

# addenda

The University of Tennessee at Martin Faculty and Staff Newsletter | May 5, 2025

## UTM holds spring 2025 commencement exercises



UT Martin held its spring 2025 commencement exercises May 3 in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center, which saw a total of 638 graduates take part in the two ceremonies. Nationally-known behavioral health and wellness expert Miles Adcox (left), a 1998 UTM graduate, was the guest speaker at both ceremonies and advised, "You can't build the life you love without holding the steering wheel." Chancellor Yancy Freeman (below) applauds a group of honors graduates during one of the ceremonies. See the commencement story on Page 4.





# YoUTMs

highlighting the excellence of our faculty and staff

The Center for Teaching and Learning – alongside the Instructional Technology Center – hosted the first faculty and staff workshop on “Blueprint in Canvas: Streamlining Multi-Section Course Management” on April 22.

The workshop included presentations by IT Specialist III **Bonnie Daniel**; IT Specialist III **Chad McDaniel**; **Dr. Abbie**



**Daniel**

**McClure**, assistant professor of education and director of the Reading Center; **Dr. Brad Baumgardner**, director of retention in the Student Success Center; and **Benjamin Ort**, assistant director of First-Year Experience.

The workshop was facilitated by **Dr. Adnan Rasool**, associate professor of political science and director of the Center for Teaching and Learning.



**McDaniel**



**McClure**



**Baumgardner**



**Ort**



**Rasool**

**Dr. Jason DeVito**, associate professor of mathematics and statistics, and fall 2024 graduate Peyton Johnson of Holladay co-authored a paper, “Curvature on Eschenburg Spaces,” which was published Oct. 12 in Springer Nature.

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

The authors of the paper investigated the curvature of Eschenburg spaces with respect to two different metrics: one constructed by the spaces namesake, Dr.



**DeVito**

Hans Eschenburg, and one constructed by Dr. Burkhard Wilking.

**Ronne Cox**, assistant professor and electronic resources and discovery librarian, was a co-presenter of the session “From Chaos to Clarity: A FOLIO Inventory Cleanup Project” at the 2025 EBSCO User Group meeting for North American Libraries, held April 29-May 2 in Providence, Rhode Island.

The presentation shared the Paul Meek Library’s work to implement the FOLIO library system platform over the last four years.



**Cox**

## Campus Calendar

**Tuesday, May 6**

- UT Martin Research Series: Dr. Derrick Shepard, “Privilege, Power, & Differences: How Social Class is All Around

Us,” 6:30 p.m., Martin Public Library.

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

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## Faculty earn UT Martin honors



Those present for faculty members receiving honors during UT Martin's Honors Day program April 13 were (front row, l-r) Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Dr. Philip Cavalier; Dr. Christie Chen, Outstanding Academic Adviser Award; Dr. Tammie Patterson, Outstanding UTAA Teacher Award; Dr. Nathan Howard, Cunningham Outstanding Teacher/Scholar Award; Chancellor Yancy Freeman; (back row, l-r) Dr. Philip Smartt, Outstanding UTAA Teacher Award; Dr. Jack Grubaugh, OVC Faculty Commitment to Student Success Award; Dr. Saman Sargolzaei, Cunningham Outstanding Teacher/Scholar Award; and Dr. Justin Sims, Coffey Outstanding Teacher Award.

## CEHBS Dean's Awards presented



Earning College of Education, Health and Behavioral Studies Dean's Awards are (l-r) Laurie Green, coordinator of the Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies program, Excellence Award for outstanding performance; Dr. Natasha Varnick, assistant professor of psychology, Service Award for outstanding service; Dr. Claret Onukogu, lecturer of health and human performance, Scholarship Award for outstanding scholarship; Dr. Stanton Watson, coordinator of training and partnerships for the Educator Preparation Program, Excellence Award for outstanding performance; and Dr. Austin Ferrell, assistant professor of educational studies, director of Call Me MiSTER program, Pinnacle Award for outstanding teaching, scholarship and service. The awards were presented at a luncheon April 23. Each award winner received a certificate and will have an engraved leaf on the Dean's Wall of Excellence in the CEHBS conference room at 128 Gooch Hall.

### Remaining Skyhawk Home Events

Tuesday, May 6

- Baseball vs. North Alabama, 6 p.m., Skyhawk Baseball Field.

Thursday, May 15

- \*Baseball vs. SIUE, 5 p.m., Skyhawk Baseball Field.

Friday, May 16

- \*Baseball vs. SIUE, 3 p.m., Skyhawk Baseball Field.

Saturday, May 17

- \*Baseball vs. SIUE, 1 p.m., Skyhawk Baseball Field.

\* - conference competition.

Full athletics schedules can be found at [utmsports.com](https://utmsports.com).

Dates and times are subject to change.





# More than 600 students take part in commencement

More than 600 students earning their degrees at the bachelor's and master's levels crossed the stage to receive those degrees in the two commencement ceremonies held May 3 in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.

Miles Adcox, a 1998 UT Martin graduate with a bachelor's degree in health and human performance, gave the commencement address at both ceremonies.

Adcox is the chairman and proprietor of Onsite Wellness Group, a globally-renowned brand offering self-development and personal growth workshops, leadership retreats, digital master classes and residential mental-wellness care.

His work at Onsite has been featured on "20/20," "Good Morning America," "Dr. Phil," The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal.

Adcox told the graduates that there is an essential ingredient for overall success and well-being.

"You can't build the life you love without holding the steering wheel," he said. "I spent a long stretch in a (mental) story loop that said I'm falling behind and will never catch up. There was a season in my life when nothing seemed to be working out. My career was shaky; relationships a little stalled; confidence, basically, was MIA (missing in action). I remember waking up one morning and thinking I don't even recognize who I'm looking at in the mirror.

"But, here's the sneaky thing about story loops: They feel like protection at the time – and if we believe we are stuck, we don't have to risk failing again. We don't have to try when we already believe it's too late. But, this story just didn't serve me. It didn't heal me; it actually just held me hostage. Eventually, I realized that the story was not going to change unless I changed it."

Adcox said he stopped waiting for confidence to show up and started "doing small, brave things imperfectly and inconsistently, but with heart." Most importantly, he said, he learned to ask for help.

"Slowly, the loop broke and I started to rewrite the story," he said. "Here is the truth: You can't control everything that happens to you, but you can control the story you tell yourself about it. You also might not be responsible for everything that happens to you, but you are responsible for how you



**Graduating student-athletes prepare for a photo outside of the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center behind the statues of UTM alumna Pat Head Summitt, longtime women's basketball coach Nadine Gearin and women's athletics director Bettye Giles.**

respond to it."

Chancellor Yancy Freeman is drawing a close to his second year as the university's 12th chancellor, and he congratulated the 638 total graduates on hand for both ceremonies.

"Everyone graduating today has faced unique challenges and disruptions in their daily lives," he said. "Yet, they persisted, and they made it through those trying times to reach this very day and this very moment.

"Congratulations, graduates. Your commitment, your consistency and your willingness to complete the journey is finally here."

The Paul and Martha Meek Leadership Award was given to Isabella Walker of Bartlett, who earned her degree in veterinary science and technology, and Charlie Shipman of Memphis, who earned her degree in political science.

The Paul and Martha Meek Leadership Award was established to recognize graduating seniors who have demonstrated outstanding qualities of leadership while

pursuing their education. It was named for former chancellor Dr. Paul Meek and his wife and was first presented in 1970.

Chancellor Meek served as the university's executive officer from 1934 to 1951 and its dean from 1951 to 1967 before being named its first chancellor in 1967.

The award was originally established and funded by the Meeks' three children to honor their parents and to honor students who embody the same spirit of leadership.

UT Martin's spring 2025 graduates came from 59 counties in Tennessee as well as from 27 other states and five other countries: Australia, Canada, France, Jamaica and Vietnam.

Maymester classes begin May 12 and will run through May 30. Summer full-time classes and Summer I classes begin June 2. Summer I classes end July 3. Summer II classes begin July 8, and summer full-time classes and Summer II classes end Aug. 8.

The fall 2025 semester begins Aug. 25 and runs through Dec. 12.

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# ECD Commissioner McWhorter visits campus



Stuart McWhorter (right), Tennessee commissioner of economic development, stopped at UT Martin on April 30 as part of his “McWhorter on the Move” visits across Tennessee. The stop at UT Martin was the first among UT campuses. The commissioner’s tour is designed “to highlight 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 met with students, Chancellor Yancy Freeman, other university administrators and faculty members. Pictured with the commissioner is Nathan Robison of the UT Martin tractor team demonstrating the screen that displays all motor information as the motor runs. The team will compete in the upcoming International 1/4-Scale Tractor Student Design Competition, May 29-June 1, at the Expo Gardens Fairgrounds in Peoria, Illinois.

## You Tell Me

• **Question** – I was driving through a university parking lot when a person on a motorized scooter cut in front of my moving vehicle. He emerged from another row of cars, took a hard right turn traveling in the same direction as my vehicle, and did so at a relatively high speed. The person (likely a student) never looked or stopped. Different timing could have created a very different outcome for the person on the scooter. Are there any rules or guidelines for smaller motorized vehicles, such as scooters and golf carts, traveling on university sidewalks and in parking lots?

• **Answer** – At this time, there is no formal policy governing the use of bicycles, scooters or other personal transportation devices on UT Martin property—unless otherwise designated by signage, such as at the university’s Fitness Trail. The university policy regarding the use of golf carts and utility vehicles on the main campus [can be seen here](#). The document primarily highlights the importance of yielding to pedestrians, safe operation practices and operator requirements.

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

## addenda

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