



All of us strive for stability in our lives. We prefer order instead of uncertainty and peace instead of turmoil.

For those of us who reside, work and have connections in the Chattanooga area, the past six days have tested the character of our community. We are searching for answers from the unexpected and tragic events that disrupted our daily lives and routines.

No one was left untouched because all of us make up our community. While the grief is shared so will be the healing process. We will come back strong.

At UTC we communicated with our university family, knowing that our words to the campus also are a message to the community.

Our priority is to provide a safe and successful learning environment for our students, faculty and staff. That also extends to being ready to provide support and assistance for a range of questions that arise from unexpected events. Our Counseling and Personal Development Center has been offering support to those who have questions or are reaching out for assistance over the past few days and at other times.

UTC prepares students to address the challenges that come from a global perspective. Students learn to search for answers; some are quite apparent and others require more inquiry. Our goal is for UTC graduates to be equipped to find real world solutions.

Our learning experience also extends to understanding and handling feelings of grief and to have informed conversations about the reasons for tragic events like the one that recently occurred in Chattanooga. All of us in our community, state and nation are searching for answers, seeking a closure that will be difficult to find but is an important next step.

For example, the events of last week led our UTC Student Veteran Organization to hold a tribute on campus Friday morning. More than 100 students, faculty and staff encircled the flag that stands on campus adjacent to the University Center. There was a caring spirit, a coming together and a brief period of time to reflect.

Our university family includes military veterans, who are continuing their education at UTC, as well as students from different locales, backgrounds and life experiences.

We learn together. We share common experiences. We gain new knowledge from the diverse backgrounds of our students, faculty and staff.

The late Sen. Robert F. Kennedy said: "Tragedy is a tool for the living to gain wisdom, not a guide by which to live."

At UTC and with others who are connected to the community, we stand Chattanooga Strong.

Our new Mission statement reflects on who we are and the education we hope to instill in our students: The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga is a driving force for achieving excellence by actively engaging students, faculty and staff; embracing diversity and inclusion; inspiring positive change and enriching and sustaining our community.

We recognize our commitment for a safe and successful learning experience; to engage and inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs, teachers, inventors, business leaders and citizens, and to share in the growth of those who will compete in a more global environment.

We will achieve these goals as a member of the community that understands from adversity comes strength, purpose and commitment to a better tomorrow.



Steve Angle

Chancellor

** UTC flags were lowered to half staff at the end of the vigil shown in the photo above.*