



# Office of Equity and Inclusion Newsletter

March 1, 2021



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

### *“Hidden Figures”*

March is nationally recognized as Women's History Month. This month, we commemorate and encourage the observance and celebration of the vital roles and significant contributions of women in American history. Historically, the contributions of women have neither been recognized nor celebrated, especially those made by women of color. Women of color play a unique role in shaping our country's political and economic climate. Even with these slow and steady progressions, women are still largely underrepresented on key issues such as reproductive health care, women's rights, and the economy.

Prominent *Hidden Figures* [Katherine Johnson](#), [Dorothy Vaughan](#), and [Mary Jackson](#) were phenomenal women who played integral roles in the space program, but were virtual

unknowns for most of their lives. Many people are very familiar with who John Glenn was; but without Katherine Johnson, there probably would not have been a John Glenn. Before *Brown v. Board of Education* established in 1954 that separate was in fact not equal, and before Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech rang out over the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, a group of black women working at the Langley Memorial Aeronautical Laboratory in Hampton, Virginia were helping America dominate aeronautics, space research, and computer technology. Katherine Johnson's success was rooted in a strong sense of self. One of her notable quotes reads, *"I don't have a feeling of inferiority. Never had. I'm as good as anybody, but no better."*

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*"Women's History is Women's Right." – It is an essential and indispensable heritage from which we can draw pride, comfort, courage, and long-range vision."*

~ [Dr. Gerda Lerner](#) ~

## Continued ~ Message from Dr. Keith Johnson

Despite having to deal with so many disparities and inequities such as infant mortality rates, higher rates of diabetes, heart disease, obesity, certain forms of cancer, hypertension, unequal pay, and being a double minority, Black women still persevere and remain resilient.

There are no shortages of women deserving such recognition for the many contributions made in this country. Like the humble beginnings of the start of Black History Month as a week-long celebration, Women's History Month began in a similar fashion, starting as one week and then growing into a month-long celebration. Women's History Month began on March 7, 1982 as "Women's History Week." Over the next several years, Congress continued to pass joint resolutions, eventually leading to the annual Women's History Month. Since 1995, presidents have issued a series of annual proclamations, recognizing many achievements that women have made in American History.

"Valiant Women of the Vote: Refusing to be Silenced" is the 2021 National Women's History Month theme. This past August, our nation celebrated a landmark movement in American women's history: the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment ratification to the Constitution giving women citizenship and the right to vote. The suffrage movement and the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment demonstrated much discrimination against many women of color. [Sarah J.S. Garnet](#) who was a woman of color and a pioneer for the movement, founded the Equal Suffrage League in the late 1800s and was an organizer for the vote through the National Association of Colored Women. In addition, [Mabel Lee](#), who was a Chinese-American and a strong advocate for the movement, organized and led suffrage parades right through the heart of downtown New York City on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Yet, white-led suffrage organizations around the country usually excluded Black women. When there were

exceptions, Black women were limited to marching at the back of the parades. As the struggles continued to persist, Black women were eventually able to vote in New York after the passing of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment. Unfortunately, many states passed local and state laws that disenfranchised them. Native American and Asian were also barred from voting until 1924 and the 1950s respectively. So many women in this nation have demonstrated incredible perseverance and persistence despite the repeated obstacles that have been placed along their journey.

For example, [Ursula Barnes](#), who is African-American, grew up in New York City in a community where gangs were widespread and somewhat overrun with drug addicts. She lived in poverty and was raised by her mother. Being so determined to be successful, Ursula's mother rigorously worked two jobs to send her and her siblings to school. Ursula went on to study at NYU. As she was completing her master's degree, she worked at Xerox as a summer intern. A year later, she joined Xerox permanently and rose through the ranks to become Chairwoman and CEO of the company.

More recently [Vice President Kamala Harris](#) became the first Black and Indian American to hold the second highest position in this nation. She, like so many other women who persist to become great, didn't allow herself to be sidelined by those who sought to do her harm. She credits her mom for the drive that she has to break through barriers and obstacles by adhering to her words, "*Don't sit around and complain about things, do something*". There are so many impacts made by women in our county, state, region, and at ETSU. Let's celebrate them for the contributions they make. Too often we look afar to identify those who have made significant impacts. The reality is, they are right under our noses.

~ continued on page 3 ~

## Continued ~ Message from Dr. Keith Johnson

For example, [Dr. Cerrone Foster](#) who is a faculty member in Biological Sciences, is a researcher who has provided us new information from her study of mechanisms of estrogen loss and its effects on the heart after menopause. She has been recognized as “100 more inspiring Black scientists in America” by the science blog CrossTalk.

The Office of Equity and Inclusion dedicates this monthly addition of the newsletter to celebrating women’s history. 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.

## ETSU Women's Studies Program



The [Women’s Studies Program](#) at ETSU is committed to strengthening interdisciplinary and diversity emphases at the university and to training students to address issues affecting women in the Appalachian South, nationally, and globally.

Dr. Phyllis Thompson, Director of Women’s Studies states that the focus on Leadership through Diversity makes the Women’s Studies

Program unique and highlights the emphasis on applied learning and leadership. As a result, Women’s Studies graduates enter the workforce and/or graduate programs as accomplished social thinkers who are focused on civic engagement, social justice, and change and who can help to satisfy the continuing need locally, nationally, and globally to improve the lives, opportunities, and futures of women.

## Grant Opportunities

The Office of Equity and Inclusion is now accepting Student Engagement, Retention, and Success (SERS) Grant proposals for the year 2021-2022. Proposals should be received by the Office of Equity and Inclusion by March 15 for review before the March 25 submission deadline. [Click here](#) for more information and to access the application and grant platform guide.

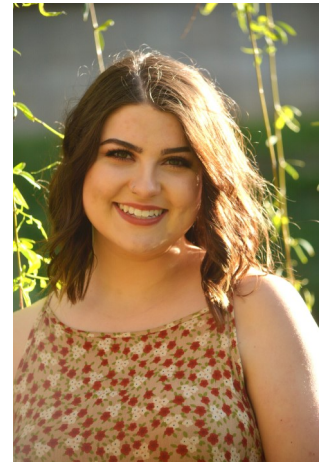
The Office of Equity and Inclusion is now accepting Open Educational Resources (OER) Grant proposals for the year 2021-2022. Proposals should be received by the Office of Equity and Inclusion by March 22 for review before the April 2 submission deadline. [Click here](#) for more information and to access the application and grant platform guide.

## Meet Alison Dyer, Graduate Assistant Women's Resource Center

Alison Dyer is the Graduate Assistant for the [ETSU Women's Resource Center](#) (WRC).

Originally from Athens, TN, Alison moved to Johnson City in 2016 for undergraduate school. She received her Bachelor of Science from ETSU in Human Services with a minor in Women's Studies. Graduating in May 2020, Alison began her master's degree in Fall 2020.

As a first-year graduate student, Alison is studying Counseling with a concentration in Clinical Mental Health. In her future counseling career, she hopes to specifically work with women and members of the LGBTQI+ community. Much of her work in undergrad, both inside and outside of the classroom, lead Alison to want to work in this field and help the specific communities that she is most passionate about.



At the WRC, it is her goal to create a welcoming and inclusive space where everyone feels safe, accepted, and supported. The mission of the WRC is to work towards improving the campus climate for all students, especially women.

Currently, the WRC has developed a partnership with Women of Mountain City which allows it to provide free menstrual products to students in several locations on campus including the WRC, the Women's Studies Office, and the Pride Center. Alison has been working with several non-profit organizations in the community to provide inclusive, educational literature and materials to students. The WRC has some projects underway to help bring light to issues that women may be facing in our community. Alison's hope is to continue making connections with organizations both inside and outside our ETSU community to keep improving the campus for all who are there and who will be in the future.

## Porcha McCurdy ETSU Alum Spotlight



Porcha McCurdy is a May 2020 graduate of ETSU, receiving her MS in Geosciences. With support from the Office of Equity and Inclusion, Porcha was a graduate assistant in Geosciences during academic years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020.

The office was also able to provide funds for her to attend both the Southeast Division of the American Association of Geographers (SEDAAG) and the American Association of Geographers National meeting in 2018-2019 where she observed the presenters and honed her presentation skills. The following year Porcha was selected to present her poster "*Inclement Weather Impacts on Surface and Groundwater Quality in Sinking Creek, Watauga Watershed, East Tennessee*" at the annual SEDAAG conference. This research has been published in the Journal of Environmental Quality. To read the full article click here <https://acsess.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/jeq2.20196>

Porcha quickly secured employment as an Environmental Compliance Specialist at the Air Protection Branch, Environmental Protection Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources in Atlanta, GA.





## Continued ~ Women's History Month



[Laura Cornelius Kellogg](#) was an Oneida activist, author, orator and policy reformer, and she was one of the founding members of the Society of American Indians (SAI) in 1911. SAI was the first national American Indian rights organization run by and for American Indians. Kellogg was an advocate against increasingly stringent federal Indian policies that, among other things, sent Native children to boarding schools and sought to eradicate Native languages, cultures, and political, economic and social systems.

—Katrina Phillips, assistant professor of history at Macalester College and an enrolled member of the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe

Little is known of **Mary Tape's** life in China. In 1868, the 11-year-old Mary immigrates to the United States and ends up as a servant in a brothel in San Francisco. She runs away and takes shelter at the Ladies' Protection and Relief Society, where she is raised and takes the name of Mary McGladery. One day Mary meets another young Chinese immigrant, a boy who drives a milk wagon and calls himself Joseph Tape. They marry, and the ambitious Joseph establishes his own prosperous transportation and immigration brokering business.



But the Tapes' wealth cannot inoculate them from racial discrimination during this time of anti-Chinese exclusion and racial hostility. In 1884, their daughter Mamie is denied admission to a local school because she is Chinese. Mary Tape is incensed. She writes an impassioned letter and the Tapes sue the principal and the San Francisco Board of Education. They win the landmark case [Tape v. Hurley](#), which guarantees Chinese children the right to a public school education. However, Mamie never enrolls at her local school. After the court decision, the school district builds a Chinese Primary School, "suitable for Mongolian children." The Tape case and the state's reaction foreshadows the "separate but equal" doctrine soon to become law in the 1896 decision *Plessy v. Ferguson*.

—Renee Tajima-Peña, Series Producer of the upcoming PBS series *Asian Americans* and a Professor of Asian American Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles

## National Women's History Museum

**Mission**—to tell the stories of women who transformed our nation. They do that through a growing state-of-the-art online presence and a future physical museum to educate, inspire, empower, shape the future, and provide a complete view of American history.

**Vision**—envision a world where women's history inspires all people to have equal respect for everyone's experiences and accomplishments and to see there are no obstacles to achieving their dreams.

Learn more at [National Women's History Museum](#).

## ETSU Commission for Women Standing Committee

The ETSU Commission for Women Standing Committee:

- ⇒ Makes recommendations addressing policies and procedures which relate to equitable treatment issues involving university facilities and personnel.
- ⇒ Makes recommendations addressing enhancement of the campus climate with respect to opportunity for women.
- ⇒ Makes recommendations aimed at improving institutional commitment to include practices in recruitment, retention, and development of women.
- ⇒ Requests and reviews data on reports pertaining to equal opportunity for women.

The ETSU Commission for Women Standing Committee began accepting nominations for the ETSU Staff Women of the Year Award in 2012. Nominators are encouraged to submit nominations for staff classified women to highlight the often unnoticed accomplishments of these women that have made a notable impact in the workplace and/or improved the quality of life for others.

a **look forward** →

April ~ National Arab American Heritage Month

May ~ Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month

## Noteworthy Accomplishments from Women at ETSU

**Adrianna Guram**, Associate Director Residence Life, Department of Housing and Residence Life, **Dr. Bethany Novotny**, Associate Professor, Counseling & Human Services Department, Clemmer College, **Dr. Stacy Cummings Onks**, Director of the University Advisement Center, and **Teresa Brooks Taylor**, Assistant Professor in the Counseling & Human Services Department, Clemmer College have an article published in the Spring 2021 Special Issue of *Learning Communities Research and Practice* (LCRP).

### **Integrating High Impact Practices: A Learning Community Model to Enhance Identity Development, Civic Engagement, and Reflective Practice**

Their article describes the process of developing a pilot learning community at ETSU, focusing on the collaboration of academic and student affairs administrators. Exploring how the literature on the integration of high impact practices, namely learning communities, service-learning, and domestic travel study informed our decisions regarding the structure and content of the pilot, they examined how this experience set a foundation for institutional exploration of future learning communities praxis. They describe the nature of their collaborations in the curricular and co-curricular learning community components and discuss the self-reflections that were necessary to help guide the learning of students. The article concludes with a summary of assessment results and reflections on major takeaways.

## Upcoming Events

### March 2021

Monday	March 1	Corazón Latino Day I <b>Live Musical Presentation from Ecuador by Duo Andaluza</b>	7:00pm	Via YouTube
Tuesday	March 2	Lunch and Learn Session <b><i>New Models of Recruitment and Retention</i></b> Discussion lead: Dr. John Kuykendall, Dean and Associate Professor, School of Education, University of Indianapolis	12:00-1:00pm	<a href="#">Join Zoom Meeting</a>
Wednes.	March 3	Women on Wednesdays <b><i>"Women and Authority in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century West Africa"</i></b> Constanze Weise ETSU Department of History	12:00-1:00pm	<a href="#">Join Zoom Meeting</a>
Tuesday	March 9	Lunch and Learn Session <b><i>Recruiting and Retaining Diverse Populations</i></b> Discussion lead: Ms. Jessica Wang, Director of Student Success, Clemmer College	12:00-1:00pm	<a href="#">Join Zoom Meeting</a>
Monday	March 22nd	Corazón Latino Day II <b>Live Musical Presentation from Washington, DC by Trifilio Tangon Trio</b>	7:00pm	Via YouTube
Tuesday	March 30th	<b>Gabby Rivera</b> <b>Writer, Speaker, Storyteller, Latinx Culture Nerd</b>	5:00-6:30pm	Via Zoom
Wednes.	March 31	Women on Wednesdays <b><i>"Designing and Creating Costumes for Performance: Artistic, Technical, and Education"</i></b> Bethany Skinner ETSU Department of Theatre and Dance	12:00-1:00pm	<a href="#">Join Zoom Meeting</a>

### April 2021

Tuesday	April 6th	Lunch and Learn Session <b><i>Social Learning and Social Justice</i></b> Discussion Lead: Deidra Rogers, Lecturer, Department of Counseling & Human Services, Clemmer College	12:00-1:00pm	<a href="#">Join Zoom Meeting</a>
Wednes.	April 7th	Women on Wednesdays <b><i>"Fostering Inclusion and Belonging for our ETSU Diverse Populations"</i></b> Carshonda Martin ETSU Multicultural Center	12:00-1:00pm	<a href="#">Join Zoom Meeting</a>
Thursday	April 22nd	Corazón Latino Day III <b>Live Musical Presentation from Tennessee by Flori Rusinol</b>	7:00pm	Via You Tube
Tuesday	April 27th	Lunch and Learn Lecture Series <b><i>Coping With Crisis</i></b> Discussion lead: Tonya McKoy, Ph.D., LPC-MHSP/AS, NCC Licensed Professional Counselor	12:00-1:00pm	<a href="#">Join Zoom Meeting</a>

### Fall 2021

Fall	Sept. 20-22	3rd Annual Equity and Inclusion Conference	TBA	
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# 2021 SPRING LECTURE SERIES

## WOMEN ON WEDNESDAYS

### WOMEN AND AUTHORITY IN NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY WEST AFRICA

#### CONSTANZE WEISE

*Department of History*

Constanze Weise, Assistant Professor of History at ETSU, will discuss women's influence and power in pre-colonial West Africa and the changes that colonial imposition brought about. In West Africa's pre-colonial and colonial past, women held important political and religious roles, including governing kingdoms, establishing cities, and founding states. Weise will explain how during French and British colonial domination, however, women's roles drastically changed.



**MARCH 3**  
**@ NOON**  
**ZOOM ID 965 3072 5820**



WOMEN'S  
STUDIES PROGRAM

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Contact  
[womenstudies@etsu.edu](mailto:womenstudies@etsu.edu)  
for more information

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Partnership with  
Mary V. Jordan Multicultural Center,  
Africana Studies, Women Studies, and  
Black Affairs Association

**JOIN US!**

**DATE:** Tuesday March 9th, 2021

**TIME:** 7:00 pm

*The*  
**WOMEN OF  
COLOR MUSEUM**  
**VIRTUAL ARTIFACT PRESENTATION & SPEAKER**



For more information, contact:  
[ETSUMC@etsu.edu](mailto:ETSUMC@etsu.edu) or 423-439-4844

Zoom link on Campus Life Calendar  
and  
Multicultural Center Website



# GABBY RIVERA



Gabby Rivera is a Bronx-born, queer Puerto Rican on a mission to create the wildest, most fun stories ever. Rivera is the first Latina to write for Marvel Comics, penning the solo series America about America Chavez, a portal-punching queer Latina powerhouse.

## COFFEE WITH GABBY RIVERA

**March 29 | 5 p.m. Eastern Time**

<https://etsu.zoom.us/j/92232364731>

## KEYNOTE SPEECH

**March 30 | 5 p.m. Eastern Time**

<https://etsu.zoom.us/j/94660568574>

For more information contact  
Dr. Fiuza at [lcrc@etsu.edu](mailto:lcrc@etsu.edu)



**EAST TENNESSEE STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

Sponsored by: Division of Cross-Disciplinary Studies, Department of Philosophy & Humanities, Dr. Patricia Robertson Pride Center, Department of Art & Design, Department of Communication & Performance, Department of Literature & Language, Women's Studies Program, Women's Resource Center, Office of Equity & Inclusion, Language & Culture Resource Center

ETSU is an AA/EEO employer. ETSU-CAS-0046-20

**SAVE THE DATE**

**September 20-22, 2021**  
Virtual Conference

**New for  
2021  
Student Track  
Sept. 22**



3rd Annual

*Equity and  
Inclusion*  
CONFERENCE

From Discussion to Action:  
Bold Steps Toward  
Equity and Inclusion

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



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## Equity and Inclusion Diversity Champion Spotlight

### Rachel Walden



Meet Diversity Champion Rachel Walden, Associate Dean and Professor, Department of Learning Resources: Medical Library (Director), Biomedical Communications, Information Technology Quillen College of Medicine.

Rachel feels the purpose of the Office of Equity and Inclusion is to ensure that equity and inclusion work actually happens. The Office of Equity and Inclusion needs support and infrastructure to connect those throughout campus to do this work and to provide learning, growth, and action opportunities. She believes her role as a diversity champion is to help with those connections, be a visible force for change, provide service in support of activities, and bring effort to areas needing work.

Rachel believes diversity and equity work requires deliberate attention to purposeful learning and knocking down barriers faced by minority/oppressed groups. As a medical library director she tries to promote learning about how unequal biased treatment does real harm to patients and communities. By

discussing, collecting readings for the library, sponsoring events, etc. she tries to educate and bring attention to this area.

When approached with discussions about potentially difficult topics, such as race, religion, politics, sexual orientation, Rachel starts from a point of assuring people that this work is a lifelong learning/unlearning process, that everyone has work to do on these difficult topics. For example, in trainings she has shared that she is from a mixed race family noting that even having a mom who is not white, she has had to work to unlearn other racist messages received from the world around her.

As a co-chair to Quillen's diversity council, Rachel plays a role in planning and executing diversity, equity, and inclusion work within the college. She works via the medical library to promote learning about these issues, especially in a medical context. Rachel is a member of the Equity and Inclusion Conference Planning Steering Committee and is eager to support other groups on campus with their equity and inclusion activities.

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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](mailto:maturo@etsu.edu).

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