

## MFD confined-space training held on campus



The City of Martin Fire Department took part in confined-space rescue training Aug. 5-7 in a storm drain near the Latimer-Smith Engineering and Science Building. The training took place in a space 13 inches by 24 inches wide in a 20-foot-deep storm drain. Members of the department's special operations team and shift personnel took part in the training. Firefighter Cory Oglesby (in harness in the photo at left) is prepared to be lowered down by Capt. Jeff Stricklin (left), Lt. Cason Massey (behind Oglesby) and Assistant Chief Jason Hauhe using the department's tripod. Strickland, Massey and Hauhe are manning the lines and entry point to ensure safety in the procedure. (Right photo) Oglesby is shown preparing to be hoisted up out of the confined space.

## Mid-South Ag Finance Conference set for Aug. 13

UT Martin will host the 27th annual Mid-South Ag Finance Conference, a signature event focused on delivering practical financial strategies and timely economic insights to the agricultural community.

The conference will be held from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Wednesday, Aug. 13, in the Watkins Auditorium in the Boling University Center. Those wanting to attend should register at [www.utm.edu/agconference](http://www.utm.edu/agconference).

The conference is sponsored by the Dunagan Chair of Excellence in Banking and the Gilbert Parker Chair of Excellence

in Food and Fiber.

Dedicated to enhancing financial decision-making across the agricultural sector, the conference equips producers, lenders and agribusiness professionals with tools to optimize profitability and manage risk in an evolving economic environment.

Each year, the event attracts about 350 participants, including agricultural lenders, producers, industry leaders, UT Martin representatives and students.

The 2025 program features a lineup of nationally recognized experts in agricultural finance, economics and meteorology.

Returning as keynote speaker is Dr. Dave Kohl, professor emeritus at Virginia Tech University, who has spoken at all 26 previous conferences. His presentation, titled "Managing through Economic Chaos," will address current market conditions and strategies for resilience in uncertain times.

Additional speakers include Eric Snodgrass, principal atmospheric scientist with Nutrien Ag Solutions, and Scott Sartor, founder and chief executive officer of Croptell. Their presentations will examine the intersection of weather, climate risk and

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# YoUTMs

highlighting the excellence of our faculty and staff

**Dr. Clinton Smith**, professor of special education and chair of the Department of Educational Studies, was reappointed to the National Education Association's Disability Rights Resource Cadre by NEA President Becky Pringle.

Smith has been a member of the cadre since 2019.

The Disability Rights Resource Cadre is a diverse group of special-education professionals

from every region of the nation who work collaboratively to identify, develop and deliver resources to enhance skills and knowledge of educators through professional development.

Being a member of the cadre is a high-profile position. Members have been called upon to work with strategic partners in the U.S. Department of Education, the White House and external education organizations.



Smith



Jones

**Dr. ZeVida A. Jones**, assistant professor of counseling, co-authored the article "[Unemployed Black/African Americans With Disabilities' Treatment Acquisition for Substance Use Disorder and Serious Mental Illness.](#)" published in the April 2025 issue of the Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development.

The study analyzed national survey data to examine

treatment access for this underserved population and highlighted strategies for counselors to improve culturally responsive care and address systemic barriers.

The article was co-authored by Jennifer M. Cook and Kayla Schneider of the University of Texas-San Antonio, Lee Za Ong of Marquette University and Melissa Deroche of Tarleton State Fort Worth.



Johnson

**Brian Johnson**, lecturer and chair of the Department of Psychology, will play the role of Dr. Frank Gibbs in Playhouse in the Park's production of "Our Town."

Johnson has appeared in over 40 productions with seven different community theaters in the past 15 years. This is his first production with Playhouse in the Park in Murray, Kentucky.

Performances are at 7 p.m., Aug. 15-16 and Aug. 22-23, and 2:30 p.m., Aug. 17 and 24.

More information about tickets can be found at [playhousemurray.org](http://playhousemurray.org).

**Dr. Cayce Batts**, assistant professor of social work, presented virtually at the 2025 Summer Counselor Conference held July 25-27.

This international conference had more than 1,500 participants representing the fields of social work, school counseling, school psychology and other related disciplines.

Batts' presentation focused on Parent Cafes, a framework to promote parental involvement in K-12 public education.

Batts volunteers at Fulton



Batts

Independent Schools in Kentucky to host Parent Cafes once a month.

## The news at [news.utm.edu](http://news.utm.edu)

[Fall classes begin Monday, Aug. 25](#)

[UTM to host 27th annual Ag Finance conference](#)

[UTM hosts nutrition workshop for area school districts](#)

[UTM graduate receives Phi Kappa Phi Fellowship](#)

[UTM Jackson Center, JSCC team up for meteorology camp](#)

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## Welcome Weekend set for Aug. 21-25



Welcome Weekend at UT Martin begins Thursday, Aug. 21, and runs through Sunday, Aug. 24.

Welcome Weekend is a way to help make returning to campus more enjoyable.

Here are some of the scheduled events taking place during Welcome Weekend:

- Move-In Mania, starts 8 a.m., Aug. 21.

- Welcome-Home Picnic, starts 5 p.m., Aug. 21.

- UTM soccer vs North Alabama, 7 p.m., Aug. 21.

- Convocation, 10 a.m., Aug. 22, Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.

- UTM soccer vs. Austin Peay, 7 p.m., Aug. 24.



# Alexander announces upcoming retirement



Rochelle Alexander, supply technician of the Department of Military Science, will retire from the U.S. Army on Aug. 29. Alexander is responsible for managing the ROTC budget, managing government vehicles, inventory control, credit card services and ordering all supplies, uniforms, accoutrements and transportation for cadet training. A ceremony took place at the Dennis D. Cavin ROTC Building on May 29 honoring her service. Alexander was awarded the Civilian Meritorious Service Award for her 20 years of service with ROTC. Pictured at the ceremony were (front row, l-r) Sgt. 1st Class Grover Muirheid, Allan Patterson, Alexander, Cadet Emily Bryan, Lt. Col. Bernard House, (back row, l-r) Sgt. 1st Class Omar Gomez, John Buckley, Maj. William Burgess, 2nd Lt. Brandon Boaz and 2nd Lt. Rita Eimer. In addition to her service to ROTC, Ms. Alexander is also a 20-year Marine Corps veteran.

## AG FINANCE from PAGE 1

data-driven decision-making in agriculture.

New to this year's event is a Producer Panel sponsored by the Tennessee Farm Bureau Tax Service. The panel will be moderated by Eric Mayberry, president of the Tennessee Farm Bureau, and includes producers Eric Maupin of Newbern, Ben Moore of Dresden and Charlie Roberts of Halls.

This panel of experienced agricultural producers will offer valuable insights and practical guidance designed to enhance farm operations, family-run businesses and personal

financial management.

Designed to foster an environment of engagement and shared learning, the conference is open to a wide range of agricultural stakeholders from farmers and agribusiness owners to students preparing for careers in agriculture.

Attendees will gain exposure to the challenges and opportunities facing modern agriculture, along with practical tools for navigating the road ahead.

For more information about the Mid-South Ag Finance Conference, visit [www.utm.edu/agconference](http://www.utm.edu/agconference).



Eric Snodgrass is shown in his meteorology presentation at last year's Ag Finance Conference, where he spoke about weather patterns and their effect on U.S. agriculture. Snodgrass is one of several people scheduled to speak at this year's conference Aug. 13.



# Skyhawk Award winners for August announced

The August winners of the Skyhawk Innovation Award and the Skyhawk Spirit Awards honor three staff members.

**Karli Smith**, the program resource specialist for the Department of Political Science and Global Studies and for the Department of English and Modern Foreign Languages, earned the Skyhawk Innovation Award for her work in helping the Department of Political Science and Global Studies transition to the College of Humanities and Fine Arts.

"She has provided administrative support to one of only three Grand Challenge Grants hosted by UTM," her letter of nomination stated. "Karli is awesome to work with – fantastic at making things run. She has worked...to ensure a smooth and streamlined process of onboarding student employees and interns that are working on various projects for the two programs she supports."

Winners of the Skyhawk Spirit Awards were:

- **Brooke Dodd**, business manager for the Office of Regional Center and Online Programs, was nominated for the award for her "unwavering



**Smith**

commitment and exceptional support," according to the letter of nomination.

"Brooke has spent countless hours navigating the complexities of the campus transition to DASH, providing continuous support not only to her department but also to her colleagues across the campus," the letter stated.

- **Jordan Reynolds**, hall director of Browning Hall, was nominated for his work in facilitating the transition of leadership when the hall director position at Ellington Hall became vacant.

"When the hall director position for Ellington Hall became vacant, Jordan immediately stepped in to help manage the building without



**Dodd**

being asked," the letter of recommendation stated. "He did so with professionalism, efficiency and great organization."

The Skyhawk Spirit Award was created in January 2024 to recognize employee contributions that exceed contributions for performance.

The Skyhawk Innovation Award seeks to recognize employees who achieve beyond the status quo who implement an idea, initiative, process or system that improves efficiencies or outcomes.

All regular full- and part-time faculty and staff up to the level of director are eligible to receive Spirit Awards.

Criteria include performance



**Reynolds**

substantially beyond expectation on a specific assignment, task or goal, contributions that have a significant impact on department or university objectives, extraordinary efforts above and beyond the normal responsibilities of the position and an employee who uses initiative and creativity to solve a challenging problem.

Cash prizes for being named to an award are \$50 for being named to the Skyhawk Spirit Award and \$250 for being named to the Skyhawk Innovation Award.

Letters of nomination are due by the first Friday of each month and should be sent to [skyhawkspiritaward@utm.edu](mailto:skyhawkspiritaward@utm.edu).

## You Tell Me

• **Question** – Is the grassy area on the corner of University Street and Skyhawk Parkway a designated pollination area?

• **Answer** – That area is a pollinator/no-mow zone along with an area by Student Recreation Center and another one behind the Dunagan Alumni Center. Other pollinator zones include the area southeast of University Street at Skyhawk Parkway, the area northwest of the Dunagan Alumni Center and the area north of the Student Recreation Center near the pond. The area north of sorority complex is also a no-mow zone.

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

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or question  
to [addenda@utm.edu](mailto:addenda@utm.edu)!**

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# UTM launches searches for three major positions

UT Martin has launched national searches for three critical academic leadership positions that will assist in shaping the future of the institution.

The university is seeking the provost and senior vice chancellor for academic affairs, as well as deans for two major colleges, with all positions expected to be filled by the end of 2025.

The provost and senior vice chancellor for academic affairs serves as the university's top-ranking academic officer and provides strategic and visionary leadership to advance UT Martin's academic mission.

This senior-level position oversees the entire academic division, including all colleges, departments and supporting units.

The position became available following the departure of Dr. Philip Cavalier, who left UT Martin to assume the presidency of Kutztown University in Pennsylvania. **Dr. Stephanie Kolitsch** is serving as transitional provost during the search process.

Ashlie Czyz, director of human resources programs and executive recruiter for the University of Tennessee System, is serving as executive recruiter for this position. Interested candidates should contact Czyz at [aczysz@tennessee.edu](mailto:aczysz@tennessee.edu) for complete position requirements and application procedures. The description for the position can be found [at this site](#).

The university is also conducting a search for a dean of the College of Business and Global Affairs. The successful candidate will provide visionary leadership for the college's AACSB-accredited programs, including accounting, economics, finance, marketing, management and information systems.

The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business accreditation represents the highest standard of achievement for business schools worldwide, held by 6% of business programs globally.

This leadership opportunity comes at an exciting time, as the university has secured approval and funding to construct a new state-of-the-art business administration building, with completion expected in 2030.

The position was previously held by **Dr. Ahmad Tootoonchi**, who recently retired.



**UT Martin has launched national searches for three critical academic leadership positions: provost and senior vice chancellor for academic affairs, dean of the College of Business and Global Affairs and dean of the College of Education, Health, and Behavioral Sciences.**

**Dr. Joey Mehlhorn**, dean of graduate studies and professor of agriculture, is serving as interim dean during the search.

WittKieffer is assisting in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by Sept. 17. Application materials should be submitted using WittKieffer's [candidate portal](#) and include, as separate documents, a curriculum vitae (CV) or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in the [leadership profile](#).

Additionally, UT Martin seeks a dean for the College of Education, Health, and Behavioral Sciences. The dean will lead a diverse college that houses the university's teacher education, nursing, social sciences and health and human performance programs, as well as the interdisciplinary studies degree that provides a flexible undergraduate program for working adults

to connect relevant experience and academic knowledge.

The college serves as a premier provider of classroom teachers for Tennessee schools and is home to the university's highly regarded nursing program, which maintains excellent licensure pass rates and job placement statistics.

**Cindy West** currently serves as dean and will continue in the role until the end of the calendar year, ensuring a smooth transition to new leadership.

WittKieffer is also assisting UT Martin in this search. Application materials should be submitted via email to [UTennMartinDeanCEHBS@wittkieffer.com](mailto:UTennMartinDeanCEHBS@wittkieffer.com) and include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in the [leadership profile](#).

## addenda

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