



Office of Equity and Inclusion Newsletter

June 1, 2022



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

“Black Voices Are In the Spotlight”

Dear Friends,

This section of the Appalachian Highlands has a rich and inclusive history. Underrepresented people greatly shaped this area’s history and though displaced, they continue to impact this region. Unfortunately, their stories are not always easy to locate.

In response to this obscurity The Barter Theater in Abingdon, Virginia recently produced, monologues that originated from stories that were told to them by Black individuals in the community. Those People of Color collaborated with Barter to develop the show, and the

results were authentic and genuine. And the project continues. Barter hopes to expand their collection so future Black playwrights can use it as inspiration for new works.

We travel to museums, historical sites around the country to learn about our culture and contributions, which often have not been preserved very well. And frequently what we seek is hidden in plain view, waiting to be unearthed and revealed through stories. Recently, in rural Virginia, a Black family purchased a large home just down the street from where they

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*“You are young, gifted, and Black.
We must begin to tell our young.
There’s a world waiting for you.
Yours is the quest that’s just begun”*

~ James Weldon Johnson ~

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grew up. The family was large and they loved getting together. So, they purchased the structure to host large family gatherings. ([Click here to read the full story](#)).

The buyers were shocked to discover that they had purchased the home of a former plantation owner who enslaved people. The property included well preserved living quarters formally occupied by slaves. They discovered that several of their ancestors were enslaved on that very plantation. A cemetery was also discovered on the property, where it is suspected that slaves were buried along with relatives of the family who purchased the property. Sometimes, our history is right under our feet.

In the year 1820 in Jonesborough, Tennessee the first national newspaper devoted solely to the abolition of slavery was established. *The Emancipator* publisher was Mr. Elihu Embree. His motivation was to advocate for the abolition of slavery and to serve as a repository of important information to further promote the freedom of slaves.

Embree owned slaves. He, of course, eventually freed them and he encouraged others to do the same. His newspaper brought additional attention and exposure to the terrible conditions of slavery and inhumanity of slave owners. The publication also advocated for emancipation and colonization for enslaved people.

The newspaper circulated across the south and made its way to Philadelphia and finally Boston. Southern states objected to the distribution of *The Emancipator*. It was perceived

as subversive. And sadly, the paper died with its publisher on October 31, 1820.

Folks in Boston, Massachusetts are working to revive *The Emancipator* and resurrect this important piece of history online as a vehicle to better address race in the twenty first century. Some new laws center on "protection" from allegedly divisive concepts in the common classroom such as Critical Race Theory.

These laws aim to alter and block the way history and culture are taught. These same laws have incited fear among educators. And this tension in the classroom is not new. A bill passed in the 1800s attempted to prevent abolitionist views. In March 1836, the Tennessee General Assembly passed law (Article VII, Section 2682 of Tennessee Code):

No person shall, in this State, write, print, paint, draw, engrave or aid or abet in writing, printing, painting, drawing or engraving on paper, parchment, linen, metal, or other substance with a view to its circulation, any paper, essay, verses, pamphlet, book, painting, drawing or engraving, calculated to excite discontent, insurrection or rebellion amongst the slaves or free persons of color.

I strongly believe that terms such as Critical Race Theory are not well understood, but uniformed reactions to CRT is being used to create new laws. At least eight states have passed laws seeking to ban schools from critically examining the full, truthful history of racism, sexism and genderism in the United States.

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Continued ~ Message from Dr. Keith Johnson

However, your academic freedom and freedom of speech remain protected. And anti-discrimination training is not only allowed but guarded by the final section of the CRT Law, also known as section seven. In plain speech, our First Amendment Rights protect us from any threat of losing accreditation or any other essential freedoms by practicing and teaching equity and inclusion related concepts including anti-racism.

ETSU Faculty and Staff and Students can be confident that they can continue their work here without the burden of worrying about First Amendment rights including academic freedom. And rest assured that this university supports you and the law protects you from personal liability in any lawsuit challenging the performance of duties. You are safe and welcome here.

As we strive to meet the challenges before us, including leaning about our collective history in a safe and structured environment, please note that Equity and Inclusion are vital to the success of the educational experience. As an institution, East Tennessee State University continues to embrace our core values which include the following:

- **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

Office of Equity and Inclusion's Quarterly Magazine



COMMUNITY VOICES

Helping People Hear Each Other...
One Story at a Time

[Click here](#) to read Issue One.

Remembering Rev. Vincent Dial



(WJHL, May 24, 2022) - The senior pastor at Bethel Christian Church and chaplain for the East Tennessee State University football team died May 23rd following a battle with pancreatic cancer. His legacy, however, continues in the lives of those he impacted from an early age.

Dial graduated from Carson-Newman College in 1974 and signed with the Kansas City Chiefs of the National Football League but suffered a career-ending leg injury the same year. He took a job with the Johnson City schools, where he served for years as a band teacher at Liberty Bell Middle School before becoming North Side Elementary's principal in 2001.

Dial had been preaching for about 20 years and retired from being a full-time educator when his former Carson-Newman teammate Carl Torbush took the reins as the new head coach of the ETSU football program.

It was Torbush who suggested the man he'd known for decades become the team chaplain, ETSU Director of Athletics Scott Carter said. "Many decades in the making, great respect for one another both centered in their faith and their love for God, and that's how the genesis of Reverend Dial and our football program began was with Coach Torbush's invitation," Carter said. "From that very first day until yesterday, he never missed a beat".

In the seven years he served as chaplain, Dial developed relationships with people throughout the athletic department, Carter said. And while he knew of Dial's musical talent and athletic background, Carter said he'll remember Dial most for his faith.

"The way he carried himself every day as just a steadfast presence for young people, a counselor, someone they could talk to they could pray with that was always there and never wavered in their support," Carter said.

He said Dial was able to relate to players as a former student athlete and do so whether they were having great success or whether they were struggling either on or off the field. Carter called him "this great calming force that just brought love to every occasion.

"I know what my relationship was, and it was special. And I would say special would be a great description everybody would say but it was unique to every person he came in contact with."

[Click here to read the full wjhl.com story.](#)

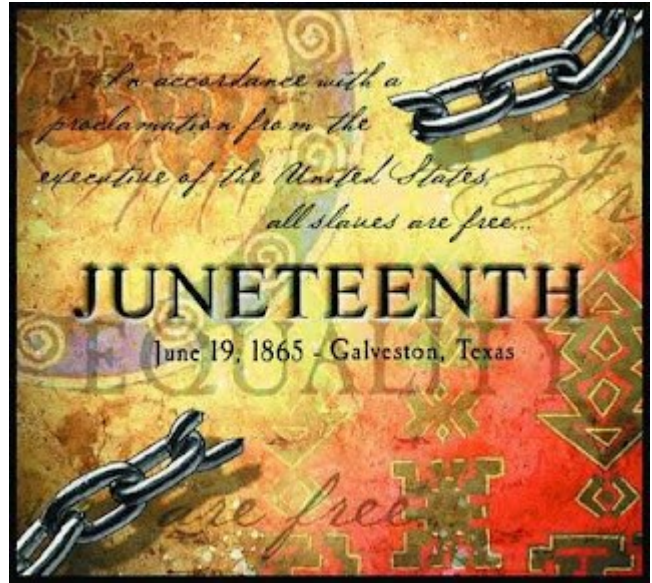
Dial's hard work and dedication have given him honorable status in the Johnson City area. Those who know him say he is the perfect representation of following one's personal journey, a journey that is destined by a higher power.

[Click here to read April 2019 feature in the East Tennessean.](#)

Juneteenth

Juneteenth is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States.

Today Juneteenth commemorates African American freedom and emphasizes education and achievement. It is a day, a week, and in some areas a month marked with celebrations, guest speakers, picnics and family gatherings. It is a time for reflection and rejoicing. It is a time for assessment, self-improvement and for planning the future. Its growing popularity signifies a level of maturity and dignity in America long over due. In cities across the country, people of all races, nationalities and religions are joining hands to truthfully acknowledge a period in our history that shaped and continues to influence our society today. Sensitized to the conditions and experiences of others, only then can we make significant and lasting improvements in our society. Learn more at Juneteenth.com.



Tom Feelings (1933-2003)

Artist, Cartoonist, Children's Book Illustrator, Author, Teacher, and Activist

Tom Feelings spent a lifetime as a painter, sculptor, and book illustrator underscoring the message, "black is beautiful". From the dawn of the U.S. civil rights era, when he came of age as an artist, Feelings was passionately committed to the mission of encouraging black children to understand their own spiritual and physical beauty. Feelings remained faithful to that mission for more than 40 years.

[Tom Feelings Biography - Drawing the Story of a Neighborhood, A Mission Born, African is Beautiful, New Worlds to Conquer - JRank Articles](#)



"I am a storyteller, in picture form, who tries to reflect and interpret the lives and experiences of the people who gave me life. When asked who I am, I say that I am an African who was born in America. The answer connects me spiritually with the past and the present. I, therefore, bring to my art a quality that is rooted in the culture of Africa and is expanded by the experiences of being Black in America."

~ Tom Feelings ~

Hear Tom's voice and listen to his experiences in a documentary, [Head and Heart My Father, Tom Feelings](#) by Zamani Feelings

Juneteenth Presentation and Celebration



The Mary V. Jordan Multicultural Center will be celebrating Juneteenth on Friday, June 17 at 11:30 am in the Jordan Center.

Kiera Moore-Majeed founder of the 1st Juneteenth in Kingsport and the executive Director of the Redemptive Life Foundation will present the history and purpose of Juneteenth. There will be a dance performance with Kasper Glasper who is a nationally known dancer and instructor with 20 years of dance training and experience. His years of training include popping, locking, Urban choreography, hip-hop, ballet and contemporary and joining him in the dance performance will be Brett Blue of Universally Complicated Freestylers.

For more information, please contact the Mary V. Jordan Multicultural Center at 423-439-5872 or ETSUMC@ETSU.EDU.

“No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.” — **Nelson Mandela**

Neurodiversity & Gender: A Beautiful Mosaic of Diversity ~ by Audrey Besch, Contributing Writer ~

The term neurodiversity was first used to describe those who had an autism and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, but it has since expanded to become a more inclusive term to describe people who differ in thinking, learning, and behavioral patterns. Rather than the use of diagnostic labels, neurodiversity steers away from pathologizing differences and presumes that a person does not need to be “fixed” on the basis of their differences (National LGBT Health Education Center, 2020). Labels that once created a sense of disconnection have been reclaimed by the communities they describe. Like neurodiversity, language around sexuality and gender has also shifted with the reclaiming of formerly derogatory words such as queer. The term queer is an umbrella term used to encapsulate the rejection of traditional categories of gender and sexuality. One thing that the gender diverse and neurodiverse community have in common is the rejection of dominant societal norms.

The intersectionality of gender diversity and neurodiversity has become increasingly highlighted in research both conceptually and clinically in recent years. While there is some disagreement, researchers agree that the relationship between neurodiversity and gender diversity is complex (Ehrensaft, 2018; Schalkwyk, 2018; & Strang et al., 2019). Around 15% of autistic adults report a gender identity other than cisgender (a person whose gender identity corresponds to their sex assigned at birth) and out of 859 transgender youth, 22.5% reported having autism (Strang, et al., 2019). There are limitations to the

current research on the intersectionality as it either excludes autistic voices or only focuses on an autistic diagnosis. If researchers were to incorporate the more inclusive definition of neurodiversity, we may see a more salient number of individuals reporting gender as fluid and intersectional (Strang, et al., 2019 & Ehrensaft, 2018).

Ultimately, the reasons for these intersectionalities are not well understood and we are only beginning to conceptualize the interplay between these diversities. One possible explanation is that neurodiverse folks, particularly autistic individuals, are not hindered by social information in the formulation of their gender identities. The bundle of neurons that shape the neurodiverse experience along with the experience of gender outside of the norm create a cohesive mosaic of neurodiverse/gender diverse individuality (Ehrensaft, 2018). What we do know is gender is an important factor in understanding neurodiversity and folks who are neurodiverse may place a particular importance on gender narratives. More work needs to be done to conceptualize the complexity of experiences and gender identities of those who are neurodiverse, but we can all start with acknowledging the complex gender narratives held by neurodiverse folks.

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Continued ~ Neurodiversity & Gender

Gender diversity is not a symptom of neurodiversity, but rather a complex interplay that may not be as common with neurotypical individuals. While neurodiverse folks are less susceptible to societal pressures and gender norms, others still report fears of coming out as transgender due to perceived discrimination (National LGBT Health Education Center, 2020). This article serves as a call to action for more inclusive spaces for gender identity exploration.

References

Ehrensaft, D. (2018). Double helix rainbow kids. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 48(12), 4079. <http://dx.doi.org/iris.etsu.edu/10.1007/s10803-018-3716-5>

National LGBT Health Education Center (2020). *Neurodiversity & gender-diverse youth: An affirming approach to care*. <https://www.lgbtqiahealtheducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Neurodiversity-and-Gender-Diverse-Youth-An-Affirming-Approach-to-Care-2020.pdf>

Schalkwyk, G. I. (2018). At the intersectional of neurodiversity and gender diversity. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 48, 3973. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-018-3735-2>

Strang, J. F., Caplan, R., Anthony, L. G., Graham, E. K., Klomp, S. E., Griffin, A. D., Harris, M. C., & van der Miesen, A. I. R. (2019). Community-based participatory design for research that impacts the lives of transgender and/or gender-diverse autistic and/or neurodiverse people. *Clinical Practice in Pediatric Psychology*, 7(4), 396-404. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/cpp0000310>

Pride Month

Join the Office of Equity and Inclusion [via zoom](#) at noon on Tuesday, June 14th for an hour of discussion and learning as we present:

Building and Supporting LGBTQIA+ Pride and Resilience

The discuss will be lead by **Mickey White, Ph. D., NCC, BC-TMH, Assistant Professor Counseling Program**.



Dr. Mickey White, NCC, BC-TMH (he/him), is an Assistant Professor of Counseling at East Tennessee State University. His research agenda includes intersectionality and gender Identity among trans individuals; the process of identity disclosure for LGBTQIA+ professionals; liberatory pedagogical approaches in counselor education; antiracist identity development; and multiculturalism and social justice in counseling. He is a past emerging leader for both the Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision and the Society for Sexual, Affectual, Intersex, and Gender Expansive Identities. He is a member of the American Counseling Association's Gender Equity Task Force and is the secretary-elect for SAIGE. His personal and professional commitments to equity and inclusion stem from his own intersectional identities and on behalf of his past, present, and future clients, students, and supervisees.

"The Annual Equity and Inclusion Conference provides us all with a space to reflect and move to action in our work around diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice."

*~ Dr. Adrianna Guram, Associate Director of Housing & Residence Life and
4th Annual Equity and Inclusion Co-Chair ~*

"The 2022 Equity and Inclusion conference has set as its primary objective to create opportunities to dialogue and learn together in order to impact our communities. Becoming strong allies and activists is the focus of the conference offerings."

*~Dr. Stacy Cummings Onks, Director of Advisement Center and
4th Annual Equity and Inclusion Co-Chair ~*



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

Upcoming Events

June 2022

Tuesday	June 14th	Lunch and Learn Series <i>Building and Supporting LGBTQIA+ Pride and Resilience</i> Discussion Lead: Mickey White, Ph. D., NCC, BC-TMH, Assistant Professor Counseling Program	12:00-1:00pm	Via Zoom
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July 2022

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

Tuesday	August 2nd	Lunch and Learn Series <i>It's the Conversation for Me: A Conversation that Feeds the Soul</i> Discussion Leads: Dylan Fields, Jaylen Grimes and Jay Guillory	12:00-1:00pm	Via Zoom
Tuesday	August 9th	Lunch and Learn Series <i>Racial Battle Fatigue in Black Male Students</i> 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 <i>TBA</i> Discussion Lead: Michelle Treece	12:00-1:00pm	Via Zoom

September 2022

Tuesday	September 6th	Lunch and Learn Series <i>Mental Health, Counseling, Trauma and Well-being</i> Discussion Lead: Kate Emmerich, LCSW, Mental Health Counselor, Quillen College of Medicine	12:00-1:00pm	Via Zoom
Tuesday	September 13th	Lunch and Learn Series <i>Neurodiversity</i> 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 <i>Multiracality</i> 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

Wednesday	November 9th	Lunch and Learn Series <i>Health Equity in the Curriculum</i> 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 <i>TBA</i> Discussion Lead: Dr. Daryl Carter, Assoc. Dean Equity & Inclusion, College of Arts & Sciences	12:00-1:00pm	Via Zoom

Equity and Inclusion Diversity Champion Spotlight

Meet Gladstone Samuel Gunn II, graduate student (Social Work Master's Program) who is the newest member of the Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council.

I feel the purpose of the Office of Equity and Inclusion at ETSU is to grow awareness across campus regarding the issues of equity and inclusion. I believe the role of the Advisory Council should be to share ideas and bring differing perspectives on how to build that awareness.

My definition of diversity is the acknowledgement of the uniqueness that each individual possess, from their perspective. As the resident director at Davis Apartment when talking with my resident advisor staff at the start of the semester about interacting with students that have diverse identities, I encouraged them to take the time to be truly curious about the uniqueness and make it a learning moment.

My approach to dealing with discussions about potentially difficult topics is to first acknowledge that I am not an expert on the topic regardless of what it may be, and recognize there is always something to be learned even if I lived experiences that allow for a deeper perspective. Secondly, be aware that others have different opinions that deserve the same respect that I expect of mine. Lastly, a safe and constructive environment must be established for a productive discussion to take place.

I hope that my contribution to ETSU's efforts to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion in a meaningful way will be a different perspective from a graduate student and GA in housing. I hope that my position as a resident director can serve as a collection point for other perspectives from our various students living on campus that can be shared where their voices may not always reach. ~ Gladstone Gunn



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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.