



2025 SOAR season gets underway



After a rainy start to the day, the 2025 SOAR season got underway May 19. Several students took part in the first Summer Orientation And Registration event at the Edward J. and Carolyn P. Boling University Center. There are seven in-person SOAR events and one virtual session scheduled for this summer.

25th Memorial Day Commemoration set for May 23

UT Martin will hold its 25th Memorial Day Commemoration ceremony at 9 a.m., Friday, May 23, on the north plaza of the main campus between the Boling University Center and the Paul Meek Library.

Parking will be available in the university center and library lots.

The in-person event is open to the public. No live webcast or recording of the event will be available.

U.S. Rep. David Kustoff (R-TN, 8th District) will be among those attending and will offer a legislative welcome.

Tennessee National Guard retired Maj. Gen. Mike Maloan of Martin will be the guest speaker. Maloan is the chancellor for the 27th District Chancery Court that

presides over Obion and Weakley counties.

Kustoff is serving his fifth term in the U.S. House of Representatives. A graduate of the University of Memphis and University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law, Kustoff serves on the House Committee on Ways and Means, the oldest committee in the U.S. Congress.

He was also appointed to serve on the subcommittees on tax and health. The Shelby County native lives in Germantown.

Maloan is a 1972 UT Martin business administration graduate and a 1974 University of Memphis (then Memphis State University) law graduate. He took a direct commission in 1988 as a first lieutenant in

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Malone

YoUTMs

highlighting the excellence of our faculty and staff

Dr. Cooper Johnson and **Dr. Jamye Long**, both professors of management, attended the 25th annual Society of Business, Industry, and Economics, where they presented their work titled “Succession Planning for Department Chairs.”

Their presentation discussed the value, benefits and ideas for succession planning at the department chair level.

The Society of Business, Industry, and Economics was held April 9-11 at San Destin, Florida.



Johnson



Long

Dr. Laura Hatch, assistant professor of accounting, was featured in the recent WalletHub online story titled “[Zero-Based Budgeting.](#)”

Dr. Mahmoud Haddad, professor of finance, was featured in WalletHub’s recent story about budget percentages. You can read the story and related Q&A with Dr. Haddad

[here.](#)

WalletHub, based in Washington, D.C., is a financial website that offers information such as credit-improvement advice and personalized savings alerts. The site’s business-related features are supplemented with information from subject-matter experts.



Hatch



Haddad

Lt. Chad Worley of the UTM Department of Public Safety graduated from the 153rd Administrative Officers Course of the Southern Police Institute (SPI).

Founded in 1951 at the University of Louisville, SPI was established to professionalize law enforcement through advanced education in leadership, law and public safety.

Its flagship program, the Administrative Officers Course, is a nationally recognized executive development program for mid- and upper-level law enforcement leaders.

The intensive 12-week course combines academic instruction with practical



Worley

training in administrative law, organizational leadership and strategic problem-solving.

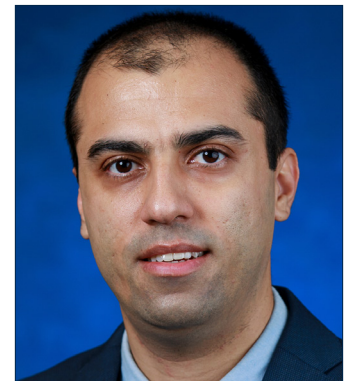
Graduates join a distinguished network of law enforcement professionals serving in leadership roles across the country and around the world.

Dr. Saman Sargolzaei, associate professor of engineering, recently graduated from the 34th session of the Martin Police Department’s Citizens Police Academy.

This 10-week interactive program offers hands-on classes covering a wide range of topics, including constitutional and criminal law, domestic violence, the K-9 unit, DUI enforcement, the SWAT unit, defensive tactics and use of force, criminal investigations, traffic stops, undercover drug investigations and firearms.

As part of the program, participants are also required to complete at least two ride-alongs with a Martin Police Officer.

Upon graduation, participants are invited to serve as community “diplomats” for



Sargolzaei

the police department and are encouraged to join the Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association.

Many graduates go on to support additional department initiatives such as the Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) Program, Neighborhood Watch and National Night Out.

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by sending a YoUTM to addenda@utm.edu!***

Engineering seniors present year-end projects

The electrical and computer engineering senior design teams presented, defended and demonstrated their senior electrical and computer engineering projects May 1.

- Automatic checkerboard (Tony Anderson mentored by Lee Bennett): A smart checkerboard that allows players to play checkers against a computer, with the added feature of the board automatically moving the pieces when the computer makes a move.

- Next-generation Skyhawk tractor: Developing electronic steering, electric drivetrain, human machine interface (HMI) and engine integration (Brooke Kala, Nathan Robison and John Kerstiens): The goal of this senior design project was to advance the electrical components and technology of the Skyhawk tractor team's 1/4-scale tractor (advised by **Dr. Sandy Mehlhorn**, associate professor of agricultural engineering).

Last year, the team made significant progress by implementing an electric driveline, which greatly improved its competitiveness. However, several areas still required enhancement, including the development of an electronic steering system, the addition of an HMI for operator data display, and the integration of a new electronically controlled competition engine.

- Traffic light control back-up power system lead (Jacob Schneppe mentored by Adam Griffin and Kyle Ross): The goal of this project is to design an affordable, efficient and user-friendly back-up power system for traffic light controllers, ensuring uninterrupted operation at traffic intersections.



Shown at the UTM senior engineering project demonstration May 1 are (kneeling, l-r) seniors Tony Anderson, Curt Lynch, Isaac Copeland, Nathan Robison and John Kerstiens; (standing, l-r) Dr. Saman Sargolzaei, associate professor of engineering; mentor Lee Bennett; seniors Kyle Byassee and Seth Hatchett; Jeff McCullough, associate professor of engineering; senior Jacob Schneppe; mentor Adam Griffin of Union City Energy Authority; senior Brooke Kala; Laura Suiter, director of Development and Planned Giving; and Kyle Ross of Union City Energy Authority.

The system will incorporate multiple free energy sources, such as solar and magnetic generation, to provide temporary power to critical control systems during outages.

- Neuroimaging-driven autonomous vehicles driving simulation in extended reality (Curt Lynch, Kyle Byassee, Isaac Copeland, Seth Hatchett): This project focuses on studying the impact of autonomous vehicles on drivers, particularly how drivers interact with self-driving systems

in high-stress scenarios.

Traditional methods of assessing driver stress, like surveys, can be limited by their reliance on qualitative data and lack of controlled environments. In contrast, testing in virtually simulated environments provides a more controlled setting and allows for the collection of quantitative data from various sources, such as EEG, heart rate monitoring, and head/eye tracking.

Caren Nichter, associate professor and cataloging librarian, and **Ronne Cox**, assistant professor and electronic resources librarian, were co-presenters at two recent virtual conferences.

At the Canadian Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres (CAML 2025), their presentation titled "Amplifying Voices: An effort to promote underrepresented composers while highlighting resources," highlighted the Paul



Nichter

Meek Library's YouTube playlist that connects listeners to music



Cox

scores via the nkoda online platform.

At the Ohio Valley Group of Technical Services Librarians (OVGSTL 2025), their presentation titled "Hidden in the Stacks: One Academic Library's Quest to Revitalize and Improve Access to Government Documents" shared the library's efforts in deaccessioning, inventory management, and cataloging enhancements aimed at increasing the visibility and accessibility of government documents within the library's collection.

Chancellor's Leadership Academy announced

UT Martin has established the Chancellor's Leadership Academy, a leader and leadership development program for UTM faculty and staff, which will begin this fall.

The Chancellor's Leadership Academy is an eight-month program that will enable participants to build their leadership skills, then apply that to their university roles.

"The Chancellor's Leadership Academy represents our strategic investment in UT Martin's most valuable asset: our people," Freeman said. "Since arriving on campus in 2023, I've been continuously impressed by the exceptional talent and dedication of our faculty and staff. This eight-month leadership experience isn't just professional development; it's a transformative journey that challenges participants to think critically, broadly and deeply about the future of higher education."

Program highlights include executive coaching sessions, personalized assessments with certified trainers, "wicked problem" exercises and engaging with UTM and UT System leaders.

The program will begin in September and run through April 2026. The orientation program will be held Sept. 4, followed by programs on Oct. 2, Nov. 13, Jan. 8, Feb. 5, March 5 and April 2. The graduation program will be held April 30.

The first cohort of the Chancellor's Leadership Academy consists of 13 UTM faculty or staff members:

- Ashley Bynum, senior associate athletics director for internal operations, Office of Intercollegiate Athletics.
- Dr. Brittany Cole, assistant professor, Department of Accounting, Economics and Finance.
- Dr. Kelli Deere, director, UTM Parsons Regional Center.
- Dr. Steve Elliott, professor and chair, Department of Mathematics and Statistics.
- Dr. Austin Ferrell, assistant professor, Department of Educational Studies.
- Will Gibson, disability and testing services manager, Accessibility Resource Center.
- Dr. Henri Giles, assistant professor, Department of History and Philosophy.
- Dr. Margaret Lewis, professor, Department of



Freeman

History and Philosophy.

- Dr. Saman Sargolzaei, associate professor, Department of Engineering.
 - Jennifer Schlicht, executive assistant, Division of University Advancement.
 - Callie Smithson, business manager, Department of Agriculture, Geosciences and Natural Resources.
 - Tammy Stanford, assistant director for success counseling, Student Success Center.
 - Lt. Chad Worley, administrative and special services lieutenant, Department of Public Safety.
- "For the 13 individuals selected from our competitive applicant pool, this represents both a recognition of their demonstrated potential and our

commitment to preparing the next generation of university leaders," Freeman said.

"As these participants engage with campus and system executives, tackle collaborative problem-solving and receive personalized coaching, they'll not only advance their own leadership capabilities but also contribute directly to advancing our institution. The Chancellor's Leadership Academy embodies our Skyhawk spirit of excellence and our dedication to cultivating leadership that will shape UT Martin's future."

The Chancellor's Leadership Academy is open to all faculty and staff upon application and selection, and the benefits of participation will extend beyond personal development. Participants will gain increased awareness of higher education's challenges, advance their leadership confidence, cultivate collaboration throughout UT Martin and prepare them for professional advancement.

More information about the Chancellor's leadership Academy can be found at www.utm.edu/leadershipacademy.

Sexual Assault Awareness Month proclamation signed



Chancellor Yancy Freeman (right) was joined by three mayors April 21 to sign a proclamation recognizing April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The signing was held in front of the "Friends" statues on the UT Martin campus and was followed by the final Healthy Hawk Walk of the spring semester. Pictured with Freeman (l-r) are Cindy McAdams, Greenfield mayor; Randy Brundige, Martin mayor; and Dale Hutcherson, Weakley County mayor.

SGA Freshman Council holds carnival for art supplies



The UT Martin Student Government Association Freshman Council plans a philanthropic event each year for the entire student body. This spring, the freshman council planned a carnival event for UT Martin students and collected art supplies to be donated to Weakley County Schools. The freshman council collected more than 200 items to donate to the art programs and delivered their donations to Martin Elementary School on April 21. Pictured at the delivery are (l-r) Terri Stephenson, elementary supervisor of instruction, Weakley County Schools; Tiffany Frazier, assistant principal, Martin Elementary School; Amber Wharton, art teacher, Martin and Dresden elementary schools; Erika Delswich, freshman council secretary general; Terrion Evans, freshman council president; John Abel, UT Martin assistant vice chancellor for student affairs and SGA adviser; Jennifer Wenz, visual arts teacher, Westview High School; and Robert Hatcher, visual arts teacher, Dresden High School.

MEMORIAL from PAGE 1

the Judge Advocate General's Corps and in 2004 was promoted to the position of staff judge advocate of the Tennessee National Guard, serving as the head lawyer for the Tennessee Military Department.

In 2007, he was named assistant adjutant general for the Army of the Tennessee National Guard. Maloan retired from military service in 2012.

In addition to Kustoff and Maloan, the commemoration will include several participants from the immediate area and region.

The national anthem will be sung by Madison Butner, a senior music major from Union City. A university welcome will be offered by Dr. Yancy Freeman Sr., UT Martin chancellor; a 21-gun salute will be presented by the university's Department of Public Safety and Martin Police Department; and taps will be played by Jonah Simmons, a May music graduate from Greenfield.

U.S. Navy retired Chaplain Debra McGuire of Paris will offer the invocation and benediction, and **Lt. Col. Bernard House**, UT Martin

professor of military science, will be the commemoration's master of ceremonies.

In addition to the speakers, the program will include presentation of the colors by UT Martin Army ROTC Skyhawk Battalion cadets Elle Colson, a sophomore criminal justice major from South Fulton; Claudia Colston, a May education graduate from South Fulton; Tyler Pannell, a junior agriculture major from Atoka; and Kile Goostree, a junior history major from Huntingdon.

Memorial Day is observed annually on the last Monday in May and honors those who have died in service to the U.S.

The observance was originally named Decoration Day in 1868, changed to Memorial Day in 1882 and declared a national holiday in 1971.

In case of inclement weather, the program will be moved to Watkins Auditorium located inside the Boling University Center.

Contact the Office of University Relations at 731-881-7615 for additional information.

You Tell Me

- **Question** – Do first-year students who plan to attend a UT Martin Regional Center at Jackson, Parsons, Ripley, Selmer, Somerville or Springfield attend Summer Orientation and Registration events at the main campus? If not, are there similar SOAR events for these students at the regional centers?
- **Answer** – Students who plan to attend a UTM Regional Center do not attend SOAR at the main campus. Students who plan to attend a regional center will work directly with the center they plan to attend for advising, registration, and SOAR orientation events.

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

Four earn Skyhawk Spirit, Innovation awards

Four people were named to Skyhawk Spirit Awards for the month of May.

Barrett Belote, Brandon Keller and Debbie Lowe each earned the Skyhawk Spirit Award and will each receive a commemorative plaque and a \$50 cash prize. Benjamin Ort earned the Skyhawk Innovation Award and will receive a commemorative plaque and a \$250 cash prize.

Belote is the coordinator for fitness and facilities in the Office of Campus Recreation. According to his letter of congratulations, he earned the award through his leadership of the Functional Fit class.

“Because of your dedication to the well-being and mental health of faculty and staff, a community has been formed that offers a welcoming and inclusive environment,” the letter states. “Not only is the class motivational and educational, but it also encourages social engagement and growth.”

Keller is the clinical case manager for the Office of Student Health Services. According to his letter of congratulations, he earned the award through his support of UTM students.

“Your dedication to meeting students where they are, particularly those facing

mental health challenges or navigating the complexities of life, has made a lasting difference in many lives,” the letter states. “You consistently go above and beyond, and your ‘nothing will get me down’ attitude is not only inspiring but is also profoundly impactful in creating a safe, supportive space for those who need it most.”

Lowe is a custodian in the Office of Housing. According to her letter of congratulations, she earned the award through her support of the students.

“Your unwavering commitment to making Conner Community and the Office of Housing a place where everyone feels seen, valued and uplifted by your kindness and thoughtful encouragement truly exemplifies the spirit of this award,” the letter states. “Your dedication to supporting students is nothing short of inspiring. Whether through greeting everyone with a warm smile or taking a genuine interest in the well-being of our students, your tireless efforts make a lasting impact.”

Ort is the assistant director of First-Year Experience. According to his letter of congratulations, he earned the Skyhawk Innovation Award through his efforts in

creating the “Power of Investment Pin” initiative.

“Your outstanding creativity and dedication to enhancing the student experience is clearly demonstrated through your idea,” the letter states. “Your innovative and meaningful program embodies the very heart of UT Martin and the deep-rooted commitment to investing in our students through time, mentorship, education and care.

“This approach encourages students to be intentional about building meaningful connections with faculty and staff that will shape their journey and success both on campus and beyond.”

The Skyhawk Spirit Award and Skyhawk Innovation Award were begun in February 2024 as a means of recognizing employee contributions that exceed expectations.

All regular full-time faculty and staff up to the level of director are eligible for these awards.

Nominations for these awards should be sent by the first Friday of the month to skyhawkspiritaward@utm.edu.

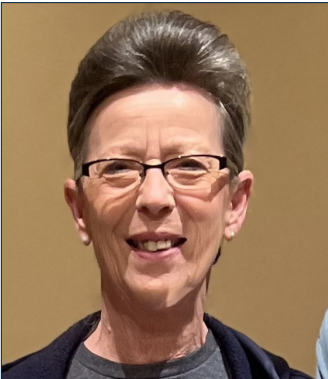
Nominations for the month of June are due by June 6.



Belote



Keller



Lowe



Ort

May 2025						
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ECD Commissioner Stuart McWhorter visits UTM



Stuart McWhorter, Tennessee commissioner of economic development, stopped at UT Martin on April 30 as part of his “McWhorter on the Move” tour across Tennessee. The stop at UT Martin was the first among UT campuses. The commissioner’s tour highlights “the people, places and innovations that make Tennessee a top state for business.” McWhorter has served as ECD commissioner since July 2022. He visited the Latimer-Smith Engineering and Science Building where he and his team visited with the UT Martin tractor team, which includes students from the Department of Agriculture, Geosciences, and Natural Resources and the Department of Engineering. The commissioner also met with Chancellor Yancy Freeman, other university administrators and faculty members. Pictured with the commissioner is Nathan Robison of Bruceton, a UT Martin tractor team member and May engineering graduate. Robison demonstrates the screen that displays all motor information as it runs. The team will compete in the International ¼-Scale Tractor Student Design Competition, May 29-June 1, at the Expo Gardens Fairgrounds in Peoria, Illinois.

UTM Advisory Board holds summer meeting

Chancellor Yancy Freeman shares a light moment with the UT Martin Advisory Board during the board’s summer meeting May 16 in the Boling University Center. Freeman previewed the university’s new strategic plan dashboard being created by the Office of Institutional Research. The completed dashboard will offer updates tied to each goal initiative that can be viewed by the public. The next UT Martin Advisory Board meeting will be Sept. 19 at the main campus.



addenda

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