



Office of Equity and Inclusion Newsletter

February 1, 2024



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

“Recognizing the Remarkable”

Dear Friends,

Black History Month is an annual celebration of the achievements and contributions of African Americans to American history and culture. In February of 2023, in the Equity and Inclusion Newsletter, I introduced the campus and the broader community to my father, Mr. Horace Johnson Sr. as a person to acknowledge and celebrate for his contributions and lifetime achievements (<https://www.etsu.edu/equity/newsletter.php>). This year, I would like to take it further by introducing the community to another tangible African American whom I hold dear, my mom, Mrs. Carolyn C. Johnson.

My mom grew up in a very small town on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, just over the Chesapeake Bay, and not far from the birthplaces of Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass.

~ continued on page 2 ~



"I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality....I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word."

~Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. ~

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Continued ~ Message from Dr. Keith Johnson

She grew up in a single parent home, with tremendous and unwavering support from her grandparents. She has three siblings, two of whom are deceased, including her twin brother. She was educated in the Talbot County School System. She went on to complete her undergraduate degree from Bowie State University and eventually completed her master's degree from North Carolina Central University, both are which are HBCUs.



A few years after my parents married, they moved the family from Maryland to North Carolina to assume the responsibilities of farming after my grandfather could no longer manage the family farm. As my father took over the farming, my mom began teaching as an elementary school teacher. She continued to advance her career by becoming an assistant principal, later principal, assistant superintendent, and eventually, superintendent of the Halifax County School system, where she remained until her retirement.

During the many years of experiencing and witnessing the inequalities and the many disparity gaps in their community, they both became interested in becoming change agents to closing equity gaps. My dad eventually became a Halifax County Commissioner where he served until his health began to fail and my mom began serving out his remaining term. She eventually ran for re-election for many more terms and was never defeated. She continues to serve in that role until December 2024 when she plans to retire from the commission.

Mrs. Carolyn Johnson is a remarkable individual who has played a significant role as County Commissioner in Halifax County, North Carolina. Her dedication to public service, commitment to community development, and advocacy for equitable representation make her a trailblazer in the ongoing narrative of Black excellence. Black History Month is an opportunity to reflect on the rich heritage of African Americans and acknowledge the individuals who have made substantial contributions to their communities and the nation as a whole. Carolyn Johnson stands as an exemplary figure, embodying the spirit of resilience and leadership.

Halifax County, located in North Carolina, has a complex history shaped by the African American community's struggles and triumphs. Carolyn Johnson emerged in this context, demonstrating a passion for community service and a commitment to addressing the challenges faced by her constituents.

As a County Commissioner, Carolyn Johnson has been instrumental in driving positive change in Halifax County. Her tenure has been marked by initiatives aimed at improving education, healthcare, and economic opportunities within the community. Johnson's leadership has contributed to the development of policies fostering inclusivity, economic growth, and social justice.

Continued ~ Message from Dr. Keith Johnson

One of Johnson's notable contributions has been her focus on community development. Through collaboration with local stakeholders, she has championed projects that aim to uplift marginalized communities, create jobs, and enhance the overall quality of life in Halifax County. Johnson's commitment to fostering sustainable development reflects her dedication to building a more equitable future.

Recognizing the transformative power of education, Carolyn Johnson has been a vocal advocate for improving educational opportunities in Halifax County. Her initiatives have aimed at narrowing educational disparities, ensuring access to quality education for all students, and promoting programs that empower the youth to reach their full potential.

As an African American woman serving as a County Commissioner, Carolyn Johnson embodies the importance of diverse representation in local government. Her advocacy for equity extends beyond rhetoric, as she actively works towards dismantling systemic barriers that hinder the progress of underrepresented communities.

Carolyn Johnson's legacy goes beyond her official roles and responsibilities. She has become a symbol of empowerment and resilience for the people of Halifax County. Her impact is measured not only by the policies she has championed but also by the inspiration she provides to aspiring leaders, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds.

Black History Month serves as an opportunity to celebrate individuals like Carolyn Johnson, whose contributions have left an indelible mark on the tapestry of American history. As a County Commissioner in Halifax County, Johnson's dedication to community development, education, and equitable representation sets a precedent for future leaders, reinforcing the importance of diversity and inclusion in the ongoing pursuit of a more just and equal society.

As we take time to acknowledge and celebrate the many contributions that African Americans have made throughout the history of America, let us not forget the university's 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

Black History Month

Looking Forward: Using Black History Month to Plot the Next Steps

By
Daryl A. Carter, Ph.D.
Associate Dean/Community Relations & Outreach
Director/Black American Studies and Professor of History
East Tennessee State University

Black History Month is upon us. This is also a leap year. So there will be an extra day to consider the history of the United States, Black Americans role in the development of the country, the unique experiences of Black Americans, and the present condition and future of Black America. During the summer of 1915, Carter G. Woodson, along with others, went to the nation's capital to remember and celebrate the 50th anniversary of the slaves becoming free persons. Within a year the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASHLH) was founded. Today, it is known as the Association for the Study of African American Life & History (ASALH). While the Talented Tenth, including Woodson, were promoting the human dignity owed to every person of color, there was a strong desire to catalog the Black experience, celebrate Black life, and uplift the race. In February 1926, the very first Negro History Week was held. Fast forward to 1976, some fifty years later, ASALH and others created Black History Month.

Since 1976 Black History Month has been a time for remembrance, celebration, discussion, and contemplation. Nationwide there are discussions about Blacks in business, politics, history, academia, sports, music, the Armed Forces, popular culture, and much, much more. Often these discussions revolve around the Civil War, the formulation of Jim Crow laws and policies, and the success of the Civil Rights Movement. *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing bill of 1968, are lauded as landmark moments of achievement which led to integration, first-class citizenship, and for many Black Americans, a piece of the American Dream.

Yet, bigotry and discrimination and the remaining vestiges of systems of opposition and repression built over the course of centuries continue to hold a heavy shadow over the life of the nation. Dr. King once said: "The arc of the moral universe may be long, but it bends towards justice." That remains true today. But it is also true that we need men and women and non-binary persons from all faiths, races, and ethnicities to pull on that arc and make sure the sons and daughters of malcontent and discontent and disinformation and conspiracy theories and rage and hate and resentment and pessimism and violence do not continue to perpetuate environments in which people, regardless of who they are or where they come from, are dehumanized, exploited, and, ultimately, discarded.

As we turn our attention to Black History Month and remember, learn and discover our collective history, let us focus on uplifting those around us with love, empathy, and compassion, especially those with whom we have disagreements. There is must work to do. Let us get to it!

An Odyssey of Resilience and Development: Samuel Adenekan's Expedition



In the lively city of Lagos, Nigeria, Samuel Adenekan nurtured vibrant aspirations that eventually led him to East Tennessee State University (ETSU). As a junior studying computing with a focus on Information Technology, Samuel embarked on his educational journey in 2021, encountering a tapestry of challenges and triumphs as an international student navigating the intricacies of academia.

Despite hurdles, he demonstrated unwavering determination and an indomitable spirit, viewing each obstacle as an opportunity for growth and boundary redefinition. Immersing himself wholeheartedly in the world of algorithms and codes, Samuel envisions his journey as a computing major paving the way for a successful career as a software engineer.

Beyond the classroom, his involvement extends into the vibrant colors of campus life. Serving as a senator for the College of Business and Technology in the ETSU Student

Government Association, Samuel passionately advocates for his peers, collaborating to ensure the collective voice of the student body resonates throughout the institution.

Samuel's commitment goes further as a member of the ETSU Black Affairs Association and the local chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers, where he actively promotes inclusivity, diversity, and empowerment within his community. Inspired by photography, videography, and music, he captures moments that transcend boundaries, fueling his dreams and contributing to his multifaceted journey.

His story becomes a testament to resilience, faith, and the transformative power of education. As Samuel's journey continues at ETSU, it stands as a radiant thread, illuminating the path for future generations. With hope and possibility brimming in his heart, one thing remains clear: the journey is just beginning, promising ongoing chapters of growth and accomplishment.

"Hold yourself responsible for a higher standard than anybody else expects of you. Never excuse yourself. Never pity yourself. Be a hard master to yourself and be lenient to everybody else"

~ Henry Ward Beecher ~

Upcoming Events

February 2024

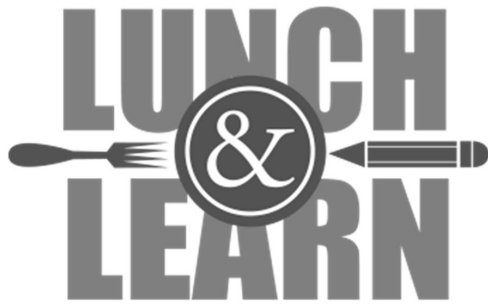
Monday	February 5th	Identity Outlaws: Gender 101	1:30-2:30pm	Culp Center Rm 304
Tuesday	February 6th	Making Ally a Verb: Putting Action Behind Your Allyship Discussion lead: Bethanie Dye, Coordinator, Pride Center	12:00-1:00pm	Via Zoom
Wednesday	February 7th	Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies on Wednesdays - Dr. Katy Beatty see flyer page 9	12:00-1:00pm	Reece Museum
Wednesday	February 7th	Coffee and Conversation: Boundaries Khia Hudgins-Smith See flyer page 10	12:00-1:00pm	Culp Center Multicultural Ctr
Tuesday	February 13th	Removing the Barriers for Students with Disabilities: Accommodations and Accessibility - Mary Little	2:00-3:30pm	Sherrod Library Room 433 Register
Friday	February 16th	How Instructors Can Support and Welcome Students of Marginalized Sexual and Gender Identities In (and Beyond) the Classroom - Dr. Mickey White	10:00-11:30am	Sherrod Library Room 433 Register
Thursday	February 19th	The Crafting Blackness Initiative with ETSU Black American Studies and Bravissima! Women Sponsoring the Arts! Amythyst Kiah with ETSU Old-Time Ramblers	7:00pm	ETSU Martin Center
Tuesday	February 20th	Ageism Awareness & Age-Friendly University Discussion lead: Dr. Jodi Southerland, Assistant Professor, Department of Community and Behavioral Health	12:00-1:00pm	Via Zoom

March 2024

Wednesday	March 6th	Inclusion and Accessibility in Large Classes – Dr. Patrick Brown	2:30-4:00pm	Sherrod Library Room 433 Register
Tuesday	March 19th	Leading for Equity and Belonging Promoting Campus-Wide Engagement Discussion lead: Keyana J Miller, Project Support Specialist, Resources for Learning, LLC	12:00-1:00pm	Via Zoom

April 2024

Tuesday	April 2nd	More than my Disability Discussion lead: Hannah N Smith, & Madison Huffine, Graduate Students, ETSU	12:00-1:00pm	Via Zoom
Thursday	April 4th	How Instructors Can Support and Welcome Students of Marginalized Sexual and Gender Identities In (and Beyond) the Classroom	10:00-11:30am	Online Register



Eat. Connect. Discover.

Bring your lunch and join us for an hour of discussion and learning. All times are noon-1 p.m.

All sessions are open to members of the ETSU community, and held in the Multicultural Center, 2nd floor, D.P. Culp Center unless otherwise noted*.

Sponsored by:

The ETSU Office of Equity and Inclusion

Spring 2024 Series

Dates subject to change. View our website for additional information.



Tuesday, February 6th

Making Ally a Verb: Putting Action Behind Your Allyship

Discussion lead: Bethanie Dye, Coordinator, Pride Center

[Via Zoom](#)

Tuesday, February 20th

Ageism Awareness & Age-Friendly University

Discussion lead: Dr. Jodi Southerland, Assistant Professor, Department of Community and Behavioral Health

[Via Zoom](#)

Tuesday, March 19th

Leading for Equity and Belonging Promoting Campus-Wide Engagement

Discussion lead: Keyana J Miller, Project Support Specialist, Resources for Learning, LLC

[Via Zoom](#)

Tuesday, April 2nd

More than my Disability

Discussion lead: Hannah N Smith, & Madison Huffine, Graduate Students, ETSU

[Via Zoom](#)

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

Mary V. Jordan Multicultural Center
Martin Luther King, Jr.



Commemorative Events

MLK Legacy Program

Feb.
1

Alumni Bell Tower
Rain location: Burgin Dossett 2nd Floor
11:30 am to 12:30 pm

Cake Cutting Celebration

D.P. Culp Student Center
1st Floor Upper Main Street
1:30 to 2:30 pm



For more information, contact 423-439-4844 or etsumc@etsu.edu

Sunshine Anderson



Rico Parkay

Run it back...

FREE CONCERT FOR ALL!
D. P. CULP AUDITORIUM AT ETSU
FEBRUARY 3, 2024
7:00 PM

WGS on Wednesdays
Speaker Series

Join us at the Reece
Museum

FEBRUARY, 7TH @ NOON

WOMEN'S, GENDER, & SEXUALITY STUDIES ON WEDNESDAYS



Dr. Kate Beatty

Department of Health Services
Management & Policy
Center for Rural Health Research

Emergency Contraception Post-Dobbs in the US Southeast

This session will explore the current landscape of Emergency Contraception including policies, definitions and misconceptions, barriers to provision, and the importance of emergency contraception accessibility in restrictive reproductive health policy settings.

In partnership with the Reece Museum's "EMBODYING CULTURE: WOMEN IN APPALACHIA" exhibit
(JANUARY 15 - JULY 4, 2024)

WGSS@ETSU.EDU 423-439-4215



Mary V. Jordan Multicultural Center

Martin Luther King, Jr.

MLK Commemoration

“King’s Beloved Community”

Host: Kevin L. Brooks, Ph.D.

Song Selection: ETSU Gospel Choir

Candle Lighting: Sigma Beta Chapter

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

Culp Center East TN Room 272

6:00 to 7:30 pm

**Feb
6**



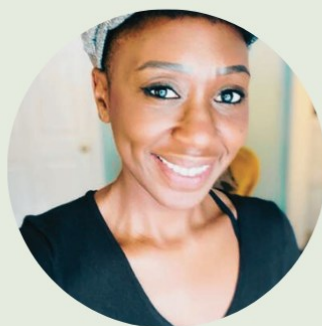
EAST TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY

Mary V. Jordan Multicultural Center

For more information, contact 423-439-4844 or etsumc@etsu.edu

BOUNDARIES

Why are boundaries so
hard sometimes?



Khia Hudgins-Smith
ETSU Counseling Center

Wednesday
February 7
1:00pm-2:00pm
Multicultural Center
Coffee, tea, and snacks!

Part of the Coffee & Conversation series with
the Women and Gender Resource Center

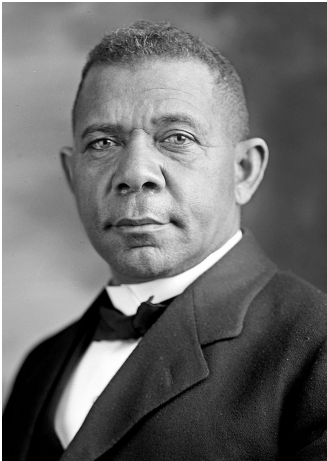
WANT TO JOIN IN ON THE FUN?

APPLY TO BE A B.U.C.S. ACADEMY LEADER!

For more information
 Email: bucacademy@etsu.edu /
 Call: 423-439-4844

SCAN HERE

E EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
 Mary V. Jordan Multicultural Center



"Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed."

*~Booker T. Washington~
 author and politician*

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Webpage: <https://www.etsu.edu/equity/>
 Facebook: <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.

To add a name to our mailing list, please email Kim Maturo at maturo@etsu.edu.