

addenda



The University of Tennessee at Martin Faculty and Staff Newsletter | May 8, 2023

FORD EXECUTIVE URGES GRADUATES TO BE RESILIENT

Resilience is one of the most important traits for success in life. This was the message to UT Martin graduates from Ford Motor Co. executive Liliana Ramirez during spring commencement exercises Saturday, May 6, in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center. Ramirez, the company's global director for workforce development, delivered her message to 591 graduates from the university's five colleges during two commencement ceremonies.

Graduates represented 65 Tennessee counties, 28 other states and the District of Columbia, and five countries outside the U.S. The 10 a.m. ceremony included undergraduate and graduate-degree candidates from the colleges of agriculture and applied sciences, and business and global affairs. The 2 p.m. ceremony also included both undergraduate and graduate-degree candidates and featured graduates from the colleges of education, health and behavioral sciences, engineering and natural sciences, and humanities and fine arts.

Ramirez joined Ford in 1993 and has direct responsibility



FORD MOTOR CO. EXECUTIVE SPEAKS—Liliana Ramirez, global director for workforce development, Ford Motor Co., delivered the address at both UT Martin commencement ceremonies May 6 in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.

to prepare the manufacturing workforce required for West Tennessee's BlueOval City and BlueOval SK Battery parks. The \$5.6 billion investment will create 6,000 jobs in various occupations to build Ford's electric trucks with operations expected to begin in 2025. For the Ford executive, resilience

has been a key to both life and professional success.

"Resilience is the ability to bounce back from adversity, to pick yourself up after a setback, and to keep going even when the going gets tough," she told the 10 a.m. audience. "It's the ability to persevere through difficult times, to adapt to changing

circumstances, and to stay focused on your goals, no matter what obstacles you may face.

"But here's the thing about resilience – it's not just about getting back up when you fall down. It's about falling forward. It's about learning from your

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Dr. Jeffrey Bibbee has accepted an offer to serve as the dean of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts. Bibbee comes to UT Martin from the University of North Alabama where he served as the associate dean of the UNA College of Arts, Sciences and Engineering. Bibbee has a Ph.D. in history from King's College London and a B.A. and M.A. in history from Auburn University. He will be joining UTM effective June 15.



Dr. Jian Wang, a professor in UT Martin's cybersecurity program, was selected for the 2021 [Harry Rowe Mimno Award](#) for his paper: "Counter-Unmanned Aircraft System(s) (C-UAS): State of the Art, Challenges, and Future Trends." He was recognized at the 2023 IEEE Radar Conference in San Antonio, Texas at an awards presentation on May 3.

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Dr. Laura G. Foltz served as the finance evaluator on the SACSCOC Off-Site Review Committee, April 25 - 26. This accreditation review is Dr. Foltz's fifth time serving as a finance evaluator for SACSCOC; cumulatively, she has reviewed nine institutions.



Dr. Philip Acree Cavalier, interim chancellor, is serving on the search committee for a new Jackson State Community College president. Dr. Flora Tidings, chancellor, Tennessee Board of Regents, appointed the committee members. The TBR will host a virtual public forum 1-2 p.m., May 16, to gather input on desired qualities, potential challenges and opportunities for the next JSCC president.



Dr. Mahmoud Haddad, professor of finance, was recently recognized for providing an invaluable educational investment opportunity to UT Martin students at the TVA Investment Challenge Program conference in Nashville, April 17-18. UT Martin was also recognized for its 25-year partnership with the TVA Investment Challenge Program.



Dr. Adnan Rasool, assistant professor of political science, recently wrote an article titled "Taiwan is reinventing how diplomacy works" for the Australian outlet, 360 Info. The article is part of an expert series on Taiwan and can be found online at this [link](#).

In Memory



John Bell, former head of the library's reference department, died, Saturday, April 29, 2023. Bell joined the Paul Meek Library in November 1980 and retired in August 2011. He never married, but is survived by his sister-in-law, June Bell of Springfield, Tennessee, and a nephew, Mark Bell of Goodlettsville, Tennessee. A memorial mass will be scheduled at a later date. The family asks that donations be made to the Paul Meek Library in Bell's name.

Furry friends added to Student Health And Counseling team

UT Martin Student Health and Counseling Services has added two therapy dogs to their team of qualified professionals. The pups, Dolly and Miss Doc, will be available for counseling sessions and on-campus events with a goal of engaging the university community with student health.

The Student Health and Counseling Services staff decided the campus needed this extra support after researching the positive impacts of dogs on college campuses.

“Studies show that students have a lower heart rate and less anxiety when they are interacting with dogs,” said **Shannon Deal**, director of Student Health and Counseling Services. “We want students to have the option to be comforted by Dolly and Miss Doc after a hard day or week.”

The dogs came from local breeders Clint and Charity Riley, 2001 UTM graduates, and are sponsored in part by Dr. Rodney “Doc” Thomsen, professor emeritus of agricultural economics. Thomsen graduated from UT Martin with his undergraduate degree in agricultural education in 1971 and returned to teach as an agricultural economics faculty member from 1975 to 2002. He was the longtime

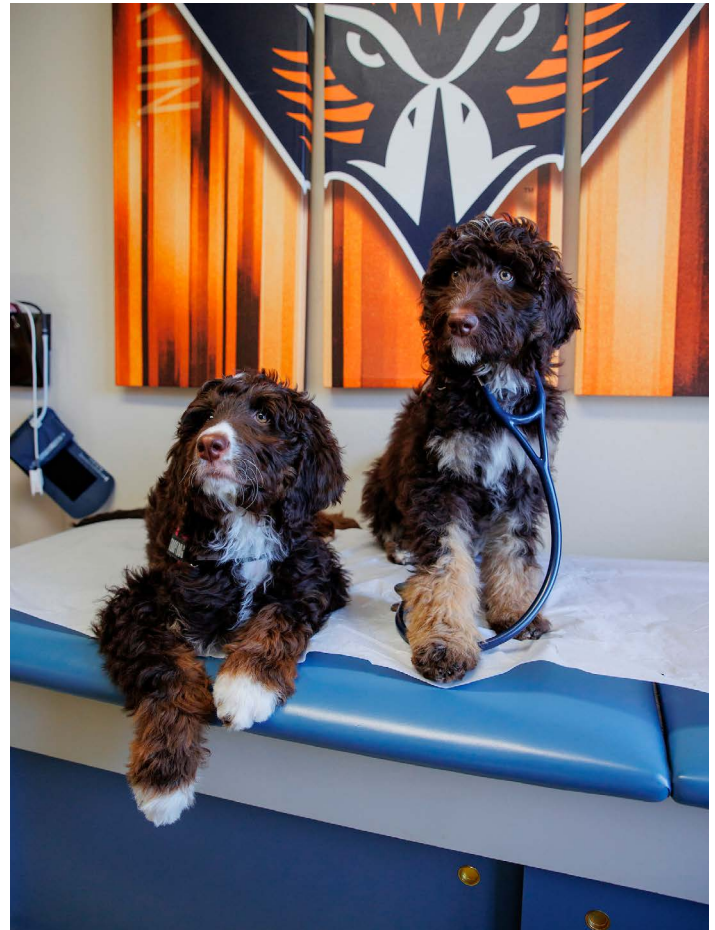
director of UT Martin’s West Tennessee Agricultural Pavilion. After hearing about the need for therapy dogs at his alma mater, he purchased “Miss Doc” and is helping fund the therapy program.

The dogs, still only a few months old, will be in therapy training until their first birthday in October. Neel Durbin, former director of Dyersburg City Schools, is working in conjunction with Student Health and Counseling Services to train the dogs.

“His (Durbin) philosophy is that we should lead the training, and he should lead us,” said Deal. “We will be working with the dogs daily, so it is important that they are comfortable with us and our leadership.”

While they won’t be fully certified for months, Dolly and Miss Doc will be available for socialization. Students can request to have the dogs in their therapy sessions, and the counselors will decide on a case-by-case basis the benefits for each student. Students not in counseling sessions are welcome to stop by Student Health and Counseling Services at any time to see the pups, as long as they aren’t scheduled for another visit.

UT Martin Student Health



and Counseling Services is committed to delivering professional mental and physical health services to the student body. By adding therapy dogs to existing health and counseling services, faculty and staff hope to improve emotional, intellectual, spiritual and social well-being

for all UT Martin students.

To follow Dolly and Miss Doc on Instagram, visit @utmtherapydogtors. For more information on the therapy dog program or about Student Health and Counseling Services, contact Deal at schs@utm.edu or 731-881-7750.

Fossicking for fossils with Dr. Michael Gibson

The UT Martin Research Series moves off-campus for a special event at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 9, at the Martin Public Library.

Dr. Michael Gibson will provide highlights of his lifetime study of fossils from around the world, with particular emphasis on work in West Tennessee. He has documented and named new species, has had fossil species (and

a shark) named in his honor and is credited with finding Tennessee’s first dinosaur skull. Gibson will share stories about the “perils” of fossicking, including being robbed in the Guatemalan jungle and diving adventures with sharks, barracuda and octopi.

Gibson is a professor of geology, and director of the UT Martin Coon Creek Science Center. His

teaching expertise is paleontology, marine geology and geoscience education.

Gibson has published over 200 articles about fossils in Tennessee, Alabama, Florida and Central America and geoscience education.

The event is co-sponsored by the Martin Public Library, the Friends of the Martin Public Library, UT

Martin’s Division of Academic Affairs and the UT Martin Paul Meek Library. It is open to the public and will begin at 6:30 p.m. at the public library’s downtown location at 410 South Lindell Street in Martin.

For more information, contact Dr. Erik Nordberg, dean of the Paul Meek Library, at 731-881-7070.



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mistakes and using them as a steppingstone to future success.”

Ramirez described resilience as a skill that must be developed over time, and she offered three keys to developing resilience.

“First and foremost, you need to believe in yourself, and you need to be your own advocate,” she said. “Have confidence in your abilities. Be kind to yourself, be willing to take risks and try new things, even if you don’t know how they’re going to turn out.

“Be flexible and willing to adjust when things don’t go as planned, because you never know when new opportunities will present themselves.”

The second key to developing resilience is persistence and the willingness to work hard to achieve goals. “Many new college graduates are worried about escalating rapidly, concerned

with titles and getting ahead,” Ramirez said. “While a title is one measure of success, I assure you that it is more important to recognize that at any level, you can make an impact. ... Stay focused and persistent in working toward your goal.”

Keeping a positive attitude was her final key to developing resilience.

“If you can stay optimistic, even in the face of adversity, and focus on the opportunities that lie ahead rather than dwelling on the setbacks of the past, you will find much more satisfaction in your life.

“I will tell you that happiness is truly a choice. I implore you to choose it.”

Dr. Philip Acree Cavalier, UT Martin interim chancellor, presided over the two ceremonies and conferred degrees. He also made several recognitions, including nine ROTC cadets

during the 10 a.m. ceremony who were commissioned Friday as second lieutenants and received their degrees Saturday. Dr. Bernard Savarese, acting vice president for academic affairs, research and student success, represented the UT System and brought greetings and congratulations to the graduates.

“Our very best work is done through others,” Savarese told the audience. “Continue to seek out opportunities that allow you to engage, support and lift up others as you advance in all you do.”

Dawson Gremmels, Student Government Association president from Huntingdon advised graduates to step back from the semester’s hectic pace and “take this moment in.” He added, “Your degree is your way of saying that you were able to make it to this point and are ready for the next steps of life.”

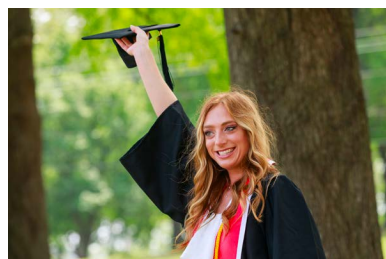
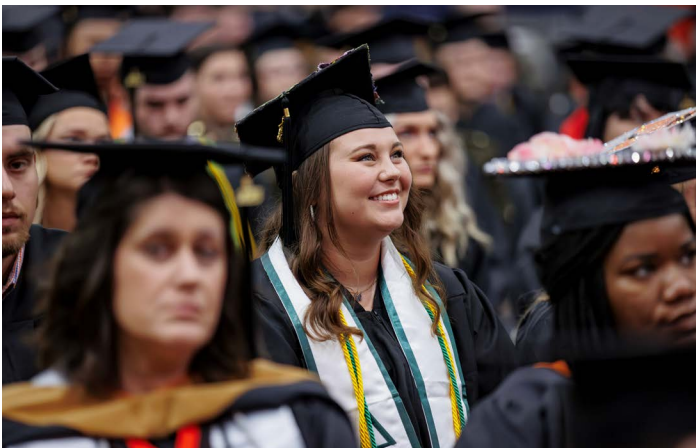
Dr. Danny Donaldson, Martin optometrist and 1999 graduate, closed with congratulations from the UT Martin Alumni Council. He asked that graduates advocate for the university, stay connected, and get involved as an active alum. “Please come back and visit the campus as often as you can,” he said. “If asked to serve on a board, please consider it. I’m glad that I did.”

The Paul and Martha Meek Award, the only award announced during commencement, was presented during the 2 p.m. ceremony to Tia Moore, of Collierville, and Gracie Barber, of Kansas City, Missouri. The award is given to one or more graduating seniors who demonstrated outstanding leadership qualities while at the university.

Both ceremonies will be archived on YouTube at www.youtube.com/utmartin for later viewing.



spring
2023
COMMENCEMENT



UT Martin held its spring commencement exercises May 6. Graduates represented 65 Tennessee counties, 28 other states and the District of Columbia, and five countries outside the U.S. The graduates totaled 591 students from the university's five colleges during two commencement ceremonies.

For more photos from commencement, visit utm.edu/photo.



PAY IT FORWARD – The UT Martin Traffic Office recently held its Pay It Forward food drive. Students, faculty and staff members with parking citations were encouraged to donate food items in exchange for one citation dismissal. During the food drive, which ran April 19-21, members of the traffic office collected over 500 non-perishable food items and dismissed 82 citations. All of the food collected was donated to Captain’s Pantry. Pictured with the food items is Christy Smith, accounting specialist in the Department of Public Safety.



POLICE ACADEMY – Four UT Martin employees graduated from the City of Martin’s Citizens Police Academy May 4, 2023. The Martin Citizens Police Academy is a nine-week class where citizens learn what police do on a daily basis while also participating in two ride-alongs throughout the nine weeks. Pictured (l-r) Courtney Roberts, Hannah Stewart, Emma Bruner and Laura Plunk.

Addenda will be taking a short hiatus following this week’s issue. We will resume publishing in June.

Thanks for a great semester!

You Tell Me

- **Question** – The university has tried to increase student wages in recent times, but it’s still challenging to find student workers when non-university jobs often pay a higher hourly wage. Is there a plan for continuing to improve student wages or even the possibility of more funding to support higher student pay?
- **Answer** – In consultation with the Office of Human Resources, units have flexibility in determining student wages based on the duties the students perform. The Office of Financial Aid should be consulted before setting the wages for students in the Federal Work Study (FWS) program. All student worker positions are not paid at the same rate. Currently, there is no comprehensive student-worker compensation plan; however, there have been preliminary discussions about the university increasing the minimum rate above the \$7.25 per hour Federal Minimum Wage. No additional funds have been allocated to support higher student wages. Units have the discretion to reallocate funding to support their student worker needs.

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

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