



Office of Equity and Inclusion

March 19, 2021

Greetings! I hope that you are taking advantage of the recent warm weather and the change in time that we are experiencing, allowing us to have more daylight to enjoy.

Unfortunately, not all families nor eight individuals will have the same privilege of enjoying the weather and daylight in the same context. We recently experienced another senseless act of murder that has taken the lives of eight innocent people. A man who police say went on a rampage at three spas in the Atlanta area has been charged with eight counts of murder in connection with the fatal attacks. Further reports indicate that at least six of the murdered victims were women of Asian descent.

As we begin to process this and attempt to move towards a brighter future, we must recognize the troubling trend that we have seen and many have experienced in major American cities, which includes a significant increase in hate crimes and violence targeting Asians, Pacific Islander, and Desi Americans, at least impart due to the pandemic.

During the last few months, many disturbing and shocking videos have surfaced on social media and other outlets depicting violent assaults against Asian-Americans. Recent studies and one in particular report from the California State University's Center for the Extremism and Hate highlighted that hate crimes against Asian-Americans jumped 150 percent in the larger American cities just last year. This equates to nearly 3,800 hate incidents during 2020. We are not immune from these incidents in our own region. We must remain vigilant of such behavior and not remain complicit if we hear, see or experience such abuse.

I encourage our ETSU community to stand up, support our Asian-American community. Speak up, and speak out if you witness such discriminatory behavior that is rooted in racial bigotry against any group. Now is not the time to remain silent. It is time to dig deep and locate our shared humanity as citizens of this society as we seek to live out the mission of ETSU 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.

Members of the ETSU community should be aware of support services for those students, faculty, and staff who may have been impacted.

The ETSU [Counseling Center](#) provides personal counseling for students, as well as outreach and referrals. Students may contact the ETSU Counseling Center (423) 439-3333. The Counseling Center is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday and is encouraging appointments via Zoom. The Bucs Press 2 service is available 24/7 by dialing (423) 439-4841 and pressing 2 for a counselor.

The [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#) is a resource for faculty and staff members who need counseling support and referral to other resources. Assistance is available 24/7 by calling (855) 437-3486.

The [Dean of Students website](#) is a resource for students and for student referral. The site includes the most often utilized resources along with links to other support services. Student referrals may be made to the Dean of Students office by submitting a [CARE Report](#) or emailing deanofstudents@etsu.edu

For those students living in impacted areas, we recommend reviewing class absence policies in your course syllabi. If your online connectivity or ability to continue your course is affected, please contact your professors. Student Life and Enrollment can help with Emergency Notifications to professors and discuss academic options. Call 423-439-4210 or email studentlife@etsu.edu

Thank you for your continued support and values regarding equity and inclusion at East Tennessee State University. Please continue to live and share our values as you interact with others on and off the campus of ETSU.

Dr. Keith V. Johnson
Vice President for Equity and Inclusion