

STUDENT AFFAIRS NEWSLETTER

The Division of Student Affairs Quarterly Newsletter



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STUDENT AFFAIRS DEBUTS OFFICE FOR FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT SUCCESS

The Division of Student Affairs is making strides in supporting its student body with the launch of the Office of First-Generation Student Success. Under the leadership of Dr. Harry Ingle, Executive Director of Student Affairs, this department aims to empower first-generation college students, providing them with resources and support to excel in their academic and personal goals.

The establishment of this office reflects the Division's commitment to fostering a supportive educational environment. As the first person in their family to attend college, these students often face unique challenges, from navigating complex academic issues to balancing family expectations and financial pressures.

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The office aims to bridge these gaps by providing the necessary support and resources to ease their transition into higher education. The initiative is not just about addressing immediate academic hurdles but also about empowering students to navigate and overcome broader factors that influence their academic and personal success.

Dr. Ingle, who recently came to Student Affairs via the College of Engineering, will spearhead the new office. With a background in student support and an understanding of the obstacles first-generation students encounter, Dr. Ingle is well-equipped to lead this initiative.

Ingle emphasized the importance of this initiative, stating, "We are excited to join the FirstGen Forward network and to kick off the University's inaugural first-generation student success initiatives. Our efforts involve engaging first-generation students and their families from the recruitment stage through their entire journey at Tech and beyond. We aim to serve as a central resource hub, connecting first-generation students with vital resources and first-gen faculty across campus to support their success and enrich their college experience."

The launch of this office is a significant step forward for the Division of Student Affairs and Tennessee Tech as a whole, aligning with broader efforts to enhance student success. By prioritizing the needs of first-generation students, the university demonstrates its commitment to creating an environment where all students can achieve their academic and career goals.

As the new academic year approaches, the Office of First-Generation Student Success is poised to make a meaningful impact. The Office of First-Generation Student Success is located in the Roaden University Center on the second floor, room 214.

ENHANCING AWARENESS WITH QR CODE INNOVATIONS

On June 25, Leigh Ann Ray, in collaboration with the Tennessee Department of Health and the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, delivered a presentation focused on enhancing vaccination awareness within college settings. The discussion centered on the latest data and educational resources for vaccinations, aiming to equip participants with the knowledge needed to prepare for the upcoming upper respiratory infection (URI) season.

A highlight of Ray's presentation was the innovative approach her team employed to disseminate vaccine information: the creation of a QR Code wall in the lobby waiting room. This dynamic tool allows patients to easily access crucial information about vaccines and other infectious diseases by simply scanning the QR codes. The QR Code wall links directly to an information section on their website, providing a seamless and efficient way for patients to stay informed.



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The project was funded by a generous grant from the Tennessee Department of Health, highlighting the crucial role of collaborative efforts in advancing public health initiatives. This funding support underscores the commitment to fostering partnerships that address community health challenges. In her presentation, Ray shared a wealth of insights and lessons learned from previous clinics.

By focusing on the specific needs and dynamics of college environments, Ray's presentation ensured that institutions are better prepared to respond effectively to the upcoming URI season. Her contributions emphasized the importance of preparedness, resource allocation, and strategic planning in safeguarding the health of college populations.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: LELA GRACY

Hailing from Fayetteville, Tennessee, Lela Gracy is double majoring in French and Computer Science with a concentration in Cybersecurity. She hopes to be a recipient of the Fulbright scholarship following her graduation in May 2026, which she will use to earn her master's degree in Cybersecurity in France. Ultimately, Lela plans to utilize a combination of her unique skills in cybersecurity and foreign languages to work for the U.S. government in a foreign country. She is preparing for her future endeavors through her upcoming study abroad trips to France and her extracurricular activities. She is the treasurer for Women in Cyber Security (WiCyS) and the Senior Lead Ambassador for the Cybersecurity Education Research and Outreach Center (CEROC) Ambassador Program. She and Rachel Stratton formalized the CEROC Ambassador Program, an organization dedicated to educating people on cybersecurity.

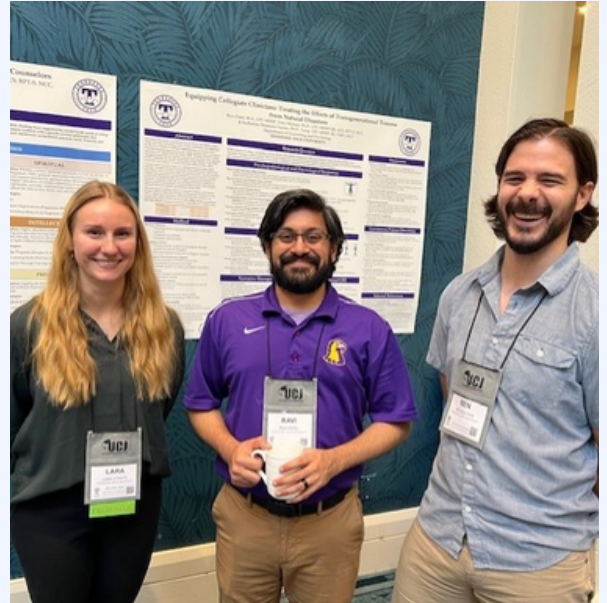
Lela's other accomplishments include serving as an Associate Justice on the SGA Supreme Court, winning the title of Miss TTU 2023, and maintaining a 3.9 GPA. With all of her aspirations and accomplishments, it is obvious that she lives her life confidently. When asked what inspires her confidence, she says that it came from the realization that "You have to make the conscious decision to be yourself, and it takes effort to do that. Confidence isn't something that just happens." As a recipient of the Student Affairs Student Spotlight, Lela Gracy embodies the traits of a Golden Eagle through her proficiency in leadership, passion for academics, and her unconquerable determination.



TECH COUNSELORS HONORED FOR RESEARCH AT NATIONAL CONFERENCE

In addition to working to promote the mental health of their students, College Counseling Centers are dedicated to furthering psychological research. Such efforts ensure that progress continues to be made in the betterment of counselors' ability to attend to the mental wellbeing of students. The research of two of Tech's counselors, Ravi Patel and Lara Strate, were recognized at the American College Counselors Association Conference in Orlando, Florida from February 23-25.

In accordance with the American College Counseling Association's mission to strengthen the practice of college counseling and encourage communication and exchange between college counselors, Mr. Patel and Ms. Strate presented their research at this conference. Ravi Patel's research is titled "Equipping Collegiate Clinicians: Treating the Effects of Transgenerational Trauma from Natural Disasters," and Ms. Strate's research is titled "The Relationship Between Alexithymia and Highly Sensitive Persons: A Literature Review." Their research presentation at this conference shows the Tennessee Tech counselors' commitment to providing the best mental health care.



DENIM DAY: HEALTH SERVICES STANDS WITH SURVIVORS

On April 24, J.J. Oakley Campus Health Services at Tennessee Tech University demonstrated their commitment to supporting survivors of sexual assault by participating in Denim Day. This event, observed by wearing denim, aimed to prevent victim-blaming and promote trauma-informed care for survivors.

The Health Services team donned jeans to show solidarity with survivors. The Denim Day initiative at Tennessee Tech highlights Health Services' ongoing efforts to protect, support, and care for survivors of sexual assault, championing a campus culture rooted in empathy and respect.



3RD ANNUAL STUDENT AFFAIRS STAFF RECOGNITION



On April 18, the Division of Student Affairs held our 3rd annual Student Affairs Staff Recognition event in the Roaden University Center Multi-purpose room. Dr. Polk-Johnson, VP for Student Affairs, stated, "The work that we do is meaningful, impactful, developmental, and transformative. We put the WOW! in the student experience, and today, we celebrate our many accomplishments."

Department	Award Nomination	Recipient
Accessible Education Center	Outstanding Collaborator	Jodi Fox-Perdue
Accessible Education Center	Campus Partner of the Year	Stephen Emert
Counseling Center	Outstanding Professional	Angie Rector
Counseling Center	Campus Partner of the Year	Military Affairs
Health Services	People Over Process Award	Shawn Cummings
Health Services	Round of Applause Award	Tara Moody, RN
Health Services	Campus Partner of the Year	Penny Milton
Health Services	Campus Partner of the Year	Tracie Murray
Intercultural Affairs	Outstanding GA Award	Josh Gordon
Intercultural Affairs	Campus Partner of the Year	Victor Kline

Department	Award Nomination	Recipient
Burnett Recreation and Fitness Center	Continued Excellence Award	James Crider
Burnett Recreation and Fitness Center	Outstanding Professional Growth	Joey Gremore
Burnett Recreation and Fitness Center	Campus Partner of the Year	Torri Cheney
University Housing & Residential Life	The 12-in-1 Multitool Award	Josh Edmonds
University Housing & Residential Life	Campus Partner of the Year	Enrollment Management
AVP Strategic Initiatives and Dean of Students Office	Campus Partner of the Year	Greg Holt
AVP for Student Engagement	He's Got That (Course) Dog in Him	Jeff Hall
AVP for Student Engagement	Head On A Swivel	Jacob Jeffers
AVP for Student Engagement	Campus Partner of the Year	Corey Dunn
Office of Student Affairs	WOW Award	Rec Your Stress
Office of Student Affairs	Division Wide Support Staff of the Year	Kim York



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!

- **Week of Welcome**, August 15-24, hosted by Student Affairs and New Student and Family Programs, See Week of Welcome website for a list of all events.
- **Great Move-in Week**, August 15-16, hosted by Housing and Residential Life. Halls open for the academic year. Check-Ins are from 9:00 AM to 10:00 PM.
- **Convocation**, August 19 at 2:45pm, hosted by New Student and Family Programs. The event will be at the Hooper Eblen Center.
- **College Town Kickoff**, August 24 at from 11am-10pm, Get ready for a day on the town, as Cookeville and Tennessee Tech come together for a unique and exciting event.



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