral health. Similar to the African American population, suicide was the leading cause of death for Asian/Pacific Islanders, ages 15 to 24, in 2019. And in 2018, Asians were surveyed to be 60 percent less likely to have received mental health treatment as compared to whites. The overall suicide rate for Asians is less than half that of the non-Hispanic, white population.

The suicide rate among the Hispanic male population was four times that of Hispanic women, in 2018. However, the overall suicide rate for Hispanics is less than half that of the non-Hispanic white population. Unfortunately, in 2019, suicide was the second leading cause of death for Hispanics, ages 15 to 34.

In 2019, suicide attempts for Hispanic girls, grades 9-12, were 30 percent higher than they were for non-Hispanic white girls in the same age group. And in 2018, Hispanics were found to be 50 percent less likely to have accessed and received mental health treatment as compared to whites. And again poverty level impacts mental health and behavior for these people of color. Hispanics living below the poverty are more likely to report serious psychological distress than their white counterparts will.

Similar trends are also prevalent for American Indians, Alaska Natives, Pacific Islanders and Native Hawaiians. Mental health for minorities continues to plague many communities, and this dysfunction will have lasting impacts that are already affecting many aspects of this country such as health care, economics, politics, and expected human lifespan.

So, what can we do to better support our minority students, faculty or staff at ETSU who battle depression or other mental illnesses? Granted, most of us are not trained to provide professional or clinical advice. However, there are some things that we can do to help, such as knowing who or what support office to contact.

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Continued ~ Message from Dr. Keith Johnson

Here is a list of fundamental things we can all do to get us started:

- Educate ourselves about symptoms of and help for those with mental health problems that are not always easily seen.
- Create a classroom environment of social and emotional support and competency and build resilience.
- Establish and ensure a mental health stigma-free, positive, and safe campus that provides support and resources to everyone by:
 1. Teaching and reinforcing positive behaviors and decision-making.
 2. Encouraging everyone on campus to help others.
 3. Leading by prioritizing health and well-being and encouraging others to do the same.
 4. Routinely reaching out to a friend whose routine and functioning have inexplicably changed.

The [ETSU Counseling Center](#) is currently searching for a [diversity-focused, clinical counselor](#). They would be responsible for providing direct counseling and campus outreach services to students. This position emphasizes serving students of historically underrepresented and marginalized backgrounds –specifically those who identify as ethnic or racial minorities. Given the rich growth in the diversity of our student body, this position will be geared specifically toward increasing the quantity and quality of services offered to students who have encountered systemic barriers to mental health care. We are aligning our actions with our core values which include:

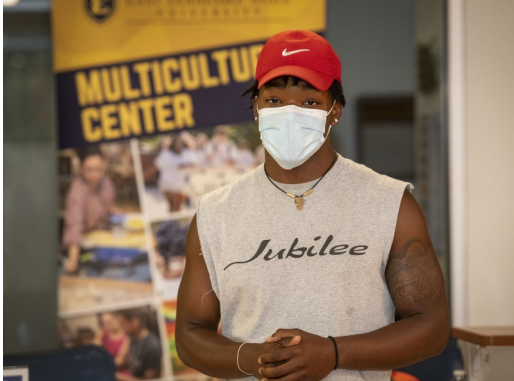
- **PEOPLE** come first, are treated with dignity and respect, and are encouraged to achieve their full potential.
- **RELATIONSHIPS** are built on honesty, integrity, and trust.
- **DIVERSITY** of people and thought is respected.
- **EXCELLENCE** is achieved through teamwork, leadership, creativity, 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

¹CDC. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Web Based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>



Juneteenth Celebration at ETSU



On Friday, June 17th ETSU hosted its Juneteenth celebration in the Mary V. Jordan Multicultural Center. The event highlighted black excellence by featuring ETSU faculty, students, and alumni who have each accomplished great things in their fields.

ETSU alumni Kasper Glasper and Brett Blue performed interpretive dances of songs that spoke to the African American experience. Current student Styles Davis performed an

original spoken word poem and Dr. Christel Young, who is an instructor in the ETSU Department of Computing and the co-president of the ETSU Black Faculty and Staff Association, shared some of the history of Juneteenth as well as the continuing importance of the day.

Juneteenth is a day for unity, being active, remembering the progress and thinking about how far we still have to go.

Meet Jeremy Marlor, New Big Man on Campus

"Friendly, loyal, determined, dependable, funny, entrepreneurial, sports guru, thoughtful, passionate, and ambassador" are just a few of the words used by friends and supporters to describe incoming Buccaneer Jeremy Marlor at his recent Person-Centered Planning meeting with Access ETSU this June.

This one-of-a-kind community leader and proud Science Hill High School alum is poised to make some big waves on campus this fall. "I was born ready," he said.

Jeremy will receive services through Access ETSU, which connects students with intellectual disabilities to opportunities and resources to pursue their career, academic, and life dreams. And it's clear Jeremy is a big dreamer.

"He thinks outside the box," said Jeremy's long-time friend and mentor Bart Lyon.

"There is no box," added Science Hill Assistant Principal Wes Smith.

Jeremy plans to apply his creative mind to classes and work experiences aligned with his deep interest in sports media, relations, and management. He is aiming to take courses in the departments of Marketing and Management as well as Sport, Exercise, Recreation, and Kinesiology. He's also exploring a variety of employment options with Campus Recreation and ETSU Athletics.

"It sounds like there's some fun courses related to athletics and social media," said Marlor.

Additionally, he hopes to take his talk show, the Jeremy Marlor Sports Show (which he co-hosts with Lyon), to the next level. "I want to cover more games, interview some players, and get more viewers," he said. "I want to make some new merch. I've already got cards; I want to make some bracelets."

Be sure to stay tuned for when the merch becomes available, but don't even think about negotiating with his innovative pricing. "It's one

card for \$2. Two cards for \$5. They increase in value," he said.

"I tried to do two separate transactions for two cards, but he said that wasn't possible," said Smith.

"I can't help it," said Marlor. "That's what we gotta do, so that's what we gotta do."

Marlor said he's a little bit nervous about making the transition from his beloved Science Hill community to ETSU. "It's a big step," he said. "I've never been to college before."

However, with his knack for connecting with people, he will undoubtedly be the big man on campus in no time.

"Jeremy doesn't know a lot of strangers," said Smith. "And when he meets somebody, he's not going to forget them. He's going to remember their name and anything they tell him."

"I'm excited to get to hang with the legendary Will Gott and all my other classmates over there," said Marlor. "I'll be hanging with the football boys most definitely. I connect with the athletes because of their hard work and dedication off and on the field. I relate to that."

Jeremy's journey to ETSU has definitely taken a lot of hard work and dedication. He's faced far more than his fair share of challenges and loss in life, but he still stays positive.

"I was born with Hydrocephalus and I've had 8 brain surgeries," he said. "My disability holds me back in some ways, but it also pushes me forward. It has stopped me from playing basketball as much as I want to, but I have found other sports and lots of other things I can do."



~continued on page 6 ~

Continued ~ Meet Jeremy Marlor

Jeremy said he wishes we had higher expectations for people with disabilities in our communities and that having a disability shouldn't prevent anybody from going to college and pursuing their dreams.

"It's all about just encouraging people to do what they can do," he said.

Beyond battling health-related concerns and debunking societal misperceptions around disability, Jeremy has faced a series of family tragedies in recent years. "I've lost both parents and I've lost other relatives," said Marlor. "That's been hard. I just want people to know they should love people while they're here on this Earth and treat them like they want to be treated."

Now living independently with a roommate, Jeremy has called on folks like his aunt, Lyon, Smith, and "the admin team at Science Hill" to step up when he needs support. It's a care network he worked hard to build.

"He was the mayor of Science Hill for a reason," said Smith. "He gets along with everyone he meets. He's got a great attitude. He's engaged, he smiles, he's friendly. When he wasn't here, we knew it. He will be remembered here by the adults as someone who embodies what we want from our kids. Classmates who went to school with him will know that he was very loyal and dedicated to all things Science Hill, including all of our students. I'm thankful to have gotten to spend the time I have had with him. I look forward to seeing him continue to grow at ETSU."

Jeremy will always remain faithful to Science Hill. "Once a Topper, always a Topper," he said. "Topper for life, baby."

However, as he looks to his future and pursues his passion for athletics at the college level, he hopes to extend his legacy as a community builder and relationship builder. "I want to have that same impact at ETSU. And even expand on that. I want to get in there with athletics and start working with them and doing all sorts of things."

As he prepares for orientation and Preview and the fall semester, Jeremy has one message for his future friends at ETSU: "Be loyal, trustworthy, and dependable. And be thankful and grateful for what you get."



To learn more about Jeremy's journey, be sure to check out the recent written and video feature on [WCYB's "The Good Stuff."](#)

Any ETSU undergraduate or graduate students interested in accessibility, inclusivity, equity, and disability justice are encouraged to [apply be BucMate peer mentors with Access ETSU](#). As Access ETSU expands from 12 to 22 students this fall, they are actively looking to expand their BucMate network to support Jeremy and other students with intellectual disabilities.

For more information, please visit www.etsu.edu/coe/access/ or contact accessetsu@etsu.edu.

50th Anniversary of Title IX

“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

**~~Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
Implementing Regulations at 20 U.S.C. § 1681 & 34 C.F.R. Part 106**

Title IX is a federal civil rights law that prohibits all sex or gender discrimination on educational campuses that receive federal financial assistance. Title IX protects individuals of all genders and sexual orientations and applies to students, faculty, staff, independent contractors, campus visitors, and other participants in University educational programs and activities. All forms of sexual or gender-based harassment, including but not limited to dating and domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault are violations of Title IX.

Any questions, concerns, reports, or complaints related to any form of unwelcome sexual conduct should be directed to ETSU's [Title IX Coordinator](#). The Title IX Coordinator is available to provide guidance to anyone in the ETSU community regarding your rights and responsibilities under Title IX and related University Policies and Procedures. You may submit a report for yourself or on behalf of someone else. The Title IX Coordinator will not initiate an investigation without first discussing all options with the person who has been subjected to unwelcome sexual conduct.

For more information, please visit University Compliance's [Title IX](#) webpage.



The East Tennessee State University Department of Intercollegiate Athletics will celebrate the 50th anniversary of Title IX (passed by Congress and signed into law on June 23, 1972) with several initiative throughout the year such as:

- Designate Title IX games at selected home events.
- Honor former ETSU student-athletes, coaches and administrators connected with Title IX at selected sporting events.
- The creation of an ETSU Title IX logo that will be used on shirts, pins and branded materials posted at the athletic facilities.
- A social media campaign on the ETSU Athletics Instagram account that highlights former student-athletes, coaches and administrators who were pioneers within ETSU Athletics.
- Share public announcements at home Buccaneer sporting events recognizing and celebrating the anniversary of Title IX.
- Giveaways of the limited-edition ETSU Title IX shirts.
- Utilize the “Buc Minute” segments on our flagship station WXSM-AM 640 for special messages on Title IX throughout the season.
- Provide Title IX facts and messages throughout ETSU’s home games broadcasted on ESPN+.
- Share information inside ETSU’s game day programs and on [ETSUBucs.com](#).

[Read full press release here](#)

"Each of us has a personal responsibility to advocate and work together to build a more inclusive community, but many wonder how to get started"
 ~ **Dr. Keith V. Johnson, Vice President for Equity and Inclusion**

[Watch](#) **4th Annual Equity and Inclusion Conference Trailer**



**EAST TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY**



Creating a Culture of Belonging:
 Building Capacity, Partnerships, and
 Opportunities for Progress

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

September 27-29, 2022

Hybrid Conference

[**etsu.edu/equity**](https://etsu.edu/equity)

Upcoming Events

July 2022

Tuesday	July 12th	Lunch and Learn Series Impact of COVID-19 Discussion Lead: Georgita Washington, PhD, RN, MSN, NPJ-BC, MACM, Retired Faculty	12:00-1:00pm	Via Zoom
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August 2022

Tuesday	August 9th	Lunch and Learn Series Racial Battle Fatigue in Black Male Students Discussion Lead: Sean Hembrick, M.Ed., MFA, Ph.D. Student, Higher Education, Penn State	12:00-1:00pm	Via Zoom
Tuesday	August 30th	Lunch and Learn Series Windows and Mirrors: How Do You See Me? Discussion Lead: Michelle Treece, Adjunct Faculty & Dr. Stacy Cummings Onks, Dir. Of Advisement Ctr	12:00-1:00pm	Via Zoom

September 2022

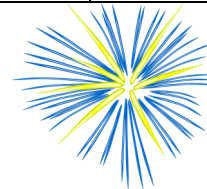
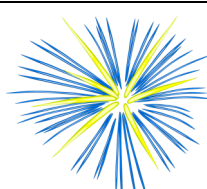
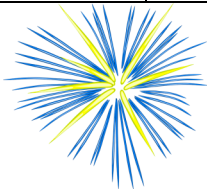
Tuesday	September 6th	Lunch and Learn Series Mental Health, Counseling, Trauma and Well-being Discussion Lead: Kate Emmerich, LCSW, Mental Health Counselor, Quillen College of Medicine	12:00-1:00pm	Via Zoom
Friday	September 9th	Office of Equity and Inclusion Open House	11:30am-1:30pm	109 Burgin Dossett Hall
Tuesday	September 13th	Lunch and Learn Series Neurodiversity Discussion Lead: Audry Beach, Clinical Instructor, Dept. of Counseling and Human Services	12:00-1:00pm	Via Zoom
Tuesday-Wednes.	September 27th-28th	4th Annual Equity and Inclusion Conference <i>Creating a Culture of Belonging: Building Capacity, Partnerships, and Opportunities</i>	8:00am-4:30pm	Hybrid Event
Thursday	September 29th	4th Annual Equity and Inclusion Conference <i>Student Track Day</i>	9:30am-5:15pm	Hybrid Event

October 2022

Tuesday	October 4th	Lunch and Learn Series Multiraciality Discussion Lead: Dr. Nicholas Wright, Director of Student Accessibility Services, St. Cloud State Uni.	12:00-1:00pm	Via Zoom
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November 2022

Wednes-day	November 9th	Lunch and Learn Series Health Equity in the Curriculum Discussion Lead: Dr. Patricia Amadio, Course Dir., QCOM and Dr. Brian Cross Asst Vice-Provost IPERC	12:00-1:00pm	Via Zoom
Tuesday	November 15th	Lunch and Learn Series Making Sense of American Fragmentation: Race, Class, and Politics in the early 2022 Discussion Lead: Dr. Daryl Carter, Assoc. Dean Equity & Inclusion, College of Arts & Sciences, Dir. of Black Studies Program, and Professor of History	12:00-1:00pm	Via Zoom



Equity and Inclusion Diversity Champion Spotlight

Meet Audrey Besch, M.S, Clinical Instructor, Trauma and Resilience Minor Coordinator, Human Services in the Department of Counseling and Human Services. Audrey is currently interning in the Office of Equity and Inclusion as she pursues her doctoral degree in educational leadership.

I feel the purpose of the Office of Equity and Inclusion at East Tennessee State University is to maintain equitable standards across university principles, policies, and practices as well as enhance the university's mission. The role of the Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council should be to advise the Office of Equity and Inclusion leadership on diversity, equity, and inclusion matters.

Diversity is understanding that every individual has their own experiences and differences based on race, ethnicity, gender, beliefs, abilities, etc. I encourage people by modeling a sense of curiosity about other peoples experiences.

My approach to dealing with potentially difficult topics is to (1) consider the potential

perspectives of others; (2) use mindful listening/ask curiosity questions;

(3) discuss solutions if applicable; (4) take care of myself; and (5) keep lines of communication

open. For example, when talking about challenging topics with students, I make it clear that holding space for curiosity and staying out of judgment is the most important thing. I encourage them to listen and reassess their positions on a given topic.

I will contribute by actively incorporating diversity, equity and inclusion principles into my syllabi, course structure, and practice as a professional. I will also be an active participant in initiatives such as the annual conference and lunch and learns.



~ Audrey Besch

Mindful listening is one of the highest compliments we can pay to others because it conveys the relationship-level meaning that they matter to us.

~Julia Wood, Professor and Author ~

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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.