



# Office of Equity and Inclusion Newsletter

June 3, 2020



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

### **“Without Struggle, There is No Progress”**

Like many, we are still trying to process the public murder of 46-year-old Mr. George Floyd, a Black man who was senselessly murdered in broad daylight by police officers of the Minneapolis Police Department. Mr. Floyd was unarmed, in handcuffs and face down on the ground. Even though there were several bystanders, cell phones recording the incident and Mr. Floyd begging for his life, this officer persisted for a little over 8 minutes until he breathed his last breath. My degrees and many successes in this instance are futile, as this could have easily been me or my son. The issue surrounding his loss of life amounted to \$20. This type of police brutality is nothing new, but it being so blatant and careless elevates it to a new level. Historically and even in recent times, this type of behavior has been woven into the fabric of American culture. What the world just endured is akin to what my parents witnessed in 1955 with the murder of Emmitt Till, and what my grandparents and great-grandparents witnessed with public lynchings of Black Americans. Though I realize we have made some progress in this country in many areas, there are still so many more that have been ignored for far too long.

I am privileged as a Black, American male working from home during the era of COVID-19. However, only 1 in 5 Black Americans in this country have that same privilege. It’s been very difficult watching so many Black Americans succumb to COVID-19, being shot and killed in their own homes by those who are sworn to protect and serve, being falsely accused by someone who used their race and privilege as a weapon against us and countless other scenarios. Just because many of us are not openly expressing our

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**Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only  
be achieved through understanding.  
~ Albert Einstein ~**

## Continued - “Without Struggle, There is No Progress”

frustrations, dismay, anger, hopelessness and desperation, does not mean that we are OK. Just because we smile and are able to sustain a regular work schedule, and appear to be very productive in our work environments, does not mean that we are OK. We are not OK.

What happened to Mr. George Floyd highlights the disparities that continue to plague Black America in this country, ranging from health care, black wealth, education, death rate, incarceration, and employment, to name a few. This most recent outcry was a collective effort among many individuals of many backgrounds, ethnicities, including White Americans to say enough is enough. In Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s “I have a Dream” speech in 1963, he said “all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” In 2020, the dream has not been fully realized. Almost 60 years later, it is clear that America has defaulted on its promises to citizens of color, especially Black Americans. What most people forget about regarding that speech is Dr. King also spoke about the “fierce urgency of now.” Mr. Floyd’s death, among others, launched a call to action. The protests that are being played out around the country, and now around the world, send that message that the time is now.

Historically, protests have been the voice and language of the unheard. However, it is unfortunate that the real message that Colin Kaepernick, former quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers, was emphasizing by kneeling during the singing of the National Anthem, may be overshadowed by the looting and misbehaving of several with personal motives to riot. Though their anger is understood, their actions are not appropriate and do not represent those of us who stand in solidarity. After having been inundated with the continuous live media coverage, many of you are judging the actions of the looters and other law-breaking citizens across this country, and not seeing the depth and breadth of this deep-rooted problem that exists. A lot of what I have written will make for very uncomfortable conversations; however, the dialog will need to occur in order for any kind of healing to begin. Fredrick Douglass, once stated “Without struggle, there is no progress.” Like many times in the past, we have struggled, but for true change to happen, there have to be diversity champions from all walks of life. We need you to step up and challenge the norms that have consistently harmed Black people. Those who sit idle and choose not to respond when you have the power and influence to do otherwise, are part of the problem. This is not a “Black” problem, it’s an American problem. If you are not sure what to do to be a change agent, here is a suggested list of things that can help. By no means is this an exhaustive list; however, the more you educate yourself, the more options become available.

1. Always confront racism and inappropriate behavior/language when you see, hear, read, or experience it.
2. Encourage your peers to talk about racism. Learning “what not to say” should not be your goal. There are many options that you can exercise. Write a letter to the editor when a racist incident occurs or educate your family members who have racist tendencies.
3. In your professional environment, eliminate discriminatory policies and practices that are institutional and harmful to Black Americans.
4. Get involved in activities or organizations that include Black Americans.
5. When conducting employment searches, make sure there are sound policies and practices for attracting Black Americans....and when you get them, mentor them, create a supportive and welcoming environment.

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## Continued - “Without Struggle, There is No Progress”

6. Support our Black students by not assuming that the playing field is level and they “are like everyone else.”
7. When teaching our Black students, don’t assume that their knowledge or opinions represents an entire population. Believe it or not, we may not be an expert. So, don’t always call on us to answer the questions that are related to Black matters.
8. Understand that you are part of the solution regardless of your race or background.
9. Come to grips that this is not a “Black” problem.
10. Remember that you are not powerless . . . Do not be fearful of speaking up if a person, regardless of age or status, says a racist comment or joke.
11. Educate yourself.

The Office of Equity and Inclusion is here to support the faculty, staff and students that it serves. Please feel free to reach out and contact us. We are here to foster an environment of inclusion. Our mission is to seek support and advance the University’s mission, vision, and values by providing guidance for the development and implementation of proactive diversity, access, inclusion and research. Our office serves to promote an environment where people come first, are treated with dignity and respect and are encouraged and supported to achieve their full potential. The office will collaborate with university and community partners on matters associated with equity and inclusion to foster relationships and advocate for underrepresented populations. Our office serves to promote an environment where people come first, are treated with dignity and respect and are encouraged and supported to achieve their full potential. The office will collaborate with university and community partners on matters associated with equity and inclusion to foster relationships and advocate for underrepresented populations.

Our office recognizes in tandem with the novel coronavirus, the tragic events have caused trauma and stress to ETSU faculty, staff, students, and especially the Black community. We want you to know that we are here for you. There are several resources on our campus that support you: the Counseling Center, Dean of Students, and the Multicultural Center. Even though many of you are away from campus, each of you are an integral part of the university. We will keep our virtual office hours available to encourage positive and supportive communication.

In the days ahead, we must strongly affirm East Tennessee State University’s fundamental commitment to equity and inclusion. Equity and inclusion must become institutional to effect change. We must continue to level the playing field and stand strong together as an educational community fighting to be inclusive, supportive, and welcoming to all.

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### Dr. Chassidy Cooper, Equity and Inclusion Coordinator



Dr. Chassidy Cooper has a new office location. Dr. Cooper’s office is located in the Women’s Resource Center, Campus Center Building, Room 220. You can also contact Dr. Cooper at [coopercl@etsu.edu](mailto:coopercl@etsu.edu) or 439-4444. Please do not hesitate to reach out to Dr. Cooper.

## Counseling Center Connection Group for Students

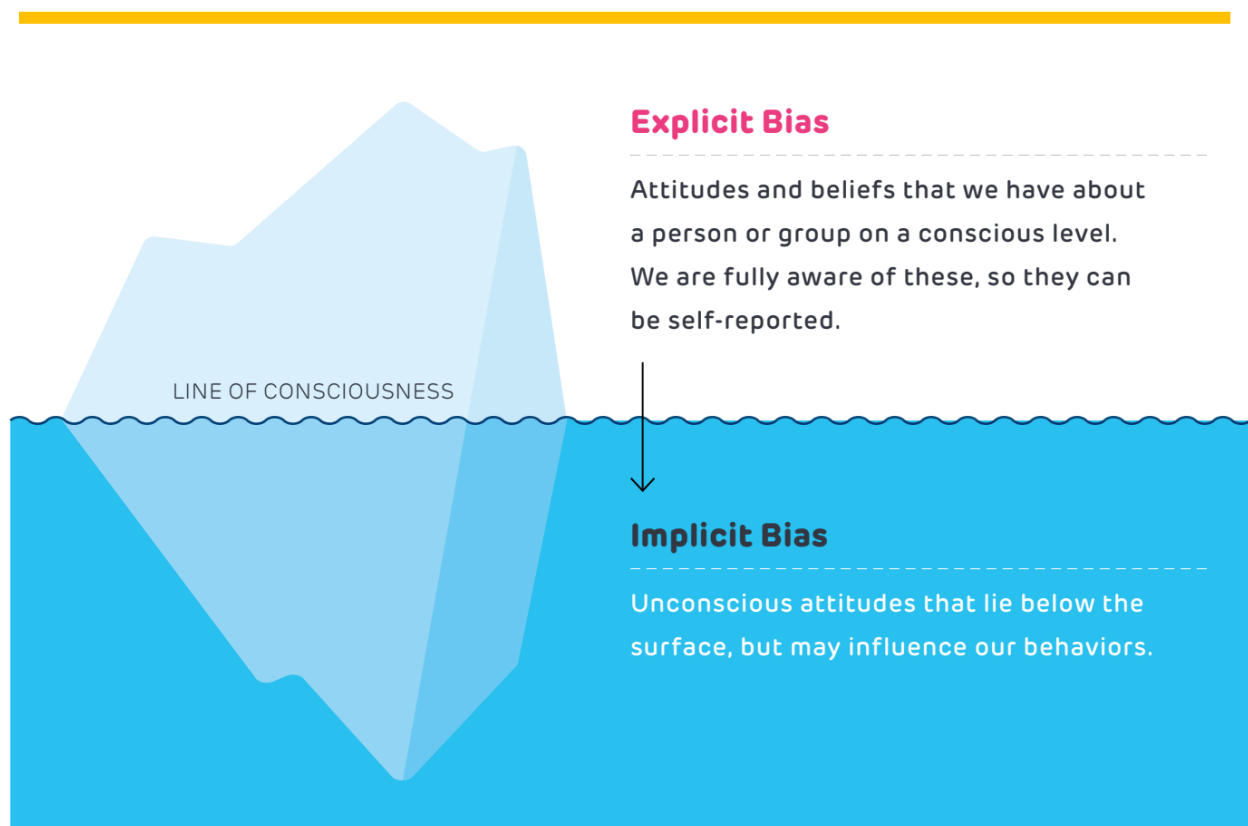
The ***Coffee and Connection*** group provides a space for students to process the nation's current events. From a global pandemic, to the recent death of George Floyd, to the protests happening nationwide, we know that our students are being impacted and the burden is heavy. The goal is for them to have a supportive, non-judgmental space to respectfully discuss the events and the impact both on them as an individual and on the nation.

***Coffee and Connection***, a peer support group, meets every Thursday from 11:00am to 12:30pm. The group offers social connection and tools relating to anxiety, stress management, mindfulness, and more!

This group is open to all students with an ETSU zoom account. This group is available for out-of-state residents!

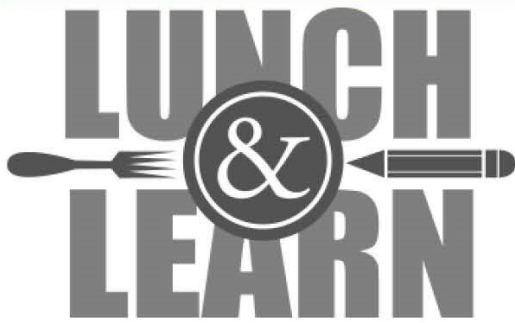
Student will need to fill out the peer support group consent form to participate found at: <https://www.etsu.edu/students/counseling/services/groups.php>

Additional resources regarding social justice, diversity and inclusion can be found at: <https://www.etsu.edu/students/counseling/>



Clear up your confusion about implicit bias: <http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/implicit-bias-training/resources/mythbusters.pdf>

Implicit Bias Test: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>



## Eat. Connect. Discover.

Join us via zoom for an hour of discussion and learning.

All times are noon-1 p.m.

All sessions are open to members  
of the ETSU community.

Dates subject to change.

View our website for additional information.

**Sponsored by:**

**The ETSU Office of Equity and Inclusion**

## Summer 2020 Series

**Tuesday, June 9th**

### ***The Culturally Responsive Classroom***

Discussion lead: Amy Johnson, Interim Associate Provost for Faculty & Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence

Join Zoom Meeting <https://etsu.zoom.us/j/95436219629>

Meeting ID: 954 3621 9629

**Tuesday, July 14th**

### ***Reframing Disability***

Discussion lead: *Mary Little, Director and ADA/504 Coordinator of Disability Services*

Join Zoom Meeting <https://etsu.zoom.us/j/94846518433>

Meeting ID: 948 4651 8433

**Tuesday, August 11th**

### ***Supporting Underrepresented Learners in an Online Environment***

Discussion lead: *Michele H. Williams, Academic Success Specialist, College of Pharmacy*

Join Zoom Meeting <https://etsu.zoom.us/j/95501678536>

Meeting ID: 955 0167 8536

To request an accommodation in order to fully participate in the Lunch & Learn program, please contact the ETSU Office of Equity and Inclusion at 423-439-4445

## 2nd Annual Equity and Inclusion Conference

**SAVE THE DATE**

September 21-23, 2020  
D.P. Culp Student Center

Due to concerns related  
to Coronavirus/COVID-19  
preparations are being  
made to have a  
Virtual Conference



# Equity and Inclusion CONFERENCE

By All, For All: Remapping  
Our Communities, Economies, and  
Lives Through Equity and Inclusion

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



**EAST TENNESSEE STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

Participants will:

- Increase their knowledge and awareness of equity and inclusion issues on campus
- Recognize the importance of equity and inclusion in the health of our organizations and communities
- Develop increased empathy for diverse student populations and student experiences
- Learn how to advocate for the well-being of diverse student populations
- Acquire tools for making their classrooms and co-curricular programs more inclusive

## Upcoming Events

### June 2020

Tuesday	June 9	<p>Lunch and Learn Session <i>The Culturally Responsive Classroom</i></p> <p>Discussion lead by: Amy Johnson, Interim Associate Provost for Faculty and Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence</p>	12:00-1:00pm	<p>Join Zoom Meeting <a href="https://etsu.zoom.us/j/95436219629">https://etsu.zoom.us/j/95436219629</a></p> <p>Meeting ID: 954 3621 9629</p>
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### July 2020

Tuesday	July 14	<p>Lunch and Learn Session <i>Reframing Disability</i></p> <p>Discussion lead by: Mary Little, Director and ADA/504 Coordinator Disability Services</p>	12:00-1:00pm	<p>Join Zoom Meeting <a href="https://etsu.zoom.us/j/94846518433">https://etsu.zoom.us/j/94846518433</a></p> <p>Meeting ID: 948 4651 8433</p>
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### August 2020

Tuesday	August 11	<p>Lunch and Learn Session <i>Supporting Underrepresented Learners in an Online Environment</i></p> <p>Discussion lead by: Michele Williams, Academic Success Specialist, College of Pharmacy</p>	12:00-1:00pm	<p>Join Zoom Meeting <a href="https://etsu.zoom.us/j/95501678536">https://etsu.zoom.us/j/95501678536</a></p> <p>Meeting ID: 955 0167 8536</p>
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### September 2020

Tuesday	Sept. 15	<p>Lunch and Learn Session <i>Becoming an LGBTQ Ally</i></p> <p>Discussion co-lead by: Bethany Novotny, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Counseling and Human Services and Stacey Williams, Professor, Dept. of Psychology</p>	12:00-1:00pm	<p>Join Zoom Meeting <a href="https://etsu.zoom.us/j/92785616155">https://etsu.zoom.us/j/92785616155</a></p> <p>Meeting ID: 927 8561 6155</p>
Mon-Wed	Sept. 21-23	2nd Annual Equity and Inclusion Conference	TBA	Virtual Conference

### October 2020

Tuesday	Oct. 20	<p>Lunch and Learn Session <i>How to Run an Inclusion Search</i></p> <p>Discussion co-lead by: Lori Erickson, Assistant Vice President and Kasey Hommel, EEO Specialist, Office of Human Resources</p>	12:00-1:00pm	<p>Join Zoom Meeting <a href="https://etsu.zoom.us/j/97822406142">https://etsu.zoom.us/j/97822406142</a></p> <p>Meeting ID: 978 2240 6142</p>
Tuesday	Oct. 27	<p>Lunch and Learn Session <i>Diversity, Inclusion, and Career Services: Helping students navigate their career through and after college</i></p> <p>Discussion lead by: Jeffrey Alston, Director University Career Services</p>	12:00-1:00pm	<p>Join Zoom Meeting <a href="https://etsu.zoom.us/j/92318735769">https://etsu.zoom.us/j/92318735769</a></p> <p>Meeting ID: 923 1873 5769</p>

### November 2020

		<p>Lunch and Learn Session <i>The Biology of Skin Color</i></p> <p>Discussion lead by: Cerrone Foster, Assistant Professor, Biological Sciences</p>	12:00-1:00pm	<p>Join Zoom Meeting <a href="https://etsu.zoom.us/j/99516630751">https://etsu.zoom.us/j/99516630751</a></p> <p>Meeting ID: 995 1663 0751</p>
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### Up-Coming

Spring	2021	Corazon Latino	TBA	
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## Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council Member Spotlight



Adrianna Guram serves as the Associate Director for Residence Life in ETSU's Department of Housing and Residence Life. An ETSU alum, she has been back on campus since fall 2013, where she has worked with her colleagues on creating a welcoming and inclusive community for students living on-campus. In her free time, Adrianna enjoys working on completing her Ph.D., spending time playing games with friends, and watching her beloved Green Bay Packers.

## ASPECTS - Aligning Support, Pride, Education and Community for Transgender Students

*Counseling Today*, a publication of the American Counseling Association, interviewed **Dr. Bethany Novotny**, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Counseling and Human Services for an article entitled [Affirming All Shades of the Rainbow](#). In the article, she talks about her work with ASPECTS - Aligning Support, Pride, Education and Community for Transgender Students. The article brings national attention to Dr. Novotny's work at ETSU and shines light on some of the unique struggles of this marginalized group.



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**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 [matur@etsu.edu](mailto:matur@etsu.edu).