



# Office of Equity and Inclusion Newsletter

June 2, 2023



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

### “Juneteenth, Celebrating Emancipation”

Dear Friends,

In the United States the Fourth of July is a widely celebrated federal holiday commemorating the Declaration of Independence ratified on July 4, 1776, establishing the United States of America. During this time the second continental congress declared that the thirteen colonies were no longer subject to the monarch of Britain, King George III and were now united, free and independent states.

Typically, around the nation, many families and friends celebrated the country’s independence with fireworks, parades, barbecues, carnivals and picnics and political speeches. While many Americans were celebrating, many Black Americans were enslaved, dreaming and praying for a day when they could experience such freedoms and liberation.

~ continued on page 2 ~



“One can choose to go back  
toward safety or forward toward  
growth. Growth must be chosen  
again and again; fear must be  
overcome again and again.”  
~ Abraham Maslow

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## Continued ~ Message from Dr. Keith Johnson

Nearly nine decades later on January 1, 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect declaring that all persons held as slaves “within the rebellious states are, and henceforward shall be free.” This announcement promised freedom to more than 3.5 million Black Americans who were enslaved in Confederate states.

However, this was not enforceable until those states came under union control. Though the word “all” in the proclamation appears to be fully encompassing, it was limited in states that seceded from the U.S. In essence, slavery continued in other states, including the Southern secessionist states.

Although there appeared to be excitement around the Emancipation Proclamation, it did not end slavery. Many slave owners fled with those whom they had enslaved to the state of Texas to avoid freeing them.

The Emancipation Proclamation did transform the character of the Civil War that was happening by allowing Black men to serve in the Union Navy and Army. The Civil War began in large part as a culmination of the long-standing disagreement over the institution of slavery. By the time the war ended in the spring of 1865, as many as 200,000 Black sailors and soldiers had been fighting for the Union.

So, what exactly is Juneteenth and why is it so important? By June 19, 1865 there were more than 250,000 enslaved Black people in the state of Texas due to the confederate slave owner dash to that state. That same day approximately 2,000 Union troops arrived in Galveston Bay, Texas. They announced that all enslaved Black Americans were now free by executive decree. This was more than two years after the official Emancipation Proclama-

tion went into effect because enslaved Black Americans in Texas were not made aware of the proclamation. So June 19 represents the end of slavery and the beginning of “freedom” for **all** enslaved Black Americans, thus establishing the phrase “Juneteenth.”

This date commemorates and signifies “freedom” for all enslaved Black Americans due to the legal abolition of slavery. This day is becoming a date that many are beginning to celebrate around the country. I encourage and challenge you to engage in conversations with those who know this history or with those who have never heard of or celebrated Juneteenth. As an institution, we should understand and be proud to celebrate this occasion as a step in the direction of liberty for all.

ETSU is well aware of many of the inequities that exist among various population and by working through its Moon Shot initiatives to address equity gaps in persistence and graduation, it is the hope that many narratives of student success will evolve through our lived out 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; and COMMITMENT to intellectual achievement is embraced.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Keith Johnson

# Juneteenth

Juneteenth is an important holiday that commemorates the end of slavery in the United States. It is a day to celebrate freedom, honor the resilience of African Americans, and reflect on the ongoing struggle for racial justice and equality.



People designed a flag to tell the story of Juneteenth.

The colors: The colors of the American flag – red, white, and blue. This is to say that the people freed in Texas were American citizens.

The 5-point star is a symbol for Texas (the Lone Star State). Texas is where the Juneteenth holiday started. They added the big star to tell about the spread of freedom.

***While Juneteenth is a celebration of Black freedom, the holiday isn't just for the Black community. Juneteenth gives people an opportunity to reflect on what it means to live in a country and in communities that say we value individual rights, we value freedom, we value freedom of the press and freedom of speech. And if we value that, we need to value that for everybody"***

~ Barbara Krauthamer, Ph.D., historian and Dean of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts at the University of Massachusetts Amherst

# Pride Month

Pride Month commemorates years of struggle for civil rights and the ongoing pursuit of equal justice under the law for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community, as well as the accomplishments of LGBTQ individuals.

Pride Month was first recognized in 1994 when a coalition of education-based organizations in the United States designated October as LGBT History Month. The federal government first recognized the month in 1999 when President Bill Clinton declared June “Gay & Lesbian Pride Month.” In 2009, President Barack Obama declared June LGBT Pride Month. On June 1, 2021, President Joe Biden declared June LGBTQ Pride Month.



## Safe Zone and Other Resources

What is Safe Zone? [ETSU Safe Zone](#) is a community of LGBTQ+ allies on ETSU campus who have all undergone an orientation to being an LGBTQ+ ally and signed the ETSU Safe Zone pledge.

### [ETSU LGBTQ+ Resources](#)

**Gender-Neutral Restrooms on campus:** <https://www.etsu.edu/students/mcc/programs/lgbtq/resources/campus.php>

**Pride Center (Dr. Patricia Robertson Pride Center)** - LGBTQIA+ pride center located on the second floor of the D.P. Culp Student Center: <https://www.etsu.edu/students/mcc/programs/lgbtq/>

**SAGA (Sexual and Gender Alliance) Student Organization** provides education and a safe space for those in the ETSU community. <https://www.facebook.com/ETSUSaga/>

**Transgender Support Group:** Contact the ETSU Counselling Center for more information - (423) 439-3333 [counselingcenter@etsu.edu](mailto:counselingcenter@etsu.edu)

## Celebrating Laura Terry - 36 years at ETSU

**Laura Casey Terry** has served East Tennessee State University (ETSU) for 36 years, guiding students through influential character-building and extracurricular experiences. She began her professional career at ETSU as an Admissions Counselor. That path led to her becoming the Director of Multicultural Affairs, and eventually, Director of Programming and Outreach for the Multicultural Center.



She worked with a diversity of students and student groups as the advisor for several student organizations, including the Black Affairs Association, the National Panhellenic Council, the Chinese Student and Scholars Association, the South Asian Cultural Exchange, Shades of Africa, the Gospel Choir, and the International Choir. Fulfilling the duties of her position and as advisor to these student groups, she produced lectures, educational displays, celebratory festivals, and a series of thematic events filled with a variety of informative and co-curricular activities.

In addition, she was responsible for introducing programming to ease the transition of new students into the university life. This workload required extensive hours of preparation and execution extending into many late night and weekend hours on a regular basis.

For more than three decades, she advised, counseled, and mentored a countless number of students, many of whom credit her with their success in obtaining college degrees. A large number of those students continue to reach out to her, bringing their children into the fold as new ETSU students. To honor her, members of ETSU's Black Alumni Association created the Laura Casey Terry Finish Line Scholarship Endowment.

The purpose of the [Laura Casey Terry Finish Line Scholarship](#) Endowment is to provide scholarship assistance to students who began but did not complete a baccalaureate degree at ETSU. The scholarship focuses on students with an abiding interest in social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion who wish to re-enter ETSU to complete a Bachelor's degree from the Division of Cross-Disciplinary Studies.

## Divisive Concepts

The Tennessee legislature Divisive Concepts Act, as amended will go into effect July 1, 2023. The Office of Equity and Inclusion will be scheduling town hall meetings over the summer to discuss the recent amendments to the Act.

[Click here](#) for a recording of a lunch and learn session titled "Divisive Concepts" held on March 28, 2023 with Brian A. Lapps, Jr. General Counsel, Tennessee Board of Regents and Dr. Mark Fulks, ETSU General Counsel.

*The Chronicle of Higher Education* has a [DEI Legislation Tracker \(chronicle.com\)](#) where you can track the latest DEI legislation affecting colleges and universities across the country.



# B.U.C.S. (Building Up College Success) Academy

**B.U.C.S. Academy students arrive on campus July 7-29, 2023.**

The [B.U.C.S. Academy program](#) is designed to give entering first-time college students a solid foundation before they start their first year. This summer program helps students to:

- Jump start their college career by earning three free credit hours before their first year of college.
- Get to know new friends, build relationships, and form a network of people who will support them throughout their college career.
- Enhance their study skills in college-level reading, writing, thinking, and public speaking.
- Participate in academic seminars, workshops, and other on- and off-campus activities designed to familiarize students with ETSU and Johnson City.
- Participate in [ETSU's QUEST](#) and [Preview](#) programs the week before fall classes begin and will continue in the program through the academic year.

The fall portion of the program is a natural extension of the summer program. It begins on the first day of fall classes and continues through the sophomore year. The students take one fall required class as a group and participate in bi-weekly programming that reinforces and extends their studentship skills, career exploration, and other topics explored in their summer program.

For additional information or to learn more please contact [bucsacademy@etsu.edu](mailto:bucsacademy@etsu.edu).



## QUEST for Success Program

### PURPOSE

The **QUEST for Success** program is to provide under-represented, first generation, minorities and socioeconomically disadvantaged students with additional resources and preparation that will contribute to their success in the university's academic environment and beyond. Each year the program focuses on the development of students in a very specific area depending on major and year. The program emphasizes the importance of the soft skills that students need to obtain as they progress through college. By providing our students with these skills, we are grooming them for success.

### MISSION

- To serve as support for underrepresented minority and socioeconomically disadvantaged students by establishing a campus network
- To ease the transition from high school to college, freshman year to graduation, and beyond.
- To aid in the retention of students
- To promote social, emotional, and academic success of all students, particularly underrepresented minority students
- To provide support, guidance and general assistance to students

**USC** Race and  
Equity Center

# Supporting and Retaining Employees of Color

*East Tennessee Higher Education  
Regional Alliance*

**Friday, June 30  
1pm-3pm EDT**



**Toby Jenkins, Ph.D.** serves as Interim Associate Dean of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion in the Graduate School at the University of South Carolina. She is also a tenured Associate Professor of Higher Education in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies within the College of Education.

Register at [www.uscrec.info/ETHERA\\_6](http://www.uscrec.info/ETHERA_6)

The recording of this live session will be available on [equityconnect.usc.edu](http://equityconnect.usc.edu).

## Upcoming Events

June 2023				
Tuesday	June 13th	Lunch and Learn <b>DEI &amp; Civic Engagement</b> Discussion Lead: Nathan Farnor, Coordinator, Leadership and Civic Engagement	12:00-1:00pm	<a href="#">Via Zoom</a>
Thurs- day Friday	June 29th June 30th	<b>Supporting and Retaining Employees of Color</b> Discussion Lead: Dr. Toby Jenkins, USC Race and Equity Center	1:00-3:00pm	<a href="#">Via Zoom</a>
July 2023				
Tuesday	July 18th	Lunch and Learn <b>Intersectionality</b> Discussion Lead: Khia Hudgins-Smith, MS, LPC-MHSP, NCC, Diversity Focused Clinical Counselor	12:00-1:00pm	<a href="#">Via Zoom</a>
Wednes.	July 26th	<b>Accountability and Incentives for Advancing Racial Equity</b> Discussion Lead: USC Race and Equity Center	1:00-3:00pm	<a href="#">Via Zoom</a>
August 2023				
Tuesday	August 1st	Lunch and Learn <b>The Libraries' Role in Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion</b> Discussion Lead: Christiana Keinath, Health Sciences Librarian, Assistant Professor, Sherrod Library/Research & Instruction Services	12:00-1:00pm	<a href="#">Via Zoom</a>
Thurs- day	August 24th	<b>Fostering and Sustaining Inclusive Classrooms for Students of Color</b> Discussion Lead: USC Race and Equity Center	1:00-3:00pm	<a href="#">Via Zoom</a>



Jason Flack

The artwork illustrating the 5th Annual Equity and Inclusion Conference theme, *"Beyond 'Checking a Box:' Building and Sustaining Campus-Wide Engagement for Belonging"* was created by Jason Flack.

Jason is an "Urban Folk" expressionist & pop-artist, community leader, and speaker and a native of Johnson City, Tennessee. His work has been heavily influenced by personal life experiences as well as many cartoons, comic books, and music. He has been drawing for over 30 years and painting for over 10.

The conference dates are September 28-30, 2023. To learn more visit the [conference website](#).



# eConvenings

## East Tennessee Higher Education Regional Alliance

# USC Race and Equity Center

This professional learning series is for full-time and part-time employees at Alliance member institutions. Each month, nationally renowned equity experts will offer a highly-engaging live session via Zoom on a different racial equity topic. Useful tools and practical strategies will be provided in every synchronous three-hour experience. Every campus can send up to 400 employees to each session – it could be the same 400 people, or a different set each month. While there is no cost, advance registration is required for each individual session.

### **Understanding and Addressing Implicit Bias**

Thursday, January 26 | 1-3pm EST

Register at [www.uscrec.info/ETHERA\\_1](http://www.uscrec.info/ETHERA_1)

### **Engaging in Productive Conversations About Race and Racism**

Tuesday, February 28 | 1-3pm EST

Register at [www.uscrec.info/ETHERA\\_2](http://www.uscrec.info/ETHERA_2)

### **Understanding the Effects of Racism on Students' Experiences and Outcomes**

Thursday, March 30 | 1-3pm EST

Register at [www.uscrec.info/ETHERA\\_3](http://www.uscrec.info/ETHERA_3)

### **Confronting Explicit Acts of Racism and Racial Violence on Campus**

Wednesday, April 19 | 1-3pm EST

Register at [www.uscrec.info/ETHERA\\_4](http://www.uscrec.info/ETHERA_4)

### **Strategically Recruiting Employees of Color**

Monday, May 22 | 1-3pm EST

Register at [www.uscrec.info/ETHERA\\_5](http://www.uscrec.info/ETHERA_5)

### **Supporting and Retaining Employees of Color**

Thursday, June 30 | 1-3pm EST Register at

[www.uscrec.info/ETHERA\\_6](http://www.uscrec.info/ETHERA_6)

### **Accountability and Incentives for Advancing Racial Equity**

Wednesday, July 26 | 1-3pm EST

Register at [www.uscrec.info/ETHERA\\_7](http://www.uscrec.info/ETHERA_7)

### **Fostering and Sustaining Inclusive Classrooms for Students of Color**

Thursday, August 24 | 1-3pm EST

Register at [www.uscrec.info/ETHERA\\_8](http://www.uscrec.info/ETHERA_8)

### **Meaningfully Integrating Racial Topics Across the Curriculum**

Friday, September 29 | 1-3pm EST

Register at [www.uscrec.info/ETHERA\\_9](http://www.uscrec.info/ETHERA_9)

### **Engaging Students of Color in High-Impact Educational Practices and Experiences**

Tuesday, October 24 | 1-3pm EST

Register at [www.uscrec.info/ETHERA\\_10](http://www.uscrec.info/ETHERA_10)

### **Using Disaggregated Data to Identify and Address Racial Inequities**

Thursday, November 9 | 1-3pm EST

Register at [www.uscrec.info/ETHERA\\_11](http://www.uscrec.info/ETHERA_11)

### **Strategic Planning and Action for Racial Equity**

Tuesday, December 5 | 1-3pm EST

Register at [www.uscrec.info/ETHERA\\_12](http://www.uscrec.info/ETHERA_12)

**race.usc.edu**

Direct all inquiries to  
**Dr. Minh Tran** (mctran@usc.edu)

**USC** Race and  
Equity Center

# EQUITY CONNECT



**INTERACT**



**CONNECT**



**SHARED LEARNING**



**FORM INTEREST GROUPS**



**VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES  
OF PRACTICE**



**FIND RESOURCES**

Learn more at  
[equityconnect.usc.edu](https://equityconnect.usc.edu)

This portal is for employees of colleges and universities that are members of the USC Race and Equity Center's alliances, equity institutes, leadership academies, and other partnerships. It includes video recordings and assets from eConvenings, as well as other downloadable racial equity resources. This portal also allows persons with authenticated profiles to form and actively participate in virtual communities of practice. Posing questions of practice, offering advice to colleagues, sharing effective practices, and fostering new collaborations are all possible in the virtual communities.

## Meet Diversity Champion Nathan Farnor



**Nathaniel Farnor  
(He/Him)  
Coordinator,  
Leadership and  
Civic Engagement**

*Recognizing the diverse faculty, staff, students, and community partners that call East Tennessee State University home,*

*the Office of Equity & Inclusion fosters a campus culture where people of all backgrounds cannot only exist but also be treated with dignity and respect academically, professionally, and personally.*

*As a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, we often discuss sexuality, gender, and identity as it relates to a "spectrum"- a reference to the reality that an individual's identity is often complex, changing, and not easily categorized. As my own knowledge and understanding of our world continues to grow, I have found myself viewing most topics related to diversity from this Queer lens, meaning that diversity is more than labels or "boxes." Visually, I view it more like a 3-dimensional Venn diagram with varying forms of identity bumping into one another - sometimes overlapping and sometimes repelling. With this in mind, I often encourage others to give space*

*for the reality that somebody else's identity may not, and will often not, fit their own definition or understanding of diverse topics...and that is okay. You do not have to understand everything about a person in order to treat them with dignity and respect.*

*I am a strong advocate for the need to talk about difficult or "heavy" topics outside of periods of tension, conflict, or emergency. While these conversations should happen in those moments of national debate, I often feel as though the most productive conversations are happening both regularly and consistently, allowing us to move forward thoughtfully and intentionally.*

*Through the institution's Diversity Educators and Volunteer ETSU initiatives, two areas in which I serve as Staff Advisor, we have made it a priority to not only support students and student leaders in engaging with diverse topics through programming and education, but we have expanded the work to support students in identifying real-world problems (both on campus and in the larger community) and giving them the skills and knowledge needed to have heavy conversations or tackle systemic challenges in both their personal and professional lives.*

*~ Nathan Farnor*

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**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](mailto:maturo@etsu.edu).

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