



## UTM's strategic plan presented at board meetings



University of Tennessee System President Randy Boyd waves as he and members of the UT Board of Trustees took in UT Martin's basketball game against Southern Indiana on Feb. 27 in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center following the board's meeting on campus. Boyd and the board brought some luck to the game as the Skyhawks swept the men's/women's double-header.

The University of Tennessee Board of Trustees convened for its winter meetings, which reviewed application, enrollment and retention rates, as well as highlighted UT Martin's bold vision for the future.

The Board reviewed data focused on the University of Tennessee System's continued success in outpacing national trends in student demand, with growth in applications, enrollment and retention. Projections show that while the number of high school graduates nationwide is expected to decline by 10% between 2023 and 2041, Tennessee is predicting a 15% increase over that period.

Also reviewed by the board was the UT System's strong

**Continued on PAGE 7**

## Groundbreaking held for TEST Hub building

University of Tennessee President Randy Boyd credited partnerships for making the UT Martin Tennessee Entrepreneurial Science and Technology (TEST) Hub possible. He made his comments during the groundbreaking for the new facility held Feb. 28 near the construction site behind the university's Student Recreation Center.

The event was attended by university and elected officials, TEST Hub partners and members of the UT Board of Trustees, which concluded the board's winter meetings earlier in the Boling University Center.

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Turning the dirt at the groundbreaking ceremony Feb. 28 for the TEST Hub building are (l-r) Daniel Longserre, UT System Department of Capital Projects; John Penn Ridgeway, president, TCAT Henry/Carroll; UT Martin Chancellor Yancy Freeman; Dr. Nancy Buschhaus, dean, UT Martin College of Engineering and Natural Sciences; UT System President Randy Boyd; Amy West Martin, Dyersburg State Community College and the Tennessee Board of Regents; and Mary Haizlip, Haizlip Studio, Memphis architectural firm.



# YoUTMs

highlighting the excellence of our faculty and staff

**Dr. Amanda Burkhart**, assistant professor of chemistry, and two undergraduate research students, Austin Vest, a senior chemistry major from Enville, and Imani Peat, a junior chemistry major from Union City, attended the 77th annual Scientific Conference of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences held Feb. 17-21 in Baltimore, Maryland.

Vest and Peat both have a concentration in forensic science, and both presented posters at the national meeting.

Vest presented a poster titled, "Analysis of Commercially Available Delta-8 THC Products from Martin, TN Using GC-MS," which included work that aimed to characterize cannabis products sold in the local area.

Peat presented a poster titled, "A 12-Month Study on the

Storage Conditions of Ignitable Liquids on Carbon Strips Used for Forensic Fire Debris Applications," which included research that should help guide protocols for the proper storage of evidence obtained from intentional fire scenes.

Burkhart and her two students attended several days of oral presentations in the areas of seized drugs, forensic toxicology and latent prints.



**Burkhart**

**Dr. Brittany Cole** presented the research poster, "Taking the (Ag) Business out of Vet Science: Why Vet Science Students are Not Minor in Ag Business," Feb. 4 at the Southern Agricultural Economics Association annual meeting in Irving, Texas.

**Dr. Jason Roberts**, professor of animal science, and **Dr. Clint Ary**, associate professor of

animal science, are co-authors on the project.

The project surveys upper-level undergraduate veterinary science and technology students to determine why they do not minor in business.

Making a business minor more accessible to veterinary science and technology students is valuable because 90% of students believe a minor is

helpful in a veterinary career.

Undergraduate veterinary science students prioritize vet school prerequisites over minor coursework. This decision may leave them lacking practice management skills, and minoring in business may help veterinary students gain veterinary practice management skills.



**Bibbee**



**Cole**



**Roberts**



**Ary**

**Dr. Jeffrey Bibbee**, professor of history and dean of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts, participated Feb. 11 in the unveiling of a blue plaque historical marker for George Brewster (1863-1875) in Cambridge, UK.

Brewster died at age 11, the last apprentice child chimney sweeper to die in England.

Brewster's death inspired the final parliamentary acts outlawing child labor and ushering in compulsory public education for all children up to age 14.

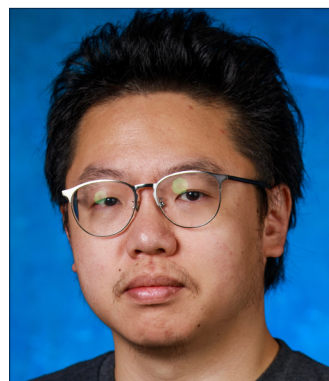
The Earl of Shaftesbury, whose great-great-grandfather advocated for the abolition of child labor, unveiled the plaque on the site of Brewster's death exactly 150 years later to the day.

Bibbee completed the research and application for the plaque.

A paper co-authored by **Dr. Changrui Liu**, assistant professor of statistics, named "Finite Markov chains with absorbing states and mis-specified random effects: application to cognitive data" has been published in the January 2025 issue of the journal "Biostatistics & Epidemiology."

The paper was co-authored by Dr. Pei Wang of Bowling Green State University, Dr. Jiyeon Park of the University of Kentucky, Dr. Suzanne L. Tyas of the University of Waterloo and Dr. Richard J. Kryscio of the University of Kentucky.

The paper can be seen online [at this site](#).



**Liu**



# Sights from the UT Board of Trustees meetings



UT Martin Chancellor Yancy Freeman speaks to the UT Board of Trustees about the university's Strategic Plan for 2025-30. Freeman spoke during the board's winter meetings Feb. 28 in the Duncan Ballroom of the Boling University Center.

UT System President Randy Boyd takes in the UT Martin basketball game Feb. 27 following the UT Board of Trustees' committee meetings held earlier in the day. The board continued its winter meetings on Feb. 28.



UT System President Randy Boyd speaks to the UT Board of Trustees during the Feb. 28 winter meetings. The board held several committee meetings Feb. 27 and 28 before the winter meeting began at 10:30 a.m. Feb. 28.



# Boyd, UT Board of Trustees take in UT Martin

UT System President Randy Boyd (left) greets UT Martin Chancellor Yancy Freeman at the podium during opening remarks at the groundbreaking ceremony for the TEST Hub building Feb. 28.



The TEST Hub groundbreaking ceremony was extra breezy, making it a good day for flags. Shown at the ceremony near the Recreation Center are the flags of (l-r) the United States, the state of Tennessee and the University of Tennessee System.

UT System President Randy Boyd (front row, fourth from left) and members of the UT Board of Trustees and UT Martin Cabinet wear special UT Martin jerseys at the Skyhawks' game again Southern Indiana on Feb. 27, each sporting the number 25, marking their 2025 visit to the campus.





# Latimer-Smith hosts FBI Collegiate Academy

Representatives from the Federal Bureau of Investigation came to the UT Martin main campus to provide a program called the FBI Collegiate Academy to show students what work at the FBI is like.

The sessions of the FBI Collegiate Academy were held in the Latimer-Smith Engineering and Science Building at UTM.

Special Agent in Charge Joseph E. Carrico of the Tennessee Division of the FBI was one of several FBI employees who spoke to the students.

“Students will get a better understanding of what the FBI does, what our role is – not what they see on television and in movies,” he said. “Our goal is to peel back the layers and give them a greater understanding of what the real mission and what the dedication of the folks who work at the FBI are all about, and not just what they read on a social media post.”

Several of the 20 students in attendance are majoring in computer science or cybersecurity, areas of great growth in FBI investigations, Carrico said.

“Everybody is up against this AI (artificial intelligence) world that we’re rolling into,” he said. “Science, technology, engineering and math are a huge need that we have to fill.”

Carrico said the FBI Collegiate Academy is a great opportunity for the FBI to engage with the community and get its message out to the people.

“We seek to make the students



UT Martin students taking part in the FBI Collegiate Academy use special light to examine evidence during one of the sessions. FBI agents showed the students the ins and outs of FBI work, including forensic science and cybersecurity.

ambassadors who go out and set others straight about what the FBI does,” he said.

“Students have the opportunity to ask questions and learn more about the opportunities we have related to internships and career opportunities,” Carrico said. “Basically, it just creates a relationship between us and this university to continue that discussion going forward.”

Dr. Lily Pharris, assistant professor of computer science, was the university’s

liaison in arranging for the FBI Collegiate Academy to be held at UT Martin.

“As a faculty member, one of the most important things I can do is expose students to opportunities that prepare them for success in the workforce,” she said. “Hosting the FBI Collegiate Academy at UT Martin is an incredible opportunity for our university and our students because it does exactly that. It introduces students to career paths they may not have previously considered and allows them to engage directly with professionals in the field.”

This is the fourth year for the FBI Collegiate Academy to be held in Tennessee. It started in 2022 at Tennessee State University, was held at Lane College in Jackson in 2023 and again at Tennessee State in 2024.

The UT Martin connection with the FBI began on campus, as Assistant Agent in Charge Jeremy Baker, an agent from the Memphis field office, teaches as an adjunct professor in the university’s digital forensics class.

In the academy, the students learn about the investigations that the FBI handles and other aspects of FBI work like the Evidence Response Team. Computer evidence handlers were on hand to talk about the work they do.



Taking part in the FBI Collegiate Academy were (front row, l-r) Intelligence Analyst Kelly Reinemann, Allison Smith, Anna Hensley, Nasir Davis, Justin Finn, Gabriel Speer, Hope Nason, Special Agent in Charge Joseph E. Carrico, (middle row, l-r) Dr. Lily Pharris, Digital Forensic Examiner Terrell Devone, Madelyn Tyler, Connor Gladish, James Hart, Lizette Navarrete, Rachel Lumpkin, Yesenia Randon, (back row, l-r) Assistant Agent in Charge Jeremy Baker, Community Outreach Specialist Dionne Manning, Emily Hatley, Jayden Rice, Daniel Way, Lacey Marcus, Gabrielle Dement, Zachary Whiteman, Charles Durham and KaTeria Scullark.

# Who's Who nominations being taken through March 9

The Division of Student Affairs is accepting applications for the 2024-25 edition of Who's Who Among Students at the University of Tennessee at Martin.

It is awarded to students who are a junior, senior or graduate student who demonstrates outstanding academic performance, commitment to leadership and involvement and a dedicated record of citizenship and service to UTM and the local community.

Students must be nominated by a faculty or staff member to be eligible, as well as complete the online application.

The application deadline is Sunday, March 9, at 11:59 p.m. Award recipients will be honored at the Registered Student Organizations and Who's Who Award Ceremony in April.

Nominees must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Be a junior, senior or graduate student who is expected to receive a degree at the end of spring 2025 semester through spring 2026 semester.
- Be in good academic and disciplinary standing.
- Be nominated by a faculty or staff member employed at UT Martin.
- Students who have received the Who's Who recognition at UT Martin in the past are not eligible for nomination.

To nominate a student, direct them to complete the online application [at this site](#).

The nominee will need to complete the online application which requires detailed descriptions of their achievements in the following categories:

- Academic achievement
  - Participation and leadership in academic activities and co-curricular activities
  - Citizenship and service to the university and community
- Any faculty or staff member can nominate a student. Those who have a great student leader they work with, an impressive athlete that they coach, a student employee who knocks their work out of the park or an outstanding student in one of their classes should nominate them for this honor.

The nominee will be required to provide the name and email address of the faculty or staff member nominating them.

A current resume can be uploaded and is required in the selection process.

Once the application is submitted, a verification email will be sent to the nominator.

## Upcoming Skyhawk Home Events

### Friday, March 7

- Baseball vs. Samford, 3 p.m., Skyhawk Baseball Field.

### Saturday, March 8

- Baseball vs. Samford, 3 p.m., Skyhawk Baseball Field.

### Sunday, March 9

- Baseball vs. Samford, 1 p.m., Skyhawk Baseball Field.

### Saturday, March 15

- \*Stunt vs. Central Arkansas, 11:15 a.m., Skyhawk Fieldhouse.
- \*Softball vs. Lindenwood (dh), 2 p.m., Bettye Giles Softball Field.

- Stunt vs. Centenary, 3:15 p.m., Skyhawk Fieldhouse.

### Sunday, March 16

- \*Stunt vs. Missouri State, 11:15 a.m., Skyhawk Fieldhouse.
- \*Softball vs. Lindenwood, noon, Bettye Giles Softball Field.

- \*Stunt vs. Northern Kentucky, 3 p.m., Skyhawk Fieldhouse.

\* - conference competition  
Full athletics schedules can be found at [utmsports.com](#)  
Dates and times are subject to change.

• Watch "Skyhawk Sports Talk" each week, archived at [utmsports.com](#)! New episodes are posted each Monday.



## Cunningham Outstanding Freshman Award nominations being accepted through Friday

The Division of Student Affairs is now accepting nominations and applications for the 2024-25 Cunningham Outstanding Freshman Award.

It is awarded to up to three first-year students who have demonstrated outstanding academic performance along with proven leadership and involvement in the campus community.

The award is presented at the university's annual Honors Day Ceremony.

Freshman students must be nominated by a faculty or staff member to be eligible, as well as complete the online application.

The nomination and application deadline is Friday, March 7.

Nominees must meet the following eligibility

requirements:

- Be classified as a freshman in the 2024-25 academic year.
- Be in good academic and disciplinary standing.
- Be nominated by a faculty or staff member employed at the University of Tennessee at Martin.

Faculty and staff must complete a nomination form for the student, including a narrative of why they feel the student should be recognized. The nomination form can be found [at this site](#).

Faculty and staff should then direct the student they are nominating to complete the award application that can be found [at this site](#).

**Read more UT Martin news  
at [news.utm.edu](#)!**



BOARD from PAGE 1

financial performance, which has seen significant growth since 2020. Revenues have increased by 32% to an all-time high of \$3.4 billion, while the university’s net assets have grown by 41% to \$4.9 billion. Additionally, cash balances have risen by \$619 million to \$1.97 billion, and investments have expanded by \$558 million to \$1.6 billion.

“These financial gains reflect UT’s continued fiscal responsibility, strategic investments and commitment to ensuring long-term sustainability while supporting the University’s mission of serving students, faculty and the state of Tennessee,” UT Board of Trustees Chair John Compton said.

UT Martin Chancellor Yancy Freeman, hosting his first board meeting since his appointment as chancellor in 2023, reviewed UT Martin’s strategic plan, which underscores its commitment to innovative learning opportunities, strengthening industry partnerships, and supporting economic development in west Tennessee and beyond.

UT Martin is experiencing strong growth, with spring 2025 enrollment reaching 7,092 students – a nearly 10% increase from spring 2024. This

represents the highest spring enrollment since 2013. The UT Martin campus also experienced record fall-to-spring retention of new first-year students, reaching 91.7% this semester.

UT System President Randy Boyd also outlined the System’s 2025 objectives, emphasizing continued progress in student success, research excellence, economic impact and expanding access to higher education across the state. Objectives for 2025 include:

- Collaborating with campus leaders to develop strategic enrollment plans in support of the goal to reach 71,000 students by 2030;
- Increasing the percentage of Tennessee college-going high school graduates who apply to a UT campus from 78.2% to 85%;
- Hiring two dynamic, transformative chancellors to lead UT Chattanooga and UT Southern;
- Establishment of a Land Use Institute through the UT Institute of Agriculture to research farmland and forestry loss while developing strategies for sustainable land preservation in collaboration with industry and state partners; and
- Expanding outdoor science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programs through 4-H camps, providing

hands-on learning opportunities to prepare young Tennesseans for careers in STEM fields.

The meeting highlighted UT Health Science Center’s newly designated R1 research status, signifying its role as one of the nation’s leading research institutions. This recognition places the UT Health Science Center in an elite category of universities with high research activity, further solidifying its leadership in medical education, groundbreaking discoveries and health care innovation.

The Board also celebrated UT Martin’s continued commitment to workforce and economic development, including ongoing investments in technology and innovation initiatives through the groundbreaking of the Tennessee Entrepreneurial Science and Technology (TEST) Hub facility. The TEST Hub is a project designed to support regional entrepreneurship and industry partnerships, offering students and local businesses access to resources that encourage innovation and collaboration.

“The elevation of UT Health Science Center to R1 status and the groundbreaking of the TEST Hub at UT Martin reflect our commitment to advancing world-class research, strengthening workforce

development and fostering entrepreneurship,” Boyd said. “These milestones are a testament to the momentum in making this the greatest decade in UT history, ensuring a lasting impact on Tennessee and beyond.”

In other business, trustees approved:

- Revised FY 2024-25 operating budget;
- FY 2025-26 state budget amendment request;
- FY 2025-26 tuition and mandatory fee increases for the UT Health Science Center;
- Statement of aspirations focused the crucial role the University fulfills in serving the State of Tennessee, emphasizing UT’s dedication to academic excellence, innovation and public service;
- Policy regarding the use of artificial intelligence technology by students, faculty and staff for instructional and assignment purposes, as required by Tennessee Public Chapter 550; and
- New academic programs, program modifications and new academic units.

For more information on the Board of Trustees’ meeting and agenda items, visit [trustees.tennessee.edu](https://trustees.tennessee.edu). Please click here to view photos from the Feb. 27-28 meetings.

Campus Calendar

Tuesday, March 4

- Employee Appreciation Day Come-and-Go Bunch, 9-10:30 a.m., Duncan Ballroom, Boling University Center.

Wednesday, March 5

- Dr. Amy Yeung, vocal recital, “The Sounds of Grace,” 7:30 p.m., Blankenship Recital Hall, Fine Arts Building.

Thursday, March 6

- UT Martin Research Serries,

UTM Scholars Program, 4 p.m., north reading room, Paul Meek Library.

Friday, March 7

- Guest recital, Dr. Jeffrey Williams and Jennifer McGuire, “Legends, Longing and Loss,” 5:30 p.m., Blankenship Recital Hall, Fine Arts Building.

Events are subject to cancellation; dates, times and sites are subject to change.

A photograph of UT Martin Chancellor Yancy Freeman, a Black man with glasses, wearing a grey suit and a patterned tie. He is standing behind a wooden podium that features the UT Martin logo. He appears to be speaking or presenting during a formal meeting.

UT Martin Chancellor Yancy Freeman presents the university’s strategic plan to the UT Board of Trustees on Feb. 28 during the board’s winter meetings.

# Spring forward, set clocks ahead 1 hour this weekend

Daylight saving time begins at 2 a.m., Sunday, March 9, and for those who observe, that means setting clocks ahead one hour, leading to more daylight in the evening.

Perhaps the best way to do that would be to set clocks and watches ahead one hour

before going to bed Saturday night. For instance, at 10 p.m., set the clocks to 11 p.m.

That will make March 9 a 23-hour day, as the hour from 2 a.m. to 3 a.m. is “skipped,” giving observers one less hour of sleep.

The entire United States observes daylight

saving time except for the state of Hawaii and the non-Navajo Nation areas of Arizona.

Those observing daylight saving time will do so until 2 a.m. local time, Sunday, Nov. 2, when the clocks are set back by one hour, returning to standard time.

## TEST HUB from PAGE 1

“We have a TCAT (Tennessee College of Applied Technology), a community college and a four-year school proposing to the governor and the legislature a new facility in which we work together,” he told those gathered for the ceremony.

“And for the state of Tennessee to be successful, we were most successful when we worked together. This is just the epitome of that, and we’re so proud to be a lead partner in that and have it on our campus and be partnering with our folks at the TCAT and the community college.”

Once completed, the \$18 million facility will provide hands-on manufacturing engineering education and a regional innovation hub that will support the region’s workforce and economic development. The facility is currently scheduled for completion in the first quarter of 2027.

Funded by the Tennessee

General Assembly in April 2022, the TEST Hub will combine educational facilities, entrepreneurial centers and manufacturing workshops surrounding a shared industrial makerspace. UT Martin Chancellor **Yancy Freeman** recognized State Sen. John Stevens of Huntingdon (R-District 24) and Rep. Tandy Darby of Greenfield (R-District 76) for their support in the Tennessee General Assembly.

Through partnerships with the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology Henry/Carroll and Dyersburg State Community College, the facility will offer educational opportunities at the certificate, associate and bachelor’s degree levels, as well as career and technical education opportunities for the region’s high schools.

The TEST Hub will also be the new home for the UT Martin Regional Entrepreneurship and Economic Development Center. The REED Center assists

existing and potential business owners through one-on-one consultations and interactive training programs. The center houses the Tennessee Small Business Development Center that is currently located in downtown Martin.

Freeman sees population growth and economic progress in the region among the facility’s future benefits.

“The Tennessee Entrepreneurial Science and Technology Hub, the TEST Hub, will serve as the cornerstone for economic and workforce development in Northwest Tennessee,” Freeman said. “It will forge innovative partnerships between industry and educational institutions, strengthening our region’s workforce and economic vitality.

“A national model for rural development, the TEST Hub is a national model for demonstrating how public universities can revitalize rural communities.”

**Dr. Nancy Buschhaus**, longtime UT Martin faculty member and the newly named dean for the university’s College of Engineering and Natural Sciences, said the facility’s impact will be felt beyond the classroom.

She said the TEST Hub is projected to contribute to the production of an additional 55 bachelor’s degrees, 27 associate degrees and 13 certificate holders each year. It is also estimated to help produce a total of 1,138 new engineering graduates from UT Martin, Dyersburg State and TCAT.

“This is not just an investment in education, it’s an investment in the future of Tennessee’s workforce, economy and innovation,” Buschhaus said. “Together we are paying the way for generations of learners to achieve their dreams and strengthen their communities.”

Learn more about the TEST Hub by contacting Buschhaus at 731-881-7385.

## You Tell Me

• **Question** – The TEST Hub will be built behind the Student Recreation Center on the UTM Fitness Trail. As someone who uses the Fitness Trail quite often, does this mean that the Fitness Trail will be demolished? Or will the trail remain for the Martin public?

• **Answer** – Construction of the TEST Hub will have minimal impact on the Fitness Trail. The trail will cross the Hannings Lane entrance to the new facility, but use of and access to the trail will not be affected for the university community or public.

Submit your questions to Addenda at [addenda@utm.edu](mailto:addenda@utm.edu).

## addenda

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