

addenda

The University of Tennessee at Martin Faculty and Staff Newsletter | Feb. 17, 2025



UT Martin Chancellor Yancy Freeman joined other UT leaders by highlighting individual campus and unit achievements during President Randy Boyd's annual State of UT Address on Feb. 13 at Embassy Suites in Murfreesboro. Boyd's remarks celebrated record-breaking achievements, expanded research efforts, and highlighted the university's growing impact across the state. "In 230 years, the University of Tennessee has never been stronger," Boyd said. "We are at the halfway point of the greatest decade in UT history, and the numbers speak for themselves." Pictured on stage with Freeman (center) are (l-r) Dr. Robert Dooley, interim chancellor, UT Chattanooga; Dr. Linda Martin, chancellor, UT Southern; Dr. Peter Buckley, chancellor, UT Health Science Center; and Dr. Herb Byrd, vice president, UT Institute for Public Service.

Valentine's Day is for love birds

Sometimes, you just can't help getting caught up in the emotion of a situation, and on Valentine's Day, UT Martin's mascot, Captain Skyhawk, turned into a love bird, bringing roses to several people across the campus. On Feb. 14, SOAR could stand for "Skyhawks Obtaining Aromatic Roses," thanks to the mascot who helps to make everyone's Valentine's Day a little brighter, a little warmer and a little hawkier.



YoUTMs

highlighting the excellence of our faculty and staff

A recent study on ethical and societal implications of neurotechnology done by **Dr. Saman Sargolzaei**, associate professor of engineering, has been accepted for presentation at the International Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine Joint Workshop of the Ultra-High Field MR and Brain Function Study Groups.

This study explores the ethical, legal and cultural challenges arising from the rapid advancements



Sargolzaei

in neurotechnology and neuroscience. It examines how

emerging tools that can monitor, record and analyze brain activity impact diverse fields like health care, education, entertainment and behavior modification, aiming to foster a better understanding of their potential consequences.

The research underscores the need for responsible development and use of these technologies, ensuring they align with societal values and individual rights.

Dr. Ashley Kilburn, professor of marketing, has been selected as the featured Faculty Scholar for the Spring 2025 semester.

Kilburn will provide a virtual presentation at 4 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 20, highlighting her research surrounding remote teaching and learning systems.

The online presentation, titled "E-Service Quality in Online Higher Education," will be streamed via Zoom and considers dimensions of the electronic service quality construct, its measurement and practical implications for improving and enriching virtual



Kilburn

learning programs.

Kilburn joined the faculty of the Department of Management, Marketing, and Information Systems in 2004, where she also

serves as coordinator of UT Martin's online MBA program. Her research examines service quality, service delivery, internal market orientation and internal customer orientation.

Kilburn was a 2017 recipient of the UTM Alumni Outstanding Teacher Award.

This online-only presentation will livestream via Zoom [at this site](#).

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

Ronne Jones Cox, assistant professor and electronic resources and discovery librarian, has had an article published in the Journal of Electronic Resources Librarianship.

The article, "174,000+ Links Dead in an Instant: How a Recent Library School Graduate Brought the Dead Back to Life," details the three-year project to resolve authentication problems encountered during a software migration.



Cox

UTM business programs maintain accreditation

The AACSB International Board of Directors has confirmed that the University of Tennessee at Martin will maintain AACSB accreditation for all business programs for the next six years.

Accredited programs include marketing, management, information systems, accounting, economics and finance at the undergraduate level and the Master of Business Administration degree for graduate students.

Commonly referenced

by its acronym, AACSB is the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. AACSB International is the longest-serving global accrediting body for institutions offering undergraduate, master's and doctoral degrees in business and accounting.

AACSB accreditation is considered by many the mark of excellence in business education and has been earned by 6% of the world's business programs.

This news follows Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee's funding

recommendation in the state budget for a new UT Martin College of Business and Global Affairs building. The governor's announcement came Monday as part of his annual State of the State address.

UT Martin Chancellor Yancy Freeman said the accreditation news from AACSB and Gov. Bill Lee's announcement about the new business building represent major milestones for the university.

Read the complete story at [news.utm.edu](#).

Submit a YoUTM or question to [addenda@utm.edu!](mailto:addenda@utm.edu)



More than 170 attend Grand Challenges Summit

More than 370 individuals from the University of Tennessee System, state and local government, and various community organizations gathered for the two-day Grand Challenges Summit in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

The summit connected experts, educators and community leaders across the state engaged in research or professional work contributing to solutions for the Grand Challenges. Grand Challenges represent complex, interconnected, large-scale issues that if left unaddressed would continue to create uncertain futures for Tennesseans.

This year's summit focused on three key areas: advancing K-12 education, strengthening rural communities and overcoming addiction.

"Our goal for this summit was to facilitate opportunities and we accomplished that," said John Lacey, systems strategist for the UT System and summit organizer. "These are opportunities for our university researchers to connect with colleagues across knowledge areas, and with community leaders and

state agencies. We believe connections, relationships and collaborations lead to more holistic solutions and ideas that can ultimately create positive change for Tennesseans."

Alisha Melton, executive director for the UT Martin Office of Research, Outreach, and Economic Development, attended the summit with other UTM representatives and attended multiple sessions.

"The summit showcased UT's impact on addressing critical issues affecting Tennesseans," Melton said. "Representatives from every UT campus, community leaders and government representatives connected about mutual interests, shared research, and initiated partnerships to create positive change across our state."

Dr. Adnan Rasool, director of the university's Center for Teaching and Learning, presented a session titled "Strengthening Rural Governance in West Tennessee."

"My presentation highlighted our work with the Grand Challenge Grant that is

supporting student placements in public service in collaboration with the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development," Rasool said. "As part of the project, UTM is supporting local and county governments in West Tennessee through governance capacity building."

Closing out the summit Friday morning, keynote speaker Dr. Joe Sanfelippo, author, speaker and former National Superintendent of the Year, spoke about the transformative impact of prioritizing people, showcasing how this approach fuels innovative solutions to today's most pressing issues.

The Grand Challenges initiative was established in 2023 to address complex, large-scale issues that threaten the future of Tennesseans. These issues include the opioid addiction crisis, teacher shortages, low student performance in schools, and scarcities in health and mental health care.

For more information about the Grand Challenges Grants, visit [the Grand Challenges website](#).



UT Martin was well represented at the UT Grand Challenges Summit, Feb. 13-14, in Murfreesboro. Pictured following keynote speaker Dr. Joe Sanfelippo's presentation that concluded the summit are (l-r) Dr. Steve Elliott (math and statistics), Dr. Adnan Rasool (Center for Teaching and Learning), Bud Grimes (university relations), Lesa Finch and Alisha Melton (both in research, outreach and economic development). Others attending (or scheduled to attend) but not pictured were Chancellor Yancy Freeman, Dr. Nancy Buschhaus (engineering and natural sciences), Dr. Mary Radford (nursing), Natalie Watson (McNairy County Center/Selmer) and Dr. Ali Seyedkavoosi (engineering).

Engineer, astronaut Hernández speaks on campus

Engineer, astronaut and University of California regent José Hernández spoke Feb. 11 as a guest speaker in UT Martin's month-long Civil Rights Conference.

He began life working with his family in California farm fields, with he and his siblings working on the weekends and throughout the summer.

When he was 10, Hernández watched the moonwalk during the final Apollo mission, Apollo 17, on his family's black-and-white TV in December 1972.

"Seeing Gene Cernan there, I said, 'Man, I'm hooked. That's what I want to be,'" Hernández said. "I want to be an astronaut."

While he was applying to become an astronaut, Hernández became an engineer at the Lawrence Livermore National

Laboratory, where he and a colleague developed the first full-field digital mammography imaging system, still used for early detection of breast cancer.

"We demonstrated to the (Food and Drug Administration) that our device provided much more information than traditional film-screen radiology," Hernández said. "More information means earlier detection. Earlier detection saves lives.

"If people ask me what's my proudest professional moment, it's not being a NASA astronaut; it's actually this because this has been demonstrated to save hundreds of thousands if not millions of lives by now. So, I'm pretty proud of that. This has made a bigger impact on humanity than I could ever do by going into space."

Before he got the call of his dreams, he

continued training and learning until, at the age of 47, he was assigned to a mission.

Hernández was a member of Space Shuttle mission STS-128 in August-September 2009, bringing equipment to the International Space Station and installing it.

Hernandez is the subject of a 2023 movie, "A Million Miles Away," starring Michael Peña, based on his autobiography, "Reaching for the Stars: The Inspiring Story of a Migrant Farmworker Turned Astronaut."

It took José Hernández 37 years from the time he set his goal of being an astronaut to realizing his dream.

The experiences, knowledge and rewards that he gathered along the way have truly left this former farm worker outstanding in his field.



In both photos, engineer and astronaut José Hernández is shown speaking with students in the Latimer-Smith Engineering and Science Building on Feb. 11 prior to being a guest speaker in the Civil Rights Conference. As a child, Hernández worked in California fields, gathering crops and dreaming of becoming an astronaut. That dream came true several years later, but he is proudest of his work in developing the first full-field digital mammography imaging system.



Black History Luncheon set for Feb. 21

For the second year in a row, the city of Martin and the University of Tennessee at Martin will be hosting a Black History awards luncheon, titled “Voices from the Past: Martin Black History Awards Luncheon.”

The event is scheduled to take place at noon Friday, Feb. 21, at the Martin Events Center inside the Martin Public Library. The luncheon will begin at 11:45 a.m. Tickets are \$12, and lunch will be provided. RSVP on the City of Martin Facebook page. Pre-registration is required through Eventbrite.

The event is a collaborative effort with the City of Martin, Town & Gown, the University of Tennessee at Martin and the UT Martin Black Student Association.

This luncheon event is replacing the Martin Luther King breakfast event that had been happening on Dr. Martin Luther King Day in Martin for the previous 11 years.

Kameron Echols, the director of Multicultural Affairs and one of the planners for this event, said that the goal of the luncheon is to uplift

and celebrate community champions.

Awards that will be presented at the event include the Harold Conner Award from the City of Martin, the Torch award from the Black Student Association and the Alpha award from the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc.

“Typically, the awards are given to people who have stood up for justice or for civil rights, or just people who have been a very good advocate for students on campus or in the community,” Echols said.

The luncheon will start with a short meeting held by City of Martin Mayor Randy Brundige and UT Martin Chancellor Yancy Freeman that will disclose university and city updates, and then move to the more formal awards program.

The awards program will open with a short keynote from Marchell Gardner, a 2013 graduate from UT Martin in interdisciplinary studies and a staff nurse with Maxim Healthcare, who will share how her career has been shaped by the mentors she has met in Martin.

Gardner’s daughter, Amy Patrice Gardner, graduated from UT Martin in 2012 with a Bachelor of Science degree in management.

Marchall’s husband, Raymond Russell Gardner, graduated from UTM in 2012 with a degree in interdisciplinary studies.

The event highlights the Black history of Martin and Weakley County, and awards community members for going above and beyond to help Martin thrive.

“I think promoting and teaching as much history to our students as possible is valuable, especially when you have people who come to a city to live in for three to four years, and they don’t know the history,” Echols said.

“I came from Memphis, and when I got here, I was immersed into the culture of Martin, not just UTM. It was eye-opening; there is a very rich history here,”

For more information, visit the cityofmartin.net, click on “Calendar” and click on “Voices from the Past, Luncheon,” or call the Martin City Hall at 731-587-3126.

This Week’s Skyhawk Home Events

Tuesday, Feb. 18

- *Women’s basketball vs. Tennessee State, 5:30 p.m., Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.
- *Men’s basketball vs. Tennessee State, 7:30 p.m., Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.

Friday, Feb. 21

- Equestrian vs. Delaware State, 9 a.m., Ned McWhirter Agricultural Complex.

Saturday, Feb. 22

- Equestrian vs. SMU, 9 a.m., Ned McWhirter Agricultural Complex.
- * - conference competition
- Full athletics schedules can be found at utmsports.com.
- Watch “Skyhawk Sports Talk” each week, archived at utmsports.com! New episodes are posted each Monday.



You Tell Me

• **Question** – What’s the status of UT Martin’s webcams?

• **Answer** – New webcams have been purchased and installed atop the Boling University Center and the Johnson EPS Building to replace 10-year-old cameras formerly in those locations. These and an older third camera originally purchased to follow construction progress for the Latimer-Smith Engineering and Science Building [can be viewed here](#). The camera views are controlled by Information Technology Services and the Office of University Relations and made available to area television stations to monitor live weather conditions. ITS researched the technology needed and installed the new cameras.

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

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