

# STUDENT AFFAIRS NEWSLETTER

The Division of Student Affairs Quarterly Newsletter



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## STUDENT SUCCESS: EMPOWERING LIFELONG LEARNERS

In a proactive effort to champion student success, Tennessee Tech's Division of Student Affairs is working to promote education for life. By leveraging their collective resources and expertise, staff are committed to equipping students with the skills, support, and resources needed for success well beyond graduation.

Dr. Cynthia Polk-Johnson, Vice President for Student Affairs, states, "It really takes a multifaceted approach to foster student success. Our departments have a way of working collaboratively across divisional lines to connect students to faculty and academic resources, provide opportunities for student engagement beyond the classroom, help students develop a sense of belonging, cultivate healthy behaviors, challenge them to step outside of their comfort zones to develop leadership skills, and prepare them for the real world."

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It takes every department in the division to make this happen and they all contribute in meaningful ways. The Office of Student Engagement leads initiatives aimed at providing students with comprehensive learning experiences. Through leadership development programs, community service opportunities, and extracurricular activities, students are encouraged to explore multiple interests and cultivate essential life skills. Efforts by University Police are being directed towards creating a safe and secure campus environment conducive to learning. By promoting safety awareness and fostering positive community relationships, students can focus on their academic pursuits with peace of mind. The Counseling Center plays a crucial role in supporting students' mental health and well-being. Through counseling services, and workshops, students receive assistance in managing stress, overcoming challenges, and maintaining overall wellness.



The Office of the Dean of Students serves as a vital resource for student advocacy and support. Addressing student concerns, providing guidance, and facilitating access to campus resources, the Dean of Students ensures that students receive the assistance needed. Through preventative care services, health education programs, and access to medical resources, provided by Health Services, students are empowered to prioritize their well-being as an essential aspect of their educational journey. The Office of Intercultural Affairs fosters an inclusive campus environment that celebrates diversity and promotes cultural understanding. Through educational programming, cultural events, and initiatives promoting inclusivity, students are exposed to unique perspectives and experiences.



Housing and Residential Life empowers lifelong learning by fostering a supportive and enriching living environment where students can thrive academically, personally, and socially. Through their experiences in the residence halls, students develop the skills, knowledge, and resilience necessary to succeed, setting them on a path towards lifelong learning. The Accessible Education Center at Tennessee Tech plays a pivotal role in empowering lifelong learning for students by providing tailored accommodations, comprehensive support, and fostering an inclusive environment. Through personalized accommodation plans, students with accommodations receive the necessary tools and resources to fully engage in their academic pursuits, laying the foundation for a lifetime of learning and achievement.



Campus Recreation at Tennessee Tech plays a vital role in empowering lifelong learning for students by providing opportunities for physical activity and social engagement. Through a variety of recreational programs, fitness classes, intramural sports, and outdoor adventures, Campus Recreation promotes holistic well-being and fosters a sense of community among students that helps them pursue lifelong learning both inside and outside the classroom. The Eagle Card Office at Tennessee Tech serves as a gateway to empowering lifelong learning for students by providing essential services and resources that enhance their campus experience. Through the issuance and management of student identification cards, the Eagle Card Office facilitates access to various campus facilities, including libraries, labs, and recreational centers, fostering a conducive environment for learning and research.

Together, staff in the division are working collaboratively to provide a comprehensive support system that promotes education for life. By addressing students' academic, personal, and cultural needs, they are dedicated to empowering students to achieve success and fulfillment throughout their lifelong learning journey.



## STUDENT LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

Tennessee Tech proudly presents the Student Leadership Development initiative. Since October 2023, a cross-divisional committee of students and staff have worked to craft leadership program goals and design features to uniquely serve Tech students, and planning for a wide range of leadership development opportunities is underway.

The initiative also includes a new Student Leadership website, [www.tntech.edu/student/lead](http://www.tntech.edu/student/lead), coordinated by the Office of Student Affairs, which offers a user-friendly interface, providing students with easy access to a wealth of resources. From leadership workshop requests to becoming involved in leadership-based organizations such as Omicron Delta Kappa (ODK) Leadership Society, the platform caters to diverse needs, fostering an environment where students can thrive both academically and personally.

These efforts, and others, serve as a cornerstone for students aspiring to develop and refine their leadership skills. A big thanks to the work that the Student Leadership Development Committee put into this initiative.



# STUDENT AFFAIRS STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Congratulations to Kendall Ely for being chosen as February's Student Affairs Student Spotlight! Kendall, hailing from Knoxville, Tennessee, is a Junior majoring in International Business and Culture with minors in sociology and cybersecurity. Her passion for business, especially on an international scale, stems from her love of travel and appreciation for language in commerce. She's actively involved in Tennessee Tech's German club and the Honor Society for Foreign Language. After graduation, Kendall plans to attend law school, aspiring to specialize in corporate or criminal defense law.

Kendall's nomination also considered her dedication to volunteering. She has volunteered for organizations like Shoes for School and Vaccine Clinics, focusing on aiding children, which has been a passion of hers since high school. Kendall credits her mother for inspiring her kindness, stating, "there are so many people that need a friend at certain times. Talking and listening to them can make their day, even if they are a stranger. Smiles do not cost anything."

Kendall's compassionate nature, community contributions, and academic achievements truly embody the spirit of a Golden Eagle, making her an excellent choice for this month's Student Affairs Student Spotlight.



## LEVEL UP: GAMING CAVE UPGRADED

The Burnett Rec Center's Gaming Cave has recently had a glow up. With a sleek new look featuring fresh paint and vibrant LED lighting, Campus Recreation is excited to offer this enhanced space for Tennessee Tech students to game. The Cave now boasts four state-of-the-art gaming stations complete with upgraded displays, ethernet ports, and plush seating for ultimate comfort. Designed with flexibility in mind, the chairs can be moved to allow for seamless transitions between small group play and larger gatherings.

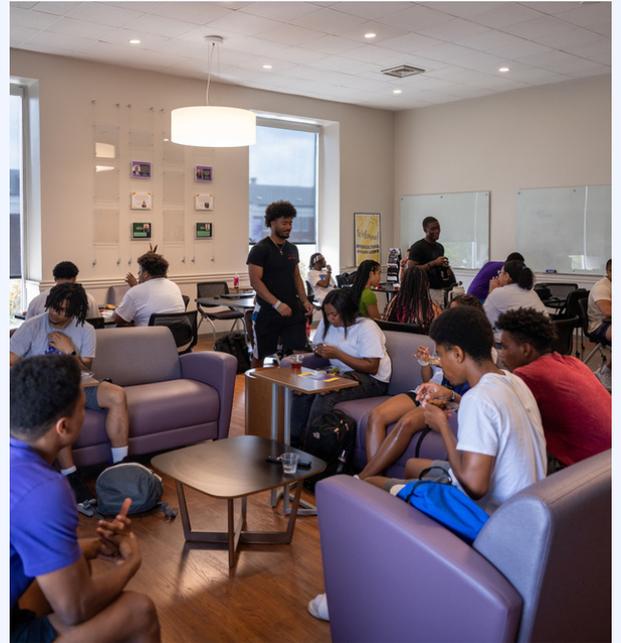
Students can bring their preferred consoles to challenge fellow gamers both on campus and across the globe. Open daily for all facility users, the Cave is also available for student group reservations, offering the perfect venue for practices and LAN gaming events.



# THE INAUGURAL YEAR OF THE INTERCULTURAL LOUNGE

Much has happened to the area that was once the Noble Cody Executive Suite since the progress of the updates was discussed in last March's issue. During the past year, the final touches were added to the new Intercultural Lounge, culminating in its official grand opening this past fall in August. Since then, it has emerged as a popular destination for students to spend their free time at Tennessee Tech.

The Intercultural Lounge has become such an integral part of campus life in so short a time because the room provides a space for students to study, socialize, and grow in community. Essentially, the lounge's mission perfectly aligns with Student Affairs' objectives, providing students with an environment conducive to academic, personal, and cultural development.



## COLLEGE TOWN TALK

The relationship between the Tennessee Tech and Cookeville communities is unique in its deep interconnection and mutual benefaction. The College Town Talk podcast aims to highlight the students, staff, faculty, alumni, and members of either community who are doing great work for both. Since August 2023, Jonathon Frank and Shan Stout host two individuals each episode to discuss the latest news regarding or their contributions to the invaluable interrelation between Tennessee Tech and its college town.

Episode 16 of College Town Talk in January featured the Counseling Center's very own Dr. Christina Mick. During the episode, Dr. Mick discussed the mental health epidemic and the willingness of today's college students to not only openly talk about mental health but advocate for its resources. Throughout the episode, Dr. Mick praised the Counseling Center in their service both to the students and themselves and really showed the importance Tennessee Tech places on mental health.

Dr. Mick joins the roster of previous highlighted guests from the Student Affairs team, which includes Dr. Katie Aikens, Dr. Cynthia Polk-Johnson, and Charria Campbell.



# SPRING 2024 ORG-STRAVAGAZA

Despite its recent name change, ORG-Stravaganza remains a beloved tradition at Tennessee Tech, heralding each semester with opportunities for students to join new organizations, forge connections, and create lasting memories.

Organized by the Student Engagement office, the Spring ORG-Stravaganza took place on January 23, 2024, featuring an additional workshop in Room 246 of the RUC. This semester's event provided valuable insights into finding the right organizations, expanding professional and social networks, and maximizing the Tennessee Tech Experience.

Students gathered in the Multipurpose Room of the Roaden University Center, where they were met with a vibrant assortment of clubs, academic societies, religious groups, and student organizations, offering games and treats to kickstart the Spring semester with both excitement and anticipation.

Ultimately, ORG-Stravaganza served as more than just the kickoff to a new academic semester; it embodied the values of community, collaboration, and lifelong learning that define the core experience of Tennessee Tech.



# HONOR SOCIETY RETURNS TO CAMPUS

Omicron Delta Kappa (ODK), America's oldest national leadership honor society, is reestablishing its presence at Tennessee Tech University. With a history dating back to 1914, ODK is known for recognizing and fostering exemplary leadership among its members. The revitalized chapter at Tennessee Tech, originally started back in 1975, will provide students with valuable opportunities for personal and professional development.

Dr. Katie Aikens, AVP/Dean of Students, and Dr. Ben Stubbs, AVP for Student Engagement, are serving as advisors to the revitalized chapter. "We are excited to collaborate with ODK in fostering new leadership avenues and service initiatives for students," said Aikens and Stubbs. Through ODK's pillars of leadership, including academics, service, athletics, communications, and the arts, students at Tennessee Tech will be empowered to make a positive impact on campus and beyond.



# FOSTERING CAMPUS SAFETY AT TENNESSEE TECH

At Tennessee Tech University, campus safety is a top priority, and University Police plays a central role in maintaining a secure environment for students, faculty, and staff. With a proactive approach, University Police focuses on a range of initiatives to ensure the safety and well-being of the campus community.

University Police officers conduct regular patrols across campus, maintaining a visible presence to deter potential threats and respond swiftly to any incidents that may arise. Their round-the-clock availability ensures that help is always just a call away.

Leveraging technology to enhance campus safety, University Police has collaborated with Putnam County 911 for the TTU Alert/RAVE emergency notification system, University Police is well-equipped to respond promptly and professionally to emergencies that may affect our campus and the surrounding community. Whether it's providing medical aid, managing fire incidents, or addressing criminal activities, their rapid response capabilities ensure effective resolution of situations as they arise.

In alignment with FBI recommendations, University Police recommends the Avoid, Deny, and Defend techniques as part of their Response to Critical Incidents training. These techniques were selected not only for their straightforward, practical application but also because they recognize that there is no one-size-fits-all solution in crisis situations. By empowering the campus community with these skills and information, University Police strives to create a safer environment for all who study, work, and visit our campus.

Tennessee Tech University's commitment to campus safety is really exemplified through the proactive efforts of University Police and its continued goal to work collaboratively to address safety issues comprehensively. Together, we all at Tennessee Tech can continue to prioritize safety, ensuring Tennessee Tech remains a place where everyone feels safe and supported.



# CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH: REFLECTING, SHARING, AND HONORING AT TENNESSEE TECH

Throughout the month of February, the Office of Intercultural Affairs has been hosting and co-hosting a series of events and activities in celebration of Black History Month. From thought-provoking discussions to cultural performances and community service, these events aim to honor the achievements and contributions of African Americans while fostering dialogue and understanding within the campus community.

Events kicked off on February 1st, with a special Black History Celebration at the Men's and Women's Basketball Games held at 5:30 PM in the Hooper Eblen Center. This spirited event, sponsored by Tennessee Tech Athletics, brought together students, faculty, and fans to cheer on the teams while also recognizing the significance of Black history in sports.

On February 6th, Intercultural Affairs Ambassadors and SGA joined together to present "Campus Conversations: Sharing Our Stories" in the Tech Pride Room of the University Center. This interactive event welcomed faculty and students to share their personal experiences and perspectives with Black history and culture. Dr. Krystal Akehinmi, Dr. Harry Ingle, alongside students Justin Eguwatu, Eman Norris, and Max Wynne, served as panelists, offering diverse insights and meaningful dialogue within the Black community at Tennessee Tech.

Thursday, February 8th, attendees were treated to an evening of poetry, sponsored by the SOLO Events Committee, with "Spoken Word" featuring renowned artist Ashlee Haze. Held at the Backdoor Playhouse, Haze's powerful performance explored themes of identity, resilience, and social justice, leaving a lasting impact on all who attended.



**BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

**Tennessee Tech University  
EVENTS & SCHEDULE 2024**

- 01 FEB** BLACK HISTORY CELEBRATION MEN'S & WOMEN'S BASKETBALL GAMES  
HOOPER EBLEN CENTER, COCKEVILLE, TN 38402 | 5:30 PM
- 06 FEB** CAMPUS CONVERSATIONS SHARING OUR STORIES  
RUC TECH PRIDE ROOM 101, 3000 W. DIXIE AVE, COCKEVILLE, TN 38402 | 6:00 PM
- 08 FEB** SPOKEN WORD WITH ASHLEE HAZE  
BACKDOOR PLAYHOUSE, 800 S. GARLAND, COCKEVILLE, TN 38402 | 7:00 PM
- 10 FEB** FOOD PANTRY SERVICE DAY  
TENNESSEE TECH FOOD PANTRY, 7000 W. WILSON AVE., COCKEVILLE, TN 38402 | 10:00 AM
- 12 FEB** BLACK HISTORY MONTH PROGRAM WITH GAVIN MOORE "A DREAM TOO BIG"  
RUC MULTIPURPOSE ROOM 101, 3000 W. DIXIE AVE, COCKEVILLE, TN 38402 | 6:00 PM
- 18 FEB** GOSPEL EXTRAVAGANZA  
RUC MULTIPURPOSE ROOM 101, 3000 W. DIXIE AVE, COCKEVILLE, TN 38402 | 6:00 PM
- 22 FEB** HISTORY OF HIP HOP WITH DR. REGINA BRADLEY  
RUC MULTIPURPOSE ROOM 101, 3000 W. DIXIE AVE, COCKEVILLE, TN 38402 | 6:00 PM
- 25 FEB** IMPACT COCKEVILLE ANNUAL HONORS BANQUET  
LOUIS WYNN CENTER, ONE WEST FIRST ST., COCKEVILLE, TN 38402 | 6:00 PM
- 28 FEB** ANNUAL SOUL FOOD NIGHT  
RUC MULTIPURPOSE ROOM 101, 3000 W. DIXIE AVE, COCKEVILLE, TN 38402 | 6:00 PM

QR Code: [QR Code]

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Celebrating Black History



**Campus Conversations: Sharing Our Stories**

SGA and the Intercultural Affairs Ambassadors presents, Campus Conversations: "Sharing Our Stories" in honor of Black History Month. Come hear from Tech faculty, staff and students who will share their experiences.

Refreshments will be provided.

6 PM  
**06 February**  
RUC Tech Pride Room, 101



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As the month progressed, the university welcomed special guest Caylin Moore on Monday, February 12th, for a Black History Month Program titled "A Dream Too Big" at 6 PM in the Multipurpose Room in the University Center. Moore, a Rhodes Scholar and former collegiate athlete, shared his inspiring journey of overcoming adversity and pursuing academic excellence. This program was co-hosted by Intercultural Affairs, the Office of the President, and the Office of Diversity & Inclusion.

Throughout the month of February, "I Am My Ancestors' Wildest Dreams" was showcased at The Wesley Foundation Chapel Theatre, recounting narratives of the Black Experience through spoken word, song, dance, and art. The community event, which was well-attended, was written and directed by Tennessee Tech alumna Lori Strode.

Speaking of song and dance, music also filled the air on February 18th, with the Gospel Extravaganza in the Multipurpose Room at Tennessee Tech. The event celebrated the rich tradition of gospel music within the African American community. The event was co-hosted by Intercultural Affairs, Kainos Church, United Voices of Praise, the Omicron Phi Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and Trinity M.B. Church.

The campus community was invited to attend the IMPACT Cookeville honors banquet on February 25 at the Leslie Town Centre. The goal of IMPACT is to uplift the Black community in the Upper Cumberland and make a positive difference for those who are socially marginalized.

Finally, rounding out the month's festivities, Intercultural Affairs hosted its Annual Soul Food Night and Black History exhibition on February 28. The event brought together students, faculty, and staff to enjoy delicious soul food dishes while reflecting on the cultural significance of African American cuisine.

Tennessee Tech University continues its dedication to honoring the past, embracing the present, and building a brighter future for everyone. These cultural events continue to unite the campus community and help to celebrate the rich heritage and ongoing achievements of African Americans.



COOKEVILLE THEATRE COMPANY  
PRESENTS

# I AM MY ANCESTORS' WILDEST DREAM 2024

A CELEBRATION OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

DIRECTED BY  
LORI STRODE & SHANE LANGFORD

**February 9-15**

**The Wesley  
Foundation  
Chapel Theatre**  
271 E 9th Street  
Cookeville, TN 38501

<b>FRIDAY</b>	February 9, 7:00pm
<b>SATURDAY</b>	February 10, 7:00pm
<b>SUNDAY</b>	February 11, 2:00pm
<b>THURSDAY</b>	February 15, 7:00pm
	PAY-WHAT-YOU-CAN-NIGHT
<b>FRIDAY</b>	February 16, 7:00pm
<b>SATURDAY</b>	February 17, 7:00pm

[CookevilleTheatreCo.org](http://CookevilleTheatreCo.org)



# UPCOMING EVENTS

There is always something exciting going on at Tennessee Tech! Check out all the great upcoming events hosted by the Division of Student Affairs and Tennessee Tech, and contact us for more information!

- **Spring Showcase.** On March 2nd from 7:45 am to 2:00 pm, incoming Tennessee Tech Freshmen will spend the day becoming more familiar with campus as well as being introduced to the professors and courses within their chosen major.
- **Spring Break** will take place from Monday, March 11 through Friday, March 15.
- **At the Faculty/Staff Self-Care Workshop,** the Counseling Center will advise faculty and staff on how to best practice self-care. The workshop is scheduled for March 26 from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm in RUC Room 246.
- **The SOLO Concert,** organized by Student Engagement, will be on March 27 beginning at 7:00 pm at the Hooper Eblen Center.
- **Student Leadership Awards.** This celebration of student achievements will occur on April 11 at 3:00 pm in RUC Room 282.
- **Commencement.** The Spring graduation ceremonies will take place at 9:00 am and 2:00 pm on May 3rd at the Hooper Eblen Center.



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