



Office of Equity and Inclusion Newsletter

June 1, 2021



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

"We Are Human Only Through the Humanity of Others"

Gender identity and sexual orientation is an integral part of who we are, and does not give others the right to abuse and discriminate against us. Yet many all over the world are confronted with inequality, violence, and even death for this very reason. ALL people have human rights regardless of their identity or sexual preferences.

Within the last year, a national study published in Science Advances, a multidisciplinary journal, has shown that people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, or gender non-confirming are nearly four times as likely to be victims of violent crimes than others outside those communities. The data further revealed that members of these communities experienced a rate of 71.1 violent victimizations per 1,000 persons a year, compared to 19.2 per 1,000 a year among those outside of these communities. Many may find this surprising, while others, not so much. Unfortunately, these crimes have been on the uptick since 2013, when the FBI began recording this data.

Alarming, the Human Rights Campaign documented the murder of at least 30 transgender or non-gender conforming people in 2020. The majority were Black and Latina transgender women. In order for our nation to advance, our country to prosper, our state to grow, our city

~ continued on page 2 ~



"Amazing how eye and skin color
come in many shades yet many think
sexuality is just gay or straight."
~ Dr. DaShanne Stokes (he/him/his) ~

Inside this issue

Message from Dr. Johnson.....	1-2
Message from Dr. Novotny.....	3
SAGA and ASPECTS.....	3
SAFE Zone Program.....	4
Overview of Pride Month.....	4
Faculty/Staff LGBTQ Assoc.....	5
LGBTQ+ Research at ETSU.....	5-7
Upcoming Events.....	8-9
Diversity Champion Spotlight.....	10

Continued ~ Message from Dr. Keith Johnson

to be inviting, and our university to live out its definition of equity and inclusion, everyone must make the effort to co-exist. In other words, we need each other to exist since one's existence is woven in with the existence of others.

Ubuntu is a very proud South African philosophy rooted in the notion that one's success is directly based on the success of one's community. South Africa is a country that historically experienced massive trauma. The political system of institutionalized racism, identified as apartheid has reaped havoc on the majority of the population. Yet, in spite of the painful and oppressive system, so many of those affected by it rose up and remained tenacious and undivided. This concept is not new. It can be traced back to the mid-1800s.

Nelson Mandela, South Africa's first democratically elected president, summarized many interpretations of Ubuntu to include "the profound sense that we are human only through the humanity of others; that if we are to accomplish anything in this world, it will in equal measure be due to the work and achievements of others." With his leadership, supported by the many teachings of Desmond Mpilo Tutu, a South African Anglican cleric and theologian, an entire country was transformed based on believing and living the philosophy of Ubuntu. The notion was, instead of emphasizing the differences between people within South Africa, Tutu was famous for celebrating them. "We are different so that we can know our need of one another, for no one is ultimately self-sufficient," Tutu wrote in *No Future Without Forgiveness* (1999). "The completely self-sufficient person would be sub-human."

Doc Rivers, former head basketball coach of the Boston Celtics, contributed his 2008 NBA championship season to the embracing of the philosophy of Ubuntu. Under Rivers' leadership, this concept unified the Celtics. He states, "I can't be all I can be, unless you are all you can be. I can never be threatened by

you because you're good, because the better you are, the better I am." To get his team onboard with the philosophy, he recruited rookie players as his messengers, empowering them to spread the message throughout the organization. Slowly but surely, his team began embracing and living Ubuntu. It became the rallying cry for that season, leading to a national championship.

I view ETSU as a unique team of players, including faculty, staff, and students from all lifestyles, harnessing talent and resources from all over the world. If we are to become a winning team, which I know we can be, we must value everyone, regardless of how much, how little or even who they are. We are an institution growing to live out and demonstrate the values and goals of equity and inclusion, which included, but not limited to people and thought.

As a university, our mission and values recognize that:

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.

Happy Pride Month!

A Message from Dr. Bethany Novotny, Director of the Dr. Patricia Robertson Pride Center

There are few greater joys in life than to live authentically, feel comfortable in one's own skin, and to be your true self without fear of harm or judgment. Unfortunately, for many individuals who identify as LGBTQ+, that joy is threatened on a daily basis. Throughout Pride Month, we recognize the progress that has been made by the LGBTQ+ community and their allies since the Stonewall Riots in 1969, as well as the ongoing fight for visibility, equity, and inclusion.

Last year, ETSU took a significant step in recognizing and supporting the LGBTQ+ community by establishing the Dr. Patricia Robertson Pride Center. The center celebrated its official (virtual) grand opening in the Fall of 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the 2020-2021 academic year, the Robertson Pride Center offered numerous educational presentations for the campus community in addition to providing social support and networking opportunities for students at the drop-in lounge and supporting the creation of the first ETSU LGBTQ+ employee association. The Robertson Pride Center staff also worked with various departments across campus to sponsor student events including hosting diversity trailblazer, Gabby Rivera, as a guest speaker. It has been an honor to serve as the founding Director of the Robertson Pride Center and I am looking forward to building on the work we started over this past year. This month's Equity and Inclusion newsletter highlights some of the current opportunities available at ETSU for LGBTQ+ education, support services, programming, and advocacy.

If you are interested in following the work of the Robertson Pride Center or getting involved, please visit the [website](#) often and follow us on social media (Facebook and Instagram @etsupridecenter).

Happy Pride!
Dr. Bethany Novotny

ASPECTS

ASPECTS (Aligning, Support, Pride, Education, and Community for Trans Students) is open to all currently enrolled ETSU students who identify as transgender, gender non-conforming, or non-binary.

Please email the Dr. Patricia Robertson Pride Center (pridecenter@etsu.edu) or Christy Oaks (oaksca@etsu.edu) for more information on meeting times and location.

SAGA ETSU

Sexuality and Gender Alliance (SAGA) at East Tennessee State University is an active student organization committed to providing social support, educational opportunities, and advocacy for the LGBTQ+ community and their allies who are affiliated with ETSU.

Throughout the academic year, meetings are held every Monday at 7:00pm with the confidentiality of all of members and participants in mind.

All ETSU students, faculty, and staff are welcome to attend, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, romantic orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, religion, age, disability, HIV/AIDS status, veteran status, or political ideology.

SAGA is currently accepting new members (including leadership positions). Anyone who is interested should contact the Dr. Patricia Robertson Pride Center at pridecenter@etsu.edu

The Safe Zone Program at ETSU

ETSU Safe Zone is a community of allies to the LGBTQ+ community on campus who have undergone a training and who have signed a pledge demonstrating their commitment to providing a safe and supportive campus environment for the LGBTQ+ community. These individuals display the official Safe Zone symbol (see below) on their office doors as an indicator of their ally status.

In the last decade the Safe Zone program at ETSU has grown to include more than 20 faculty and staff trainers and over 250 trained allies to the LGBTQ+ community across the various colleges. Additionally, Safe Zone has provided ally training to a number of student groups such as Diversity Educators and medical students.



The facilitators of ETSU's Safe Zone are dedicated to building ETSU's community of allies. Multiple trainings are offered in the Fall and Spring semesters. In the 2021-22 academic year, facilitators will launch a new program called Safe Zone 2.0 which offers more advanced training for Safe Zone members who would like learn and grow as an ally. This skills-based training was developed by facilitators Dr. Brittany Wilkins and Heidi Marsh. Additional trainings for undergraduate student as well as community groups are in development.

Check out the Safe Zone website for more information about the program and trained allies across campus: <https://www.etsu.edu/equity/safezone/default.php>. Individuals interested in joining Safe Zone can sign up for trainings through the website as well. Groups or departments can also arrange trainings by contacting the Safe Zone administrators (Alison Deadman: deadmana@etsu.edu, Stacey Williams: williasl@etsu.edu, or Heidi Marsh: marshhh@etsu.edu).

Overview of Pride Month

Pride Month commemorates the ongoing pursuit of equal justice for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community and celebrates the accomplishments of LGBTQ individuals.

The event that catalyzed the gay rights movement occurred June 28, 1969, at the Stonewall Inn in New York City.

Police raided the establishment, which was a popular gathering place for the LGBTQ community. They arrested employees and patrons of the bar while pedestrians watched. Riots ensued in response, lasting about 5 days.

At the Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations in Philadelphia, gay

rights activists proposed the idea of a march in response to the Stonewall events. The march occurred on June 28, 1970, the first anniversary of the Stonewall riots, to celebrate "gay pride." The event was named the Christopher Street Liberation Day march after the street that was the epicenter of New York City's gay community. The pride march in New York inspired others to occur across the country in solidarity. Thereafter, gay pride celebrations expanded globally. In the United States, LGBTQ Pride is a month-long celebration, with marches occurring throughout the month of June.

To watch a video of this overview [click here](#).

To explore the history of the LGBTQ movement [click here](#).

Celebrating PRIDE!

Faculty/Staff LGBTQ+ Association is organized.

The university's first-ever Faculty/Staff LGBTQ+ Association was organized in spring 2020 and has been meeting regularly via Zoom during the past year. More than 40 current faculty and staff have been part of the meetings.

This past semester, the organization elected as co-directors Dr. Stephanie Frye-Clark, Joe Smith, and Dr. Alan Stevens. Leadership support for the organization has also been provided by Dr. Bethany Novotny and Adam Derrick through the Dr. Patricia Robertson Pride Center. Work is being done to establish bylaws for the group and plan activities for the summer and fall. ETSU will also have a presence at the TriPride festival in Bristol later this fall.

Members are looking forward to upcoming in-person meetings and events. Any faculty or staff member with questions or is interested in joining the association should contact the Dr. Patricia Robertson Pride Center at pridecenter@etsu.edu.



LGBTQ+ Research at ETSU

Across multiple colleges, ETSU is contributing to scientific knowledge about the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals regionally and beyond. Here we provide a snapshot of some of the work going on at ETSU.

Dr. Stacey Williams, Professor of Psychology



Dr. Stacey Williams directs the Social Issues and Relations Laboratory (SIRL), which she began upon her arrival at ETSU in 2006. Trained as a social-health psychologist, she came to ETSU after completing a postdoctoral research fellowship at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan. Her research on the impact of stigma on health and wellbeing has mainly focused on calling attention to minority stress and health disparities in sexual and gender minorities using both quantitative and qualitative designs. Most recently she has completed an NIH-funded study on minority stress in LGBTQ emerging adults living in South Central Appalachia. Her current work is focused on understanding polycystic ovary syndrome in gender diverse individuals. Graduate and undergraduate students involved in the lab gain hands-on experience conducting surveys, interviews, and interventions.

~ continued on page 6 ~

Continued ~ LGBTQ+ Research at ETSU

Dr. Abbey Mann, Assistant Professor of Family Medicine

A group of researchers at ETSU is wrapping up a two-year project examining healthcare access for transgender folks in our region. Funded by an ETSU Research Development Committee grant, Transgender Access to Comprehensive Care Experiences Study in South Central Appalachia (TransACCESS), included two research studies and an online training. The team, led by Dr Abbey Mann, a community psychologist and research Assistant Professor in the Department of Family Medicine, collected interview and survey data from almost two hundred transgender participants in the region and hosted an all-day event with Quillen's Office of Continuing Medical Education on May 7, 2021 during which more than 35 local healthcare providers were trained on transgender primary care by 12 local provider experts. This interdisciplinary research team also included Dr Stacey Williams (Psychology), Dr Brittany Wilkins (Social Work), Dr Ivy Click (Family Medicine), and Dr Leigh Johnson (Family Medicine). For more information about the study, go to etsu.edu/transaccess.



Dr. Mickey White, Assistant Professor of Counseling and Human Services



"Most research is me-search." - Beatrice Beebe

I tell my students all the time that in counseling the personal is often professional. As a queer and trans counselor, counselor educator, and researcher, I don't think that could be any truer. My dissertation shared the experiences of Black transgender men, which came from my own experiences transitioning into White maleness and a growing sense of urgency around racial justice and healing, as well as a recognition that within the social sciences many intersections have been ignored. That formative scholarly experience has catapulted me into the rabbit-hole of intersectional trans-focused research that is defining my career as I write. As an early-career faculty member here at ETSU, I've been fortunate to have opportunities to be supported in research,

including being selected for a Clemmer College Summer Research Assignment grant to conduct a phenomenological investigation of the self-disclosure practices of queer and trans counselors, educators, and supervisors. I am in the process of applying for a grant to evaluate online peer-led trans support groups, which I hope can become a training manual that would allow more trans folks to access effective and supportive community care. I've been fortunate at ETSU as well to be invited to serve on the newly-minted Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Steering Committee (formerly the Women Studies Steering Committee) and to facilitate ASPECTS (Aligning Support, Pride, Education, and Community for Transgender Students) for the past 1.5 years. In fall, ASPECTS will be housed in the Pride Center and led by Human Services Lecturer Christy Oaks. I'm excited to see the growing number of LGBTQ+ students, faculty, and staff at ETSU, as well as opportunities for advocacy and support. Particularly with the recent "Slate of Hate" coming from the TN legislature, community will be even more important moving forward.

~ continued on page 7 ~

Continued ~ LGBTQ+ Research at ETSU

Dr. Bethany Novotny, Assistant Professor of Counseling and Human Services



Dr. Novotny joined ETSU in the fall of 2016 and since that time has been involved in numerous education and advocacy efforts related to equity and inclusion, especially in regard to the LGBTQ+ community. Her work includes conference presentations *Rolling with the resistance: A model to foster social change for the LGBTQ community* and *LGBTQ+: Understanding the Fluidity of Sexuality and Gender* as well as published articles *A View from the Bench: Adjudicating same-sex divorce & child custody* and *From Oppression to Opportunity: Disrupting Social Stigma and Affirming LGBTQ Families*. Dr. Novotny has also partnered with local organizations Rise Healthy for Life and Carter County Drug Prevention to provide inclusive and comprehensive sex education for the community and supported students in a Carter County school who are hoping to start their first

Gay Straight Alliance. Dr. Novotny currently serves as a faculty member in Department of Counseling and Human Services as well as the Director of the Dr. Patricia Robertson Pride Center at ETSU.

Kelsey Braun, M.A., Doctoral Student in the Department of Psychology

Kelsey Braun, M.A., earned her master's degree in General Psychology with a concentration in Applied Social Issues from the University of Houston-Clear Lake. She is currently a doctoral candidate in the Experimental Psychology program and works in the Social Issues and Relations Laboratory (SIRL) at East Tennessee State University. Broadly, her research uses intersectionality to examine how wide-scale societal structures influence systemic privilege and oppression. By identifying factors related to inequity, she strives to increase inclusivity and opportunity among individuals in institutional settings. While circumstances of privilege and oppression can occur between-groups or within-groups, her most recent work assessed variation in minority stress *within* the sexual minority community due to wide-scale structural, representational, and political factors.



Dr. Sarah Job, Doctoral Graduate in the Department of Psychology



Dr. Sarah Job recently completed her PhD in the Experimental Psychology program in the Psychology Department of ETSU, where she also previously completed a master's degree. From 2016 to 2021, she worked in the Social Issues and Relations Lab, where her work examined the relationship between minority stressors and health among sexual and gender minorities, as well as how these health disparities can be ameliorated through strengths-based interventions. Her dissertation utilized an online strengths-based intervention, featuring five positive psychology writing tasks, which effectively improved well-being and self-rated health among a sample of sexual minority adults in a seven-week study. She begins her new position as a Research Specialist at the University of Central Florida in June.

Upcoming Events

June 2021

Tuesday	June 8th	Lunch and Learn Lecture Series <i>Allyship</i> Discussion lead: Dr. Taine Duncan, Associate Professor and Director of Gender Studies Program, University of Central Arkansas	12:00-1:00pm	Join Zoom Meeting
---------	----------	---	--------------	-----------------------------------

July 2021

Tuesday	July 13th	Lunch and Learn Lecture Series <i>Accessibility Matters</i> Discussion lead: Miriam Smith, Director of Accessibility Services, Oglethorpe University	12:00-1:00pm	Join Zoom Meeting
Tuesday	July 27th	Lunch and Learn Lecture Series <i>Hate Crimes</i> Discussion lead: Jeff Blanton, Assistant VP for Ad- ministration/Director of Emergency Management	12:00-1:00pm	Join Zoom Meeting

August 2021

Tuesday	August 10th	Lunch and Learn Lecture Series <i>Leadership Identity Development on Black Men's College Experience</i> Discussion lead: Dr. Shannon Williams, Faculty Staff Experience and Professional Development, Human Resources, Wake Forest University	12:00-1:00pm	Join Zoom Meeting
---------	-------------	--	--------------	-----------------------------------

September 2021

Tuesday	September 7th	Lunch and Learn Lecture Series <i>The Problem with Diversity by Numbers Only: A Talk About Ideological Diversity, Hegemony, and A Dead Italian Guy</i> Discussion lead: Dr. Jean Swindle Assistant Professor, Education Foundations & Special Education, Clemmer College	12:00-1:00pm	Join Zoom Meeting
Tuesday	September 14th	Lunch and Learn Lecture Series <i>Inclusive Leadership</i> Discussion lead: Dr. Angela Webster, Associate VP for Institutional Diversity and Inclusion, Associate Professor of Leadership Studies University of Central Arkansas	12:00-1:00pm	Join Zoom Meeting
Mon-Wed.	September 20-22	3rd Annual Equity and Inclusion Conference <i>From Discussion to Action: Bold Steps Toward Equity and Inclusion</i>	Visit conference website	Virtual

October 2021

Tuesday	October 5th	Lunch and Learn Lecture Series <i>Equity and Inclusion in the Sustainability World</i> Discussion lead: Irene Poulton, Grad Student	12:00-1:00pm	Join Zoom Meeting
Tuesday	October 19th	Lunch and Learn Lecture Series <i>Microaggressions</i> Discussion leads: Dr. Teresa Carnevale, Director of Quality Improvement, Assistant Professor, College of Nursing; Dr. Chassidy Cooper, Coord. Office of Equity and Inclusion; and Dr. Chelsie Dubay, Internet Prog.Support Coord.	12:00-1:00pm	Join Zoom Meeting

Continued ~ Upcoming Events

SAVE THE DATE

September 20-22, 2021
Virtual Conference



3rd Annual
Equity and Inclusion
CONFERENCE
From Discussion to Action:
Bold Steps Toward
Equity and Inclusion

etsu.edu/equity



Day One Opening Keynote Speaker

Dr. Paul Farmer
**“To Repair the World:
Dr. Farmer Speaks to the Next Generation”**

~~~~~

Day Two Closing Keynote Speaker

**Dr. Vernon Wall**  
**“Creating a Campus Culture Committed to  
Equity & Inclusion”**

Visit [etsu.edu/equity/conference](https://etsu.edu/equity/conference)  
to learn more.

### Conference Goals

Participants will:

- Increase their awareness of equity and inclusion issues and opportunities on campus and in the community.
- Recognize the benefits of a diverse organization and community and the importance of equitable and inclusive practices, policies and procedures.
- Engage in meaningful conversation around topics of equity and inclusion resulting in a better understanding of the concept of "otherness" and to increase empathic behaviors.
- Develop and/or increase their skill set related to equity and inclusion contexts and recognize the difference between intent and impact.
- Adopt and utilize tools that will increase advocacy for groups that are disenfranchised.

### **Registration is Open**

Early Bird Rate, available May 2021— Aug 31, 2021

ETSU Employee: \$50.00 (can use [Education Assistance Form](#))

Community Rate/Non-ETSU: \$60.00

ETSU Student Rate: Free

Non-ETSU Student Rate: \$25.00

[Click here to register.](#)

## Equity and Inclusion Diversity Champion Spotlight

Loren Biggs, L.M.S.W., counselor at the ETSU Counseling Center, defines diversity to include, but not limited to; race and ethnicity, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language, culture, national origin, religious affiliations, age (dis)ability status, etc. In her work as a therapist, Loren utilizes the "ADDRESSING" model, both with clients and trainees. Developed by Pamela Hays (1996, 2008), the "ADDRESSING" model is a framework that facilitates recognition and understanding of the complexities of individual identity. According to Hays, consideration of age, developmental disabilities, acquired disabilities, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, indigenous group membership, nationality, and gender contributes to a complete understanding of cultural identity. Each factor helps researchers understand underrepresented groups and oppressive forces. Loren thinks by attending to these complex pieces of identity that shape and inform cultural identity, it is making their role in our lives (strengths and challenges, privileges and oppression) explicit in a way that both honors the individual and gives context to their identity in broader culture and creates room to talk about experiences of opportunity and oppression.



Maybe, because of her position, Loren has more opportunity than most to have these discussions and she tends to "lean in" to them. In her clinical work, she is direct about these topics because to ignore any one of them is to miss critical information about her client and their experience in their family system, community, and the world. Her clients are the "experts in their own lives" and if she is not willing to talk to them about the full complexity of their identity, then she is not learning who they are, and her work will be both inauthentic and ineffective.

Loren feels that the purpose of the Office of Equity and Inclusion is to ensure a commitment to embracing and increasing diversity at ETSU. To borrow from Social Work Ethical Standards, to respect the inherent dignity and self-worth of the person, and, further to build a culture of belonging by inviting and encouraging the contributions and participation of all people.

**Office of Equity and Inclusion**  
**230 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://](https://www.facebook.com/etsuequity/)

[www.facebook.com/etsuequity/](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](mailto:maturo@etsu.edu).

To add a name to our mailing list, please email Kim Maturo at [maturo@etsu.edu](mailto:maturo@etsu.edu).