



EAST TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY



From **My Notepads**

November 4, 2020



Reflection on the Days Ahead

One of the great hallmarks of colleges and universities is that they are institutions where a free and open exchange of ideas is embraced and where thoughtful and meaningful conversations can take place. At times, the ideas and opinions of others may not be aligned with our own personal views. East Tennessee State University is an institution where people come first, are treated with dignity and respect and where those differences are embraced and, at times, bring us together. The topic of politics is one

that often draws strong reactions and, unfortunately, can divide relationships. I recognize that the current political landscape has done just that. As we move through hours and possibly days when major uncertainties are relevant about the outcome of the 2020 election, I challenge you to hold closely to the **core values** of this wonderful institution we call home. If you encounter discord, I encourage you to react with civility and to demonstrate personal integrity. Do not let the differences of ideas or opinions cause separation in your relationships with others.

I also recognize that the stress of these uncertain times can present challenges in coping. You may be struggling and feeling alone. We have a number of resources available for members of the ETSU community and I encourage anyone needing assistance to reach out and ask for help. For our students, these resources include the **Counseling Center** ([423-439-3333](tel:423-439-3333)), and we also have an **Employee Assistance Program** for our faculty and staff that can be accessed through our Office of Human Resources ([423-439-4457](tel:423-439-4457)).

Additionally, I hope faculty and staff will participate in one of the upcoming training sessions aimed at helping us learn how to engage/respond in ways that are aligned with ETSU's Core Values when we encounter potentially divisive (political and social) topics. The Office of Human Resources will host **"We Hear You!" – Helping ETSU employees appropriately navigate polarizing topics in the workplace** on Thursday, Nov. 5 and Friday, Nov. 20 at 10 a.m. **Click here** to learn more and to register.

Remember, we are one ETSU, one community, and together we will get through these challenging times.

Board of Trustees to Meet November 13

The ETSU Board of Trustees will hold its next meeting on Friday, November 13. On that date, the full board will meet as well as three committees. Information on meeting times, materials, and location will be updated at the **Board of Trustees website**.

New ETSU Chief of Police Arrives Monday

Next week we will have the honor of welcoming Cesar Gracia back home to the campus where he



Cesar Gracia
*Chief of Police and Director of
Public Safety*

received his undergraduate and graduate degrees. Gracia is our new [Chief of Police and Director of Public Safety](#) and assumes this new role on November 9. For the past five years he has served as police chief at Lincoln Memorial University. His career also includes time with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation and the Kingsport Police Department.

Upcoming Strong BRAIN Institute Event

As you recall from earlier this summer, a partnership between the university and Ballad Health has resulted in the launching of the [ETSU Ballad Health Strong BRAIN Institute](#). The institute is being led by Dr. Wally Dixon, who is chair of the Department of Psychology. The first in a series of [Town Hall Conversations](#) focusing on promoting resilience at ETSU is scheduled for **Tuesday, November 17 at 11 a.m.** The Town Hall, “Cameras On versus Cameras Off: Conversations on Virtual Resilience,” will be held via **Zoom**. [Click here](#) to register.



Celebrating a New Season: Holiday Lights Ceremony November 9

The ETSU community will kick off the holiday season during our annual [Holiday Lights Ceremony](#) on **Monday, November 9, at 5:45 p.m.** Join us in Alumni Plaza in front of the Carillon as SGA President Shivam Patel, Bucky and I turn on the holiday lights and enjoy hot cocoa, cookies, and live entertainment from the Department of Music. I look forward to seeing you and your family, and I thank you in advance for considering the health and safety of others by practicing physical distancing and wearing a face covering at the event.

COVID-19 Safety Information

Our region is witnessing significant numbers being report of persons who have been diagnosed with COVID-19. As flu season is also upon us, these CDC guidelines are vitally important for protecting your health as well as the health and safety of others.

- Wear face coverings or masks in public settings
 - Avoid close contact by practicing physical distancing and staying at least 6-feet apart
 - Frequent handwashing for 20 seconds
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces
 - Stay home if you are not feeling well
 - Contact your primary health care provider about getting your flu shot
- For more health and safety information, visit our [Bucs Are Back website](#).

