



De-escalation program earns second two-year grant

In November 2021, the criminal justice program at UT Martin received a two-year grant to teach and develop de-escalation techniques for police and first responders and build a training center for that purpose.

Two years later, the project received another two-year grant to bolster that mission.

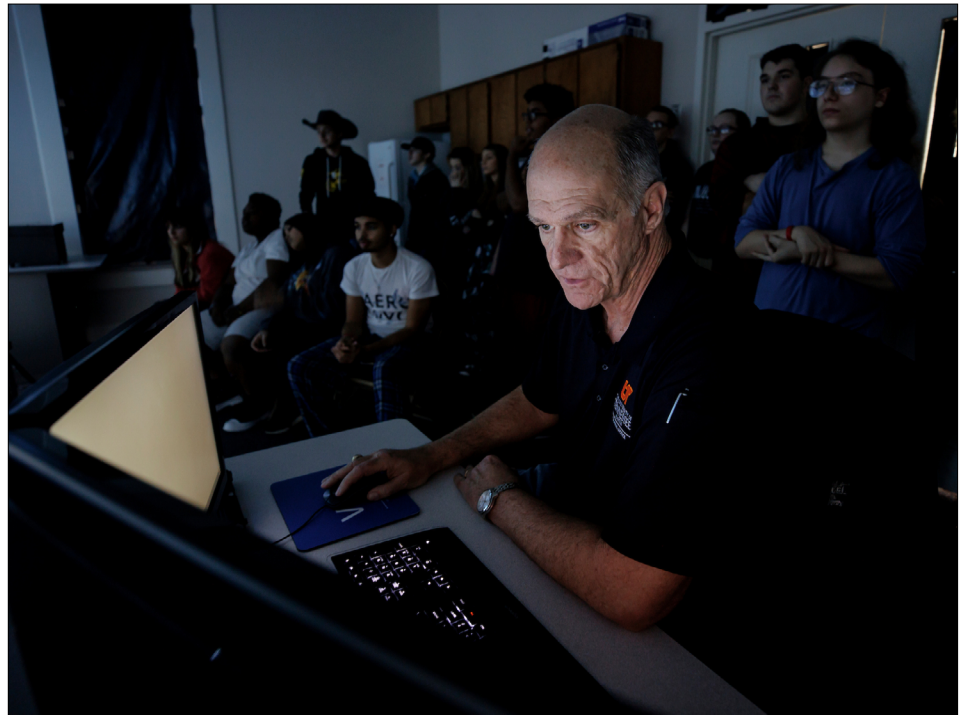
Called DETER, the De-Escalation Techniques and Emergency Responses project has proven to be successful, garnering \$547,293 in the original grant from U.S. Department of Agriculture Delta Health Care Services.

The second phase of the grant program brought an additional \$407,000, bringing the total grant investment to \$954,293.

Jackson State Community College and Carey Counseling Center Inc. are partners in the project along with UT Martin.

Dr. Brian Donavant, professor of criminal justice in the Department of Behavioral Sciences, wrote the grant and has worked with securing the grant since the project's inception.

The first grant provided funding for the project to create a training center - the Lawrence D. Bromley Training Center in the C.E. Weldon Building in downtown



Dr. Brian Donavant looks into the control panel of the VirTra 300 simulator that helps train people to de-escalate potentially dangerous situations while a group of training participants watches the action on the screen.

Martin - and to purchase a VirTra 300 judgmental use-of-force simulator and real-life de-escalation training.

"The original purpose was to provide de-escalation training for law enforcement

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25 UTM faculty/staff retirees honored at program

Twenty-five retiring UT Martin faculty and staff members were honored Nov. 8 in a ceremony held in the Boling University Center.

Those retiring after 40 or more years in the University Tennessee System were **Victoria Seng**, Academic Affairs, 42 years, and **Tommy Cates**, Hendrix Chair, 40 years.

Those retiring after 30 to 39 years of service were **Michael Gibson**, Agriculture, Geoscience and Natural Resources, 39 years; **Chris Caldwell**, Math and Statistics, 38 years; **Susie Lewis**, Computer Store, 37 years; **Lynn Alexander**, Humanities and

Fine Arts, 34 years; **David Ray**, Math and Statistics, 34 years; **Henry Parker**, History and Philosophy, 33 years; **Dale Willis**, HVAC, 32 years; **Alice-Catherine Carls**, History and Philosophy, 31 years; **Edie Gibson**, Chancellor's Office, 31 years; and **Teresa Collard**, Mass Media and Strategic Communication, 30 years.

Those retiring after 20 to 29 years of service were **Phyllis Hammer**, Public Safety, 28 years; **Lisa LeBleu**, Family and Consumer Sciences, 28 years; **Sheryl Breden**, Business and Global Affairs Administration, 27 years; **Carol Eckert**, Visual and Theatre Arts, 22

years; **Janet Bonat**, Agriculture, Geoscience and Natural Resources, 21 years; and **Joyce Swan**, Educational Studies, 20 years.

Those retiring with fewer than 20 years of service to the UT System are **Brad Burkett**, Physical Plant Administration, 19 years; **Donald Bowlin**, Building Services, 18 years; **Sheila Williams**, Bursar's Office, 18 years; **Sandra Carrington**, Housing, 15 years; **Cindy Cooper**, Housing, 14 years; **Teresa Erwin**, Academic Records, 11 years; and **Danny Walker**, Agriculture, Geoscience and Natural Resources, 11 years.

YoUTMs

highlighting the excellence of our faculty and staff



Hatch



Gullett

Dr. Laura Hatch, assistant professor of accounting, and **Dr. Nell Gullett**, professor of finance, presented at the International Academy of Business and Public Administration Disciplines Conference in Memphis on Oct. 26.

Their paper, "FASB and GASB Financial Statements: A Comparison from the Perspective of the Reader,"

discussed differences in government and business financial reporting requirements and the impact of those differences on the reader's ability to understand and use the information.

Their paper was included in the conference proceedings.

Hatch and Gullett also served as discussants for the accounting and economics session.

Dr. Jason Roberts, professor of veterinary science, and **Dr. Brittany Cole**, assistant professor of finance, served as the faculty mentors for senior pre-veterinary science student Ainsley Watt's senior thesis project, "Man's Best Friend or Best Study Buddy? Student Classroom Performance and Canine Interactions," Nov. 18 at the 2023 Tennessee Academy of Sciences Conference at Rhodes College in Memphis.

The project received the first-place award in the Agriculture (Section 1) division of the TAS Conference. The paper studies 11 academic semesters of canine interaction with business students in business core and finance major-specific courses.



Roberts

The paper compares student exam performance between two groups of students: one group that interacts with an Australian Shepherd pre-exam and one group that does not interact.

The animal interaction includes students practicing training commands with the



Cole

dog as well as soft interactions like grooming, petting and holding.

Over the 11 academic semesters, three separate business/finance courses and roughly 650 students, the results show that animal interaction pre-exam positively influences

student exam performance.

As universities search for ways to combat student stress and support student mental health, these results add a meaningful contribution to the discussions surrounding student mental health and steps universities can take toward adding tools for student success.

Roberts also serves as Watt's academic advisor, and she is already accepted to the University of Tennessee's College of Veterinary Medicine in the early admission process.

Watt will defend her thesis in the Spring 2024 semester, and Roberts and Cole will work with her on further developing her project for her defense as well as publishing the final paper.

The Go Cloud Careers 2023 Summit Recap was a multi-speaker roundtable discussion that included **Dr. Cooper Johnson** and **Dr. Jamye Long**, both associate professors of management, as well as several Go Cloud administrators and standouts.

The roundtable's purpose was to invite the panel to share their thoughts, experiences, highlights, take-aways and

lessons gained from the Oct. 13-15 summit in Orlando, Florida, with a world-wide audience.

The summit recap provided a platform that answered questions, generated enthusiasm and clarified what attendees of future summits can expect.

This roundtable discussion was viewed in real time by 406 people and has since been viewed by about 760 people.



Long



Johnson

Submit a YoUTM!



Spreading the message of “Everywhere You Look, UT,” the University of Tennessee System seeks to place a mural in each of the state’s 95 counties. The most recent mural came in Lauderdale County (left) at the Ripley Farmers Market. Another mural promoting the UT Martin Ripley Center was also placed in Lauderdale County (below). That mural was designed by Beth Bodwell of the UTM Office of University Relations.



‘Everywhere you look’ message spreads to Ripley

The UT System has a goal to paint a mural in each of the state’s 95 counties by 2030 to remind residents and travelers of UT’s presence in their lives.

The Ripley Farmers Market building at 129 Monroe St. in Ripley is the latest canvas in the campaign, showcasing a 40-foot-wide mural near the historic town square. It can be seen by more than 5,300 travelers daily.

In addition to the campaign’s “Everywhere You Look, UT” mural, a second mural promotes the presence of the UT Martin Ripley Center.

That mural, featuring the Skyhawk logo, was designed by **Beth Bodwell** of the UTM Office of University Relations.

“The Bank of Ripley constructed what looks like a barn with a galvanized roof and to be used for the city’s farmer’s market, and that’s where the location came from,” said Mayor and Bank of Ripley CEO Craig Fitzhugh. “It’s visible to folks that are driving in from U.S. 51 or driving through our main thoroughfare, Washington Street which, to me, makes it a perfect spot.”

Ripley is home to the UT Martin Ripley Center, which offers a variety of undergraduate courses supporting bachelor’s degree requirements in more than 80 specialized programs, including ag business, criminal justice, education, farm and

ranch management, history, interdisciplinary studies, nursing, political science, psychology and social work.

“We serve the evolving needs of diverse students throughout West Tennessee through the convenience of our UTM Regional Centers and high-quality online degree programs offering inclusive quality education to dual enrollment, traditional, and non-traditional students, thus empowering them to be engaged and active community members and the future leaders of tomorrow,” said **Erica Bell**, UT Martin executive director of Regional Centers and Online Programs.

“My hope is that the murals

serve as a reminder to our rural communities that this is a collaborative partnership, and we are committed to providing support and advocating for accessible access to education for all students.”

Since launching in 2018, the “Everywhere You Look, UT” campaign includes murals in 43 counties across the state.

Costs of the first mural in each county are covered by the UT System.

To learn more about the mural in Lauderdale County or to submit a location for consideration, visit the campaign website at everywhere.tennessee.edu.

DETER from PAGE 1

officers, for non-law enforcement crisis intervention specialists like social workers and to provide training for those aspiring to either of those two areas,” he said.

“In Phase I, we trained almost 1,500 folks, so it was very successful. Our goal was to train 700, so there is a need for it; people are really hungry for this kind of training.”

Donavant said one of the exciting things about the second grant is that it allows for the expansion of the current program. Its focus is on the area of the Delta Region, which

includes parts of eight states, including West Tennessee, western Kentucky and southeast Missouri.

“Through this new grant, we have funded a graduate assistant who is a UT Martin graduate student in criminal justice, as well as undergraduate student interns every semester,” Donavant said. “This is going to increase our staff and our ability to do outreach and connect with the agencies out there who need this training.

“It’s also going to give us a great opportunity to provide our students with some real hands-on experience about how to run this type of project, how to organize them with the logistics involved in training and delivering training to communities to give them real, practical experience that they can incorporate into their degree programs and give them some great practical experience when they go out into the working world.”

Donavant said there is no cost for those taking the training that is provided through the DETER program.

“It gets more people to Martin and UT Martin so they can see what we offer here,” he said. “It also provides a service for the community. Last year, the legislature passed statutory requirements requiring police in Tennessee to receive de-

escalation training annually.

“There is a need in law enforcement for this, but more importantly, there is a need in the community for this.”

The program has garnered almost \$1 million in grant funding, but investments are coming from elsewhere, too.

“The university is making an investment in this as well,” Donavant said. “Not only through direct funding, but through support resources that amount to about \$1.6 million. So, the total worth of the project thus far is more than \$2 million, through the support of the university, support from the city of Martin, Jackson State Community College and Carey Counseling Center Inc.”

Donavant said a big part of the project is to educate the public on how to safely interact with police, understanding the police perspective in risky situations.

“It’s kind of what we do in law enforcement: We train officers to understand the perspectives of citizens, but they often don’t understand some of the things that law enforcement officers take for granted in their interactions. We’re trying to get everybody on the same page.”

Donavant said when he applied for the grant, he saw a need to provide training for law enforcement officers and people

who weren’t officers to keep a potentially volatile situation from getting out of hand.

“You see incidents like the George Floyd incident, Tyre Nichols and others – all of these have made national headlines,” he said. “If you look at all of those, there is a disconnect about how police and the public interact. We need to get folks on the same page.

“Yes, police sometimes are in situations where they need to use force, but many times, there are other things we can do to resolve situations, and even if we do have to use force, many times, we can use lower levels of force if we learn how to better interact with the folks we’re dealing with.”

Donavant added that in his police career, there were many times when it would have been justified and appropriate for him to use deadly force, but because he had other tools and resources – including training in how to deal with people in those situations, he was able to de-escalate the situation without using high levels of force.

“The goal here is for everybody to go home safely, and when I say, ‘go home,’ that means ‘get away from that situation,’” he said. “Sometimes, ‘home,’ for a short period of time, is still in jail, but at least, we want them to go there safely.”

This Week's UT Martin Skyhawks Home Events

Wednesday, Nov. 22

Men’s basketball vs.

North Alabama, 2 p.m.,
Kathleen and Tom Elam
Center

Full athletics schedules can be
found at utmsports.com.



You Tell Me

- **Question** – Demolition of Grove Apartments appears set to begin. When will the work be completed, and what will be done with the site?
- **Answer** – The Notice to Proceed went to Allen Searcy Builder-Contractor Inc. on Nov. 2, and the area was fenced Nov. 6. The contractor hasn’t submitted a construction schedule, but utilities are being terminated and abatement should begin in the next few weeks. Demolition will follow and is expected to happen in December. Everything except the large trees and northeast corner parking lot will be removed when the project is complete. Plans to use the space are not yet finalized, but at a minimum, the cleared site will offer more green space and a gathering point for different activities. You can learn more about the history of Grove Apartments [here](#).

Submit your questions to Addenda at addenda@utm.edu.



Shown attending the 2023 ACM Conference in Gatlinburg are (front row, from left) Dr. Jian Wang, Shakira Perry, Lucky Woods, Andy Lum, Lucy Gauldin, Zachary Rose, Connor Walsh, Dr. Lily Pharris, Dawn Dill, (back row, from left) Chase Duclos, Andrew Newbill, Jackson Horton, Victor Gasior, Dr. Qing Wang, Blade Johnson, Vrushrank Mali, Joshua Chamberlain, Aaron Alden, William Hayes and Spencer Karpati.

Computer science students attend seminar

The Computer Science Department’s senior seminar class attended the ACM Conference Nov. 16-17 in Gatlinburg.

Sixteen students participated, presenting a total of five team projects with two teams securing top-three placements.

ParkSense, a project designed by Aaron Alden, Spencer Karpati and Zachary Rose, was awarded second place.

The team addressed the challenge of insufficient parking spaces on campus, exacerbated by recent construction.

Gardener’s Best Friend, an app developed by Shakira Perry, Lucy Gauldin, Vrushrank Mali, and Chase Duclos, was awarded third place.

Described as a mobile app for plant enthusiasts, the application focuses on maintaining a plant journal, aiding users in scheduling, fostering a deeper connection with their gardens and enhancing gardening knowledge through progress photos and online documentation.

Additionally, Dr. Qing Wang contributed to the conference

with a presentation titled “Visibility of Polygons.”

Also attending the seminar from the UT Martin Computer

Science Department were lecturer Dr. Lily Pharris and administrative associate Dawn Dill.

10 years of service



Chris Virgin (right) of the Physical Plant-Grounds was recognized for 10 years of service within the University of Tennessee System at the service awards ceremony held Nov. 8 at the Boling University Center. He is shown with Chancellor Yancy Freeman.

Let the UT Martin community know about your most recent accolades by submitting a YoUTM to addenda@utm.edu.

addenda

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